CHAPTER - III

CONTROVERSIAL BEGINNINGS OF ENGLISH EDUCATION

1. Anglo-Oriental Controversy

This controversy involved two opposite views on the policy of education. The Orientalists maintained that it was the primary duty of the Government to encourage the promotion of oriental learning of India as their main educational programme, and to engraft upon it the knowledge of European literature and science as a source of intellectual and moral improvement, and, while conceding the importance of learning English as a secondary language on a voluntary basis, they demanded that the medium of higher instruction was to continue to be the classical languages of Hindus and Muslims, namely, Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian respectively. The Anglicists, on the other hand, held that the paramount duty of the rulers was to introduce and extend, in preference to any other system of education, instruction of western literature and science through the medium of the English language. Both the sides, however, agreed that Indian vernaculars at the time were not rich and cultivated enough to become the fit vehicle for the communication of European knowledge in higher education.
The Charter Act of 1813, which laid down the education policy of the East India Company, became the source of the Anglo-Oriental controversy, although the Education Despatch of 1814, explained the main objective of the education policy to be the promotion of oriental studies and encouragement of oriental scholars, combined with the cultivation of sciences.\(^1\) In spite of the broad and specious statement of the educational clause of the Act, the intention of the Court of Directors was evident enough from the emphasis they placed upon the need for preservation and promotion of the native educational system. It was clear also that the parliamentary grant of a lakh of rupees was intended for the encouragement of higher education, and the Directors were more concerned about the political consequences of their educational policy and programme and more interested in providing facilities for the training of Indians for public service than in financing wild schemes of mass education. It is obvious that the words "the revival and encouragement of literature", and "the encouragement of the natives of India",\(^2\) indicated the promotion of oriental learning, which as Lord Minto (1807-13) had warned the Directors, had fallen into a state of decay.\(^3\)

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1. Despatch of 3rd June, 1814.
On the other hand, the reference to "the promotion of the study of the sciences" would seem to indicate a desire to introduce and encourage modern western learning. The members of the British Parliament had no clear ideas on the subject of Indian education and adopted an educational policy which provoked a sharp controversy.

The educational clause of the Charter Act itself marked the end of one phase of conflict between the Government and Christian missionaries and was something in the nature of a compromise between the evangelical interests of the Christian missions and the political needs of the East India Company for their Indian territories. The Christian missionaries who had been working in India for a long time past, encouraged the spread of English education and Christianity and opposed the policy of orientalism. As a trading concern the East India Company used to encourage the missionaries to come to their territories mainly for the benefit of their Christian employees, but when they emerged as a political power since 1765, this attitude of friendliness towards the missionaries changed into one of hostility as the Government considered these "consecrated cobblers" as a political risk, because they provoked by their missionary zeal the misgivings of the Indian people, and the Government gradually restricted their activities and finally

banned their entry into this country except with official approval. This was strongly resented by the aggrieved missionaries and their cause was supported by eminent leaders like Zachary Macaulay, Wilberforce, Thornton, Charles Grant and other members of the evangelical party known as the 'Clapham Sect', a body of British reformers, who vigorously demanded the abolition of slavery and the dissemination of Christian knowledge throughout the colonies. They held the firm view that Christianity alone could bring about the moral and spiritual improvement of the Indian people steeped in appalling poverty, ignorance and superstition and the most effective means of their conversion to Christianity would be English education and they demanded that Christian missionaries were to be allowed to go to India to undertake the twofold task of educating and converting the people. On his return to England from East India Company's service in Bengal Charles Grant whole-heartedly threw all his energies in the movement for the spread of English education and Christianity in India, and became its spokesman. In a remarkable pamphlet with a rather clumsy title,¹ which he wrote in 1792, while in England, Grant

¹ "Observations on the State of Society among the Asiatic subjects of Great Britain, particularly with respect to morals; and on the means of improving it. Written chiefly in the year 1792: dated August 16, 1797."
examined the social and moral evils which he observed widespread in India, and set out a plan of education and evangelisation which could uplift the degraded people morally and intellectually.¹

According to the plan of Grant the knowledge of western science, philosophy and religion was to be communicated through the medium of English language and this scheme of education was to be carried out by the Government.² On the analogy of Persian as the language of the Mughal administration which became a source of assimilating the ruled to the rulers and the wide diffusion of the language of the conquerors,³ Grant suggested that English should replace Persian as the official language of British rule in India.

