

Chapter – 6: Civilising the ‘Native’, Educating the Nation

- Earlier chapters – British rule – effects on – rajas, nawabs, peasants, tribals
- This chapter – effects on – students’ lives
- British in India – wanted – territorial conquest (control) – AND – control of revenues (finances)
- They felt – their cultural mission – ‘civilise the natives’ – change their customs, values
- BUT – British – cannot decide – how to educate?

How the British saw Education

- Ideas of education – present now a days – developed in past 200 years
- How did Indians react to British education? – How did British developed their opinion about educating?

The tradition of Orientalism

- 1783 – William Jones – arrived Calcutta – appointed as – junior judge – Supreme Court – set up by the Company
- Jones – expert in Law – AND – linguist – someone – studies languages
- He –
 - Studied – Greek, Latin at Oxford
 - Knew – French, English
 - Learnt – Arabic from a friend
 - Also learnt – Persian
- At Calcutta – spent hours with pandits – learnt basics of Sanskrit, grammar, poetry
- Soon – studied – ancient Indian texts – law, philosophy, religion, politics, morality, arithmetic, medicine, etc
- Jones – discovered – his interest – common – many other British officials – living in Calcutta
- Englishmen – Henry Thomas Colebrooke, Nathaniel Halhed – busy studying – Indian heritage, Indian languages – translated – Sanskrit, Persian texts into English
- Along with them – Jones – set up – Asiatic Society of Bengal
- Jones, Colebrooke – presented – particular attitude towards India
- They had – deep respect – ancient cultures – Indian and the West
- They believed – Indian civilisation – reached peak (top) – ancient past – BUT – declined afterwards
- To understand India – necessary to discover – sacred (religious) and legal texts – produced in ancient period
- They believed – those texts – reveal – ideas and laws – Hindus, Muslims – new study of these texts – form the basis – future development
- Jones, Colebrooke – kept discovering ancient texts – understanding their meaning – translating them – sharing them with others
- They believed – this project – help the British – learn from Indian culture – also help Indians – rediscover their own heritage
- This process – British became – guardians and masters of Indian culture
- Many company officials – influenced by these ideas – stated – British should promote Indian learning – instead of – Western learning

- They felt – institutions – set up – encourage study – ancient Indian texts – teach Sanskrit, Persian literature and poetry
- They also believed – Hindus, Muslims should be taught – what they already know – not the new subjects – alien (unknown) to them
- They believed – only then – British could – win the hearts of ‘natives’ – respected by subjects (*praja*)
- With this view –
 - **Madrasa** – set up in Calcutta – 1781 – promote Arabic, Persian, Islamic law
 - Hindu college – set up in Benaras – 1791 – promote – study of ancient Sanskrit texts – helpful in administration
- BUT – many officials – disagreed with Orientalists

Grave (too much) errors of the East

- Early 19th century – British officials – criticized – Orientalists
- They believed – Eastern knowledge and literature – non-serious, full of errors, unscientific
- They stated – British spending time and effort – spread Arabic, Sanskrit language – very wrong
- James Mill – opposed the Orientalists
- He declared – British effort – teach natives – what they respected – very wrong
- Instead – British should teach – useful and practical things
- Indians should be taught – scientific, technical advancement – made by West – instead of – poetry and literature
- By 1830s – opposition of Orientalists – stronger
- Most influential (powerful) – Thomas Babington Macaulay
- He believed – India – uncivilized country – need to be civilised
- Eastern knowledge – cannot compare to – Western (England) knowledge
- He declared – single shelf – European literature – worth more than – entire literature – India and Arabia
- He urged (requested) – British govt. – stop wasting public money – promoting Oriental learning – no practical use
- Macaulay emphasized (pointed out) – need to teach English
- He felt – knowledge of English – help Indians – read some finest literature – make them aware – developments in Western science and philosophy
- Teaching English – method – civilise people, change their tastes (choices), values and culture
- Following Macaulay’s thinking – English Education Act, 1835 – developed
- This decision – make English – medium of education – stop promotion – Oriental institutes – Calcutta Madrasa, Benaras Sanskrit College
- These institutes – seen as – temples of darkness – falling into decay (ending)

Education for commerce

- 1854 – Court of Directors – East India Company, London – sent educational despatch (order) to Governor-General, India
- This despatch – issued by Charles Wood – President, Board of Control – known as Wood’s Despatch
- This despatch – outlined – educational policy – followed in India – emphasized (pointed out) – benefits of European learning
- One of the practical uses – pointed out by Despatch – economic
- It stated –

- European learning – enable Indians – understand – advantages – expansion of trade and commerce – introducing European life – change their tastes, culture, etc – increase demands – British goods
- European learning – improve moral character – make the Indians – truthful and honest – supply – civil servants – trusted
- Literature of East – full of errors – cannot develop – sense of duty, commitment, skills for administration
- Following this Despatch – several measures – introduced by British
- Education departments – set up – extend control – all matters – regarding education
- Steps taken – establish – university education system
- 1857 – sepoys – revolt in Meerut, Delhi – Universities – established in Calcutta, Madras, Bombay
- Steps taken – bring changes – school education system

What Happened to the Local Schools?

