

INDO- BRITISH EDUCATIONAL TIES- POST INDEPENDENCE

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Abstract

The modern education system in India has its roots in the East India Company. The then government encouraged the study of English and vernacular languages. The Indian education system has largely followed the British pattern after independence, with the Colombo plan and the British Open University inspiring distance education in India. The British government also focused on primary education, offering facilities such as increased student grants and the Bursary Scheme. Indian students in Britain are increasing rapidly. The UK government offers scholarships in different fields of education and has become a stronger partner in the Global Gateway and Initiative of the U.K. Department for Education and Skills. The UK-India Education and Research Institute has played a pivotal role in establishing strong, thriving, and deep-rooted educational links between the two countries.

Keywords - Education, India, Britian, Woods Dispatch, Hunter Commission, Colombo plan, Oxford University Press.

Introduction

The education system in India has deep colonial roots, and the engagement of the East India Company in the 18th and 19th centuries was a significant turning point in the history of the country's education system. In the beginning, the East India Company was more concerned with commerce than it was with education. As their political power increased, however, so did their desire to influence Indian society in various ways, including the educational system. The positive impact was the incorporation of Western science, philosophy, and topical issues which yielded beneficial effects. The rise of a newly educated middle class contributed to the rise of Indian nationalism, as many leaders were educated in Britain. Whereas it adversely affected traditional Indian educational systems and fostered western superiority and colonial mentality.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY: This paper aims to examine the education system post-independence, as India and Britain endeavored to enhance their partnership across multiple fields of potential cooperation and collaboration.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY: This paper is purely based on primary and secondary sources such as annual reports, journals, articles, books, websites.

Educational Cooperation- A Historical Context

Modern education system in India owes its origin to the East India Company. Through various commissions, education was deep rooted in India. Before the coming of the Europeans, education was imparted to students studying in gurukuls, madrasas and temples. The establishment of East India Company in India gave new meaning to society, economy and polity. Warren Hastings in 1781 opened Calcutta madrasa for the study of Persian and Arabic. In 1791 Jonathan Duncan, the British resident at Benares opened Sanskrit college. At the same time Christian missionaries were advocating western literature and Christian religion through the medium of Englishⁱ. In 1800, Lord Wellesley setup Fort William College for the training of the civil servants for the company, in the languages and customs of India. The Court of Directors ordered the closure of this college in 1802. In 1813, the Court of Directors (charter of 1813) provided for an annual expenditure of one lakh of rupees for the promotion of education among the inhabitants of the British territories. The company needed people well versed in Persian and Sanskrit for the correspondence with the uneducated masses of India but at the same time for higher posts, they needed the knowledge of English as well as vernacular. Raja Rammohun Roy also advocated the western education. The government agreed to encourage the study of English as well as oriental languages. The General Committee of Public Instruction was constituted. Within the committee there were two groups, the orientalist and Anglicistⁱⁱ. Differences arose between them regarding the medium of instruction. In this connection as a member of the Executive committee Macaulay gave his famous Minute on education policy dated February 2, 1853, in which he advocated western education. The government of Lord Bentinck in the resolution of 7 March 1835 accepted the view point of Macaulay. He further gave his infiltration theoryⁱⁱⁱ. Hereafter the government made half-hearted efforts to the development of vernacular languages.

Woods Dispatch on Education (1854) further laid emphasis on western education. It also declared that as medium of instruction for the higher education, English language is the best. It also proposed the setting of

vernacular primary schools at the village level. Universities on the model of the London University were proposed for Calcutta, Bombay and Madras. The dispatch emphasized the importance of vocational instruction and the need for establishing technical schools and colleges.^{iv}

The Hunter Commission (1882-83) was appointed in 1882, under the leadership of W.W.Hunter^v to review the progress of education in the country since the Dispatch commission. It recommended the extension and improvement of primary education. It also suggested that all efforts should be made to encourage private enterprise. The education Commission also drew the attention towards the negligence of female education. After this commission there was exceptional growth of education in India. The Punjab University and Allahabad University were set up during this time.^{vi}

Education received impetus during Lord Curzon's period. The Indian University Act was passed. In 1906, the State of Baroda introduced primary education. In 1917, the Sadler University Commission was appointed. This commission reviewed the entire field from school education to university education and was of the view that the improvement of secondary education was a necessary condition for the improvement of university education. This commission recommended a twelve-year school course, less rigidity in framing the regulations and facilities for female education.

