CHAPTER - I

SECONDARY EDUCATION UNDER THE BRITISH RAJ IN INDIA FROM THE SECOND HALF OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY TO THE DAWN OF INDEPENDENCE
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Secondary education under the British Raj in India from the second half of the 19th Century to the dawn of independence

The evolution of the modern system of secondary education in India is a long process. Its origin can be traced back to the efforts of the Christian missionaries during the late 18th and early 19th century. The Christian missionaries established schools as an important means of proselytization. In this formative period of secondary education in India the East India Company, which was in charge of administration, was unwilling to undertake the responsibility of educating the Indians because the company was mainly a trading concern and it could not be expected to educate the people it traded with. The East India Company won the political power in India in 1765 when it obtained the Dewani of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. Even then the company took a policy of non-interference with the education of the country. But the Charter Act of 1813 brought an end to this policy of non-interference in the field of education. The most important implication of the Act was that it would incur an expenditure of one lac of rupees each year for the revival and improvement of literature and the encouragement of the learned natives of India, and for the introduction and promotion of a knowledge of the sciences among the inhabitants of the British territories in India.1 Thus the East India Company was compelled, by the Charter Act of 1813, to accept the responsibility for the education of the Indians. But the Act was followed by a controversy as to what policy should be followed in the award of this grant. Madras and Bombay authorities favoured institutions giving instruction through modern Indian languages. But Bengal authority was in favour of institutions giving instruction in

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1 East India Company's Act of 1813, Section 43.
classical languages. A section of the British officials like Lord Macaulay were, however, more inclined towards opening English schools for it was likely to solve the problem of getting more efficient subordinates from among the Indians. A section of the Indians headed by Raja Ram Mohan Roy seemed to favour it, partly because of the fact that this policy would ensure freedom from the proselytising influence of the schools run by the Christian missionaries. But the controversy ended in 1835 when the then Governor General Lord William Bentinck issued a resolution on March 7, 1835 which stated that the great object of the British Govt. ought to be the promotion of European Literature and Science among the natives of India and that all the funds appropriated for the purpose of education would be best employed on English education alone. This knowledge should be imparted through the medium of English language.¹

This policy was the result of several factors such as:

i) Administrative necessity of getting English knowing clerks.

ii) Influence of Lord Macaulay, the president of the Council of Education and a law member who had an aversion to all Indian or Eastern culture.

iii) Influence of politicians who wanted to create a class of an English knowing minority isolated from the masses and attached to the English.

Whatever might have been the original motives, the practical considerations of getting educated assistants seemed to have outweighed all other motives.

¹ Selection from Educational Records vol -1. pp 130 - 31
However, the decision was followed by the development of a new system of education and the establishment of schools teaching European literature and science.

The new system became immediately popular. The reasons behind this were:

i) The great interest shown in Education by some of the educated Indians and more particularly by leaders like Raja Rammohan Roy,

ii) The education imparted in these schools became a passport for entrance into government services. This was mainly due to the proclamation issued by Lord Hardinge in 1844 that for services in public offices preference should be given to those who were educated in English schools.

iii) In 1837 English was made court language and people's desire for English education increased to a great extent.

iv) The Indians of this period were dazzled by their first contact with western civilization and believed that their country could no better than imitate the British model.

Thus the old indigenous system of education disappeared gradually and a new system of education, which aimed at the spread of western knowledge through the medium of English language, was firmly established in its place. But the new system was imparted with a limited object of preparing pupils to join the service and not for living an independent life. In the new High schools the standard of achievement in subjects like language and literature was from the very beginning high but little or no progress was made in training the pupils in the practical side of science.
In 1853 the Character Act of East India company was to be renewed and the need for defining wider extended educational policy had become apparent because it was clear that educated Indians would be a true pillar of support of the British Government. This led to the emanation of the famous Despatch of 1854 from Charles Wood, the president of the Board of control. The Despatch was a document of great historical importance. It proposed certain new schemes such as:

i) Creation of Department of Public instruction under an important officer to be called the Director of Public Instruction in the five existing provinces viz. Bengal, Bombay, Madras, North West provinces and the Punjab.

