

**CONTENTS**

**page no.**

**I. Introduction.....5-6**

**II. Woods despatch of 1854.....14-19**

**-aims and objectives**

**-recommendations**

**III. Merits and demerits of woods despatch.....20-21**

**IV. Conclusion.....22**

**Bibliography.....23**

## INTRODUCTION

**Charles Wood, 1st Viscount Halifax** (20 December 1800 – 8 August 1885), known as **Sir Charles Wood, 3rd Bt** between 1846 and 1866, was a British Liberal politician and Member of Parliament. He served as Chancellor of the Exchequer from 1846 to 1852.

### Background

Halifax was the son of Sir Francis Wood, 2nd Baronet, and his wife Anne, daughter of Samuel Buck. He was educated at Eton and Oriel College, Oxford, where he studied classics and mathematics.

### Political career

A Liberal and Member of Parliament from 1826 to 1866, Wood served as Chancellor of the Exchequer in Lord John Russell's government (1846–1852), where he opposed any further help for Ireland during the Great Famine there. Wood later served as President of the Board of Control under Lord Aberdeen (1852–1855), as First Lord of the Admiralty in Lord Palmerston's first administration (1855–1858), and as Secretary of State for India in Palmerston's second government (1859–1866). He succeeded to his father's baronetcy in 1846, and in 1866 he was elevated to the peerage as **Viscount Halifax**, of Monk Bretton in the West Riding of the County of York.

### Wood's despatch

British Parliament exercised control over the East India Company. After every 20 years a new Charter Act was issued to the company by the British government. In the Charter Act 1813 a sum of rupees one lakh was sanctioned for the development of education in India. The Charter Act, 1833 increased the sum of rupees 10 lakh. In 1853 when the company's Charter came for the renewal in the British Parliament, the need for the permanent and comprehensive education policy for India was felt. So the Parliamentary committee was founded by the British Parliament

to decide the policy for Indian education. The committee thoroughly studied the contemporary Indian education system and the role of company in it. It heard the idea of the persons like Marshman, Wilson, Halide, Cameron and Duff who had a thorough knowledge about the Indian Education and on its basis submitted its report to the British Parliament. A discussion took place on the report and on its basis an education policy for India was decide and added to the new Chater of the company. **The president of the Company's Board of Control was Sir Charles Wood. He declared this education policy on July 19' 1854. It it therefore, on his name termed as Wood Despatch.** This declaration is long inscription of 100 articles which describes the education policy and role of Company in it. Wood's educational despatch has a very important role to play in history of education in India.

As the President of the Board of Control, Wood did a yeoman's job in spreading education in India when in 1854 he sent a despatch to Lord Dalhousie, the then Governor-General of India. It was recommended therein that:

1. An education department was to be set in every province.
2. Universities on the model of the London university be established in big cities such as Bombay, Calcuta and Madras.
3. At least one government school be opened in every district.
4. Affiliated private schools should be given grant in aid.
5. Special institutions for training teachers should be set up
6. Importance should be given to the education of women.

**In accordance with Wood's despatch, Education Departments were established in every province and universities were opened at Calcutta, Bombay and Madras in 1857 and in Punjab in 1882 and at Allahbad 1887.**

## WOODS DESPATCH OF 1854

The origin of the present system of education which is prevalent in this country today can be traced to the beginning of the nineteenth century when a controversy had been raging over the issue whether oriental learning and science should be spread through the medium of Sanskrit, Arabic or Persian or Western sciences and literature be spread through English as the medium of instruction. The Government conducted surveys of the then prevalent systems of education with a view to re-organising education to suit the needs of the times. Consequent on Macaulay's Minute regarding the educational policy of the future, Lord William Bentick's Government issued a communique wherein it was stated " that the great object of the British Government ought to be the promotion of European literature and science among the natives of India; and that all the funds appropriated for the purpose of education alone"<sup>1</sup>. The Government Resolution, however, stated that provision should be made for the continuance of schools and colleges where indigenous learning was being imparted.

**By 1853 a number of problems concerning education in the country had risen which required immediate solution. As a result of an inquiry made by the Government, Sir Charles Wood, the then Secretary of state, sent a despatch popularly known as Wood's Despatch to the Court of the Directors of the East India Company in 1854.** The despatch enunciated the aim of education as the diffusion of the Arts, Science, Philosophy and Literature of Europe. It laid down that the study of Indian languages was to be encouraged and that the English language should be taught wherever there was demand for it, and that both English and the Indian Languages were to be regarded the media for the diffusion of European knowledge; a scheme to establish universities was to be formulated, whose functions were to hold examinations and order degrees. The despatch also recommended that a number of high schools should-be set up. This eventually **led to the establishment in the country of the first three universities in 1857.**

**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**

---

<sup>1</sup> <http://mohitpuri.pbworks.com/w/page/11465849/Woods-Despatch>

**Despatch No 49 of 19 July 1854 for 'creating a properly articulated system of education, from the primary school to the University'.** The renewal of the Company's Charter in 1853 provided the occasion for the despatch. As usual, a Select Committee of the House of Commons held a very thorough enquiry into educational situation in India. **Often described as the 'Magna Carta of modern education in India'**, the despatch was one of the wisest state papers prepared by the court of directors. 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.

