

## Indian Education Commission- 1882

**Introduction:** The revolt of 1857 shook the very foundation of British Empire in the country and the administration was taken away from the company and transferred to the crown. The normalization of conditions took some time. By 1882 it was considered necessary to assess the development of education in the country and to remove the defects which has crept into it. For this purpose Lord Ripon appointed on February 3, 1882 the Indian Education Commission under the chairmanship of William Hunter, a member of the executive council of viceroy. Subsequently Indian Universities Act of 1904 and Lord Curzon's Educational Policy also came into existence to improve upon the educational system of India.

### **3. RECOMMENDATIONS OF INDIAN EDUCATION COMMISSION – 1882 OR, THE HUNTER COMMISSION, 1882**

A landmark in the history of education in India is, however, the report of the Hunter Commission submitted in 1882. There were complaints that the Wood's Dispatch of 1854 had not been properly followed. In the circumstances Lord Ripon, the Governor – General, appointed a Commission composed of 22 members with Sir William Hunter a Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council as its Chairman to report on the manner in which effect had been given to the principles of the Despatch of 1854. The Hunter Commission was also required to report on "the present state of elementary education and the means by which this can be extended and improved." The progress of the college work and some other aspects of education were also to be reported upon; though the general operation of universities was out of the commission's terms of reference.

After the implementation of the recommendations of Woods Despatch, England entered the Victorian era. Now the responsibility of Indian education shifted from the company to the Parliament. Queen Victoria wanted peace during her regime because England had witnessed the War of independence of (1857). Secondly Christian missionaries had made complaints against the Indian education administration on the ground that education in India was not in line with the of Woods Despatch. In the third place, the Country Council Act of 1880 for reforming primary education had been passed in England and education in India was to be reformed on similar lines. Lastly, there were other issues like evaluation of the success of Government schools and the policy of the government with regard to the private enterprise, etc., that needed the attention of the government. Therefore, the same tradition of periodic revision of the policy of the education was adopted. A Commission under the chairmanship of William Hunter, a member of the executive council of the Governor-General of India, was appointed in 1882. It was the first commission which gave wide and comprehensive recommendations on education in Indian context. It had twenty members comprising of Indian educationists like Saiyad Mahmood, Anand Mohan Bose etc.

### **Terms of Reference of Commission**

“It will be the duty of the commission to enquire particularly into the manner in which the effect has been given to the principles of the Despatch of 1854; and to suggest measures as it may think desirable in order to the further carrying out of the policy therein laid down.”

“It is the desire of the Governor General-in-Council that the commission should specially bear in mind the great importance which the Government attaches to the subjects of primary education. The development of Despatch of elementary education was of the main objects contemplated by the Despatch of 1853-54 : the principle objective, therefore, of the enquiry of the commission should be the present state of elementary education throughout the empire and the means by which this can everywhere be extended and improved.

### **Aims of the Indian Education Commission (1882)**

The following were prescribed as the aims of the commission:

1. To assess the position of primary education and to give suggestions for its reforms.
2. To evaluate the work of the missionaries in the field of education.
3. To find out if the government institutions should be allowed to continue.
4. To assess the utility of the grant-in-aid system. To find out the attitude of the government towards the private Indian enterprises in the field of education. To find out if they received encouragement from the government.
5. The main purpose of the commission was to study the problem of primary education and to suggest the measures for its reforms. But the commission also chose to look into the affairs relating to secondary and higher education.

The commission produced a report of about 700 pages within ten months after hard labour. This report is of historical importance. The Commission made several sittings for the first two months in Calcutta, then for the next eight months it toured round the whole country. The Commission elicited opinion from provincial Governments and formed a number of Committees in various provinces to study the problems of primary education. It obtained more than 300 suggestions from various groups of persons. Although the commission worked very hard for full ten months, but it could not give any original suggestion or educational ideas. In a way its report has been a revised and enlarged version of Charles Wood's Report of 1854. We are giving below a short summary of the recommendations of the Commission.

### **Recommendations of Indian Education Commission (1882)**

The main recommendations of the Commission were as under:

1. In the field of primary education, the commission made elaborate recommendations on the lines of country council act of England with regard to its policy, objectives, curriculum, methods of teaching, teachers training, finance and administration etc. The responsibility of imparting primary education was fixed on local – bodies.
2. The curriculum should be framed according to local needs and its practical aspects properly emphasised.
3. The Mother tongue should be the medium of instruction at the primary stage. The commission was silent about the secondary stage. Hence, indirectly, it supported the cause of English.
4. The Commission recommended the establishment of a model Government high school in each District.