- How children were taught in pre-British time?
- Were there schools? – If there were, what happened to them?

The report of William Adam

- 1830s – William Adam – Scottish missionary (teach Christian religion) – toured – Bengal, Bihar
- Company – asked him – report on – education – vernacular (local) schools
- Report by Adam – very interesting
- Adam found out – Bihar, Bengal – over 1 lakh *pathshalas*
- These – small institutes – less than 20 students each
- Total students – over 20 lakhs
- Institutes – set up by wealthy people – OR – local community – sometimes – started by teacher (*guru*)
- System of education – flexible – no fixed fee, no printed books, no separate school building, no benches or chairs, no blackboards, no separate classes, no roll-call, no examinations, no regular time-table
- Some places – class under Banyan tree – other places – village shop, temple – OR – *guru's* home
- Fee – depended on – income of parents – rich – paid more than – poor
- Teaching – oral – *guru* – decided – what to teach
- Students – not separated – different classes – all of them – sat together
- Adam discovered – flexible system – suited – local needs
- Classes – not taken during – harvest time – rural children – helped in fields

New routines, new rules

- Upto mid-19th century – Company – concerned with higher education – allowed local *pathshalas* – function without interference
- After 1854 – Company decided – improve vernacular education
- They believed – problem solved by – introducing routines, rules, regular inspections
- They appointed – govt. pandits – each in charge of 4-5 schools
- Task of pandits – visit *pathshalas* – improve teaching standard
- Each *guru* – submit periodic reports – take classes – according to timetable

- Teaching – based on textbooks – learning – tested through – annual examinations
- Students – pay regular fees, attend school regularly, sit on fixed seats, obey new rules
- *Pathshalas* – accepted new rules – supported – govt. grants (financial help)
- Those – not ready – work with new system – received no govt. support
- Over time – *gurus* – wanted to keep independence – very difficult – compete with govt. supported *pathshalas*
- New rules, routines – another problem
- Earlier system – students – poor farmer families – went to schools – flexible timetable
- Discipline – new system – demanded regular attendance – even during harvest season
- Not attending school – seen as – indiscipline – lack of desire to learn

The Agenda for a National Education

- British officials – not the only people – thinking about education
- Early 19th century – many thinkers – different parts – talked about – wider spread of education
- Impressed by developments in Europe – some Indians – believed – Western Education – help modernize India
- They urged British officials – open more college, schools, universities
- Other Indians – against Western education – Mahatma Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore

English education has enslaved us

- Mahatma Gandhi – believed – colonial education – created sense of inferiority
- Indians saw – Western education as superior – destroyed their own culture
- Mahatma Gandhi said –
 - Western education – poison, sinful, enslaved Indians, cast spell on Indians
 - Indians – educated in British institutes – admired British rule – appreciated everything from the West – influenced by them
- He wanted – system of education – recover self-respect of Indians
- National movement – he urged students – boycott British institutes – show British – Indians no longer require their education
- He believed – Indian languages – mode of teaching – education in English – distanced them from their own culture
- Educated in English – cannot relate to the masses
- He said – Western education – focused on reading, writing – instead of – oral knowledge
 - Valued textbooks – instead of – practical knowledge
- He believed – education should develop – person's mind and soul
- Literacy – learn to read, write – not education
- People – work with hands, learn crafts, different things – develop their minds – capacity to understand
- National movement – spread – other people – started developing – national education system – different from British system

Tagore's 'abode of peace'

- Santiniketan – started by Rabindranath Tagore – 1901
- As child – Tagore hated school – school looked like prison

- Other children – listen to teacher – Tagore – thinking something else
- Experience of school – shaped Tagore’s ideas of education
- On growing up – he set up a school – children were happy, creative, explore their thoughts
- He believed – childhood – time of self-learning – without restrictions of schooling system set up by British
- Teachers should – understand children – help them with curiosity
- According to him – current schools – suppress (kill) their desire to be creative
- He believed – creative learning – encouraged – natural environment
- Set up the school – 100 km away from Calcutta – rural setting
- This set up – adobe of peace (*santiniketan*) – children develop – natural creativity – living with nature

- Many senses – Tagore and Mahatma Gandhi – same thinking about education
- Many differences too –
 - Gandhiji – against Western civilisation – use of machines and technology
 - Tagore – combined elements – Western civilisation with Indian tradition
 - Taught – science, technology at Santiniketan – along with art, music, dance