Consisting of a hundred paragraphs the document dealt with several issues of great educational importance. Accepting 'the improvement and far wider extension of education both English and vernacular' as the 'sacred duty' of the Government of India the despatch recommend the following measures for the realisation of the desired aims:

**(1) the establishment of a separate department of education for its administration; (2) the foundation of universities at the three Presidency towns; (3) the establishment of institutions for training of teachers for all types of schools; (4) the maintenance of the existing government colleges and high schools and establishment of new ones if and when necessary; (5) the establishment of new middle schools; (6) greater attention to vernacular schools, indigenous and others, for expansion of elementary education and (7) the introduction of a system of grants-in aid to help support a rising number of privately managed educational institutions.**

The despatch drew special attention of the government 'to the importance of placing the means of acquiring useful and practical knowledge within reach of the great mass of the people'. English was to be the medium of instruction in the higher branches, and the vernacular in the lower. English was to be taught wherever there was a demand for it, but it was not to be substituted for the vernacular. The system of grants-in-aid was to be based on the principle of perfect religious neutrality. A properly graded system of scholarships was to be introduced and female education was to receive the frank and cordial support of the government.

The despatch concluded with the comment that in course of time, government institutions, especially those of the higher order, might safely be closed, or transferred to the management of

local bodies under the control of, and aided by, the state. On the basis of these recommendations the new system of education in India gradually evolved. No doubt, with the progress of time the system underwent changes, but the original blue-print was framed by the Despatch of 1854.

### **AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF WOOD'S DESPATCH**

- 1. To confer upon the natives of India those vast and material blessings which flow from the general diffusion of western knowledge.**
- 2. To raise the moral character.**
- 3. To provide the East India Company with educated, reliable and capable public servants.**
- 4. To secure for U. K a large and assumed supply of many articles necessary for her manufacturers.**
- 5. To make people of India familiar with the works of European authors.**

### **RECOMMENDATIONS OF WOOD'S DESPATCH :**

- 1. Government's acceptance of educational responsibility:** The Despatch for the first time clearly accepted that the responsibility of education in India lies on British Government.
- 2. Aims of education:** The Despatch defined the aim of education keeping in view the interests of Indians and British rule. Education is to raise intellectual fitness and moral character of Indians. At the same time, it was to prepare them to become supporters of British rule in India.
- 3. Oriental languages:** The Despatch emphasized the importance of Oriental languages. Mr. Wood had recognized the usefulness of Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian and recommended them as subjects of study in regular institutions. Like Macaulay, he also recognized the usefulness of western knowledge for Indians.
- 4. Medium of instruction:** The Despatch recommended that owing to the shortage of books in Indian languages, the medium of instruction should be English. But English should be needed for those people who have proper knowledge and taste for English and are able to understand European knowledge through this language. For other Indian languages should be used.

**5. Establishment of Education Department:** The Despatch directed that the Department of Public Instruction should be established in every province. This department was to inspect schools and to guide teachers.

**6. Establishment of Universities:** The Despatch recommended the establishment of Universities in Presidency towns of Calcutta, Bombay and Madras, and if necessary at other places also.

**7. Establishment of graded schools:** The Despatch recommended that there should be graded schools all over the country as follows:

			Universities	
			Colleges	
		High Schools		
	Middle Schools			
Primary Schools				

**8. Expansion of mass education:** The Despatch admitted that mass education has been totally neglected. Therefore, the Despatch directed that useful and practical knowledge should be conveyed to masses. To achieve this purpose, the Despatch recommended the establishment of increased number of High Schools, Middle Schools and Primary Schools. The indigenous primary schools were regarded as the foundation upon which the superstructure of education could be constructed.

**9. Grant-in-aid System:** The Despatch proposed the sanction of grant-in-aid to the Indian educational institutions for increase in teacher's salaries, scholarships, libraries, construction of building etc.

Following types of educational institutions were declared eligible for grants:

- i. Institutions following the rules and regulations enforced by the government and which were prepared to get them inspected by government inspectors.
- ii. Institutions run very well by private institutions.
- iii. Institutions free from the communal feelings and not observing distinction of caste, community and creed.
- iv. Institutions charging fees from the students.

**10. Training of Teachers:** Without proper training, teachers would not be able to teach well. The Despatch recommended the need for establishing different types of training institutions.

**11. Education of women:** In Wood's Despatch, much emphasis was given upon women education. The Despatch recommended that the education ladder would be incomplete without women education. It appreciated the work of enlightened Indians engaged in this sacred job.

**12. Muslim Education:** Concerning Muslim Education, Mr. Wood found that Muslims in this country were educationally backward and hence they should be encouraged to gain more education and efforts should be made in this direction.

