

Impact of Modern Education on Indian Society and Economy

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ABSTRACT:-

The British rule has been seen to be really oppressive on the Indians and it has been looked down upon by most liberal thinkers. The British did loot India of its wealth but they also did bring various technical advancements to the Indian society. The education system before the British was more religion based and the society was full of evils and superstitions. The British brought a rather modern and logic based education system that led to the evolution in the thinking of the people and helped ban a lot of social evils in India. This paper deals with the change in the education system and how it was not as bad it was thought to be by many Indian leaders. These changes have helped shape the modern Indian education system and also impact on socio-economy of India. This paper tries to justify this evolution brought by the British. In the end, this paper tries to answer a very important question i.e. Was the British rule as oppressive and tyrant as it was thought by the Indians or there were certain positive impacts (like educations) that helped India in the longer run?

KEYWORDS: Equality, Fragmented, Poverty Stricken, Superstitious, Freedom.

INTRODUCTION:

Foundation of Modern Education in India.

The British had come to India originally in late 1600 A D, and the British company rule effectively began in 1757. The British ruled India for 200 years and during these years there have been many revolutions, wars, fights and revolts that damaged the Indian civilization to its core. Though there were negative impacts, they have also benefited India through their education system. The Indian education system has gone through many phases. Great efforts has been put to shape up the present scenario of education system. The journey from Gurukuls to English Education had many ups and downs. But each phase has its own pros and cons. The Pre-British and Post-British education system has been reviewed to known the intentions of the British behind making changes in the Indian education system.

The advent of European missionaries introduced a new phase in education of the country and developed it appreciably. The fundamental aim of these missionaries was to propagate Christian religion through European mode of education. The education system they provided has made a major impact on Indian society and economy. In 1835, Lord Macaulay laid successfully the foundation of modern education in India. The sole purpose was to educate Indians in such a way that they “should through western education get Anglicised in terms of both cultural and intellectual attainments”.

One of the most significant things the British did to westernize India was introducing a modified version of English education. Macaulay's 1835 Minute on Education had a decisive impact on British educational Policy, a classic example of the Western rationalist approach to Indian civilization. Before the British took over, the Court language, Persian and the Muslim population used Urdu, a mixture of Persian, Arabic and Sanskrit, was used by the Mughal. Higher education was largely religious and was forced to learn Arabic and Sanskrit. The Company gave some financial support to a Kolkata Madrassa, and a Sanskrit college at Benares, Warren Hastings, as governor-general from 1782 to 1795 had himself learned Sanskrit and Persian and several other Company officials were oriental scholars and had great influence. But Macaulay strongly opposed this orientalism "I believe that the present system tends not to accelerate the progress of truth but to delay the natural death of expiring errors. We are a Board for wasting public money, for printing books which are less valuable than the paper on which they are printed was while it was blank for giving artificial encouragement to illogical history, absurd metaphysics, absurd physics, absurd theology ... *"I have no knowledge of Sanskrit or Arabic" ... But I have done what I could to form a correct estimate of their value ... "Who could deny that a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia"* ... all the historical information which has been collected from all the books written in the Sanskrit language is less valuable than what may be found in the most paltry abridgements used at preparatory schools in England."

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

- ❖ To evaluate the process of modern Indian education in India.
- ❖ To analysis the Impact of modern education on Indian Society and Economy.
- ❖ To highlight the merits of modern education in India.

Issue:

Served Double purpose:

Introduction of modern education had served a double purpose for the British rulers- they got the credit for the amelioration of the Indian society. Also at the same time, through it, they devised a unique method of distribution of power, kept balance of power and prolonged their rule in India by keeping the natives busy in their in-fights. After the introduction of new modern education system, the traditional Indian system of education gradually withered away for the lack of official support, and with it, Indian people got dis-associated from traditional way of learning.

Purpose of Introducing Modern Education:

Lord Macaulay clearly said that, *"We must at present do our best to form a class, who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern; a class of persons, Indians in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals and in intellect."*

Why?

The reason of introducing the modern education was that it was too costly and practically impossible to import a large number of Englishmen to fill up the large and increasing number of subordinate or lower posts in administration.