5. At the secondary stage two types of courses were recommended. 'A' Type courses was to be pursued upto university level and 'B' type for providing vocational education. Thus, the Commission laid special emphasis on the diversification of courses.
6. For primary teachers training, the number of normal schools should be increased or, established.
7. Due encouragement should be given to local co-operation and private efforts. It suggested for the creation of a fund for the development of education in the country and the government was made responsible for providing grant-in-aid.
8. Emphasis was laid on the Indianisation of education. The result was that the number of institutions at various levels of education increased enormously.
9. Government institutions were banned for imparting religious education. Private institutions had freedom to manage their affairs in their own way. This lead to a policy of religious neutrality on the part of the government.
10. In the field of women education, emphasis was laid on the differentiation of curriculum, award of scholarships and facilities in appointments
11. Education for Muslims was given due to encouragement and attention was paid towards granting proper facilities to them.
12. The commission also recommended for the proper arrangements of the education of backward classes.

Thus, the recommendations of the Hunter Commission (1882) gave a great set back to the efforts of the Christian missionaries. The individual's efforts and local co-operation got due impetus and encouragement. This led to Indianisation of education. The result was increased number of schools and colleges. Grant-in-aid system was recognised by the Government and emphasis was laid on imparting useful knowledge.

But most important recommendation of the commission was with regard to the development and improvement of primary education. The practice of appointing Indian as school inspector in education department was adopted. The government institutions observed a policy of religious neutrality.

## **PRIMARY EDUCATION**

The Hunter commission studied the problems of primary education from every angle and gave elaborate suggestion for its reforms. The education policy, the financing system, training of teachers, organisation and curriculum etc, were studied by the commission. Below we shall hint at some of the major recommendations of the commission:

**Policy for Primary education:** The commission has observed that Primary Education should be related to life and should be practical and useful. Its purpose should be to make students self dependent and its curriculum should consist of such subjects which may further these goals. The student should be given primary education through the medium of their mother tongue. Persons who have received Primary Education should be given preference in services suitable for them. Primary Education will be encouraged by this step. So steps should be taken to develop Primary Education. The backward and tribal peoples should be encouraged to receive the Primary Education.

**Management of the Primary Education:** The Hunter Commission placed the responsibility of Primary Education on district boards, municipal boards and town areas. Thus it made the government free from its responsibility.

**Training Schools:** The commission urged the necessity of opening training schools for training of teachers; the commission rightly thought that training of teachers was necessary for development of Primary Education. In this connection it gave the following suggestions:

1. Training school should be established at such places where trained teachers may be made available for the areas where there are no trained teachers. There should be at least one normal school within jurisdiction of each inspector of schools.
2. Inspection of schools should take personal interest in the organisation and maintenance of normal schools.
3. Normal schools should also get reasonable share of the grant sanctioned for primary education.

**Curriculum:** The Commission left the organisation of the curriculum on provincial governments with the suggestions that they should organise the same in their respective areas according to the needs of the locality concerned. But at the same time the Commission also suggested that subjects useful for life should be incorporated in the curriculum. It opined that agriculture, physical trigonometry, geography, medicine and accountancy should be included in the curriculum, because these subjects were closely related with life.

**The Impact of the Recommendations of the Commission on Primary Education:** The Hunter Commission changed the shape of Primary Education by bringing it under the local boards. This measure made the government free of any responsibilities for the same and gave an opportunity to the local boards to serve the people. Luckily, the local boards performed their task well and condition of primary education schools, the provincial governments had to release the grants sanctioned in their favour and they could not divert it to other purpose. This position eased the financial difficulty of primary schools up to some extent.

**Indigenous Schools:** At the time of Hunter Commission there were many indigenous institutions imparting education to people on the old traditional Indian pattern. The Commission regarded these schools as very useful for imparting primary education. So, it recommended financial grants for them.

### **Development of Primary Education:**

According to the recommendations of the Hunter Commission the responsibility for Primary Education was entrusted to the local bodies which were established in Great Britain at this time and the local bodies in India were formed on the same pattern. Generally, in the beginning of any new scheme, the progress appears to be very slow. So, the progress of Primary Education under the local bodies appeared to be very slow in the beginning. The Indigenous Schools were also brought under the control of the local boards according to the recommendations of the Hunter

Commission. Great set back and they began to fade away from the scene. At places where they were added to the Government schools there also they lost their identity.