In 1793, the question of renewal of the Company's Charter came up for consideration and Grant, Willerforce and other supporters of the missionaries made great efforts to include the "pious clauses" in the new Charter whereby Christian priests and teachers would be permitted to go to India, but they failed in the face of strong opposition of the Government. When again in 1813, the Company's Charter came up for renewal the leaders of the missionary movement gave a stiff fight to get their right to freedom of religious activities restored and succeeded this time. Parliament

had to accept the "pious clauses". But the Court of Directors who, unlike the missionaries, supported secular education and the principle of religious neutrality, could not afford to leave the Christian missions alone in the field of Indian education, and proposed, however reluctantly, an educational provision adopted by Parliament as the 3rd clause of the Charter Act of 1813, which directed the Government to spend one lakh of rupees annually 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". Grant's pamphlet revised in 1797 played a powerful role "in convincing advanced opinion both inside and outside Parliament, of the Government's duty to make some provision for the enlightenment of the people of India". Though it was the views and plans of Grant which laid the foundation of modern education in India guiding not only the movement of missionary education but the official policy of Bentinck that emerged out of the Anglo-oriental

1. Richter, J., - "History of Missions in India", p.150.
2. Hampton, H.V., - "Biographical Studies in Indian Education", p. 9
   "A History of Education in India", p.77.
contraversy and finally embodied in the Despatch of 1851, the confident expectation of Grant that English education would Christianise India was not realised.

The educational clause of the Charter Act of 1813, was interpreted by the Orientalists and Anglicists to suit and support their own point of view. The Orientalists took it to mean that the Government was to devote available educational funds to the promotion of classical learning whereas the Anglicists explained it to mean that the official policy had to encourage western knowledge, and while the former conceded the need of teaching English also the latter were committed to the cause of English education alone. While the views of the Orientalists had a social and cultural bias the Anglicist approach was marked by political considerations, pragmatism and administrative needs, although both the sides held a common aim of education, namely, moral and intellectual development of the people of India.

This educational aim could not be realised by a smattering of English according to the Orientalists, but by a thorough knowledge of the classical languages conveying both eastern and western learning. In Wilson's view "a command of English language, sufficient for the ordinary purposes of life, is compatible with gross ignorance and inveterate superstition", and even "individuals of rank and education".

who had acquired a high proficiency in English were "not the less bigotedly devoted to their national belief".¹

A knowledge of English merely would not work a beneficial change in the ways of the people. "To spread a thin sheet of water over a vast tract", wrote Wilson, "will generate only slime and weeds; fertility is the consequence of deep and judiciously distributed irrigation".² To accomplish any lasting improvement in the ideas and feelings of the people they must receive a new education which would enrich their mind with modern ideas; they have their means of communication already, what they need is a body of new knowledge. And this new source of ideas would conveniently be the western knowledge acquired thoroughly by only a few scholars having the will, inclination and leisure to work hard to achieve the cherished goal. "It is not by the English language that we can enlighten the people of India; it can be effected only through the forms of speech which they already understand and use".³ European ideas were to be communicated in the early stage of educational development through

2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., p.11.
translation into oriental languages and in the later stage oriental literature would emerge, "a legitimate progeny of that of England, the living resemblance, though not the servile copy, of the parent".¹

Like other Orientalists H.T. Princep was not against the encouragement of the study of English and western science which, he conceded, might be engrafted on the indigenous classical learning which alone could provide the natural foundation of Indian education. But he dreaded the disposition of the junior members of the General Committee "to disparage and deprecate all knowledge save that in which they have themselves been brought up, to look upon instruction in the rudiments of a strange language, because it is English and European, as more valuable than prosecution of studies in the higher branches of literature and sciences when those studies had to be followed in the language of the East".²

Princep rejected the Anglicist view that the study of English would do for India in modern times what the classical languages of Greek and Roman did for Europe at the time of renaissance. For reasons of employment English was at the time much in demand, but it was more or less confined to the Hindus and "certainly we have no reason that the Mosulmans in any part of India can be reconciled to the cultivation of it

². Princep's Minute of 15 August, 1834.
much less give it a preference to the polite literature of their race".\(^1\)

The Court of Directors faced with varied problems of administration inherited from the Mughal rule and urged by the need of change and adjustment reviewed the question of their educational policy from time to time and in \(^2\) the cherished results being basically wrong and unworkable. Under the oriental programme European sciences could not be effectively taught by translation of English works into the classical languages and it was realised before long that only English as a convenient medium could communicate fully and adequately western knowledge to those who sought to acquire it. While commenting on some educational views of the Delhi Local Committee and the General Committee of Public Instruction, the Court of Directors said that they "fully concur with them in thinking it highly advisable to enable and encourage a thorough knowledge of English; being convinced that the higher tone and better spirit of European literature can produce their full effect only on those who become familiar with them in the original languages. While, too, we agree with the Committee that the higher branches of science may be more advantageously taught in the language of Europe than in translations into the Oriental tongues, it is also to be

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1. Princep’s Note of 15 February, 1835.