Socio-Economic Impact:

Though we were never wished to be ruled by the British, we must thank them, their rule removed some of the most gruesome practices like *Sati* (where a widow jumps into her husband's cremation fire). *Untouchability*, which was another problem faced by the people in India, the British took the advantage of this weakness of India but had also eradicated it, by education. Education by the British was equally provided without any discrimination, even *Dalits* were educated this made the Dalits revolt and fight for their rights. Also the rights for the widows were given. Elimination of Evils like Sati and untouchability can be seen as step towards a more liberal and modern society. The Education system has actually helped the Indians understand the idea of looking to find a reason for why things are supposed to be done rather than just blindly following the myths that have been prevalent in the society. The teaching of modern science and mathematics led to more development in education quality as compared to the religion based teaching done before. There was more preference to logic and thought rather than religion or myths which helped better the condition of the way the Indians thought and dealt with situations. Having a modern education system also helped people look above such evils and thus the whole idea of modernization of the society can be seen to happen. Hence, here the British rule did prove its liberal ideas led to better governance.

Emphasis on English Medium:

The emphasis of British rulers was on English medium education system. In 1844 through a declaration knowledge of English was made compulsory for Government employment. It made English medium schools very popular.

Missionaries Welcomed Modern Education:

Missionaries and their supporters found that modern education would encourage local people to adopt Christianity in large numbers. Christian missionaries brainwashed many people especially the poor by preaching and educating them and developed in their minds a complex about the primitiveness of Indian society, influenced them towards the alien culture and then converted them into Christianity. With the help of British rulers, Christian missionaries and religious minded Westerners like William Webber force or Charles Grant, they succeeded in converting many persons into Christianity.

Access to Liberal thoughts of Western philosophers:

As was thought, modern education offered to Indian people access to the thoughts of many liberal thinkers, like Locke, Mill Rousseau Voltaire, Spencer and Burke. Also it familiarised Indians with the knowledge about English, French, American revolutions. Western literature and philosophy widened the mental horizons and knowledge of Indian people. Modern education by British has served a double purpose, they got credit for making better societies in India. Also at the same time, they devised a unique method of distribution of power. The style and themes of European writers inspired the Indian a lot and they started writing different sorts of literature pieces on patriotism and related themes which ultimately played a vital role in freedom fighting. It is to be admitted that they did contribute to build a modern India too.

Modern education produced many national leaders, intellectuals and reformers. Modern education not only provided personnel to fill the lower levels in administration, as desired by the rulers, but also produced national leaders, intellectuals and reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Dadabhai Naoroji, Ferozeshah Mehta, Gokhale, Gandhi, Jinnah, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Ambedkar, Tilak, Lala Lajpat Rai, Moti Lal Nehru, Jawahar Lal Nehru, Neta Subhash Chandra Bose, Patel and many more. They took upon themselves the responsibility to build a modern, open, plural, culturally rich, prosperous and powerful India out of a fragmented, poverty stricken, superstitious, weak, indifferent, backward and inward looking society.

In the economic realm they were attracted by modern industry and the prospect of economic development and prosperity. The Britain, economically the most advanced country of the time would introduced modern science and technology and economic organization in its dependencies including India. The means of communications such as the railways and road transport were increased. The British replaced the wasteful warlord 'aristocracy' by a 'bureaucratic-military' establishment, which was carefully designed by utilitarian technocrats and was very efficient in maintaining law and order. The greater efficiency of government permitted a substantial reduction in the fiscal burden, and a bigger share of the national product was available for the landlords, the capitalists and the new professional classes. Some of this upper-class income was syphoned off to the UK, but the bulk was spent in India. However, the pattern of consumption changed as the new upper class no longer kept harems and palaces, they did not wear fine muslins and damascened swords. This caused some painful readjustments to the people who were in traditional handicraft sector. It seems likely that there was some increase in productive investment which must have been near zero in Mughal India, the government itself carried out productive investment in railways and irrigation and as a result, there was a growth in both agricultural and industrial output. New towns and urban amenities were created with segregated suburbs and housing for the people. Their western habits were copied by the new professional elite of lawyers, doctors, teachers, journalists and businessmen, within this group, old caste barriers were eased and social mobility increased.