ii) Formulation of a scheme to establish universities in the three presidency towns like Calcutta, Madras, Bombay whose functions were to hold examinations and confer degrees. The University of London was their model.

iii) Adoption of a scheme of Grant-in-aid because it was impossible for the government to develop a comprehensive scheme for the whole country single handed.

iv) Establishment of new schools in every districts for the education of the great mass.

v) Establishment of different types of training institutions for the training of the teachers.

vi) Adoption of both English and the spoken languages of the people as the media of instruction at the secondary stage.

After the publication of the Despatch steps were taken immediately for organising the prevalent education system on new lines. The Department of Public Instruction with inspectors and other minor officers was set up in 1855 in every province.

1 Syed Nurullah and J. P. Naik - A History of Education in India. P. 214.
Secondly, the Universities of Calcutta, Bombay, Madras were established as examining bodies in 1857 on the lines of the London University which was then an examining body.

Thirdly, a system of grant-in-aid for private schools was introduced in all provinces.

The establishment of universities had far reaching consequences specially on the content, range and scope of secondary education. The universities dominated secondary schools in every respect. Secondary education, instead of being a self-sufficient course preparing students to enter life after completing the course, became merely a step towards the university. The result was that schools could not function with an independent programme of their own.¹

The encouragement of Indian languages, which the Despatch promised, remained a pious wish for a long time to come and the languages spoken and understood by the masses continued to languish. In fact the object of the secondary course was to spread a knowledge of English not European knowledge.²

More over no satisfactory measure was taken to train secondary teachers in the thirty years following the Despatch. There were only two training institutions in the country; one in Madras and the other in Lahore.

The despatch suggested the opening of examining universities not the teaching universities simply because it was more concerned with the finished product rather than the process of education. The consequence of such a policy has been that examination requirements dominated the curriculum and teaching methods were sub-ordinated to them.

Again the scheme of Grant-in-aid advocated by the despatch was not developed properly. For over sixty years government institutions gradually increased in number and private enterprise was often discouraged rather than encouraged.¹

The Despatch discarded the Downward filtration theory, (the theory of educating the upper or influential classes of society first and their culture would later on naturally descend to the lower classes) and laid emphasis on mass education but it was still favoured by the government and there was no spread of mass education.

The Despatch laid emphasis on the importance of vocational instruction in secondary schools. But the development of vocational education as expressed in the Despatch was also neglected for a long time. This unhappy result was due to three causes. In the first place most of the pupils of the secondary schools of those days belonged to the educationally advanced classes of the society whose main object was to obtain employment under the government. So they were more attracted to the Entrance Examination which meant an entrance to the university from where they could get into higher and more lucrative posts under the government. Secondly, government itself had not taken any step to provide vocational education in secondary schools and these schools set the standard for private entrepreneurs to follow. Thirdly, most of the newer schools that came into existence did not have adequate financial resources at the start, and hence they usually confined their work to the course of liberal education leading to the Matriculation Examination because it required the least equipment and expenditure.

Thus some of the most important recommendations of the Despatch were not carried out for a long time; some were given effect to in a mutilated form; while some more were yet to be acted upon.² But

¹ M. R. Paranjpe - Progress of Education in India, P. 47.
² Syed Nurullah and J. P. Naik - A History of Education in India, P. 214.
the recommendations were no doubt important and it laid down the foundation of the present system of education. Even some historians described the Despatch as the "Magna charta of Indian Education" (an official paper bestowing or guaranteeing certain rights and privileges) but it is incorrect to describe it as an "Educational Charter". It did not refer to the ideal of universal literacy although it expected education to spread over a wider field through the grant-in-aid system; it did not recognise the obligation of the state to educate every child below a certain age; it did not declare that poverty should be no bar to the education of deserving students, nor it aimed at education for leadership, for industrial regeneration of India, for the defence of motherland, in short education required by the people of a self-governing nation.¹