**13. Vocational Education:** The Despatch pointed out the need of starting vocational schools and colleges for imparting instructions in different vocations. Vocational education may be considered as a necessity in order to prepare children for future life.

**14. Education for Employment:** The Despatch recommended that academically and highly qualified person should be preferred more than the others for Government services.

**15. Policy of religious neutrality:** The Despatch directed the company to follow a policy of religious neutrality. No man's religion was to stand in the way of securing an appointment under the Government. Moreover, no religious instruction should be imparted in educational institutions. They were to be exclusively secular.



# MERITS AND DEMERITS OF WOODS DESPATCH

## Merits of Wood's Despatch

Following are the merits of Wood's Despatch.

1. **Educational Policy:** Through Wood's Despatch, 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 Despatch they decided for the first time their policy about education system in India.
2. **Educational Responsibility:** This Despatch 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.
3. **Importance of Indian literature and culture:** The Despatch 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.
4. **Indian languages as medium of instruction:** Charles Wood also recognized Indian languages as the medium of instruction along with English.
5. **Department of Public Instruction:** To run properly the education schemes of India, the Despatch 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.
6. **Establishment of Universities:** Because of the recommendations of the Despatch universities were opened in Presidency towns of Calcutta, Bombay and Madras. Thus education got a good stride.
7. **Expansion of Mass Education:** The Despatch took active steps for the encouragement and expansion of public education. By giving a universal character to education, the

Despatch abolished the filtration theory. Thus education was not confined to higher class of people alone, instead its doors was opened for all.

8. **Solution of unemployment:** Wood's Despatch 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.
9. **Training of teachers:** The Despatch recommended the training of teachers.
10. **Responsibility of women education:** The Despatch revived and recognized the need of development of women education as the duty and responsibility.

### **Demerits of Wood's Despatch**

- 1) The Despatch set up the defective system of education. Education remained as a means for earning livelihood and not a means for obtaining knowledge.
- 2) The pattern of proposed universities was purely foreign. The Despatch took the idea of London University for Indian universities. Thus the universities established on the basis of its recommendations became British in nature and spirit. They were not Indian in character.
- 3) The Despatch gave priority to English. The government was spending the major portion or almost all the allotted money for the education in the development and extension of English schools.
- 4) The main purpose of the Despatch was to spread western knowledge.
- 5) Due to the recommendations of the Despatch, the Education Department was set up in each province and the education went under the direct mechanical control of the government.
- 6) Actually speaking, there was no real vocational education as advocated by Despatch. It was proposed not in the interest of Indians but to create faithfulness toward British government.
- 7) The Despatch had said that the government should follow a policy of secularism, but regarding the Christian missionaries the Despatch showed a soft corner.

## CONCLUSION

By 1853 a number of problems concerning education in the country had risen which required immediate solution. As a result of an inquiry made by the Government, Sir Charles Wood, the then Secretary of state, sent a despatch popularly known as Wood's Despatch to the Court of the Directors of the East India Company in 1854.

**The despatch prepared by Sir Charles Wood in 1854 on an educational system for India came to be called the Magna Carta of education in the country.** According to Wood's scheme, the government needed to spread western education through English medium for higher education. But vernacular primary schools should be set up in rural areas. Its other **recommendations were a grants-in-aid system to encourage private enterprise's involvement in education, a Department of Public Instruction in each of the five provinces, universities in Calcutta, Bombay and Madras, teacher's training institutions and promotion of education for women.**

**Wood's Education Despatch formed the basis of the education policy of east India company's government in India since 1854.** The despatch drew special attention of the government "to the importance of placing the means of acquiring useful and practical knowledge within reach of the great mass of the people'. English was to be the medium of instruction in the higher branches, and the vernacular in the lower. This Despatch gave many recommendations, on the basis of these recommendations the new system of education in India gradually evolved. No doubt, with the progress of time the system underwent changes, but the original blue-print was framed by the Despatch of 1854. Most of **Wood's proposals were implemented which led to westernization of the Indian educational system.** Despite many limitations ,**the Despatch has contributed a lot to the organization and stabilization of the present Indian educational system.**

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

### **Books referred**

- Sharma.Ram Nath, Rajendra K Sharma, “*History of education in India*”, Atlantic Publishers & Dist, new delhi,1996
- Jayapalan ,N. “*History Of Education In India*”, Atlantic Publishers & Dist, new delhi,2005
- Kahol , Yudhishtar. “*A Handbook of Education*”, Anmol Publications PVT. LTD.new delhi, 2004
- Tara,Chand. “*Development Of Education System In India*”, Anmol Publications PVT. LTD,2004,

### **Websites**

- [www.banglapedia.org](http://www.banglapedia.org)
- [www.indianetzone.com](http://www.indianetzone.com)
- [www.mohitpuri.pbworks.com](http://www.mohitpuri.pbworks.com)
- [www.educationandeconomy.wordpress.com](http://www.educationandeconomy.wordpress.com)