2. Despatch of 18th February, 1824.
considered that the fittest person for translating English scientific works, or for putting their substance into a shape adapted to Asiatic students, are natives who have studied profoundly in the original works.¹

While advocating the cause of English education the Directors not only did not overlook, but stressed, the importance of the vernaculars as vehicles for wide diffusion of western and useful knowledge among the masses of the population. The small number of the people of the upper classes who could afford to receive English education should be encouraged by the Government to communicate through the medium of the vernaculars as teachers in schools and colleges and writers or translators of useful books, containing western knowledge which they had acquired through English.²

It was not oriental learning but English education that could bring about a cultural renaissance in India. As her domestic resources were inadequate for the purpose she needed an impulse from without and English language and western knowledge readily and amply provided it.³ Anglicists maintained that cultivation of classical learning would only revive the old prejudices of the Hindus and Muslims against foreign culture and cause damage to the British rule. Following the example of the Romans who once civilised the nations

1. Letter to Bengal, 29th September, 1830.
2. Ibid.
3. Trevelyan, "Education of the People of India", p.36.
of Europe and attached them to their rule by Romanising them, by educating them in the Roman literature and arts and teaching them to emulate their conquerors instead of opposing them, Anglicists demanded that, in the place of Arabic, Persian and Sanskrit, it would be more conducive to the political interests of Britain and the moral improvement of the Indian people themselves to introduce English education in the country. It was only through English education that the cultural conquest of the Indian people could be achieved, and it would be politically favourable to the British rule by making the educated classes loyal to it, and beneficial to the Indian people themselves by vitalising and enriching their decadent civilisation. "It is only by the infusion of European ideas", wrote Trevelyan, "that a new direction can be given to the national views. The young men, brought up at our seminaries, turn with contempt from the barbarous despotisms under which their ancestors groaned, to the prospect of improving their national institutions on the English model. Instead of regarding us with dislike, they court our society, and look upon us as their natural protectors and benefactors: the summit of their ambition is to resemble us; and under our auspices, they hope to elevate the character of their country-men, and to prepare them by gradual steps for the enjoyment of a well-regulated and therefore a

secure and happy independence". 1 It was by providing English education that any violent movement against the rulers could be prevented and a lasting bond of friendship and alliance based on mutual benefit could be fostered.

Anglicists also pointed out that for the social and moral improvement of the people the Hindu and Muslim legal systems had to be simplified and modernised and since this could be done only in English the people had to be educated in this language, so that they could be brought under the full impact of the new code of law.

The bearing of the codification of Indian laws on the enlightenment of the people was emphasised in all official discussions on the question of education, and the need for the spread of English education in this connection was stressed. 2

The need for change of the language of administration from Persian to English was urgently felt and the Anglicists demanded it, and the Government also wanted to introduce this change gradually in all their departments and in their official communications with the people and when they sought the approval of the Court of Directors they gave their consent as they observed,


From the meditated change in the language of public business including judicial proceedings you anticipate several collateral advantages, the principal of which is, that the judge or the other European Officer, being thoroughly acquainted with the language in which the proceedings are held, will be, and appear to be, less dependent upon the natives by whom he is surrounded, and those natives will, in consequence, enjoy fewer opportunities of bribery or other undue emolument. But the Directors felt that it would be just and fair to adopt the vernacular language rather than English, as the language of judicial proceedings.

Since the time of Lord Cornwallis (1786-93) Indians being allegedly undependable and inefficient were excluded from all administrative offices except at the lowest level. However, this practice was inconvenient and uneconomical as an adequate number of European officers was not available and they were to be given a high scale of pay. So the Court of Directors asked the Governor-General in Council to educate and properly train an increasing number of Indian personnel for public service, and the Charter Act of 1833, abolished all disabilities forbidding Indians from holding any

1. Letter from Court of Directors to Bengal, 29th September, 1830.
2. Ibid.
3. Letter to Bengal, 18 February, 1829.
office in the service of the East India Company. Lord Bentinck (1828-35) in pursuance of this legislative provision appointed educated Indians in ever increasing numbers. The larger employment of Indians emphasised the need for a wide diffusion of sound and useful knowledge for the training of the officers, which could be supplied only by English education.