But it should be realised that the Despatch was a product of a materialistic age and materialistic considerations dominated the author. Commercial advantages that would accrue to England from the education of Indians were not lost sight of; India was to supply raw products to England and to consume finished articles from the English factories. Similarly the author could not get rid of the idea that the education of the Indians was necessary for securing public servants. Numerous paragraphs of the Despatch breathed that tendencies.²

The missionaries were dissatisfied with the Despatch. They thought they would be the chief agency in Indian education as private enterprise was encouraged. The great Mutiny of 1857 convinced a section of people in England that missionary activities were not favourable for the British interest in India and the Queen's proclamation of 1858 advocated a policy of strict religious neutrality. The

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¹ Paranjpe- Progress of Education in India, pp. 51-52.
² S. N. Mukherjee - History of Education, P. 119
missionaries criticised the government policy agitating against it and started campaign in England against the decision.

Meanwhile national consciousness was aroused in the country and the attitude towards western civilization became not only critical but even hostile and a demand for national education based on national cultural tradition as against western culture came into being.

Thus the educational scenario in India after the Wood's Despatch was not satisfactory and Governor General Lord Ripon appointed a commission in 1882 under the chairmanship of William Hunter to inquire into the manner in which the principle of Wood's Despatch had been adopted and to advise the government for necessary action. During this time the taste for English education increased among the masses to a great extent. So a faster expansion of secondary education was felt necessary but regarding the agency the government could not come to a firm decision. The commission was entrusted with the responsibility of taking a decision.

The report of the Hunter commission of 1882 was a valuable document which not only gave an excellent survey of the position of secondary schools at the time but made certain fundamental recommendations concerning the type of education to be given at this stage.

It advocated a policy of gradual withdrawal of government from direct enterprise leaving the expansion of that branch of education to efficient private bodies through a system of grant-in-aid.

The provincial governments in India accepted the recommendations of the commission regarding expansion and encouragement of private enterprise. Consequently, the twenty years
following the report of the commission saw a very rapid expansion of secondary education, specially through private schools. The following statistics will be found interesting from this point of view-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No. of secondary schools</th>
<th>No of pupils in secondary schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1881-82</td>
<td>3,916</td>
<td>214,077</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901-02</td>
<td>5,124</td>
<td>590,129</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Among those there were so many unaided English schools which were insufficient but government had no jurisdiction over them; universities were not authorised to inspect schools; so their recognition was loose. Thus the unwieldy expansion without proper consolidation led to certain obvious defects.

(ii) The commission gave considerable attention to the provision of vocational courses at the upper secondary stage with a view to preparing pupils for various walks of life. It recommended the bifurcation of the secondary courses - one leading to the Entrance Examination of the universities, the other of a more practical character intended to fit youths for commercial or non literary pursuits.¹

The recommendation was accepted and courses of modern and practical character free from the domination of Entrance Examination was introduced in every province. Bengal drew the scheme of this practical course in 1900. It introduced -

a) A course of Engineering leading to technical schools and colleges. and

b) A course preparing the students for clerical and commercial careers.

But the new examinations, however, did not prove very popular and the Matriculation Examination dominated the entire field of secondary education. It was found that in 1901-02 while 23000 candidates appeared for the Matriculation Examination, the alternative courses could attract 2,000 examinees only.¹

iii) The Indian Education Commission, 1882 did not make any definite recommendation which would help the development of modern Indian languages as the medium of instruction. Consequently, the dominance of English in the Secondary course continued to grow; and the teaching of English came to be regarded as the prime object of the secondary course. The study of English was very frequently begun even before the pupil had obtained a good knowledge of his mother tongue and English was used as a medium of instruction so early in the secondary course that most of the time of the pupils had to be devoted to overcoming the difficulties created by the medium of instruction rather than in mastering the liberal subjects in the curriculum.

iv) Regarding training of teachers the recommendations of the commission emphasised training of secondary teachers both in theory and practice, in the principles of teaching and practice of teaching. More normal schools needed to be established for training of secondary teachers and the government should have incurred all the expenses of those institutions.

