

**BA 4<sup>th</sup> Semester**  
**Sub: Education Major**  
**Course Code: 200-299**  
**Course Name: DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATION IN INDIA**  
**Unit-2: Education in British India: The 19<sup>th</sup> Century**  
**Sub Title: INDIAN EDUCATION COMMISSION-1882**

**INTRODUCTION**

We have already discussed that through the Wood's Despatch the British Government tried to give some importance to Indian education. As we know, the British Government's effort was insufficient for mass education in India. After Wood's Despatch, the revolt of 1857 shocked the foundation of the British Empire. They thought that Indian people cannot be neglected for a long time. As a result, the administration of the country was taken away from the Company to the British Crown.

During this period, Lord Ripon was appointed as the Governor General in India. He was one of the most popular Viceroys in India. Lord Ripon was interested in the welfare of the people of India. He made significant contributions to the development of the country in various fields. He was also interested in the development of education.

Wood's Despatch had already passed twenty-eight years of its existence. This Despatch laid down that Government should provide education for those 'who are incapable of obtaining education worthy of the name by their unaided efforts.' It directed the government to concentrate its energies on primary education. It also asked the state to withdraw itself from the field of higher education and attend to the general education of the masses. But the government neglected primary education altogether.

By 1882 it was considered necessary to assess the development of education in the country. It was also necessary to remove the defects of education which had come out during the post Wood's Despatch period. For this purpose, Lord Ripon appointed the Indian Education Commission on February 3, 1882. Sir William Hunter, a member of his Executive Council, was appointed as the Chairman of this Commission. Besides the Chairman, in the first Education Commission, 20 other members were also appointed. In this commission Indians were represented by Anand Mohan Bose, Bhudev Mukherjee, Syed Mahmud, and

K.T. Telung, etc. From the missionaries' side it was represented by Rev. Dr. Miller of Madras. B.L. Rice, the Mysore Director of Public Instruction was appointed its Secretary.

The commission was asked 'to enquire particularly into how effect had been given to the principles of the Despatch of 1854 and to suggest such measures as it might think desirable with a view to the future carrying out of the policy therein laid down'. The commission was also asked to keep the enquiry into the primary education. The commission was further asked to enquire into the position of the government institutions in a national system of education. The commission was also asked to offer suggestions on secondary education. European Education and Universities were excluded from the preview of the commission.

The commission made several sittings for the first two months in Calcutta and then for the next eight months it travelled the whole country. The commission discussed with the Provincial Governments and formed several Committees in various Provinces to study the problem of Primary education. The commission obtained more than 300 suggestions from various groups of persons. After ten months of its formation, the commission produced a report of about 700 pages in 1883.

The Hunter Commission report is of historical importance. The report had 222 resolutions. The most significant part of the report was that it freed the government from the responsibilities of mass education. It gave the responsibility to the local bodies and suggested a gradual transfer of government institutions to private bodies. Indians were thus required to raise funds for their education and their efforts were to be assisted by a liberal grants-in-aid system. Although the commission worked very hard for full ten months, but it failed to give any original suggestions for the development of Indian education. We are discussing below the major recommendations of the commission.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS ON PRIMARY EDUCATION**

The Government directed the commission to pay special attention to primary education. Accordingly, the commission studied the problem of primary education deeply. During that period, Elementary education was imparted through two agencies: (i) indigenous schools and (ii) new type of primary schools. Recommendations of the Wood's Despatch on primary education were also general and not specific. But the recommendations given by the

Hunter Commission on Primary education were specific and clear. The education policy, the financial system, training of teachers, organization and curriculum, etc., were the areas of recommendation on primary education by the commission. The recommendations on primary education were discussed in detail for your clear understanding.

