
THE RISE OF BRITISH ENLIGHTENMENT IN INDIA : THE EDUCATIONAL AND SOCIAL IMPACT

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Abstract :

In the pre-British era, there was a lack of fundamental changes in Indian society. Due to contact with the west, the mentality required for educational and social enlightenment was formed after the establishment of British empire. Efforts were made at various levels to improve the situation. The company government made some benefits in terms of improving Indian society. With introduction of western education and educational reforms, the ideas of learning English literature, freedom, equality, and democracy etc. began to grow among Indians. Schools were established and continued to grow. The company officials accepted the policy that along with English education, comprehensive education in all disciplines should be provided, and that western education should be provided in English. Wood's influence led to the beginning of the modern Indian education system. Schools and universities started to emerge. With the emergence of reformist institutions, the work of educational and social became wide spread and effective.

Keywords : Colonialism, Western English education, Social reforms, British empire, Religion and customs etc.

Introduction :

The battle of Plassey in 1757 laid the foundation of British empire in India. During 1757, this empire expanded and became strong. While the empire of British East India company, many changes took place in India, which we will study in this paper. After the Portuguese and Dutch fell behind in the competition of European nations to establish colonies in India and in this period British-French conflict broke out. Overcoming it, the British won the wars fought with the foreign powers. By 1818, the British established their empire in almost the entire India. The purpose of this paper is to see what social, religious and educational reforms they made during this period had and how the enlightenment began.

Along with the spread of Christianity, the spread of Western education began in India. Reformist institutions began to emerge, and social reformers made great contribution to society. We will see in these elements that printing became widespread

after the invention of printing press. As newspapers began to grow and appear in various languages like English in India. How it grew and how it reflected social, political and educational life in India. Keeping in mind the social conditions, Superstitions, immoral customs, and their consequences, can be find in this writing.

Social consequences of the east india company's policies :

After the establishment of British empire in India, an ideological awakening took place in India. This awakening brought about a great transformation in Indian society. it is said that an ideological awakening took place in India after the establishment of British empire, which reflects the influence of British view that Indian society was backward. It is seen that the reformers also had the same view. In these narrow perspectives, pre-British India was compared with modern western culture. It is accepted that there was lack of fundamental changes in Indian society during the pre-British period. It is worth noting that although there were no changes in society, there were potential to changes. The mentality required for these social changes to take place were being formed. It is necessary to see, what the overall social situations were like during that period.

Social conditions :

In social spheres, religion and customs had imposed great restrictions on the caste system, family system and marriage system, the medieval caste system was insidious. The profession of the caste was fixed. If the person did any other profession other than his caste profession, he had to faced the wrath of his caste and the people of the caste in which he would do his profession. Apart from profession, the caste system had imposed many other restrictions on individuals. Caste was determined by birth. A person could only marry within his own caste. Interaction with other caste was avoided. Whether these restrictions were followed or not was seen by the community. Those who violated this restriction were thrown out of the village. In the overall social sphere, the authority of the community greater than the king. In the various caste system of the society, untouchability was the observed for the lowest caste. The saints tried to remove the inequality in the social system. They try to create equality and brotherhood. But equality in the religious field could not be achieved in practice.

Child marriage, marriage of girls with adult men, polygamy etc. were prevalent. Widow remarriages were not accepted among the upper castes. However divorce and widow remarriage were accepted among the lower castes. Marriage was considered a religious obligation. The condition of women were deplorable. Many restrictions of the family and marriage system were imposed on them. Child marriage, marriage of girl with adult men, tradition of "Sati", hairnes etc.were prevalent. The trend of polygamy and the ban on remarriage of women had made the condition of women worse. This situation of medieval Indian society was in accordance with the times and the needs of the society, therefore, no thoughts arose against the established status. The view is that the British empire brought about a paradigm shift in India. They started making administrative changes and social consequences of those policies and practices are

evident.

