



A Review of Wood’s Dispatch and its Merits and Demerits

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Introduction : Wood’s Dispatch is a very important educational document and holds a unique place in the history of Indian education. It placed the responsibility of education of the Indian people fully on the Company and stated quite explicitly that it must never be neglected. The Despatch gave new direction to education in India

Wood's Education Despatch formed the basis of the education policy of east india company's government in India since 1854. Drafted probably at the instance of Sir Charles Wood, President of the board of control, it was forwarded to the Government of India as Despatch No 49 of 19 July 1854 for 'creating a properly articulated system of education, from the primary school to the University'. It was indeed a landmark in the history of education in modern India and presented a comprehensive plan for the later development of the educational system in the subcontinent.

Merits of Wood’s Dispatch:

Educational Policy: Through Wood’s Dispatch, British Parliament, for the first time made an attempt to decide the educational policy of India and made it constitutional. Before this, there was no policy of education for Indians. Through this Dispatch they decided for the first time their policy about education system in India. Wood’s Dispatch started a new era in Indian education system by clearly defining objectives of education. It made the Government realize the importance of education for the people and presented a comprehensive scheme of education embracing primary, secondary and higher education.

Grant-in-aid system: By the grant-in-aid system many schools were benefited, the quality of education improved, and private organisations were encouraged to open new schools.

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Educational Responsibility: This Dispatch brought about a revolutionary change in the educational policy of the British Government. It declared that Indian education was the duty and responsibility of the British government. The Dispatch recommended scholarship for the poor and deserving students.

Importance of Indian literature and culture: The Dispatch recognized the importance and utility of Indian literature, culture and knowledge. It recommended the inclusion of Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian language and literature in the curriculum along with the western knowledge.

Indian languages as medium of instruction: Charles Wood also recognized Indian languages as the medium of instruction along with English. Wood's Dispatch encouraged Language teaching. As a result, regional languages and classical languages were taught in the schools.

Department of Public Instruction: It recommended the creation of a separate Department of Public Instruction in five provinces and appointment of a Director to head the Department To run properly the education schemes of India, the Dispatch suggested for setting up Department of Public Instruction in each province with the Director of Public Instruction, Deputy Directors etc. Thus it prepared an administrative set up for education.

Establishment of Universities: The Dispatch encouraged higher education by recommending the establishment of universities in Calcutta, Bombay and Madras and emphasized on the necessity of vocational education. Thus education got a good stride.

Expansion of Mass Education: The principle of Downward Filtration Theory was discarded by the Wood's Dispatch and it encouraged the promotion of mass education. It recommended the establishment of indigenous schools. By giving a universal character to education, the Dispatch abolished the filtration theory. Thus education was not confined to higher class of people alone, instead its doors was opened for all.



Solution of unemployment: Wood's Dispatch also paid attention to solve the problem of unemployment by encouraging vocational education. Arrangements for vocational education were made. Thus the public got an opportunity for becoming self-dependent.

Training of teachers: The Dispatch recommended the training of teachers. The Dispatch recommended the importance of establishing teacher-training institutes to improve the quality of teachers and their conditions of salaries.

Responsibility of women education: The Dispatch revived and recognized the need of development of women education as the duty and responsibility.

Demerits of Wood's Dispatch

Wood's Dispatch could not remove the imbalance in Indian education system. The rich people sent their children to English medium schools, and the government gradually stopped financial aid to the indigenous schools and so the existence of these schools became jeopardized. It failed to develop character initiative and leadership among students.

The Dispatch, in reality promoted Western literature and knowledge and government offices showed preferences for persons educated in English. The education planning and management schemes remained only in black and white.

The system of grant-in-aid did not operate in proper sense, i.e., there was always the paucity of funds, the irregularity of their release and biased attitude towards the privately managed schools.

It neglected general education. Only the privileged class received education.

Indigenous schools remained neglected. Priority was given to people educated on English pattern with regard to government posts. M. R. Paranjpe stated that, —the authors did not aim at education for leadership, education for the industrial regeneration of India, education for the defense of the motherland, in short, education required by the people of a self-governing nation.



Departments of Education were opened in the five provinces but they could not promote the real interest of education

The Dispatch had said that the government should follow a policy of secularism, but regarding the Christian missionaries the Dispatch showed a soft corner

The Wood's Dispatch had a partial attitude towards the Christian missionaries; Christian religious books were easily made available to the students, in the libraries.

The three universities were modeled on the London University and the Government's policy of nominating members to the senate was biased. Therefore higher education was not related to Indian conditions

Conclusion :

Wood's Dispatch recommended the establishment of a network of graded schools all over the country. At one end were the universities and the colleges, then the high schools followed by the middle schools and the bottom of the middle schools and at the bottom of the network were the primary schools, both government and indigenous. Both the Anglo-vernacular and vernacular schools were to be included in the same class. This system was recommended in order to enable an individual to receive higher education after completing the different levels of schools education

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