

History of Education policies in British India

- The History of Education policies in British India can be classified into two – before 1857 (under the English East India Company) and after 1857 (under the British Crown).

Education policies in India under the English East India Company

- **1781:** Governor-General of Bengal, Warren Hastings established Calcutta Madarasa for Islamic law studies. It was the first educational institute set by East India Company (EIC) governance.
- **1784:** Asiatic Society of Bengal was founded by William Jones to understand and study the history and culture of India. During this period Charles Wilkins translated Bhagwat Gita to English.
- **1791:** The resident of Benares, Jonathan Duncan founded the Sanskrit college for the study of Hindu laws and philosophies.
- **1800:** Governor-General Richard Wellesley founded the Fort William College in Calcutta to train the civil servants of EIC in Indian languages and customs. But this college was closed in 1802 due to disapproval of the British administration in England on Indianising the English civil servants.

Charter Act of 1813:

- This was the first noted step towards modern education in the country by the British.
- This act set aside an annual sum of Rs.1 lakh to be used in educating the Indian subjects.
- During all this time the Christian missionaries were active in mass educating the people but they concentrated more on religious teachings and conversions.

Macauley's Minutes / English Education Act of 1835:

- Governor-General William Bentick's tenure saw more funds being allocated to education, and the policies were based on the recommendation of Macauley's minute.

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- We have to remember that Thomas Macauley had no knowledge or value for Indian and oriental literature and considered western science to be superior to all. He had famously said that “*a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia*”.

The gist of the minute is:

- Government should spend resources for teaching western sciences and literature in English alone.
- English should be made the medium of education in schools and colleges.
- Elementary schools were not given importance, rather more schools at district levels and colleges were suggested to be opened. Hence, mass education was neglected.
- **Downward filtration theory:** The British decided to educate a small section of upper and middle-class Indians who would be the bridge between the masses and the government. And this educated would spread western education to the masses gradually.

Adam’s report on vernacular education in Bengal and Bihar was published in 1835, 1836, and 1838 which pointed out the defects in the system of vernacular education.

- **1843-53:** James Jonathan experiment in North West province where he introduced one model school in each tehsil where the vernacular language was used for teaching. There was also another school for training the teachers for these vernacular schools.

Wood’s Despatch of 1854:

- It is also known as the Magna Carta of English education in India’ was the first comprehensive plan to envisage mass education in India.
- It prompted the government to take responsibility for education and suggested grants in aid to encourage private enterprises to invest in education.
 - Vernacular languages should be used in primary schools in villages.

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- Anglo-vernacular high schools
- Affiliated college at the district level
- Universities in presidency towns
- Gave impetus to female education and vocational training.
- Laid down that there should be secular education in government schools.
- Viceroy Mayo's term saw the establishment of Rajkot college in Kathiawar in 1868 and Mayo college of Ajmer in 1875 for the political training of the Indian princes and elites.

Education policies in India under the Royal Crown of British:

- Under the British Crown, various commissions like Hunter, Raleigh, Saddler etc submitted recommendations for the reforms in the Indian Education system.

1882: Hunter Commission on Indian Education:

- It recommended more government efforts for the improvement of mass education through vernacular languages.
 - Transfer of control of primary education to the new district and municipal boards.
 - Encourage female education outside presidency towns also.
 - Secondary education should be divided into 2 categories-
 - Literary (leads to university through entrance exam)
 - Vocational (for commercial jobs)

1902: Raleigh Commission:

- Viceroy Curzon believed that universities were the factories producing students with revolutionary ideologies; hence he constituted the commission to review the entire university education system in India.
- The recommendation of the commission led to the universities act of 1904.

1904: Indian Universities Act

- The Act brought all Indian universities under the control of the government. The key provisions of the act were-
 - More attention to study and research in universities rather than revolutionary activities
 - The number of fellows were reduced and were to be nominated by the government
 - The government acquired veto power against university senate decisions.
 - Stricter affiliation rules.

1906: The princely state of Baroda introduced compulsory primary education in its territories.

1913: Government Resolution on Education Policy:

- The government refused to adhere to the demand by leaders of the national movement to introduce compulsory primary education in British India; they did not want the responsibility of mass education.
- But announced a future policy for the removal of illiteracy.
- Provincial governments were asked to take responsibility to provide free elementary education to poorer and backward classes.
- Quality of secondary education and private efforts to be improved.
- One university is to be established in each province.

1917-19: Saddle University Commission:

- It was originally set up to study and report the causes behind the poor performance of Calcutta University however it ended up reviewing all the universities in the country.
 - It said that the improvement of secondary education is necessary for the improvement of university education.
 - School should be completed in 12 years-
 - Students to enter university after intermediate stage (not matric) for a 3-year university degree.

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- This would better prepare students for university and make them at par with university standards.
- It will provide collegiate education to those not taking up university degrees.
- Separate board for secondary and intermediate education.
- University should function as a centralized and resident teaching autonomous body.
- Focus on female education, applied scientific and technical education, teachers training.
- **1916-21:** 7 new universities came up at Mysore, Patna, Benares, Aligarh, Dacca, Lucknow, and Osmania.
- **1920:** The Saddler commission recommendations were handed over to the provincial government as education was shifted under provinces in the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms.
- This caused a financial crunch in the education sector.

1929: Hartog Committee

- Provide primary education but not need of compulsory education system.
- Only deserving students should be allowed to study in high schools and intermediate stage whereas average students should be diverted to vocational courses.
- Restricted admissions in university to improve standards.

1937: Wardha Scheme of Basic Education by the Indian National Congress (INC)

- Congress organized a national conference on education in Wardha and formulated a committee under Zakir Hussain for basic education.
- The scheme focused on “learning through activity” which was based on Gandhiji’s ideas published in Harijan.
 - Basic handicrafts should be included in the syllabus
 - First 7 years of school to be free and compulsory
 - Hindi as medium till class 7 and English from class 8 onwards.

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- These ideas were not implemented due to the resignation of the congress ministries due to the start of World War II.

1944: Sergeant Plan of Education by the Central Advisory Board of Education

- Free primary education for 3-6 years age group.
- Compulsory education for 6-11 years age group
- High school to selected students of 11-17 years age group.
- Improve technical, commercial, and arts education
- Focus on teachers' training, physical education, and education of mentally and physically handicapped.