The Department of Education was transferred to the provinces according to the Montague-Chelmsford reforms. Later on, the education department was amalgamated with other departments. Special grants were also stopped. Under the provinces, education improved. Wardha scheme of basic education was prepared but due to Second World War Congress ministry postponed this scheme. In 1944, the Central Advisory Board of education gave another scheme known as Sergeant Scheme. This scheme envisaged a 40-year educational reconstruction plan for the country, which was, reduced to 16 years by Kher committee. Thus, when India became independent, well-established education system was there in place which served as foundation on which independent India took significant strides in the field of education.^{vii}

After independence, the Indian education system developed largely on the British pattern. Britain rendered valuable help to India in the matter of both development of scientific and technical education and general education. At the same time, the help was also given for the improvement of the teaching of English. This help was rendered at the governmental, non-governmental and Commonwealth levels. In 1958, the British

government and the Federation of British Industry (FBI) agreed to provide British staff, training and equipment for establishing a college of Engineering at the University of Delhi

Under Colombo plan, India received substantial help from Britain in the form of educational equipment. The United Kingdom supplied £ 335,000 worth of equipment's to India between 1951 and 1960 for universities, colleges, research institutes, and hospitals all over the country^{viii}.

During the period 1951-1961, 23 national laboratories and 3 regional research laboratories were established.^{ix} These laboratories have received equipments and staff training from the United Kingdom. The national Metallurgical laboratory at Jamshedpur, Central Fuel Research Institute at Dhanbad received equipment's from United Kingdom worth £ 82.500 and £ 20.000 respectively. The assistance helped in the development of irrigation and hydro-electric power & improvement of harbors etc.

Apart from this, United Kingdom provided equipment to Institute of Technology Kharagpur (£ 30,000), Bengal Engineering College, Howrah, Calcutta (£ 17,000) and for medical research and training of medical students of the Christian Medical College Hospital, Vellore (£ 15,000). The Lala Ram Sarup Tuberculosis, Hospital Mehrauli (£ 17,000) and hospital for Mental Diseases, Ranchi (£ 2,400).^x

The assistance given by the British government also helped in the technical sector, which further enabled Indian institutes to progress in their respective fields. It was a cooperative project where Indian government provided land building and local staff and technical expertise was provided by British government^{xi}. The Duke of Edinburgh laid the foundation stone of the college of Engineering and Technology, Delhi on January 27, 1959. It was formally opened in August 1961. Later it became an Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Delhi with an independent status.^{xii}

Distance Education in India was inspired in 1971 by the experience of the British Open University. Its success led India to establish the Andhra Pradesh Open University in 1982 to be followed by Indira Gandhi National Open University in 1985^{xiii}. In 1988-89 under bilateral agreement concluded in Delhi in August 1980 between the British Open University and India Gandhi National Open University. Rs. 8 Crore assistance was provided to I.G.N.O.U on November 6, 1989 by Lynda Chalker British Minister for Overseas Development Administration.^{xiv} Britain also focused on primary education The British government is helping India in various projects, which can contribute, to the improvement of universal primary education.

In 1988, however, British offered facilities in the form of increased students grants and these grants were founded by the ODA and Administration by the British Council. Between 1988-91, lot of grants were diverted to the technical training cooperation program. The number of students in U.K. Universities showed a marginal increase due to the measures introduced by the British government.

The British Council provided another scheme known as Bursary Scheme. Under this scheme, bursars were able to undertake research, post graduate studies or practical training for period varying from one to six months. All these schemes were within the framework of the Commonwealth University Inter change scheme. Other schemes sponsored or administered by the United Kingdom government were the Colombo plan under which the students from India visit U.K. for advanced study in United Kingdom. The Commonwealth Scholarship Scheme, inaugurated at the Commonwealth Educational Conference held in Oxford in 1959, Many government organizations as well as voluntary organizations also offers scholarship, fellowships or research grants. The United Kingdom Government's Department of Scientific and Industrial Research received 28 visitors from India during 1960-61.^{xv} They visited the Building Research Station, the Road Research Station, the Radio Research Station, the National Physicals laboratory, the Water Pollution Chemical laboratory and the Hydraulics Research Station. According to one report between 1958-60, nearly 480 scholars went abroad for advanced research^{xvi}. The British Council Fellowship Program, Commonwealth Scholarship and British Chevening Scholarships provide financial support to Indian students studying in the UK. Various other scholarships like the Inlaks Foundation, the Rhodes Scholarship etc are offered for study in various UK educational institutes.