In (1882) only 24 lacs of rupees and in (1902) 46 lacs were spent on Primary Education. Although the Hunter Commission had recommended full government financial assistance was almost negligible, as was evident from the fact that during the period of twenty years the government help was increased only by 22 lacs. The local boards were not rich. Hence, Primary Education did not progress satisfactorily.

### **SECONADARY EDUCATION**

As we have already said earlier, the Hunter Commission examined the condition of secondary and higher education as well, although it was appointed only for Primary Education. The commission gave the following three important suggestions for Secondary Education:

1. The government should entrust the responsibility of secondary education wholly to the Indians and should only give financial grant for removing certain difficulties.
2. The commission indirectly pleaded for English as the medium of instruction and ignored the claim of the mother tongue for the same. For the middle schools the managers of schools were made responsible to organise education according to the local needs.
3. The secondary school curriculum should be divided into two parts. In the 1<sup>st</sup> part literary and science subjects should be grouped and in the 2<sup>nd</sup> part their should be such vocational subjects which might be useful to life.

### **Training Graduate Teachers:**

The commission emphasised the necessity of teacher's training for rising the standard of secondary education. At the time of Hunter Commission there were only two training schools in the country, only at Lahore and the other at Madras. So there was a great dearth of teachers. The commission recommended that the duration of training of graduates should be shorter than those who are not graduates. The trainees should be examined both in theory and practice of teaching.

**Grant-in-aid:** The Grant-in-aid system was started in (1865). This system was started in England also in 1861. There was no uniformity in this system in India. It was of different nature in various provinces. In Madras, it was based on teacher's salary, in Bombay on provinces it was only for a fixed period. The commission urged that there should be uniformity in this system and the same policy would be followed through out the whole country.

### **Development of Secondary Education:**

Secondary Education was benefited by the recommendations of Hunter Commission and it developed further. The commission had recommended for total governmental withdrawal from the field of secondary education. But the education departments continued their control over secondary education. This situation helped the development of secondary education, because the education departments worked for its expansion in order to make their own position stronger. Previously, the departments had not taken so much interest in the development of secondary education. The financial position of government schools was quite sound and the standard of

education in them, too, was better than in the aided schools. The aided schools were facing financial stringency.

The Hunter commission had recommended for diversification of the curriculum into two separate parts: (1) Literary and science and (2) vocational. The 1<sup>st</sup> was meant to prepare students for university classes and the 2<sup>nd</sup> was for imparting vocational education useful in practical affairs of life. The students those days were more interested in procuring services and they had little interest in vocational education. So, vocational education could not be encouraged, although some arrangements for vocational education were made after (1882).

## **University Education or Higher Education**

The commissions gave some important suggestions for improvement of higher education. The commission has observed that at the time of giving grant it should be seen that the educational institutions well utilized the given grant. The grants should be determined keeping in view the strength of teachers and students, need and capacity of the institution. The colleges engaged in higher education should be given sufficient grants for experimental laboratories, reading rooms, libraries, equipments, science rooms, buildings and furniture etc.

## **Development of Higher Education**

We have said earlier that secondary education prepared students for higher education. Therefore, its progress had its impact on university education. Since secondary education progressed between 1882 and 1902, the university education also progressed during this period. With a view to obtain good services youths began to come to universities. The commissions had recommended for encouraging private enterprise in field of education. So many colleges were opened by voluntary organisations. Their number was larger than the college started by Missionaries. By (1882) there were 437 colleges run by Missionaries, whereas the number of colleges run by voluntary organisation at this time was 42. By (1902) there were 191 colleges in the whole country. Out of these 145 were art colleges, 30 laws, 4 engineering, 5 training, 4 medical and 3 agricultural colleges. Besides, there were 12 women's colleges for higher education in the country by (1902).

In (1885) the Indian National Congress was established. This created a feeling of nationalism and patriotism. Youths educated in colleges were greatly influenced by the revolutionary ideas of such great writer as Rousseau, Byron, Burke, Bacon, Milton, Locke, Wordsworth and others. These educated Indians were imbued with the ideals of sacrifice, national morality and independence. They became perturbed over the foreign rule in the country and they began to dream for national freedom. This situation led to the generation of nationalism in education. The Indians more intensively realised the necessity of education and they thought that education would be a good tool for obtaining freedom. Therefore, the work of expansion of education was accelerated by private enterprise under the control of Indians. It was at this time that such great personalities were born who took the vow of national service with the ultimate objective of winning national freedom. High school began to be developed into colleges and a number of new colleges were also opened. Great persons like R.P. Paranjpe, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Triplankar. Ayaner took the work of education in their hands. The Ferguson Colleges was established at Pona in 1870. Sir Surendra Nath Banerji controlled the management of Ripon Colleges at Calcutta.

