



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CREATIVE RESEARCH THOUGHTS (IJCRT)

An International Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

MACAULAY VS GANDHI: AN EDUCATIONAL TRANSFORMATION

Krishnakant Singh

Student

Department of Education

Central University of Jharkhand

Ranchi, Jharkhand, India

Abstract: Gandhi and Macaulay both were philosophers and their philosophies are still relevant. Thomas Babington Macaulay, better known as Lord Macaulay, is the man who brought English language and British education to India. Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi gave us the first indigenous education system named Basic Education in the British Raj. The foreign education system makes the Indian weak and fragile. Instruction in the foreign language decreases critical thinking as well as prepares the common masses to follow the guidelines laid down by the Britishers. It took many years for the Indians to overcome the trauma inflicted by their colonizers. The retaliation of the colonized to their colonizers can be seen in the Basic Education of 1937 laid down by M.K. Gandhi in which he had given them the hope of freedom and sovereignty. Gandhi knew that education plays a very effective role in the awakening of Indian masses. He worked even before the Wardha Commission as Britishers were also working on the education of Indians before the Macaulay minutes. This Basic Education or Wardha Commission or the 'Nai Talim' creates a sense of unity and interdependence among fellow Indians by giving the concept of vocational education that was purely indigenous.

Key Words: Macaulay's Minutes, Basic Education, Wardha Commission, 'Nai Talim'

INTRODUCTION

In our education system, we have two famous names, Macaulay and Gandhi. On the one hand, there is Macaulay (Thomas Babington Macaulay), an ideal follower of White's Man Burden (burden of the white to civilize the uncivilized); whereas on the other, we have Gandhi (Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi), a man who sacrificed his life to give the message that it is we (the citizens of India) who are responsible to bring the change no other can. He induced in the heart and soul of the Indians the feeling of nationalism. In this writing, we will see how education made us dependent during the era of Macaulay to independent in the Gandhian period. We will see the journey from being literate to being educated, from a trained worker of a state to a responsible citizen of a nation.

Indian Education in 1835 vs Indian Education in 1935

Macaulay introduced his Minutes in 1835 and successfully westernized Indian education. English became the official language for the government and courts and was adopted as the official medium of instruction. Macaulay wrote in his Minutes, “*A single shelf of a good European library is worth more than the whole native literature of India and Arabia*”. Macaulay wanted to create, “*A class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals and in intellect*”.

Gandhi's idea of education was introduced in The All Indian Educational Conference held at Wardha, 1937. This scheme of education is also known as Basic education or ‘Nai Talim’. Basic Education occupies a unique place in the field of elementary education in India. This scheme was the first attempt to develop an indigenous system of education in British India by Mahatma Gandhi.

Macaulay supported the downward filtration theory (that is, providing education to few and through them, it is conveyed to the masses); whereas Gandhi supported free and compulsory education to all between the age of 7 to 14 years. Gandhi on British education system said, “*I am convinced that the present system of education is not only wasteful but positively harmful.*” The conference of 1945 at Sevagram characterized Basic Education as ‘Education for Life’. The focal point of Basic education is skill-based teaching which would enable the student to solve the problems of livelihood and at the same time develop the quality of good citizenship.

The most important thing for all of us is to look at Gandhi as a visionary. He introduced this education system in 1937 and the focus of this education was to enhance the skill of the children and make them good citizens. He knew that children who were at the age of 10 or 12 years in 1937 would be of 20 or 22 years at the time of Independence. The children who were getting education under this education system would become youth of the country in 1950. This education system was considered to be a failure but it gave us the sense to be a responsible citizen. Out of the many reasons to consider India as a successful democratic third world country during the mid of the 20th century, Gandhian education system might be the one because most of the third world countries who got their independence during 1950 fell into terrible conditions like struggling for their rights or indulged in civil war whereas India stands flourishing. This could be possible because Indians gained their lost identity. They have their constitution, culture, language as well as their own education in the form of Basic education. For this, the Indian masses must thank Gandhi.