Recent Developments

According to one report Indian students in United Kingdom after 2009-2010 show decline because of the policies of the Government.^{xvii} The UK universities years after years are visiting India and are having educational road shows for admission of Indian students. Britain is the gateway to European Union.^{xviii} Britain helps Indian students to get greater international exposure. Indian students constitute the second largest number (after China) of international student's enrolled for higher education courses in the UK.

Chevening India Programme is the second largest programme globally. Dozens of Indians benefit from this programme annually. The Chevening India program has supported over 2000 scholars^{xix}. Chevening scholarship brings young post graduate to the UK normally for Master Degree courses. The key theme is

Leadership^{xx}. The demand of Indian students to get education in UK has reached its target level as set up by the UK government. The UK government approximately offers 700 scholarships in different fields of education.^{xxi}

The Joint Declaration of 2004 identified educational linkages as a priority for both countries. India became a stronger partner in the Global Gateway and Initiative of the U.K. Department for Education and Skills for linkages between schools. The British Academy is exploring university level linkages with the UGC. Government of India established a chair on Indian History and Culture in the Oxford University with an endowment of 1.8 million pounds in July 2002.^{xxii} It was intended the bridge the worlds of Indology and Modern history, as well as open up Indian studies to wider range of students.

The UK – India Education and Research Institute is a five-year programme, which aims to substantially improve education links between India and UK. Under this initiative United Kingdom has pledged £ 23 million through contributions by the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS), office of Science and Innovation, Foreign and Commonwealth office. British council and authorities of Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.^{xxiii} UKIERI has been instrumental in transforming the educational links between the two nations. The program has been further extended for five years, from 2011 to 2016, in acknowledgment of its significant accomplishments and to capitalize on its success. The extension was declared by UK Prime Minister David Cameron and Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in July 2010. Both governments have affirmed financial support for UKIERI, and the initiative seeks to implement systemic change by engaging a broader audience. The program emphasizes the bilateral and reciprocal advantages for learners, researchers, scholars, fellows, professionals in the skill sector, and leaders of higher education and further education institutions in India and the UK. The two components of UKIERI are: Research and Innovation, and Education & Training. The private sector has added significantly to this. Contribution through the four corporate champions BAE, BP, GSK and Shell, UKIERI has received an additional £ 3 million contribution from DIUS.

The UKIERI awards represent a significant educational initiative between the United Kingdom and India, having committed over £25 million since their establishment in 2006. The awards are designed to enhance collaboration between institutions in the two countries by providing direct support for research initiatives and facilitating reciprocal mobility for students, post-docs, and faculty members.

Close cooperation is also seen in the field of publishing. There have been a number of joint British and Indian Publishing companies like Oxford University Press and Macmillan (India) engaged in the field of quality printing & publishing.

The British Council Division of the British High Commission in India promoted Academic and Research links in collaboration with the UGC and research bodies and there are 30 links of this kind.

Britain continues to work closely with Indian institutions concerned with the improvement of English teaching. The British Council was established in 1934 and since then British council is assisting Indian authorities. It is rendering a remarkable service for the welfare of the society. The British Council Division of the British High Commission in India promoted Academic and Research links in collaboration with the UGC and research bodies and there are 30 links of this kind.

At present India is one of the biggest operating areas of the British Council. The British Councils- India partnership has a membership of 141 UK institutions and is the second largest. British Council administered over 100,000 UK exams in India. These were primarily IELTS and other English language tests, but also included both professional and educational qualifications^{xxiv}. However, the inflow of UK students to India was slow. Those who chose to come here mostly opt for philosophy, Sanskrit and Indian culture. In fact, India offers limited scope in this sphere^{xxv}.

Conclusion: An enduring relationship

Indo-British educational links remained strong, thriving and deep rooted even after independence. The distinctiveness of Indo-British relations can be attributed to historical context, democratic principles, and shared values. The bilateral relationship, regarded as an advantage by both countries, extends beyond trade and is multi-faceted. The relationship has been enhanced through a deepening of cooperation that extends beyond political realms, now encompassing areas such as education, environment, defense, and counter-terrorism, among others. The remarkable intensity of bilateral cooperation indicates the robustness of the bilateral relationship. India and Britain have recognized multiple sectors, in which they are actively working to enhance their collaboration. Both private and official organizations are actively promoting Indo-British collaborations in these sectors.

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