The name of Maharshi Dayanand Saraswati would ever remain immortal in the field of education in India. He stood for some of the ancient ideals of education and established a number of D.A.V. Colleges in the Northern part of the country. He tried to remove the ills of Hindu Society and religion through his educational ideals. The Arya Samaj took up his work and tried to propagate his ideals of life throughout of the whole country.

In the city of Banaras Mrs. Annie Besant established two Central Hindu Colleges in (1898) on the basis of Hindu ideals. Later on this college became the nucleus of the Banaras Hindu University established by Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya.

The Commission had also made recommendation in regard to higher education. These recommendations may be summed up under the following heads:

- (a) While giving grants-in-aid to the colleges, the number of the teachers, expenditures of the college, efficiency and local needs must also be kept in mind.
- (b) If needed, non recurring or, special grant may be given to the colleges for establishing libraries and other educational equipments.
- (c) Such varied and vast curricular should be arranged in these colleges so that the students must have the subject of there choice and aptitude.
- (d) Meritorious and promising students may be set to foreign countries for higher education on the Government scholarships.
- (e) In order to raise the moral standard of the students such books should be compiled which may contain the principles of religion and human religion at large.
- (f) The number of students receiving free education should be limited.
- (g) Private colleges should be authorised to receive lesser fee as compared to the Government colleges
- (h) While appointing teachers such Indians should be preferred who have received education in European universities.

**Education Department:** Hunter Commission made the following recommendations in this regard:

- (a) The number of inspectors in every Province should be raised so that every institution may be inspected.
- (b) As far as possible Indians should be appointed on the post of District Inspector of Schools.
- (c) As far as possible the Inspector of the Primary schools should be local.

**Women Education:**

Hunter Commission was pained at the pitiable condition of the women education of the time. It gave out the following recommendations for overall development and expansion of the women education:

1. Arrangements of Public Funds.
2. Appointment of lady teachers.
3. Appointment of lady inspectresses.
4. Free education for women.
5. Different curriculum for girls.

6. Decent arrangement of hostels for girls.
7. Liberal Grant-in-aid for girl education.
8. Special arrangement for education of 'Pardah' observing ladies.
9. Arrangements for Secondary Education.

### **Muslim Education:**

The commission consider that the education of the Muslims was not given sufficient and proper attention. The commission recommended that every effort should be made to popularise Muslim education.

Special funds should be allocated for it. In the localities where Muslims are in majority, the teaching of Hindustani (Urdu) and Persian should be given in middle and high schools. More scholarships should be given to Muslim students as they are unable to pay the fee. In the Government appointments, Muslim should be given proportionate representation.

### **Education of Harijans and Backward Classes. Aborigines and Hill Tribes.**

In regard to the education of Harijans and Backward Classes, the following recommendations were put forward:

- (a) All the schools run by Government, Municipalities and local boards should be directed to admit children of Harijans and Backward classes.
- (b) In places where an objection is raised to the admission of these Harijans and Backward children, special schools should be opened for them.
- (c) It was made recommendatory on the part of school teachers and inspectors to make judicious effects to remove caste prejudices.

In regard to the education of Aborigines Hill tribes , commission made the following recommendations :

- (a) It was recommended that the education of the Aborigines Hill tribes cannot be left to private agencies only and so Government was expected to take up this job.
- (b) Children of these tribes were not be charged any fee.
- (c) The education of students should be such as may help them to establish contact with their neighbours.
- (d) It was also recommended that subjects taught should be of the most elementary character.

### **Religious Education :**

The Commission made the following recommendations in this connection :

1. Religious education of any sort should not be given in the public schools.
2. Religious education may be imparted in the private institutions and the Government shall have nothing to do with it.
3. While giving grant-in-aid to institutions imparting religious education as well, attention should be paid to their teaching work only.



## **Significance of Hunter Commission and its impact on Education**

The Hunter Commission constitutes an important stage in the history of education in India. Majority its recommendations were adopted by the government with the result that with the devolution of control to the local bodies, the British element in the teaching and the inspecting departments was considerably reduced. Another significant improvement after 1882 was the development of the Punjab University which was founded in that year, thus, lessening the burden of the Calcutta University. The progress in primary schools from 1882 to 1901 was displayed by number of students in them, rising from 22 lakhs in 1882 to 32 lakhs in 1901. In the secondary school, this number increased from 42,993 in 1886 to 6,33,728 in 1901, while in the colleges, the number of students increased from 11,501 in 1886 to 23,009 in 1901.