But progress in training of secondary teachers was very slow in the twenty years following the report of the commission. There were

only 6 training colleges in 1901-02 though there were some training schools in the country.\(^1\)

Another important change during this period was the appointment of inspectors. It was necessary that certain field officers should be appointed to visit the schools and see for themselves the quality of instruction that was being offered and the manner in which the public money given in the shape of assistance was being utilized.

Meanwhile, there was another development. National consciousness was aroused in the country and the attitude towards western civilisation had become critical. The Indian National Congress with the basic principle "India for Indians" was founded in 1885. Religious nationalism was greatly affected by the organisation of three distinct religious movements viz Arya Samaj (1875), Theosophical Society (1878) and Ramkrishna Mission (1897). The superiority of European culture was questioned and the current opinion was reflected in a catch phrase "The East is spiritual, the West material". Education naturally formed an important element in all these national movements and the politically minded people began considering the development of education as a national need.

In such an atmosphere of the rise of national consciousness Lord Curzon, who was an imperialist to the core, came to India as a Governor-General in 1899. He was strongly antagonistic to the national sentiment of the Indians and came to a headlong collision with this sentiment. It was an age of extremist politics in India particularly in Maharashtra, Punjab and Bengal - it was the age of Lal-Bal-Pal (Lala Lajpat Roy, Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Bipin Chandra Pal). Their attitude

\(^1\) Syed Nurullah and J. P. Naik - A students' History of Education in India. p - 174.
was uncompromising with the British and they abandoned the policy of prayer and petition. Under these circumstances Lord Curzon was determined to carry out his educational reforms even in the face of strong nationalist opposition. There were two main objectives of his national reforms - (a) to improve the quality of education (b) to raise the control of the Government. On the other hand Indian nationalist opinion wanted rapid expansion without Government intervention. A group of educationists headed by G.K. Gokhale argued that educational expansion rather than efficiency was the more pressing need of the country. According to them the policy of "quality first and quantity next" might suit England where expansion of education was already complete but it had no place in India where expansion had not even begun. Complete and speedy Indianisation of the Education Department was demanded. A system of education needed to develop which would help to grow love for motherland and not loyalty to the British rule. They also claimed the adoption of modern Indian languages as the medium of instruction. Another important development of this period in the field of secondary education was the establishment of the Brahmacharya School at Bolpur in 1901 which was the outcome of the national aspirations of the people of India.

In such an environment Curzon appointed the University Commission in 1902. Though the commission was appointed to review the position of the university education it had an indirect bearing on the existing secondary education. As a result of the recommendations of the commission secondary education came to be even more under the domination of the Universities. On March 11, 1904 Lord Curzon published his educational policy in the shape of a Government Resolution. The main principle was to raise the standard of education all-round. The most important step during Curzon's rule regarding
education was the Indian Universities Act of 1904. The Act was based on the recommendations of the Indian Universities Commission of 1902 and on the principles laid down in the Government Resolution on education. The Bill was passed on March, 21, 1904. It had also an important impact on the secondary education of the country. Under the Universities Act of 1904 schools had to be recognised by the Universities and rules and regulations were framed for this purpose. Moreover, all the private schools aided or unaided should also be recognised by the Department, Govt. of India.

Another important feature of Curzon's policy was that government should withdraw and encourage private enterprise but it should maintain a limited number of state institutions in each branch of education as models for private enterprise to follow in order to uphold a high standard of education. In addition to this a general control over the institutions through inspection was advocated. The inspectors would not only judge the results of the teaching but should also advise regarding methods.

But the new policy of control by the Department and University was criticised by Indian public opinion. It was argued that the attempt of the government to control private secondary schools was political in origin and was really intended to curb the growth of national feeling and private Indian enterprise.¹

Indian opinion also resented to Lord Curzon's attitude when he tried to restrain the speed of advancement which started after Hunter Commission, 1882 by insisting on efficiency and quality. By that time the extremist movement and the movement headed by G. K. Gokhale for educational expansion became popular. Thus a feeling of distrust was

created in the mind of the people from all corners. It was felt that the state wanted to contain free development of education which was India's right and necessity. Thus, Lord Curzon left education in a state of crisis.