Social reforms laws enacted by the company :

Government in the first half of the nineteenth century, the company government passed various laws and stopped some of the unwholesome customs of the Hindu society. The period of Lord Bentinck is called a new era of social reforms. Bentinck's policies were to achieve the welfare of the people through austerity and to establish peace. According to some opinions of the Historians are, this empire in India was wise and for the welfare of the people. Macaulay has given a very accurate description of Lord Bentinck's reformist empire. Bentinck eradicated many unwholesome customs from the Indian society. The laws enacted by the company during the period from 1817 to 1856 are as follows:

1. Act of 1817 :

The Brahmins of Banaras had some special rights, which allowed them to punish others with corporate punishment of certain crimes. This right was abolished by this act passed in this period.

2. Act of 1829 :

After the death of women's husband, women has to burn herself on his pyre was common. The attitude of voluntary surrender had become a form of torture. At such time, knowing that it was in the public interest to abolish this out dated practice, Lord Bentinck show the courage to ban this practice by the law. At the insistence of Raja Ram Mohan Roy, the custom of "Sati" was first slowed down in Bengal. Later, it was banned throughout the India.

3. Act of 1832 :

According to Hindu scriptures, if someone changes their religion, their rights to the estate are lost, but this law made provision for their rights to the estate to remain intact even if they change their religion. Many Hindus believed that this law was a ploy by the British government to benefit those who had converted to Christianity or wanted to convert.

In the reign of Lord Bentinck so many acts passed, like act of 1836, act of 1840, act of 1843 and act of 1856 etc. to ban the traditional malpractices. With above effects were visible due to western culture and education. From this period Western or English education took place in India.

Western Education :

Since ancient times, India had made great progress in many types of arts, Sciences, Languages and scientific subjects. But in the British empire Missionary schools started to open in India to educate the Indian people by the western education. In British empire, such schools were operating in almost every large village. Due to foreign

invention and Political, Social and Cultural instability help to arose with the situation. It was necessary for there to break inn the high tradition of Indian education. According to the traditional education system, education was given for reading and writing, education given in terms of accounting, physical education received by the traditional form home where the norms.

English education was formally started in India with the English education act of 1835, which made English will be the medium of instruction for schools and universities. This act implemented the decision of Governor General Bentinck and was influenced by Lord Macaulay's advocacy for western learning. While Missionaries had introduced English education earlier in some areas, the act of 1835 officially sanctioned and promoted it across the British India, reallocating funds to support this new educational system. English education in India provide benefits such as wider carrier opportunities enabling access to globe. It also grant access to global educational institutions and resources, improving learning and cultural understanding.

Educational Reforms :

When the British empire was established in India, the first question was whether to provide education to the people of the India. In 1718, a school was started in Bombay on free basis. In the following period, number of Missionaries schools increased in India. However in the early nineteenth century, due to small amount of government aids and private efforts, the number of schools increased rapidly. Initially Baron Hastings, Lord Hastings etc. advocated the study of Western Literature. There were the difference of opinion among the company officials doubt the type of education to be provided in these new schools. There was the school of thoughts that Sanskrit, Persian and classical texts should be studied. There was also another school of thoughts language, literature and modern science should be taught according to the European method. As the scope of government work increased, emphasis began to take place on teaching in government schools. Until 1857, the medium of education was also English, thus, with the spread of education, the junior clerical class required for government offices was automatically available.

Whatever the intention of school founders in the early days, over time, the principle adopted by the western education system seem to have been implemented in India as well. This according to the education system, the connection of education with religion was abolished, and the modern education system was called for. Accordingly, emphasis was placed on teaching subjects such as English and English literature. William Jones established the "Asiatic Society Of Bengal" in 1874 to study the ancient Indian literature and Oriental research. Mount Stuart Elphinstone was appointed as the first Governor of Bombay province in 1819. Before that, he had served as Resident I Pune, Nagpur and again in Pune. He advocated liberal education for Indians. He supported the idea that comprehensive education in all disciplines should be provided instead of providing English education for religious purpose.

Conclusion :

Because of the rise of English enlightenment, Indians were introduced to Western ideas. They were the introduced the ideas of liberty, equality and fraternity in the English education. English education gave a rise to a new class in India. This class started efforts to eliminate the undesirable customs and traditions of the society. A sense of unity was created among Indians and the idea of opposing injustice began to grow. Various institutions came into existence to create awareness in the society. Through English education, Indians became aware of western culture and tried to study English literature.

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