- **Policy for Primary Education:** The Hunter Commission has observed that the Primary education should be related to real life situation. The Commission acknowledges the importance of primary education. The commission laid down the clear-cut policy of primary education. The state should give its effort for the promotion of primary education. The aim of primary education should be the instruction of the masses. The commission recommended that primary education should be closely related to the practical aspect of the masses. The government should encourage primary education by giving appointments. Instructions should be imparted in such subjects as may best fit the people for their work in life. The students should be given primary education through the mother tongue. The commission believed that primary education would be encouraged through these steps. So, these steps should be taken to promote primary education. The backward and tribal people should also be encouraged to receive primary education.
- **Management of the Primary Education:** The management of primary education was left to the local boards introduced in India by Lord Ripon's Local Self Government Act. In England, the Education Acts of 1870 and 1876 had placed responsibility of primary education on the County Councils, so the commission recommended that the control of primary education should be transferred to District and Municipal Boards. Every district and Municipal Board was asked to keep a separate fund for education, which should be exclusively for the purpose for which it was meant. The commission also asked the provincial governments to contribute to the local funds by a suitable system of grants-in-aid, preferably at the rate of half the local assets or one-third of the total expenditure.
- **Finance:** In the opinion of the commission, finance is the greatest obstacle in the way of primary education. The commission thus pressed the claims of primary education on different types of funds, but the funds placed at the disposal of the local boards were insignificant given the vast population of the country. The grants to the individual schools were to be made strictly based on results.

- **Training of Primary School Teachers:** The commission felt the necessity of training primary school teachers through a network of normal schools. For this reason, the commission emphasised the need for establishing normal schools for the training of teachers. To make the Normal school functional, they were assigned to one Inspector. Cost, direction, provision and inspection of Normal Schools was the first charge of the provincial funds and normal schools were to be so localised as to provide for the local requirements of all Primary Schools whether government or aided within the jurisdiction of an inspector.
- **Curriculum:** The commission felt the need for broadening school curriculum by introducing subjects like the native method of arithmetic, accounts, elements of natural and physical sciences, and their application to agriculture, health and the individual arts. The commission did not support a strict rule in curriculum planning and construction. It opposed uniform curriculum throughout the country. The commission suggested that the Provinces should be provided freedom in the use of text-books and the organisation of the curriculum of primary schools.

### **Impact of the Recommendations:**

The Hunter Commission made various important recommendations for the improvement of primary education. The commission changed the basic structure of the primary education by bringing it under the local boards. This new system allowed local bodies to serve their own people. These local boards did their duty honestly and the condition of primary education improved. The financial difficulty of primary schools was overcome due to the release of funds by the provincial governments.

You should also understand that the progress of primary education was not satisfactory during 1886-1902. The main reason for slow progress was that the primary education continued to be neglected by the local bodies. Funds were scarce also for the expansion of primary education. The government did not provide sufficient funds to the local bodies.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS ON SECONDARY EDUCATION**

As we have already discussed that the commission was appointed to suggest the improvement of secondary education along with primary education. The commission presented the following suggestions for the improvement of secondary education.

- **Expansion of Secondary Education:** The commission recommended that the government should gradually withdraw from the field of direct management of secondary schools and leave the expansion to private bodies through a system of grant-in-aid. The government may establish secondary schools in exceptional cases. Specially, where they may be required in the interest of people and where the people themselves may not be advanced or wealthy enough to establish such schools for themselves even with a grant-in-aid. The duty of the government was to establish one secondary school in one district, and after that the expansion of secondary education in that district should be left to private enterprise. To make private institutions popular, they should not be required to charge fees as high as those of neighbouring government institutions.
- **Bifurcation of Courses at Secondary Level:** To remove the defects of secondary education, the commission suggested improvement in the curriculum. In Secondary education, as has been said earlier, the Commission recommended gradual withdrawal of the government from direct enterprise. It, however, suggested that the government should maintain some secondary schools, at least one model high school in every poor district. The Commission also recommended bifurcation in the curricula to maintain a high standard in secondary education. It suggested an 'A' course which was meant for the entrance examination of the universities and a 'B' course which was meant for commercial and non-literary studies. The commission was more than a century ahead of its time and looked forward to measures which are engaging the attention of the educationists at present for vocationalising secondary education.
- **Medium of Instruction:** The recommendation on medium of instruction given by the commission was not practical. It recommended that in Middle Schools, the use of vernacular was preferable to English as a medium of instruction and suggested that students should have some elementary knowledge also. The commission was in favour of English. The most harmful effect of the domination of English as a subject of study and as a medium of instruction had ruined the education system even after 1882. In almost all provinces English remained the medium of instruction at the secondary stage.
- **Training of Secondary School Teachers:** Wood's Despatch of 1854 had already laid the foundation of Teachers' Training at secondary level. But, till 182, only two training institutions were established. The commission was not satisfied with the

system of teachers' training in India. The Commission recommended that students of training colleges should be examined in Principles and Practice of Teaching and the training period for graduates should be shorter than for others. The commission recommended that the success in the examination should be a guarantee for permanent employment as a teacher in any secondary school, government or aided.