Yet his reforming policy invigorated education in all its parts and introduced efficiency to some extent. It also controlled the educational policy of the government for the next two decades. At the same time, public consciousness was fully awakened and the educational policy of the state was viewed with critical eye.

This consciousness gave birth to the National Education Movement which is an important feature of the Indian education system. The imperial system of education established in 1835, consolidated in 1854, and expanded after 1882 could not satisfy the people with rapidly growing national consciousness. The national leaders laid great stress on national education under national control and based on national ideals and tradition. As a result National Education Movement originated. The movement started as a part of anti-partition movement in Bengal.

Swadeshi Movement was organised to fight against the partition of Bengal. An open revolt against the prevailing educational system was organised as a part of the Boycott and Swadeshi Movement and a body known as the National Council of Education was established. The Council formulated a very detailed programme for national education right from infant upto the University stage. Many national schools were founded in Bengal. The curriculum of the National Council of Education was broadbased and comprehensive. In the Secondary stage also literary and scientific education was imparted with some Technical subjects vocationally biased. Education at this stage was both theoretical and practical. Workshop practices and laboratory
experiments were introduced. At this stage, education was truly three-dimensional—Literary, Scientific and Technical and the course was obviously a mixed course. The subjects included Arithmetic, Workshop practice, Drawing, Object lessons, Classical languages (Sanskrit, Arabic or Persian), Vernacular, Geography, History, Mathematics (from 3rd year), English (from 1st year), Physics, Chemistry and Biology (from 5th year). French, German, Japanese and Pali were optional subjects. Economics, Psychology and Ethics were taught in the last two years of secondary stage. These were included in the literary course of secondary education (6th and 7th years). The secondary scientific course for two years (6th and 7th year) included Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Mathematics, Physiology, Geology, Agriculture, Workshop practice, Drawing, etc. The Secondary Technical Course for two years (6th and 7th year) included Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics, Drawing, Machine Drawing, Mechanics, Hand and Machine tools, Pattern-making, Fitting, Turning, Brass-moulding etc. In fact this was the first organised movement for national education but it did not last long. With slackening of the Swadeshi Movement, the schools were closed. Ever since the initiation of this movement education became a part and parcel of the national movement in the country.

The movement for national education was noticeable in other directions also. Rabindranath Tagore started his Brahmacharya Ashram at Bolpur in 1901, the Aryapratinidhi Sabha established Gurukulas at Brindaban and Hardwar and the Ramkrishna Mission started its educational activities. As a result new types of institutions were established.

Thus Curzon's Policy of education created great resentment among the people of India. He left India in 1905. Certain policies of the imperialist Governor General was abandoned after he left India such as

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partition of Bengal in 1911 and the capital was transferred from Calcutta to Delhi. As a result the Government of India passed a Resolution on Educational Policy on February 21, 1913. But no policy of Curzon was abandoned; in fact, most of them were continued with even greater zeal than that of Lord Curzon.¹

The Resolution reiterated the state policy relying on private enterprise and encouraging it by means of grant-in-aid. But it emphasised the existence of state institute as "Model Institutions".

Secondly, it stressed the need for adequate inspection.

Thirdly, it advocated the introduction of a curriculum of modern and practical type, complete in itself and freed from the domination of Matricultation Examination.

Fourthly, it stressed the urgency of separating the function of examination from the university.

Fifthly, the training of teachers, improvement of their salaries and the provision of pension and provident fund were included within the resolution.