The high cost of a useless oriental education was a serious charge levelled by the Anglicists against the system and claimed that English education would not cost the Government as much since a system of payment of tuition fees would be introduced in English schools and colleges, and this practice would improve the tone of discipline of students in these institutions.

Like the General Committee, Indian public opinion was also divided on the question of the educational policy. The orthodox sections of Hindus and Muslims and those who earned an income under the oriental system opposed any change in the existing educational policy, while the more enlightened and progressive public opinion represented by such social reformers as Raja Rammohan Roy, demanded, for the moral and spiritual uplift of the people from a state of utter degradation and for their cultural regeneration the introduction of English

2. Iwevelyan, C.S., "On the Education of the People of India", p. 156.
education in the place of oriental learning which only perpetuated the moral and social evils inherited from the past. Rammohan Roy, himself an erudite classical scholar and uncompromising, undaunted and redoubtable fighter for freedom and social justice, who suffered untold hardships and insults hurled upon him by the blind and bigoted fanatics of the orthodox Hindu society, in a memorandum addressed to Lord Amherst (1823-28) pointed out that classical Sanskrit learning only loaded "the minds of youth with grammatical niceties and metaphysical distinctions of little or no practicable use to the possessors or society", and acted for ages "as a lamentable check on the diffusion of knowledge", and warned that the Sanskrit system of education "would be the best calculated to keep this country in darkness", and appealed to the Government that, since it had the improvement of the native population at heart, "it will consequently promote a more liberal and enlightened system of instruction, embracing mathematics, natural philosophy, chemistry and anatomy, with other useful sciences which may be accomplished with the sum proposed by employing a few gentlemen of talents and learning, educated in Europe, and providing a college furnished with the necessary books, instruments and other apparatus". This address of Rammohan Roy

1. 11th December, 1823.
2. Ibid.
representing his strong plea for the study of modern sciences and the vigorous role he played in the spread of English education as illustrated by his bold initiative in establishing the Hindu College at Calcutta for English education, strengthened the cause of the Anglicist movement.

Although orientalism was stoutly opposed as the main programme and basis of the general educational policy, Anglicists wanted the authorities to promote the cultivation of oriental learning as a wide and rich field of historical study and antiquarian research and desired that such educational and cultural institutions as the Asiatic Society of Bengal, which had been carrying out critical and scientific study of classical Sanskrit learning should be liberally assisted, since their historical investigation could reveal the essential features of an old civilisation which moulded Hindu life and character.

"The Hindu system of learning" observed Trevelyan, "has formed the character of the people up to the present point; and it must still be studied to account for daily occurring phenomena of habits and manners. Whatever mental cultivation, whatever taste for literary pursuits has survived among the Hindus, is owing to it; they were a literary people when we were barbarous; and after centuries of revolution and anarchy and subjection to foreign rule, they are still a literary people; now that we have arrived at the highest existing point of civil-

sation. That the system which had produced these effects should be carefully analysed and recorded in all its different parts, is no less required by the interests of science in general than by our particular interest as rulers of India.¹

Anglicists, however, realised that there was a great political risk inherent in the wide dissemination of English education. Having received it the people of India would demand freedom from foreign rule which could not be averted, as Trevelyan apprehended that "no effort of policy can prevent the natives from ultimately regaining their independence".² It was feared that the sooner the Indian people grew to maturity by means of European education the sooner they would be able to do without British rule, and that by giving them knowledge, British Government was giving them power of which they would make the first use against their foreign rulers. Yet, it was conceded by the Anglicists that English education had to be provided, in spite of the political danger involved, in order to foster in the educated classes a feeling of attachment to British culture and loyalty to British rule, even though these influences might not last for all time to come.³ It would be an eloquent testimony

1. Trevelyan, C.E., "On the Education of the People of India", p. 182.
to the greatness of the British policy if ever the Indian people under the benign influence of western education would demand freedom from foreign rule. In the peroration to his speech of July 10, 1833, on the East India Company Bill, delivered shortly before he came to India, Macaulay, the most ardent and articulate apostle of anglicism, declared:

"It may be that the public mind of India may expand under our system; that by good Government we may educate our subjects into a capacity for better government; that having become instructed in European knowledge, they may, in some future age, demand European institutions. Whether such a day will ever come I know not. But never will I attempt to avert or retard it. Whenever it comes it will be the proudest day in English history".  