### **Impact of the Recommendations:**

The government accepted the recommendations on secondary commission given by the commission. It is very difficult to understand the reason for giving importance to using English as the medium of instruction. The recommendation given by the commission regarding bifurcation of courses at the high school level was a step in the right direction. Another good recommendation was emphasized on technical education as a part of general education, which was accepted by the government. After the recommendation of the commission, the secondary education of the country began to expand rapidly.

### **OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS**

Besides the recommendations provided by the commission on Primary and Secondary Education, the commission provided various recommendations in different fields of education. As a student of education, you should know all these recommendations given by the commission. The major other recommendations of the commission are discussed below-

- **Education of Women:** Hunter Commission gave various suggestions for the improvement of Women's education in India. The commission recommended that more liberal grants should be given to girls' schools and the grant-in-aid rule should be made easier. Money from Local and Municipal Boards and Provincial funds should be spent in an equitable proportion on girls' and boys' schools. Men and Women who were interested in female education should be included in the management of schools. Girls should not be charged any fee so that they may be attracted to get an education. Meritorious girls should be awarded scholarships so that they may continue their higher education. Girls should be encouraged to get professional training, and training schools for female teachers should be started. Female inspectors should be appointed to inspect and guide girls' schools. Secondary schools may be opened for girls only where there was a demand for them.

- **On Muslim Education:** The Commission also felt that the education for Muslims was not adequate. They were very backward in the field of education. There were very few English-speaking Muslims in the country. Hence, the Commission recommended special educational facilities to the Muslims for encouragement of indigenous Muslim schools like the establishment of Muslim High, Middle, and Primary schools. Higher education for Muslim people should be encouraged. In all schools, a certain proportion of free studentship should be reserved for Muslim students. As far as possible, Muslim teachers should be appointed in Muslim schools. Muslim inspectors should be appointed for the inspection of Muslim primary schools. The standard of teaching of Muslim primary schools should be raised. In this way, the commission wanted to develop education for the Muslim people of the country.
- **Education of the Backward Classes:** The Hunter Commission recommended that in Government schools special facilities should be provided for backward classes. The commission further suggested that some government schools be opened for children of backward classes. The suggestion of the commission regarding the development of the education of backward classes helped in the progress of the same.
- **Education of Aborigines:** The commission suggested that special provision should be made for the education of aborigines. Special types of schools should be opened in their areas, keeping in view the geographical and social conditions, traditions and customs of the people.

The Hunter Commission tried to find a new direction for the Indian Education, which was in a bad situation. It encouraged private enterprise in the field of education. But some of its recommendations were very harmful. Indian languages were neglected by the Indian people because the Commission supported English as a medium of instruction.

### **LET US SUM UP**

- The Hunter Commission was appointed to assess the position of education in India and to give suggestions for reforms
- Lord Ripon appointed the First Indian Education Commission on February 3, 1882
- Mr. William Hunter was the chairman of the commission and for that reason it is popularly known as 'Hunter Commission'
- The commission was to make the enquiries on the condition of primary education and methods of its expansion, the position of state institution and their importance, the

position of missionary institutions in the general scheme of Indian education, the attitude of the government towards private enterprise

- The Commission first started its work at Calcutta for nearly seven weeks and thereafter toured India for eight months examining witnesses and collecting materials, and finally submitted its voluminous report of more than 600 pages and 222 resolutions in 1883
- It recommended that Primary Education must be related to the practical life of the common people. It should not be treated as a step to reach university education
- The system of grant-in-aid should be followed thoughtfully
- Secondary education curriculum should be divided into two parts. In the first part, literary and science subjects should be included, and vocational subjects should be included in the other part
- As per the recommendation of the Hunter Commission, the number of colleges increased to a great extent in the country
- After 1883, secondary education attained a high level of progress and the speed of progress was reasonably fast for the decade