Sixthly, it emphasised the importance of formation of students' character. But unfortunately the outbreak of the World War I in 1914 hindered the developments planned in the Resolution and many important items were postponed owing to financial stringency. Yet there was a great increase in the number of pupils and institutions. Unfortunately there was paucity of trained teachers, the salary of teachers was unsatisfactory, standard of teaching fell and the average attainment of pupils was lowered.²

¹ Nurullah and Naik - A student's History of India. P. 236.
The next important stage of the development of the secondary education in India was the appointment of the Calcutta University Commission in 1917 under the Chairmanship of the late Sir Michael Sadler, the Vice Chancellor of the University of Leeds. Though the commission dealt with the problems of Calcutta University, it also examined the problems of secondary education very critically. The commission held that no satisfactory reorganisation of the University System of Bengal would be possible unless and until a radical reorganisation of the system of secondary education, upon which university work depended was carried into effect.¹

The main defects of the Secondary Education observed by the Commission were (i) a low standard of teaching, (ii) undue domination by the University through the Matriculation Examination, (iii) the division of authority between the University and the Department of Education.

For overcoming these defects the commission made certain recommendations such as:

(i) The government should create a new type of institutions called the Intermediate Colleges which would provide instruction in Arts, Science, Medicine, Engineering, etc. These colleges might either be run as independent institutions or might be attached to selected high schools. The dividing line between the University and Secondary courses was to be drawn at the Intermediate Examination not the Matriculation Examination. So, the admission test for universities became the passing of the Intermediate Examination.

(ii) A Board of Secondary and Intermediate Education consisting of the representatives of Government, University, High Schools and Intermediate colleges to be established and entrusted with the administration and control of secondary education.

(iii) It also recommended a definite policy regarding the medium of instruction. Mother tongue ought to be given a place as the medium of instruction throughout high school classes.¹

During the subsequent period there was a great expansion of secondary education and the number of secondary schools began to increase both in rural and urban areas largely owing to the interest of the common men and the generous donations of individuals and institutions. But the unprecedented expansion of the academic type of secondary schools resulted in a failure to provide for bifurcated courses of studies in high schools. Moreover, the problems relating to the training of teachers, their salaries, and conditions of service were left unsolved. Beside this the study of modern Indian languages were not sufficiently emphasised mainly owing to an emphasis on English and classical languages and their adoption as the media of instruction.

During this period another historical force which influenced the secondary education system of India was the martial law atrocities in Punjab and the "Incident of Jalianwalabag" and the advent of Mahatma Gandhi in the Indian political movement in 1919. Gandhiji launched non co-operation movement which included an educational programme. Withdrawal from the Government and recognised institutions and repudiation of state grants and recognition were openly advocated. It was established that the existing institutions were not able to give the right type of education suited to national aspirations of the country.

Parallel institutions known as National schools were established at different levels including secondary level. The Muslims opened a number of Azad schools. The courses of study did not differ much from the existing one. But mother tongue was used as the medium of instruction, Hindi was studied as an all India language and the use of "Charkha" was taught as a preliminary step towards economic independence of India from the west.¹

But in 1922 the national institutions more or less disappeared with the withdrawal of Non-corperation movement by Mahatma Gandhi after the violence of Chaurichaura in the district of Gorakhpur in Uttar Pradesh. Yet the attempt to develop a national system was not a total failure. It showed the seed of later development and exposed the main defects of the prevailing system of secondary education. There came a great change in the field of the whole educational atmosphere of India including secondary education with the beginning of a kind of provincial autonomy by the Montford Reforms in 1919. As a result education became the direct responsibility of the province and the control of the Central Government more or less disappeared. The system of giving "doles" to provincial governments for education was discontinued. This led to serious financial handicap to provincial governments. Secondly, the new policy encouraged an exaggerated form of provincialism, overlapping of experiments and wastage in energy and money. Thirdly, it also deprived the Government of India of the power of formulating an all India educational policy for the whole country. In this situation a committee was appointed on 31st May, 1928 presided over by Sir Phillip Hartog.