Battle of Buxar (1764) vs. Indian National Congress (1885)

“*History repeats itself*”. If we forget history then it will repeat itself. Battle of Buxar (1764) was the decisive battle that was fought between English forces and a combined army of Mir Kasim, the Nawab of Bengal, Nawab of Oudh - Shah Alam II and the Mughal Emperor. The English won the battle and the battle proved to be the turning point in the history of India. English started moving into the heart of India and after sixty years they came up with the Macaulay Minutes.

Similarly, in 1885, there was the birth of the Indian National Congress. A.O. Hume invited eminent Indians from different parts of the country to meet at Poona from 25th to 28th Dec 1885 (It shifted from Poona to Bombay because Poona was infected with cholera). The main idea of creating this organization was that all Indian forums should work as ‘safety valve’ for the escape of the great anger generated against British rule in India. A very humble beginning of INC developed into a powerful organization. M.K. Gandhi made it a mass organization from a class organization.

When the reader will think deeper into this, they will feel how beautiful history is. During the Battle of Plassey and Buxar, it was the Indian who supported the Britishers and helped them to establish in the Indian subcontinent. Similarly, it is the British who helped in the formation of INC, which uprooted the British Empire from the Indian subcontinent. Macaulay's Minutes shows the deep penetration of British Raj in the Indian subcontinent whereas the Wardha Commission of Gandhi paved the way for the new beginning of India by giving a sense of self-reliance.

India vs. Bharat or Hindustan

India is a place for the world especially for the Britishers whereas Bharat or Hindustan is the dream of all the people living in this country - a dream for which their forefathers laid their lives. A dream for them becomes a reality for the present citizens of the country and the dream for them becomes a reality for the coming generations. Macaulay's Minutes came into existence to make the best use of India while on the contrary Basic Education of Gandhi was laid down to fulfill the dreams of millions of 'Bharatwasis'. India as a place and Hindustan or Bharat as a reality must live long. *"Our forefather's dream heaven in which we are living. Now it's our responsibility to preserve this heaven". "Burden for Britishers; Responsibility for Indians"*.

Orientalist vs. Occidental

Let us understand both these terms with examples: Orientalism is a way of seeing the east. It involves seeing their culture as exotic, backward and uncivilized. For example, on 13th April 1919, the killing of unarmed people of Jallianwala Bagh as if their existence meant nothing; their protest meant the shouting of a few uncivilized people. Only such kind of mentality of the west would turn so brutal and lead to a massacre like the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre.

Occidentalism is a way how the east looks at the west. The East thinks that the west is a bourgeois society where people are addicted to money, sex, self-interest, and security. For example, attack on the World Trade Centre by a few terrorists. Attack on the symbol of wealth and prosperity gives us a feeling of how the East thought the west as valueless and must lose their existence. In the 21st century, one can see that there are many people in West Asia who look at the west with hatred and resentment.

The above examples may be harsh but cannot be ignored. Macaulay looked at the Indian education system as trash and he changed everything. On the contrary, Gandhi did not introduce English and thought western education as an impediment for this country. Fortunately, the current education system of India has a blend of views of both these educationists.

Dependent vs. Independent

Macaulay's Minutes is a teacher or instructor-centered education. If the education is instructor-centered, the chance of creativity and free-thinking reduces. This gives a clear understanding that the English education system wanted to make Indians dependent. In the Gandhian era, the common Indian masses started to think freely. Child-centered education came into existence. Craft-centered education came as a solution for imparting free education. It not only revives the culture and civilization but also makes a child self-reliant by enabling her to use her acquired knowledge and skills in practical affairs of life. This indigenous system of education makes the Indians independent.

State vs. Nation

The state is a political organization. The State has four elements: population, territory, government, and sovereignty. During the British Raj, India was not a sovereign state, the government, as well as territory, was controlled by the Raj whether directly or indirectly. To control the population they came up with many measures and Macaulay's minutes was one of them.

The nation is about social, cultural, psychological, emotional and political unity. Ernest Renan said on Nation *"What makes a nation is not only speaking the same language or belonging to the same ethnographic group, it is having done great things together in the past and wanting to do more great things in the future"*. Wardha education system spoke for free and compulsory education, giving instruction in the mother tongue and a craft-centered education would definitely

generate a sense of unity. It may not be wrong to say that India during the freedom struggle felt a sense of unity in all its forms because of this indigenous education system.

