Abstract:

This paper reveals that the beginning of the 20th century marked a great change in the educational policy in India as well as Bihar. The Laissez faire system of education introduced by the Woods Despatch of 1854 and reiterated by the India Education Commission of 1882 was reversed by Lord Curzon, who became the Viceroy of India in 1898. The liberalisation of educational policy during the latter half of the 19th century was viewed with distaste by Lord Curzon as it resulted in increased criticism of governmental policies. Therefore, Curzon planned to reform the educational structure by officialising Indian education through higher control. The policies initiated by him influenced the Indian Educational Systems in the subsequent decades. Lord Curzon's educational reforms started with the Simla conference held in September 1901, a starting point of an era of increased educational activity and earnest prosecution of educational reforms. This was followed by the appointment of the Indian Universities Commission (1902), on the basis of whose recommendations the Indian Universities Act was passed in 1904. In 1913, the next major change was the declaration of the Educational Policy, which was passed through a government resolution. Apart from these changes, initiated by the government, non-officials like Gopala Krishna Gokhale, also moved a Bill to make elementary education free and compulsory. All these changes had a great impact on the growth of education during two decades.

Keywords: Elementary Education, Simla conference, Educational System, Syllabus 1901, etc.

Introduction:

Here, an examination of the changes in the policy made by Lord Curzon is briefly given; Lord Curzon summoned all the Directors of Public Instruction, after a preliminary survey of education, to a conference at Simla in September 1901, "to consider the system of education in India". The major resolutions of the conference were; the establishment of model schools in localities where education was neglected, improvement of female education, primary education, strengthening of inspecting agency for a higher control and putting efficiency first and expansion next. By this the placid calm of ordered progress achieved on the basis of the
principles laid down by the Indian Education Commission was suddenly disturbed and was followed by an era of controversies, conferences, commissions, government resolutions and drastic' changes in educational policy by the government\(^5\).

As a follow-up measure of the Simla conference, the Indian Universities Commission was appointed in January 1902, under the Chairmanship of Thomas Raleigh to enquire into the conditions and prospects of the Universities to improve and elevate the standards of the Universities in British India\(^6\). The Commission submitted its report in June 1902 and its major recommendations were: enlarged legal powers to the older Universities, local limits of Universities, recognition of Universities as teaching bodies, senate, syndicate, and the faculties to be more representative of the affiliated institutions and properly constituted governing bodies for each college\(^7\).

The recommendations invited severe criticism both by press and public opinion in India. It was considered as a step checking the spread and the scope of education and virtually destroying the limited independence of the Indian Universities. On the basis of the recommendations of the Commission of 1902, the Indian Universities Act was passed in 1904. The Act conferred on the Universities of India a working constitution investing them with the authority to control and supervise higher education in accordance with the principles and policy approved by the Government of India. But the unfortunate result of Curzon's reforms was the excessive officialisation of the University administration. No doubt Curzon was trying to bring education under the control of the Government to suppress the nationalist movement in India, but his educational policy introduced efficiency and improvement in the quality of education and was the basis of the educational system for many years to come.

Analysis:

The educational progress received another milestone with the initiation by G.K.Gokhale, the moderate Congress Leader and a member of the Imperial Legislation Council, with the introduction of a Bill to make elementary education free, compulsory, for children aged between 6 and 10 years. The old distinctions between lower primary and upper primary, lower secondary and upper secondary disappeared in 1906 and the institutions were reclassified into elementary and secondary schools\(^8\). Primary Education and Elementary Education used interchangeably hereafter. Government was in favour of it initially but later rejected it on the ground that the scheme was not well worked out and that all the local governments were against it and the suspicion that the intention was to overthrow British Raj\(^9\). Gokhale's efforts had a far-reaching consequences in the subsequent period. His efforts were responsible for the creation of a separate education department and the strengthening of the movement in favour of mass education. When Gokhale's Bill was under discussion, Hardinge, the Viceroy presumed that in the forthcoming coronation Darbar, the Emperor might announce free elementary education\(^10\). Even in his address to the Calcutta University in January 1912, he favoured the spread of education for the enlightenment of Indians. This was followed by the Government Resolution of February 1913 on
Educational Policy for expansion and improvement of Primary Education\(^{11}\). With this started the struggle between the quality and the quantity even in the field of primary education.

The Calcutta University Commission was appointed by the Government of India in 1917, under the Chairmanship of M.E.S. Sadler, to study its working. The report of the Commission, which was submitted in 1919, was a great turning point, since its recommendations were adopted by several other universities. The Montagu Chelmsford Reforms of 1919 introduced Dyarchy and consequently education became a transferred subject.

