

Growth of Education in Bihar (1900-1947) Concerned With Education Under Dyarchy

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Abstract:

In 1918 Mr. Edwin Montagu, the Secretary of State for India and Lord Chelmsford, the Viceroy, made thorough inquiries into political problems. In the year 1919, the Government of India passed a resolution known as Government of India Act, 1919, which is otherwise known as Montague-Chelmsford Reform. It was the first time that the British India government had introduced democratic form of government. The provinces of India had been given dyarchy form government or double government rule under transferred subjects and reserved subject. Here subjects mean various administrative functions of the government. Moreover, reserved subjects were given to councillors includes law and order, the police, the land revenue ,irrigation where transferred subjects were given to Indian minister includes local self-government ,education, public health, public works, agriculture ,forest and fisheries. This system of governance was later on ended with the introduction of provincial autonomy in 1935.

Keywords: *Dyarchy, control of education, democratic form, etc.*

Introduction:

The main feature of the Government of India Act of 1919 was the introduction of the principle of dyarchy in the provinces. The Provincial Executive was divided into two parts – the Councillors and the Ministers. The Councillors were British, took charge of what was known as “reserved subjects” while the Ministers who were Indians, took responsibility for “Transferred subjects”. Education, a transferred subject, became the direct responsibility of the Indian ministers. These ministers were unable to effect any major changes in education because finance, a reserved subject, was under the control of the English Councillors who were reluctant to give the required amount of money to Indian Ministers. That’s why Indian National Congress launched the Civil Disobedience Movement.

As a result of the Montague –Chelmsford Reforms of 1919, the Department of Education was transferred to the control of popular ministries in the various provinces. The Central Government ceased to take direct interest in educational matters and the Department of Education in the Government of India was amalgamated with other departments. Above all, the Central special grants for education liberally sanctioned since 1902 was discontinued. Financial difficulties prevented the provincial governments from taking up ambitious schemes of educational expansion or improvement. During this period expansion of education was mostly made by philanthropic effort. Thus Mont-ford Reforms introduced the first step towards provincial autonomy in the Indian Constitution and Education was made a Transferred Subject. But European education was maintained as a Reserved Subject (Mukherji, 1074: 206).

In the words of the educationists A. Biswas & S.P. Agarwal (1994), the Indians first obtained the control of the Education Department in the Dyarchy System dividing Provincial governments into reserved and transferred departments under the Government of India Act, 1919. But the Indian ministers were not able to obtain the funds essential for a large-scale

expansion, qualitative improvement and reorganisation of education. The most important thing that happened under Dyarchy System was the rapid development of mass education and the passing of Compulsory Education Acts in most of the provinces.

Transfer of control of education to Provincial Governments not only isolated them from the Central Government but also them from one another. It also deprived the Government of India of the power of guiding and formulating an educational policy for the whole country, and it was no longer possible for it to act as an advisory and co-ordinating agency on problems of all – India importance (Mukherji, 1974: 207). Beginning in 1918, some form of compulsory schooling was gradually introduced just as education was transferred to the control of provincial governments under elected Indian ministers. These changes introduced by the 1919 Montague-Chelmsford reforms mark the end of direct colonial responsibility for education.

Analysis of the Study:

The need for a co-ordinating agency in the matter of education was immediately felt by the Central and Provincial Governments. Consequently, the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) was established at the Centre in 1921. The idea that there should be a Central Advisory Board of Education was first put forward by the Calcutta University Commission (1917-19) which felt "that the Government of India can perform an invaluable function by defining the general aims of educational policy, by giving advice and assistance to local governments and to universities" and "by supplying organised information as to the development of educational ideas in the various provinces, and also elsewhere than in India". The chief function of the Board was to offer expert advice on important education matters referred to it. The Educational Commissioner with the Government of India was chairman, and it included a number of eminent educationists, official and non-official, from the provinces. The Board was a body which might have been of real assistance to Ministers in framing a policy suited to advancing India, and to whom complex problems could be submitted for advice (Government of India, 1929:227). But, in 1923, in a time of financial stress, the Board was abolished without even a reference to provincial Governments as to the advisability of its continuance, and the Bureau of Education was closed in pursuance of a policy of retrenchment in order to save a total recurring expenditure of only a few thousand rupees on the recommendations of the Inchcape Committee. The policy of retrenchment was further responsible for combining the Department of Education and Health in the Government of India with the Department of Revenue and Agriculture (*Ibid.*, p. 277). The combined Department was termed the Department of Education, Health and Land. The drawback of such an ill-thought out economy became evident very soon and the CABE was revived in 1935 according to the suggestions of the Hartog Committee, 1929. The first meeting of the reconstituted Board was held in New Delhi on the 19th and the 20th of December of 1935. The Bureau of Education was also revived in 1937 on the recommendations of the CABE. It was again reconstituted and strengthened in 1945 (Mukherji, 1974:207).

The Hartog Committee, 1929

The Government of India Act of 1919 devolved considerable responsibility to the provinces. The Act created "Diarchy" or "Rule of Two" leading to greater representation of elected members. In 1921, the Department of Education was transferred to an Indian Minister responsible to Legislature. Being unable to receive sufficient funds from the Government, these ministers could not provide the expected results. The continuous pressure for educational improvement resulted in the appointment of Hartog Committee (May, 1928),

after his its chairman, Sir Philip Hartog which made wide-ranging proposals for development of both, general and professional education. The Committee submitted its report in September, 1929.