The bitter controversy dragged on for a long time and the General Committee faced a stalemate and the end of the crisis did not seem to be in sight. Two events hastened a situation that forced the Government to review the whole policy of education. In a meeting held on 26th April, 1834, of the Calcutta Madrasa Committee, attended by its members H. Shakespeare and J.R. Colvin, president and member respectively of the General Committee, a resolution that henceforth English would become a compulsory subject of study in the Madrasa, was adopted. H. T. Princep, a member of both the

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"Speeches of Lord Macaulay", (Corrected by himself), p. 78.
General Committee and the Madrasa Committee, who was absent from this meeting, recorded a vigorous protest against the resolution when he came to know about it, as he felt that the Madrasa Committee had no legal authority, without the sanction of the Government, to change the educational scheme of the Madrasa for which it was endowed. A similar situation arose when the Agra Oriental College Committee proposed to turn it into an Anglo-Indian institution where English literature and science would be the principal subjects of study to the exclusion of Arabic and Sanskrit, and even the instruction in Hindi and Persian, which so far enjoyed priority would be subordinated to a secondary position, as the Committee pointed out that the demand for English education far surpassed that for the traditional classical learning.

The General Committee failed to take a firm decision on the proposal of change to be made in the curriculum of the Calcutta Madrasa and the Agra College. The Committee was equally divided when the question of the Madrasa was referred to it, five members supported the resolution of the Madrasa Committee in favour of English and five members voted against it.¹

The General Committee being unable to take any decision on the disputed problems received by them referred all the outstanding cases of controversy to the Governor-General in Council with a request to announce their final verdict on the whole question of the policy of education. The matter was referred by the Government of Lord Bentinck to Lord Macaulay, who, as the president of the General Committee of Public Instruction was asked to give his views and comments on the whole question of the educational policy which had highlighted the Anglo-Oriental controversy.

2. Macaulay's Minute, 2nd February, 1835

T.B. Macaulay, fourth member of the Governor-General's Council was a firm and staunch supporter of English education. He examined all the major issues involved in the controversy and all his views and conclusions were influenced by his anglicist bias. In opposition to the Orientalist interpretation of the educational clause of the Charter Act of 1813, which in his view was inconsistent and unsatisfactory, Macaulay maintained that correct meaning of the relevant clause clearly implied that the parliamentary grant of one lakh of rupees had to be spent on the promotion of western literature and science, and no parliamentary sanction would be necessary to act upon this interpretation, since the Governor-General in Council was free and competent to
direct that the educational grant would no longer be employed for encouraging oriental learning. It was unanimously admitted that the spoken languages of India being utterly deficient in literary and scientific information, could not become the means of pursuing higher studies, nor the classical languages could serve this end, because they were very poor in content, and according to Macaulay's assessment "a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia". 1 Classical learning was not only poor in intrinsic value and barren of useful knowledge, but "that literature inculcates the most serious errors on the most important subjects", and Orientalists themselves admitted the superiority of western literature, and yet a considerable amount of public funds was spent on the promotion of a faulty system of oriental learning, and students had to be encouraged by liberal payment of stipends to learn false dogmas and doctrines, which were useless for all practical purposes as scholars complained to the Government that their classical education failed to obtain for them employment in private or public service and demanded redress. "They represent their education", Macaulay wrote, "as an injury which gives them a claim on the Government for redress, as

1. Minute of 1835.
an injury for which the stipends paid to them during the infliction were a very inadequate compensation".\(^1\) Quite a large amount of public money was also wasted on printing and publication of oriental works for which there was hardly any demand.

Since Sanskrit, Arabic, Persian or the vernaculars of the people, could not be used as the means of communicating western knowledge, the more suitable and convenient medium would be English, a highly cultivated language with a rich and varied literature which provided "ready access to all the vast intellectual wealth which all the wisest nations of the earth have created and hoarded in the course of ninety generations".\(^2\) As rulers of the country interested for the sake of duty in the well-being of the people Government had the unquestioning authority to introduce English education which was so obviously useful and beneficial for them. The use and popularity of English was increasing among the upper classes and elsewhere as the language of the rulers. In 1834, Macaulay examined the students of the Hindu College and was impressed by their proficiency in English when he observed that it was "unusual to find even in the literary circles of the continent any

\(^1\) Macaulay’s Minute of 1835.
\(^2\) Ibid.
foreigner who can express himself in English with so much facility and correctness as we find in many Hindoos".¹ Macaulay contended that English could do for Indian regeneration what Greek and Roman did for European renaissance, and the languages of Western Europe did for the development of Russian culture. Further, as the laws of the Hindus and Muslims were being codified in a simple and scientific manner into English under the auspices of a Law Commission, the students of the Oriental College, instead of learning Sanskrit and Arabic, the traditional sources of their legal knowledge, should learn English. As for securing the co-operation of the people it was not the classical learning which would only provoke opposition to foreign rule, but English education that alone by rearing "a class of persons Indian in blood and colour but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect", could inculcate in the educated classes a strong feeling of loyalty and attachment for the rulers and their superior culture? The educated people of the upper classes could become teachers of the masses and enrich their vernaculars by contributions taken from western knowledge and English language, and thus they would become interpreters between the Government and the masses of the population.