Atmosphere, Completely Ready:

At the time when modern education was introduced, the atmosphere was completely ready. Different sections of society had welcomed it wholeheartedly for different reasons. They not only welcomed, but exerted pressure on the company to encourage and promote western education in India.

British Rulers in India:

As hoped, British rulers found modern education very economical and conveniently the rulers. It provided personnel to fill the lower levels in administration and made it possible to keep contact with local people. The knowledge of modern movement like industrialization, reformation, renaissance fetched unprecedented energy and enthusiasm into the blood of Indians. The people became aware of their own right and they learned how to stand on their own feet. Though the English men almost destroyed the traditional culture and treasures of India, it is to be admitted that they did contribute to build a modern India too.

Indian intelligentsia, key to enter Modern World:

For Indian intelligentsia, Humanitarians and intellectuals considered modern education the best remedy for social, political and economic ills of the country. The intellectual ferment was strongest in West Bengal, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu. Intellectuals and their organizations had purely an economic and social thrust. They were aware of the real issues hampering the progress of Indian society. They also got alarmed at the erosion of Indian Culture and divisible policies of the rulers.

National Leaders:

The understanding of liberal, and humanitarian ideas thought of Western World gave birth to Indian national leaders. Educated national leaders welcomed rationality and other good features of Modern English education. Modern education equipped them with the intellectual tools, with which they could fight the oppressive British Raj. They realized the impact of British racial discrimination and their repressive policies on the Indian people.

National Movement Gained Momentum:

The destructive character of British imperialism lit the fire and gave birth to national movement. Economic loot, political subjugation, assertion of lordly superiority over the subject on the ground of race, assumption of a haughty exclusiveness, persistent insulting and supercilious behavior towards all Indians, exclusion of Indians from all places of authority and responsibility and denial of their capacity for self-governance united Indians against British rule. They tried to bring social awakening and awareness amongst masses about their rights.

Modern Education for Reformers:

Modern education highlighted the weaknesses, rigidity and harshness of society towards the weaker sections of the society. It had attracted the attention of the intelligentsia and reformers towards social evils, which had developed in the system. Social reformers fought against many social evils caused by ignorance, superstitions or irrationality like Sati, Polygamy, child marriage, and inhumane treatment to women, untouchability and many superstitions prevalent at that time. They criticized the mumbo-jumbo of rituals and superstitions created by some selfish people to entangle the ignorant and poor masses. The new education system opened the doors of education for all sections of Indian society to get educated irrespective of caste or creed. While welcomed by different sections of society, the new system of education had some adverse effects also. It had disassociated Indian people from their traditional way of learning and living, their classical roots and indigenous knowledge. Along with it faded Indian values, philosophies and traditions. Modern education had loosened the bonds of caste system, which kept discipline in various sections of society and believed in inter-dependence. It also made Indians to lose their faith in social values and systems. So much and so that some groups of Indian society considered the social practices and customs prevalent in India as indefensible.

CONCLUSION:

Modern education did produce manpower, as desired by the rulers. But it also generated groups of visionary national leaders and reformers. The second half of the nineteenth century saw the impact of modern education on Indians. The knowledge of the freedom struggling and fighting in different countries collected by Indians, as they started reading articles in English, gave birth to national

integration and national feeling in the minds of Indians. The Education system brought in by the Britishers can be seen to have a certain positive impact on the Indian society and economy. The advancements brought helped modernise the mind set and helped bring reason to the way of thinking of the people. The newer education also helped Indians question the situations they faced and to find better and more rational solutions. The learning of international revolutions and thinking of various philosophers led to the Indians question the whole idea of the British oppression and helped bring up opposition against the whole idea of British rule and thus fight for a free India. The British rule has been called oppressive and tyrant over the years but they did bring a number of advancements to the Indian society. Thus, it can be clearly seen, the advancements in education brought by the British have actually led to the shaping of the current education system in place and also have helped change the approach and outlook of Indians over the years. The Europeans might have been thought later that they shouldn't have provided English education to Indians who fought against them as a single mind after getting a common language for communicating with each other's.

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