Thus the period from 1901 to 1920 witnessed great educational activity and changes in Government Policy in India. These changes greatly influenced the educational pattern in the province of Orissa also. In this paper, the spread of education, in the light of the policy changes discussed earlier, will be examined.

In the province of Orissa, the second phase of educational development started from 1901 and continued apart from the earlier development in that field. In the field of primary education, the focus was emphasised more. Being inspired by the current edition of the regulation of the education department of England, it was laid down that, the purpose of the public elementary schools of India was "to form and strengthen the character and develop the intelligence of the children entrusted to it, and to make the best use of the school years available in assisting both girls and boys, according to their different needs to fit themselves practically as well as intellectually for the work of life"\(^{12}\). It was further stated that the other aims of the primary school were to train the children carefully in the habits of observation and clear reasoning so that they may join in intelligent acquaintance with some of the facts and laws of nature, to arouse in them a living interest in the ideas and achievements of mankind.

To give them some power over language as an instrument of thought and expression to develop in them a taste for good reading to encourage their natural activities of hand and eyes by suitable forms of practical work and manual instruction. To train them in appropriate physical exercises, to encourage them in organised games, to instruct them in similar laws of health, to discover and advance individual children of exceptional capacity, to lay the foundations of good conduct and to enable the children not merely to reach their full development as individuals but also to become upright and careful members of the community in which they live\(^{13}\).

**SYLLABUS OF 1901:**

The well-known resolution of January 1901 aimed at achieving the above mentioned objectives. The sole purpose was to revolutionise school teaching in Bengal. Presidency by the introduction of a system under which 'Children are trained and not taught, this is to say, trained to do and learn things by themselves. It strove to activate the innate intelligence of the children for its proper growth. The school work was to become for children a developed part of their everyday life, while habits of accuracy and obedience were to be inculcated by the process of stick-laying and simple physical exercise and action song. These high goals were felt quite difficult to realise, but the intention of the authors of resolution of 1901 was that "bad teaching with a good education system will produce better results than bad teaching with a bad and
unsound system”. The resolution also mentioned clearly that the then prevailing system was quite mechanical system of training, where in the memory was used for imparting education.

As a result of the introduction of the well known Resolution of 1901, the following changes were made in the Lower Primary and Upper Primary courses.

i) The infant class was to be divided into 3 sections and the course was to extend over a year.

Under the new system, the children were to be taught. Kindergarten and object lessons, simple lessons about the human body and about animals, lessons on number, the writing of numerals, rotation and simple calculation, the learning of the alphabet and reading of simple printed and written language etc.,

ii) In the lower primary course, the class reading book was abolished and a science primer was introduced, which was to consist of certain number of pages on; Botany, Natural History, Agriculture, Physics, Chemistry, Hygiene, Domestic economy etc.,

iii) The Upper Primary course was enlarged by the addition of a historical reader and a literature book, practical geometry and menstruation being also added and the scope of the object lessons on the natural objects being enlarged ”.

The planners of the new system had the objective of creating a new system of elementary instruction which consisted wholly of making children commit to memory certain statements, either taken from book or verbally imparted and mechanically instructing them in certain processes, such as writing, counting and calculating. Realising that for the revivify the masses for elementary education, modern development of infant teaching must be brought in, so as to develop the elementary education.

But these reform measures were encountered by colossal difficulties to function effectively. The teachers of the primary school, where the new system was to work, were poor in qualifications. While writing on this subject in 1902, the Director of Public Instruction remarked, "It was almost impossible to convey to the ordinary educated English man or European even an idea of them. To say that the majority of these men were able to record and write and to do a little arithmetic is to rechange the sum total of their accomplishments. How could these even be got to assimilate the principle of the kindergarten system and to learn to teach their pupils about things instead of confining them to a repetition of words 1%.

Conclusion:

This paper concludes that the syllabus of 1901 had among its objectives had that every Indian child should under it have a chance of acquiring a proper knowledge of his own vernacular. But with the introduction of science primer, which was the only book in standard I and II, this excellent object was frustrated. The science primer that had been produced in Oriya language had not been good either from the point of view of science or language. Indeed, considering the development of Oriya Language in the first decade of the 20th century, it was impossible to produce vernacular elementary science primer, which could be considered a good book from the point of view of language and style.
Thus the period from 1901 to 1920 witnessed great educational activity and changes in Government Policy in India as well as Bihar. These changes greatly influenced the educational pattern in the province of Orissa and Bihar also.

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