1. Minute of Macaulay.
2. Ibid.
Macaulay concluded his statement by saying emphatically that it was clear "that we are not fettered by the Act of Parliament of 1813, that we are not fettered by any pledge expressed or implied, that we are free to employ our funds as we chose, that we ought to employ them in teaching what is best worth knowing, that English is better worth knowing than Sanskrit or Arabic, that the natives are desirous to be taught English, and are not desirous to be taught Sanskrit or Arabic, that neither as the languages of law nor as the languages of religion have the Sanskrit and Arabic any peculiar claim to our encouragement, that it is possible to make natives of this country thoroughly good English scholars, and that to this end our efforts ought to be directed".¹ He would "strike at the root of the bad system which has hitherto been fostered" by the Government,² and recommended that all Oriental Colleges except the Benares Sanskrit College and the Delhi Mahomedan College should be abolished, and printing of classical works and payment of stipends to students of oriental learning at the expense of public funds must stop, and the money thus saved had to be spent on the encouragement of English education. Macaulay proposed to resign as

1. Minute of Macaulay.
2. Ibid.
the president of the General Committee of Public Instruction if his suggestions were not acted upon by the Government.

H. T. Prinsep challenged every point made out by Macaulay in favour of his anglicist stand, and apprehended that, if the measures recommended by him were adopted by the Government, educational progress of the country would be impeded and the people alienated completely.¹ A member of the Governor-General's Council, Lt. Col. William Morrison referred to the feelings of resentment with which the proposed substitution of English for the classical languages of India would be viewed and he considered that this measure to banish the classical languages so much venerated by the people, betrayed a lack of toleration on the part of the Government, which might lead to the alienation of the ruled from the rulers.²

3. Bentinck's Resolution, 7th March, 1835

Lord Bentinck was a bold reformer who had already in 1829, abolished the atrocious practice of 'suttee', and eager to carry out other measures of salutary and far-reaching changes which could develop and modernise Indian life and society. On the body of Macaulay's Minute Bentinck wrote in his own hand, "I give my entire concurrence to the

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¹ Note of H. T. Prinsep, 15th February, 1835.
² Minute of Lt. Col. W. Morrison, 18th February, 1835.
sentiments expressed in this Minute", and adopted a res­
lution in the Governor-General's Council, which very lar­
gely though not entirely accepted the recommendations of 
Macaulay as the basis of the new educational policy which 
replaced oriental learning by English education, the pro­
motion of which would henceforth be the main concern of 
the Government.

The Governor-General in Council carefully conside­
red the two letters from the Secretary of the General Com­
ittee of Public Instruction, dated 21st and 22nd January, 1835, 
and all the relevant papers, and resolved that "the great 
object of the British Government 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".1 However, Macaulay's suggestion for the abolition 
of all Oriental Colleges and the payment of stipends was not 
accepted and the Governor-General in Council directed that 
"all the existing professors and students at all the institu­
tions under the superintendence of the Committee shall con­
tinue to receive their stipends".2 But the Council objected 
to the practice of financially supporting the students during

1. Resolution of 1835.
2. Ibid.
the period of their education, because this system gave only artificial encouragement to branches of obsolete learning in preference to more useful knowledge, and announced that no stipends would be given to new students and no new professors would be appointed in the Oriental Colleges except on special grounds of necessity, and no funds had any longer to be spent on the printing of classical works. The Governor-General in Council directed that "all the funds which these reforms will leave at the disposal of the Committee be henceforth employed in imparting to the native population a knowledge of English literature and science through the medium of the English language";¹ and asked the General Committee to submit to Government a suitable plan for the implementation of this purpose.