The main findings of the Hartog Committee were as follows:

The Committee observed that an increase in number of schools and colleges had led to deterioration of education standards. The Committee was of the opinion that the rapid expansion of education resulted in the dilution of quality and education became largely ineffective and wasteful. It emphasised the national importance of primary education but condemned the policy of hasty expansion or attempt to introduce compulsion in education. The Committee recommended the policy of consolidation and improvements by reducing the large extent of stagnation and wastage. According the Report, “Primary education is ineffective, unless it at least produces literacy. On the average, no child who has not completed a primary course of at least four years will be permanently literate”(Hartog Report, 1919: 48).

The Committed then examined secondary and university education. They were looked upon as designed to produce competent officials. It pointed out the large failure at the matriculation examination as mere wastage. It recommended the introduction of varied curricula in middle vernacular schools and the retention of a large number of pupils in such schools and diversion of more boys to industrial and commercial careers at the end of the middle school stage.

The Committee also criticised the policy of indiscriminate admission at university level which led to lowering of standards. It recommended that “all efforts should be concentrated on improving university work, on confining the university to its proper function of giving good advanced education to students who are fit to receive it, and, in fact, to making the university a more 'fruitful and less disappointing agency in the life of the community” (Hartog Report, 1929:137)

The main conclusion of the report was that the quantitative increase of education inevitably led to deterioration of quality and lowering of standard. Quantity had been gained at the cost of quality and therefore the immediate need was to improve the quality rather than increase the numbers still further. The Committee regarded that the transfer of power from the Central to Provincial Governments had been too sudden. It pointed out the need of establishing a centralising educational agency at Delhi. In its opinion the transfer of control over primary education to local bodies was not desirable (Mukherji, 1974:213).

The Report of the Hartog Committee more or less shaped the educational policy of British Government during the last decades of its existence in India. Words like Wastage and stagnation have become key words in educational terminology, and a policy of expansion initiated since the beginning of the present period was changed into one for consolidation. The Committee highlighted that a policy of expansion resulted in Wastage and Retention and thus weakened the need for a rapid expansion of primary education irrespective of quality. Briefly speaking, the Report like Macaulay’s filtration theory stopped the progress of the growth of primary education.

The Act of 1919 made education a subject which was “partly all-India, partly reserved, partly transferred with limitations and partly transferred without limitations” (Ghosh, 2013: 162). But in 1935, the British Parliament passed the Government of India Act. This Act divided all educational activities into two categories only – Federal (Central) and State (Provincial). All matters regarding education of all other categories other than those included in the Federal list fell under State or Provincial Subjects. Besides, the entire administration of

the Provinces was transferred to the Executive, which was responsible to the Legislature. Popular Ministers were placed in charge of provincial subjects. Briefly speaking, the whole field of provincial administration was placed under a ministry. This new system of governance, known as Provincial Autonomy, was introduced in 1937. The Congress party came into power in seven provinces of British India. During their short term in office, the Provincial ministers dealt seriously with education. They made an attempt to study Indian education from the national point of view (Kochhar, 1982: 13). The Provincial Government undertook certain bold experiment such as Wardha Scheme. The main principle of the scheme was 'Learning through Activity'. The Zakir Hossain Committee worked out the details of the scheme and prepared detailed syllabi for a number of crafts. However, the outbreak of the 2nd World War in 1939 and the resignation of Congress ministers in 1940 due to differences that arose between the Congress and the British Government of India over the question of war and peace aims of the Allies led to the postponement of the scheme. During this period, several committees were set up by the Central and Provincial Governments for the purpose of discussing various problems of education in India. The Abbot-Wood Report (1936-1937) pointed out that general education and vocational education were not essentially different branches and that vocational students should have an adequate general education.

During the period between 1940-1946, due to absence of popular ministries, domination of the Indian scene by political problems and the preoccupation of the government with war efforts, the pace of educational progress slowed down. After the end of Second World War, the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) in India published a comprehensive report on the "Post-War Educational Development in India" in the country. This was the first systematic and national level attempt to review the problems of education as a whole. It is also known as Sargent Plan after John Sargent, the then Educational Advisor to the Government of India. Surprisingly, the report is not known after its chairman (Sir Jogindra Singh), but its one of the members of the Committee – John Sargent (the educational advisor to the Government of India). 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. It is worth mentioning here that this plan was proposed by the British Government in order to counter the attempts made by leaders of the freedom movement to evolve a National System of Education (such as Wardha Scheme) (Chauhan,2004:37).

Conclusion:

The present study concludes that the Sargent Plan was one of the most comprehensive schemes of education ever proposed by the British Government after the Despatch of 1854. Through this, the government had proposed a detailed outline of the educational programmes to be undertaken by the government during the following 40 years from 1944 to 1984. As the freedom movement was at its full swing those days, this plan could not be implemented because of political turmoil in the country. With India achieving freedom in 1947, this Plan became only a matter of historical significance. The objective was to create within 40 years, the same level of educational attainment as prevailed in England. Although a bold and comprehensive scheme, it proposed no methodology for implementation. Also, the ideal of England's achievements may not have suited Indian conditions. However, hardly had the first steps been taken when the British period in the history of Indian education came to an end on 15th August, 1947. The Sargent Scheme envisaged a 40 – year educational reconstruction plan for the country which was reduced to 16 years by the Kher Committee.

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