State Power vs. State Control

The above-mentioned terms are given by Althusser (a Marxist). Every great leader knows how to use ideologies and create a difference. State Power means controlling others through repressive structures like law, courts, prison, and army. State Control means controlling others through ideological structures like media, education, political parties, art (including literature).

Both the educationists effectively used the State Control to change the thought process of Indian masses. Macaulay's Minutes was the first well-planned education system that led to the complete loss of identity of the colonized. Considering that, Gandhian education helped in regaining the lost identity. It helped to reconnect Indian masses with their lost culture and civilization.

There is another aspect that is important to discuss, otherwise, it will be a biased document. Today, The Indians cannot ignore Macaulay's Minutes. It is because of Macaulay's education system that the Indian intellectual class came to know about world literature, science, and technology. It is the English education system because of which we became one of the global leaders. Today, we have developed this English so much that there is Indian English. On the contrary, the Gandhian education system tried to create an ideal society for which Indian education constantly moved with the English education system. Much of idealism proves to be impossible on ground reality but it should not be forgotten that it is the Wardha Commission that generated a sense of hope for having our own education system. Basic Education was an attack on the British Raj, according to which India could never have its own education system.

CONCLUSION

Both the education systems are very unique in themselves. Macaulay's Minutes was the first well-defined education system that was considered to be a turning point in the Indian subcontinent. It is the first well-defined system for the people who were going to be completely colonized. Basic Education was the last indigenous education system in the British Raj that made people aware of their rights and made them ready to breathe in an independent nation. However, Macaulay's Minutes, as well as basic education, have their pros and cons.

After going through the whole article we must understand that education is not a magical stick that one will move and in a fraction of seconds, we will get the result. The education system should be such where the learner is at the centre. Creativity and free-thinking should be given an appropriate place. Educational policies must be revised with the changing scenario. Education should be such where people show their willingness to gain knowledge, they must not feel education as a burden but take this as a responsibility. Theories must come out of the pages and must be experienced on the ground. We must not forget that this is our world and it is we who have to take care of it. For all this, we need a proper and effective education system. We have to make a proper balance between both Macaulay's Minutes as well as Basic Education which will fulfill the economic as well as social needs of this country.

References

- Althusser, L. 2014. *On the Reproduction of Capitalism: Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses*. Verso. Print.
- Barry, P. 2018. *Beginning Theory- An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory*. Viva Books Private Limited. Print.
- Desai, M. 2009. *The Story of My Experiments with Truth*. Fingerprint Classics. Print.
- Gandhi, M.K. 2015. *Hind Swaraj*. Rajpal Publishing. Print.
- Gandhi, M.K. 2014. *India of My Dreams*. Diamond Books. Print
- Lal, R.B. 2016. *Contemporary India and Education*. R. Lall. Print
- Parekh, B. 2001. *Gandhi a Very Short Introduction*. Oxford University Press. Print.
- Rao, P. V. 2019. *Beyond Macaulay: Education in India, 1780-1860*. Routledge India. Print
- Chanshetti and Shah. *Mahatma Gandhi Global Village a Model of Basic Education: To Teach Self Reliance and Respect for Manual Labour*. Retrieved from <https://www.mkgandhi.org/articles/basic-education.html>
- Deshmukh, S.P. (2010, March). *Gandhiji Basic Education: A Medium of Value Education*. Retrieved from <https://www.mkgandhi.org/articles/basic-education.html>
- Sinha, S. (2017, February 8). *Policies Regarding English Language Education*. Retrieved from <https://www.slideshare.net/sameer4sure/english-education-policies-in-india>
- *A minute to acknowledge the day when India was 'educated' by Macaulay*. (2018, February 02). Retrieved from <https://www.indiatoday.in/education-today/gk-current-affairs/story/a-minute-to-acknowledge-the-day-when-india-was-educated-by-macaulay.html>