Bentinck's resolution which announced the new policy of the Government in favour of English education provoked vigorous protests from the supporters of oriental learning. W. H. Macnaghten and James Princep who lodged a strong protest against the decision of the Governor-General, resigned from the General Committee, and other Orientalists also resented it. For instance, the Asiatic Society of Bengal, a staunch supporter of orientalism remonstrated in a letter of protest thus:

¹. Resolution of 1835.
"If the Sanskrit and Arabic languages consecrated as they are by ages of the remotest antiquity, enshrined as they are in the affections of venerating million; the theme as they are of the wonder and of the admiration of all the learned nations of Europe, if these languages are not to receive support from a Government which has been ever famed for its liberality and its justice, from a Government which draws an annual revenue of twenty millions from the people by whom these languages are held sacred, it is the decided opinion of the Asiatic Society - an opinion which they want words to express with adequate force, that the cause of civilisation and the character of the British nation will alike sustain irreparable injury",¹ Over eight thousand Muslims of Calcutta and its suburbs sent to the Government a petition written in Persian praying for the restoration of the policy of orientalism. Students of Sanskrit Colleges and Madrasas also sent letters of protest against the decision of the authorities which abolished the classical system of education that had been a source of income to them. A petition written in Sanskrit and in English was addressed to the Court of Directors by nearly nine thousand Hindus of Bengal demanding that due encouragement had to be given to the promotion of Sanskrit learning

¹ Letter from President, Asiatic Society to Governor-General, 3rd June, 1835.
as well as to instruction in Bengali, and while the Calcutta Sanskrit College had to be properly and adequately maintained the entire amount of money so far appropriated for the publication of Sanskrit and Bengali books, had to be restored.

The wide discontent thus revealed in the vehement opposition of both Indians and Europeans to the new policy of education urged the Government to ask the General Committee to review the resolution of 7th March, which they did, but declined to bring about any vital change of principles laid down in it. When the reply of the General Committee was received the Governor-General in Council refrained from making any fundamental change in the policy of education announced by Bentinck till instructions were received from the Court of Directors to whom the controversy had been referred, but decided to conciliate the disgruntled Orientalists by modifying the resolution of 7th March in favour of them; for instance, it was decided that a system of scholarship for meritorious students of the Oriental Colleges should be introduced and the Asiatic Society would receive grants from the Government for the publication of oriental works and the General Committee was asked to conduct the administration of the Oriental Colleges in such a manner as to eliminate the popular
apprehension that they were to be ultimately abolished.

These views of the Governor-General in Council could not be acted upon by the General Committee which considered them incompatible with the principles laid down in Bentinck's resolution and the Court of Directors were requested to send early their opinions on the matter, pending which Lord Auckland who succeeded Lord Bentick as the Governor-General (1836-42) had to prepare a minute to deal with the mounting opposition to the official policy of education and bring the Anglo-Oriental controversy to an end.

4. Lord Auckland's Minute, 24th November, 1839: End of the Controversy

The Governor-General had no linguistic bias or prejudice and no pre-conceived educational preferences. Urged by a sincere desire for a compromise between the rival claims of the Orientalists and the Anglicists Auckland gave just and legitimate consideration to the value of both oriental learning and English education and duly recognised the importance of the vernaculars in the education of the people and by his judicious approach to the problems involved in the controversy and their correct assessment he could impress all the parties concerned and eliminate their misgivings and suspicious. As the head of the
Government, however, Lord Auckland reaffirmed Bentinck's policy. He was not an Orientalist himself, nor did he share Macaulay's anglicist views. When Bentinck's resolution was promulgated English rose at once into a position of the highest importance. It seemed likely that English might overshadow the learned oriental languages and push aside the vernacular tongues. Lord Auckland struck a balance and offered encouragement to the oriental languages and broadly supported the cause of vernacular instruction as a means of improving the great mass of the people.¹

In analysing the causes of the Anglo-Oriental controversy Lord Auckland attributed the dispute mainly to lack of funds. "I may observe", he wrote, "that the insufficiency of the funds assigned by the State for the purpose of public instruction has been amongst the main causes of the violent dispute which has taken place upon the education question, and that if the funds previously appropriated to the cultivation of oriental literature had been spared, and other means placed at the disposal of the promoters of English education, they might have pursued their object aided by the good wishes of all".²

1. Lord Auckland's Minute, 24th November, 1839.
2. Ibid.
The Government was willing to provide as much money as possible; available funds would certainly not be sufficient to organise "a full and fair experiment" of oriental and vernacular education. In the circumstances, what the Government could do was to adopt "a principle of wise liberality not stinting any object which can reasonably be recommended, but granting a measured and discriminating encouragement to all". While English education would receive the highest consideration, the cause of oriental learning would not be ignored. To give practical effect to this principle the Government made an additional non-recurring grant to supplement the yearly allotment for the encouragement of classical learning, and also an annual recurring grant for the publication of oriental works by the Asiatic Society of Bengal.

