

# HISTORICAL REVIEW OF EDUCATIONAL REFORM IN INDIA FOR 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

JYOTI GANAPATI NAYAK

Assistant Professor of History Department ,  
Govt. First Grade College, Ankola.

## ABSTRACT:

**Introduction:** Radical changes in Indian Education have been too few and too slow to come about. In fact, the whole history of Indian Education in the modern period falls into two stages : 1800-1900: During this period, one radical change in education was carried out, viz., the traditional system of Indian education was replaced by the colonial system. 1900-2000 : During this period, decided to bring about another radical change in education, viz., to replace the colonial system by the national system of education. Still trying to reach this goal and it would be an achievement even if we do so by the end of the century.

**Objective of study:** the main purpose of this paper is historical review of education reform in India for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

**Data analysis:** From the point of view of major educational reforms, the history of education modern India can be divided into three periods. (1) **1813-1900:** This was the period in which the first major reform in modern education was slowly, but steadily and firmly implemented. The educational system was almost wholly replaced by the colonial one. (2) **1900-1947:** This was a period when the control over the education system gradually passed from the British administration to the Indian people; and Indians did continuous and considerable thinking about the National System of Education they would like to create and experimented about their new ideas on a limited scale. (3) **1947-2000:** This is a period in which are trying without “System of education to the life, needs and aspiration of the people.

**Conclusion:** In the past years, India’s governments have consciously striven to correct the errors of the old system, to adopt new developments, and to build a knowledge-based society that privileges creativity and innovation.

**Key word:** Education system, Historical review, Reform in India.

## INTRODUCTION:

Radical changes in Indian Education have been too few and too slow to come about. In fact, the whole history of Indian Education in the modern period falls into two stages:

**1800-1900:** During this period, one radical change in education was carried out, viz., the traditional system of Indian education was replaced by the colonial system.

**1900-2000 :** During this period, we decided to bring about another radical change in education, viz., to replace the colonial system by the national system of education. Still trying to reach this goal and it would be an achievement even if end of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

In 1800, the traditional system of education based on religion and shared only by a small minority of the people held the field. It took the British administration nearly 100 years to replace it by the colonial system whose principal object was to educate a class of intermediaries and interpreters between them and the people. The principal landmarks were four: (1) the decision of Bentinck (1835) to use English as the medium of instruction; (2) the decision of Hardinge (1844) to employ educated people under government; (3) the Despatch of 1854; and (4) the Indian Education Commission (1882).

This revolutionary reform was possible because of several factors such as: 1) Full and enthusiastic support by the Government who found it politically and administratively useful. 2) State patronage to educate persons . 3) Support by the ruling classes in the Indian society itself who were its main beneficiaries and who found the change of great use to rehabilitate themselves in the new social, economic and political order created by the British Rule.

Between 1900 and 1947, we were mainly engaged in trying to get control of the education system. Finally succeeded in the principal landmarks were : (1) Association of local bodies primary education (1884) ; (2) Dyarchy in the Provinces (1921); (3) Provincial Autonomy (1937); and (4) Independence (1947).

After the attainment of independence, the Central and the State Governments were expected to give the highest priority to education and create a national system of education as early as possible. This has not been done and all that has happened is that the same old calomel system has been expanded immensely with a few changes here and there. It is therefore necessary to review the entire position and to make an intensive effort to create a national system of education as early as possible and at any rate by the end of the century.

This will involve a fresh and hard look at all our concepts of national education: 1) some of which have become out of date. 2) launching a simultaneous programme of complementary and mutually supporting educational and social reforms. 3) Initiating a reform movement, both within the system and without. 4) Co-operation between educational and socio-political workers. 5) Organization of a large-scale nation-wide movement to create the necessary social ethos.

## HISTORICAL REVIEW FOR EDUCATIONAL REFORM IN INDIA:

### Three Stages in Major Educational Reform:

From the point of view of major educational reforms, the history of education modern India can be divided into three periods. ‘

### The First Major Reform (1813 - 1900):

The nineteenth century, we had a limited system of formal education consisting of some institutions of higher learning and a much large number of elementary schools. The Hindu Sanctions of higher learning (the Tols and Pathashalas) used Sanskrit as the medium of instruction and were open only to the Vedas. The institutions of humbler institutions comparatively to learn them.

Koran in addition. The reading of the large about one to five per cent of the people not in the age group 5-15. Girls, castes and scheduled tribes were few; and the schedule any fore, were educated in the incidental and non-formal channels of education which initiated them to the essential vocational skills, introduced them to the traditional social culture, and helped them to adjust themselves to their lonely and unenviable station in life.

The Charter Act of 1813 required the East Indian Company to develop a programme for the education of the Indian people. Faced with this challenge, the officials of the Company had three options:

- (a) They could leave the indigenous system of education as it was and merely provide it with state support. This was tried, for instance, when Sanskrit colleges were established at Pune and Varanasi.
- (b) They could accept the indigenous system of education as the principal operational instrument but try to improve it by introducing modern knowledge through the Sanskrit medium. This was the view of the Classicist group led by H. T. Prinsep.
- (c) They could ignore the indigenous system altogether and create a new system of education which would teach Western literature, philosophy and science through the medium of English. This was the view of the Anglicists led by T. B. Macaulay.

After a short struggle which was unequal from the very start, it was the third group that won the battle in 1835 when Lord William, Bentinck made English the language of courts and administration and directed that the grand objective of education was to spread Western knowledge through the medium of English. The popularity of the system, which had the strong support of enlightened Indian leaders like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, was assured when Lord Hardinge promised jobs under government to those who were educated in the new system (1844). The system therefore grew rapidly and under the guidance of policy laid down by the Despatch of 1854 and the Indian Education Commission (1882), entrenched itself fully in the country by 1900. Over the years, this colonial

system developed a three-tier pattern which consisted of elementary schools (which generally used the Indian languages as media of instruction) , secondary schools (which generally taught English as a second language to begin with and then used it as a medium of instruction) , and colleges and universities (which invariably used English as a medium of instruction).