The committee was appointed to make enquiries into the growth of education in British India, which in many respects was the

¹ S. N. Mukherjee - History of India. P. 209.
cause of dissatisfaction among the officials and the non-officials. The rapid expansion of education exposed glaring defects in the existing system. The whole system of secondary education was still dominated by the Matricultation Examination. There was another disappointing feature that the percentage of failures at the Matriculation Examination was very large. This involved the waste of time, effort and money of the pupils. This was because of slackness in class promotions in the secondary schools and the absence of a reasonable evaluation system. Moreover, the service condition of the teachers were far from satisfactory. The salary of the secondary teachers was often miserably low. So the best type of men could not be attracted to the profession. The teachers of private schools managed by the local bodies faced insecurity of tenure and their salaries were paid very irregularly. Thus the general conditions of the teachers remained unsatisfactory.

In order to do away with these defects the committee made the following recommendations—

i) the introduction of more diversified curricula in the schools.

ii) diversion of more boys to industrial and commercial careers at the end of the middle stage for which provision should be made for alternative courses in that stage.

iii) improvement of the condition of service of the teachers and increase of the training facilities of teachers.

iv) establishment of a centralised educational agency at Delhi.

v) increase in the inspectorate.¹

Such were the main recommendations of the report. It more or less shaped the educational policy of British Government during the last decades of its existence in this country. But the pity was that

nothing much was done for carrying out some of the valuable suggestions of the committee\(^1\). The salaries of the teachers were not improved, opening of vocational courses was not much stressed.

A new scheme of education was launched in 1937 when the Government of India Act of 1935 was implemented. It introduced provincial autonomy and entrusted Ministry of Education greater power than the Act of 1919. The popular ministers showed increasing interest in educational problems of their provinces and took new plans.

In 1936-37 two expert advisers, Messrs Abbot and Wood were asked to advise the Govt. on certain problems of educational reorganisation particularly of vocational education. The report of Messrs Abbot and Wood suggested a complete hierarchy of vocational institutions parallel with the hierarchy of institutions imparting general education. Secondly, mother tongue should, as far as possible, be the medium of instruction throughout the High school stage, but English should be a compulsory language for all pupils at this stage.

One important result of their recommendations was the birth of a new type of technical institution called polytechnic. Secondly, the province also started technical, commercial, and agricultural high schools conducting non-literary courses.

In 1937 there was a great hope of educational advancement. The Congress, the most influential political organisation in the country, accepted office in seven provinces out of eleven and in the remaining four the ministries had the clear support of the majority of population. It was, therefore, hoped that the new provincial governments working under the Government of India Act, 1935, would be able to plan

\(^1\) S. N. Mukherjee - History of Education. P. 214.
educational reconstruction with a bolder and a freer hand and execute it with vigour, firmness and speed. But unfortunately any progress in the field of education was not possible because the World War II broke out in 1939. This was a time when political problems dominated the whole scene and educational matters were consequently relegated to a very subsidiary position. Beside the World War II there was the Quit India Movement (1942), the fight between the Congress and the Muslim League, the preparation for the withdrawal of the British power and the partition of India. All these made the question of educational advancement insignificant. But though there was no significant achievement the preparation for future reconstruction was started.

The most important plan was the post war Educational Development in India prepared by the Central Advisory Board of Education, popularly known as the Sargent plan of 1944. The object of the plan was to create in India, in a period of not less than forty years, the same standard of educational attainments as had already been admitted in England.¹

i) With this aim in view, it visualised a system of universal, compulsory and free education for all boys and girls between the ages of 6 and 14, the Senior Basic or the Middle School being the final stage in the school career of majority of the future citizens.

Under the prevailing administrative, financial and infrastructural conditions the aim was too ambitious. In the last fifty years India could hardly reach a fraction of the target. Basic Education formulated by Gandhiji was practically abandoned and instead of Middle Schools, Matriculation became the final stage in the school career. A vast majority of the children of school going age was not getting the opportunity to enter the schools still then.

¹ Syed Nurullah and J. P. Naik - A History of Education in India, P. 834.
(ii) It also recommended that at the Middle School stage, provision should be made for a variety of courses extending over a period of five years after the age of 11. These courses while preserving an essentially cultural character should be designed to prepare the pupils for entry into industrial and commercial occupations as well as into the universities. High school should cover 6 years, the normal age of admission being 11 years.