Lord Auckland did not, however, agree to the view of the Orientalists that the funds assigned to particular institutions should continue to be so appropriated for ever and no diversion of funds from the original objects should, in any circumstances, be permitted. "I would reject the strict principle of absolute and irreclaimable appropriation", wrote the Governor-General. It was proposed that

1. Lord Auckland's Minute, 24th November, 1839.
2. Ibid.
3. Lord Auckland's Minute.
the funds allotted to the oriental institutions should be used to increase their efficiency which could be done by securing services of the most eminent native teachers receiving adequate remuneration, by the revival of stipends on an improved plan and the publication of useful oriental works as well as by providing effective European superintendence. When efficiency of the oriental institutions would have been thus completely secured, but not before, any surplus funds of these institutions might be devoted to the promotion of English education. It was decided that all funds previously appropriated to oriental institutions should be left undisturbed and whatever additional money would be required for English education was to be supplied by additional grants.

The Court of Directors approved the principles laid down by Lord Auckland and authorised him to provide funds to carry them out as they desired that fair and equal encouragement should be given to various prevailing modes of education according to the needs of each and remarked, "Experience indeed does not yet warrant the adoption of any exclusive system".¹

Indeed, the usefulness of English education had already disarmed much of the opposition against the new

¹ Despatch of 20th January, 1841.
system. The orthodox sections of the Hindus could not long hold out against the material advantages offered to their children by English education. In imparting education the Government had in view the employment of qualified young men in the judicial, revenue, medical and education services. A knowledge of English, however imperfect, enabled a young man to secure an appointment under the Government and the children of the upper and middle classes came in over larger numbers to the high schools and colleges. By declaring in 1844, that a candidate having knowledge of English or vernacular would be preferred in public employment, Lord Hardinge only strengthened a demand which had already become widespread.\(^1\) The prospect of getting employment gave a strong impetus to the spread of English education particularly. Owing to a diversity of causes, such as the pride of race, the memory of their vanished glory, their religious fears, the Muslims were, however, slow in taking advantage of the new educational opportunities.\(^2\) For a long time they held aloof, at least from higher education and special measures had to be adopted to encourage the promotion of education among the Mohammedans.

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1. Lord Hardinge's Resolution, 10th October, 1844.

2. In 1850, the number of Muslim students in the Hoogly College, Bengal, was only five out of a total of 409 pupils.
The moral effect of the new education was not less apparent. Intellectual activity was stimulated, and there followed a radical transformation in social and religious ideas and practices. The liberal ideas of the West roused the people from the slumber of ages and the new awakening was marked by a critical outlook on the past and high aspirations for the future. Faith and belief gave place to reason and judgement and the traditional meaning of the scriptures was subjected to scientific scrutiny and new conceptions of morality and religion evolved. The age-long inertia and immobility of the people were shaken and the educated Indians were inspired by a zeal for reforms in every sphere of life. As a result, India emerged in the nineteenth century from the mediaval to the modern age. Of course, there were over-zealous reformers and pioneers of the new age who appeared to the orthodox as mere iconoclasts. Yet, the impact of western knowledge was so pervasive and over-powering that it swept away all opposition and the demand for English education continued to increase. The demand was not confined to the great centres of European influence and their neighbourhood, but spread to the remoter districts where local people were in many cases ready to supply resources to meet the demand.
The parliamentary enquiry of 1852-53, convinced the Court of Directors of the great effect of English education in bringing about moral and material prosperity in India and they decided upon the extension of the system on a far wider scale at a considerable expenditure of public funds. The Wood Despatch of 19th July, 1851, the great charter of modern Indian education, outlined an elaborate and comprehensive scheme concerning all types of education from primasy to the university stage to be supervised by Education Departments under the Government. Not only was the extension of English education aimed at, but the promotion of mass education and female education as well as classical learning also was to be undertaken and instruction in technical subjects such as engineering, medicine, agriculture, law, etc., was to be provided. Government alone was not to supply all the means of education, but the voluntary agencies in the field were to be encouraged by grants to share the burden with the Government. The resolution of Bentinck oriented by Lord Auckland to meet the varied demands of education initiated the English system of education which was placed finally on a strong and stable foundation by the Despatch of 1854, which was "the

1. "A History of Education in India (During the British Period)", p.203.
climax in the history of Indian education: what goes before leads up to: what follows flows from it". The creative power of ancient India that had been dormant but not dead through the ages of decadence was roused to varied activities of reconstruction of life under the strong impulse of western education which brought about a renaissance that entered a new phase with the withdrawal of the British power from India in 1947.

1. James, H. R., - "Education and Statesmanship in India", p. 42.

2. "The native mind of the present day, although it is asleep, is not dead". - "Vernacular Education in Bengal and Behar", William Adam (Long's Edition, 1838), p. 198.