This major educational reform unleashed three major movements, which are still in progress, viz., secularization, democratization and modernization.

(a) **Secularization** : As the traditional education system was essentially religious. But the sheer force of circumstances compelled the new educational system to adopt a secular stance. The decision was not easy. The missionaries who pioneered the educational effort in India wanted the religious character of schools to continue with the substitution of Christianity for Hinduism and Islam.

(b) **Democratization** : The second movement unleashed through this major educational reform was democratization. The basic assumption of the traditional education system was that formal education is meant only for a few ; and in actual practice also, persons belonging only to a certain socio-economic status had access to it. In the new educational system, however, the schools were open to all, irrespective of caste, colour, race, sex or religion. But this major victory had to be won after a prolonged struggle.

(c) **Modernization** : The third movement which this educational reform initiated was that of modernization. Indians had lost contact with the outside world and had begun to stagnate. English opened a window on the world and enabled them to relate themselves to the world outside. This had a very stimulating effect and led to a cultural renaissance and several social reforms.

### **From Colonial to Indian Control (1900-1947)**

In the early years of the nineteenth century, the Indian people (which only meant the educated upper and middle classes and higher castes) were generally in favour of the new system of education and appreciative of its advantages. By 1900, however, they began to realize that the colonial educational system could not be considered an unmixed blessing, that it had more or less outlived its utility, and that a stage had been reached when its disadvantages rather than its advantages were being felt more acutely. For instance, the colonial rather than liberal aspects of educational policy began to come to the fore ; and as time passed, the British rule began to emphasise 'control' of private Indian enterprise in education rather than its development, loyalty to the crown rather than a sense of patriotism (which often came to be described as indiscipline), narrow training for employment under government rather than spread of liberal education as such, and a mere command over English language rather than acquisition of knowledge, skills or values. While educated Indians were given employment under government to an increasing extent, care was taken to see that all important posts were held only by the trusted

Bruisers similarly, the secular policy was found to be more negative than positive and the schools did very little to foster a really secular outlook. Nor was any attempt made to foster moral values through appropriate methods. In the same way, the democratization process was halted because of the continued neglect of mass education and the programme of modernization suffered because new values suited to modern life did not grow even while the traditional values continued to languish. The study of English had first stimulated the development of Indian languages. But its continued dominance in administration, trade, commerce, industry and education began to interfere with their further development; and so on. A strong feeling was therefore, created that the colonial educational system established in the early nineteenth century had outlived its utility and that the country would not progress further unless another major educational reform in attempted.

A key-note of this movement is probably best contained in the Resolution on National Education adopted by the Indian National Congress in 1906 which said : “A time has now arrived for the people all over the country earnestly to take up the question of national education for both boys and girls, and organize a system of education, literary, scientific and technical, suited to the requirements of the country, on national lines under national control and directed towards the realisation of national destiny.” The movement thus initiated was kept up till 1947 and took four main forms : 1)boycott of official schools and colleges as an important aspect of political struggle for freedom. 2) defining the concept and working out the programmes of the national system of education which the country needed. 3) Conduct of a few institutions outside the official system where experimental work on national education could be undertaken. 4) Struggle to gain control over the official education system.

### **Implementing the Second Major Educational Reform (1947-2000)**

What have we done to implement the' programmes of national education in the last 30 years and to translate into action the dreams and visions we built up and the promises we gave to the people during the earlier period (1906-47) ? This is the one significant question to be asked in the evaluation of educational development in the pos independence period.

(1) It was hoped that the small class, mostly educated, which came to power in 1947 would use this opportunity for improving the standards of living of the poor and for educating them. It was, however, found that this did not happen ; and the ruling class or classes used their authority shamelessly to strengthen their own position.

(2) In a vast and figural country like ours, we need a policy of de- centralization, promotion of diversity and elasticity, and full freedom to experiment and innovate if, even within the broad framework of a national policy, we are to relate education to the life, needs and aspirations of the people. But our craze for uniformity and centralisation still continues, making the system extremely rigid and inelastic. In this situation where either everybody moves or none moves, the usual result is that nobody moves.



(3) The processes of secularization, democratization and modernization were initiated by the colonial educational system in the nineteenth century itself. In the national system of education, it was our duty to strengthen them. But we have paid no adequate attention to this very significant problem (except to the extent expansion, which we have stressed so far, assists in democratization), either in the debate on the national system of education or in our attempts at educational development in the post-independence period.

### **The education system of the future:**

The series of education provisions in the 2016-17 draft budget provides an exact picture about the Modi government's future plans with regards to education.

The government is planning to establish a new institution (Higher Education Financing Agency) to oversee the infrastructural developments in higher education. At the same time, owing to standardization of training, a new regulatory body's establishment has also been on the agenda. In addition to supporting online courses, the next step of the government in the direction of digitalization is the creation of an online register for report cards and degrees. .

Concerning state investments, as stated earlier, higher education continues to enjoy priority, but public education, particularly technical training, will also benefit, as the allocation of financial sources makes clear.

Whether the reforms live up to their promise cannot yet be seen. However, they certainly prove that India has recognized the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the power of knowledge, information, and innovation, and accordingly radical reforms are taking place in the country. The successful creation of information society would carry great opportunities for India, while its failure could push the state towards not just an economic but a political crisis as well.

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