

## IMPACT OF WOOD'S DESPATCH ON WOMEN'S EDUCATION

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### **ABSTRACT**

*In India the most important contribution by British people is introduction of western Education through English language. They also spread values related to religion culture and sense of beauty in India. After entering foreign education in India women are able to get education. As far as movement of madras in concerned wood's Despatch grant-in-aid system is helped much for women education and their development. There is no doubt this system is a good model for women development of Regional level in madras presidency. It is clear that wood's dispatch was a foremost factor to active tremendous change in the growth and development of women through provision of education. This would help them to increase self confidence and braveness in there to encounter the challenges. The greatest and most important contribution of the British to the national life of the Indians was the spread of Western Education. With its spread, the traditional sense of values regarding religion, education, culture and sense of beauty underwent a change and a new sense of values developed.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Development of Women, Provision of Education, Sense of Values Regarding Religion, Education, Culture*

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **Female Education**

The influences and attitudes that promote women's education are important. During the first half of the nineteenth century, a few schools for female education were established due to the initiative of the missionaries and a few Indian aristocratic families. The conservatives were, however not in favor of female education. Female education in India spread due to the initiative of the western educated liberal minded Indians.

During the first half of the nineteenth female education did not make much headway. Ram Mohan Roy was a great advocate of female education. The BrahamSamaj also contributed much in this regard. In creating an urge and mentality for women's education, journals like UmeshChandia's Bamabodhini, Girlish Chandra Sen's Mahila, BasanteMicra's Bharat Mahila etc., played a very important part. The contributions of PrarthanaSamaj and the Deccan Education Society also deserve special mention in this regard.

#### **Goals of Women Education**

Concerning the goals and the purpose of women's education, two divergent views have emerged in the course of its developments. One can be summarized as the demand for equality, including equal opportunities for women. The other

conceptions, which emerged later, stress on the need for the development of human resources in the development process. In the actual education policy of India, a constant effort was made to harmonize these two conflicting tendencies.

### **Women's Education Prior to 1854**

The first step towards the development of Women's Education had been taken by the missionaries and the philanthropists in the early nineteenth century. The first girls' school was founded in 1820 by David Here in Calcutta. In 1848 several schools were started in Bombay by the initiation of Patherson, and in 1815 J.E.D. Betherme founded the famous Bethume School in Calcutta. These private efforts remained limited to certain groups. The Hindus and Muslims hesitated to send their daughters to these schools. During this period Madras Presidency stood foremost in women's education. In 1821 the Church Missionary Society at Tirunelveli opened the first Secondary School. In 1840 with the assistance of Rev. Issac Wilson and his wife, the Scottish Church Society ventured to start six schools for Hindu girls in Madras.

Female education had also made a certain amount of progress independently of the State, chiefly under missionary management before the publication of the Despatch of 1854. Boarding schools were maintained from an early period by the Church of England Societies in Tirunelveli, but they were almost exclusively attended by the higher castes. This attempt had to struggle against many; obstacles.

In 1845 the first girls' school, partly under native management, was opened in Madras. It was the precursor of many more. In 1854 there were probably 7000 girls at schools conducted by missionary societies, and although the bulk of these were native Christians, there was also a considerable proportion of Hindus belonging to the higher castes. The nine pupils at the school of the free Church of Scotland in 1843, had increased to about 700 in 1854.

### **Magna Carta of Education, 1854**

The education dispatch of the Court of Directors, dated July 19, 1854, is a document of great historical. It is the most memorable document on education in India. It rises to the height of the problem and comprehends in its length and breadth.

Wood's Despatch began a new era of organized educational administration, defined the aim of Indian education, and determined the Government's attitude towards the need for technical and women's education. Even though it had recommended that the British Government should support women's education and give financial assistance for the opening of girls' schools, the department of education did not take active measures for another decade or two.

### **Department of Education**

In accordance with the recommendation of the Wood's Despatch, a department of education was set up by the Government of Madras and the grant-in-aid system was introduced. The city of Madras witnessed educational progress at different levels. A Director of Public Instruction was appointed for the Presidency of Madras, with a staff of Inspector and Assistant Inspector under him. The Educational Department in each province acts directly under the orders of the

respective Provincial Government and had developed a system of working, more or less distinctively its own. It took over the Government or the Board instructions which had grown up under the earlier efforts of the East India Company.

### **Official Support to Female Education**

As the result of the Despatch of 1854, the indigenous schools began to function in a better manner in imparting elementary education in the Madras city. The Despatch propounded a series of propositions of first-rate importance concerning elementary education. The Governor of Madras, Lord Elphinstone, did not make any reference to the problem of women's education in his Minutes in 1823. Lord Dalhousie, on the contrary, declared: "It is the opinion of the Governor General-in-Council that no single change in the habit of the people is likely to lead to more important and beneficial consequences to female children". This declaration of Lord Dalhousie was the forerunner of the famous Wood's Education Despatch of 1854, which laid down the encouragement of the female education' as that of the Company's policy. It was for the first time an official decision was made to give frank and cordial support for female education.

The Despatch, though stressed the importance of female education, was silent about ways and means to promote it. Even fourteen years, after the passing of the Despatch the government at Fort St. George did not have any concrete proposal for fostering female education.

On the basis of a recommendation made by this Despatch, three major universities were established in India in 1857 in Madras, Bombay, and Calcutta, which created a great landmark in the field of education. Western ideas of education in general and female education in particular received special attention under these universities.

### **Schools for Girls**

After the transfer of power to the British parliament in 1858, the subject of female education came under the serious consideration of the government, though previous to that year, several missions had taken practical steps towards the establishment of elementary schools for girls. Secular schools had been springing up in various parts of the presidency. The normal school established at Madras for the education of teachers for native girls became a great measure.

The Despatch recommended that the British government should support women's education, and grants should be made to the established private schools. The Sarah Tuchker Female training school, named after the sister of the C.M.S. secretary in Madras, was opened at Palayamkottai in 1858. In 1867 it passed into the capable of Mr.Lash.

The Big Parichary, Madras consisted of eight divisions but had no girls school, actually, within its limits, although one of the many good works of the Rev. C.R. Drury was the establishment of a school for this place. It was put under government inspection and obtained a grant.

In Black Town, Madras, a school for the education of girls began in 1860. It was altogether a self-supporting school. Only lately it was put under government inspection, and obtained a grant.

The first Caste Girl's School of the London Mission Society appears to have been opened in January 1862. This was in Black Town. Subsequently, three more were opened, but after a time the children of four schools or the greater part of

them, were induced to assemble, I order that they might enjoy the more continuous oversight and instruction of the lady in charge. In 1866 a school for caste girls was started in purasawakkam. It has been brought under inspection, and a small grant on the resulting system has been obtained.

In conclusion, goes without saying that Woods Despatch contemplated an educational system for India. One cannot underestimate the work of Charles Wood who encouraged the establishment of schools and colleges, particularly for women, grants-in-aid system and vernacular medium of instructions. To bring the entire educational system under the supervision of a government department is a unique task in this regard.

Owing to the emphasis made by Charles Wood towards female education, women who were denied the privilege of education, women who were denied the privilege of education, were enlightened through the western system of education. This dispatch was, no doubt, a specific directive to encourage female education.

The dispatch of 1854 though stressed the importance of female education, was silent about ways and means to promote it. Even fourteen years after the passing of the Wood's dispatch, the government at Fort St. George did not have any concrete proposal for fostering female education.

Despite this fact, the path laid by Wood's Despatch was a basic factor to achieve tremendous change in the progress of women through education which brought self-confidence and courage in them to face the challenges till date.

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