(iii) Entry to High Schools should be on a selective basis and in order to secure the right children the method of selection would require the most careful consideration.

(iv) The High Schools should be of two main types (a) academic and (b) technical. The objective of both should be to provide a good all-round education combined with some preparation in the later stages for the careers which pupils would pursue on leaving schools.

(v) The list of subjects to be taught in both the types of High Schools were (1) Mother tongue (2) English (3) Modern language (4) History (5) Geography (6) Mathematics (7) Science (8) Economics (9) Agriculture (10) Art (11) Music (12) Physical training. In the academic High School classical languages and civics were added to the common list. In the Technical High School Science subjects were to be studied more intensively.¹

Mother tongue was suggested as the medium of instruction in High Schools. Regarding recruitment and training of teachers the Report made valuable recommendations. It suggested increase in the number of teachers, proposed new and reasonable scales of pay and emphasised the importance of the training of teachers. The Report was

specially emphatic on the necessity of employing such teachers only as were fully qualified and trained.

Some of the features of the Report were commendable. It was the first comprehensive scheme of national education; it did not start with assumption, implicit in all previous Government schemes, that India was destined to occupy a position of educational inferiority in the comity of nations; it was based on the conviction that what other countries achieved in the field of education was well within the competence of this country.

Secondly, it was inspired by the desire to provide equality of opportunity at different stages of education. Free places and scholarships were proposed for all bright and deserving students. This was by no means that full measure of educational equality which an enlightened sense of social justice demanded, but it was certainly a welcome step forward towards that goal and was expected to bring a great improvement in the existing situation.

Thirdly, it stressed in clear terms the importance of the teaching profession and made proposals for increasing its miserable standard of salaries and poor conditions of service. It laid down a minimum national scale of salaries. But it had not a bracing and stimulating effect on the profession as was expected because the rise in prices was quicker and steeper than the rise in salaries.

This is all that can be said in favour of the Report. On the other hand its shortcomings were so many and so important that it failed to satisfy many educationists. It placed a very tame ideal before the country. The Report itself admitted that India would reach the

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1 Year Book of Education (Evans Brothers) 1949, P. 507
educational standard of England of 1939 in a period of not less than 40 years. This ideal was not likely to satisfy any ardent educationist. An acceptable plan of educational development in India must be spread over a much shorter range of time, not exceeding 15 years.

On financial grounds the scheme was too utopian to be practicable. The cost of working out the scheme would come to Rs. 313 crores, on the basis of the population of India as it was in 1940.¹

Moreover the Report gave emphasis on the appointment of fully qualified and trained teachers but India needed to commence an immediate programme of educational development. So the available teachers should be depended on and simultaneously a programme of improving and training the personnel of the teaching profession should be worked out.

Beside this the only ideal held by the Report was that of the educational system of England, while, as a matter of fact, England was the one country which could not serve as a model to India, because the social, political and economic conditions in the two countries were so vastly different. If India must have a model she should look for it elsewhere in eastern countries like China or Egypt or Turkey or in Western agricultural countries like Denmark, or Soviet Russia, all of which had problems similar to those of India.

With these defects the Sargent plan was one for comprehensive educational reconstruction but the plan could not be implemented because the British rule was withdrawn from India in 1947.

Thus the educational policies in India concerning the development of secondary education from the second half of the 19th century to the dawn of independence were characteristic of the British

¹ Syed Nurullah and J. P. Naik - History of Education in India. P. 847.
genius for "muddling through to success". The idea of a plan, of a prescribed goal to be reached within a specified time by the adoption of well co-ordinated programmes was new to the educational system of India and when it was officially accepted during this period, the innovation was welcomed in all sections. But the preparation of an agreed plan was not an easy matter and it kept Government busy almost till the end of the period under review and hardly had the first step been taken for the implementation of these plans by the central and provincial governments, when the British power was withdrawn from India on 15th August 1947 and the British period in the history of Indian education came to an end.