

### **The Educational Policy of the Government of India.**

The Government of India published a remarkable document—its Resolution on Education,—at the time when the public mind in India was exercised over the Universities Bill. Its publication must be pronounced as singularly well-timed as it is calculated to allay the apprehension entertained by many thoughtful minds in India that the ultimate result of the Bill would be the ending rather than the mending of High Education. The Resolution gives an exhaustive treatment of the various systems of instruction that have prevailed in India from the earliest Vedic times to the commencement of the present century, it lays bare the characteristic defects of these various systems, and it further formulates a comprehensive scheme of education to meet the various needs of the country and its people. Even a cursory glance at the ramifications of the subject dealt with in the Resolution—commercial, agricultural, technical, industrial, high, secondary, primary, mass-education, female education, education of teachers—leaves on our mind an impression of the thorough grasp and wide sweep of a great statesman. We cannot claim the Government of India's universality of genius and do not therefore consider ourselves competent to pronounce judgment on the grand scheme promulgated for the benefit of the teeming millions of India. We may content ourselves with offering a few remarks on such aspects of the scheme as make a special appeal to us as teachers of some degree of experience, and as persons who have obtained some of the benefits of high education as it has been administered in the past.

(1). We may, in the first place, briefly advert to a singular generalisation that stares us in the face in an early part of the Resolution. In old times in India entire books were committed to memory. In modern University days in India students have an unhealthy tendency to commit notes, commentaries etc to memory. It is, we are told, an innate tendency of the Indian mind. This startling confirmation of the doctrine of heredity would have, we doubt not, made Darwin and Herbert Spencer chuckle. But after all, the inference is a

thoroughly gratuitous one. It should not be forgotten that the practice of committing entire books to memory was unavoidable in remote ages, nay that it was the only avenue to knowledge when printing and even writing were unknown, when it was well-nigh impossible for the learners to secure copies of the works they were studying. If in modern life, this evil of cram has crept in, it is unquestionably due to bad systems of teaching, bad systems of examinations, nay, worst of all, to the high-pressure work occasioned by the modern examination system, the vicious character of which the Government has at last perceived. The existence of coaches and crammers in more fortunate countries proves that the practice of subordinating teaching to examination is productive of unhealthy results in every country.

(2). The last statement brings us to the second point of our discussion. It is a great relief to find that the Government have at last placed their finger on the actual plague-spot of the existing system *viz.*, the subordination of teaching to examinations. But the practical remedy proposed by Government is we confess, far from re-assuring. The system which Government intend now to substitute in its place, the subordination of teaching to inspection and supervision would in all probability leave the evil just where it was.

(3). With one incidental remark of the Government of India we have the fullest sympathy. The Government contemplate the abolition of competitive examinations for the various services. This appears to us as a move in the right direction. We have always looked upon these competitive examinations as a veritable anomaly, as their existence side by side with the University Examinations inevitably suggests the conclusion that the University Examinations are no adequate test of the true worth of the young men who undergo them and who may eventually seek employment under Government. This is tantamount to an admission of the utter inadequacy of University standards and tests. To avoid the possible evil of such a system lending itself to nepotism and favouritism, we may suggest that the system that has all along been followed by Government in the matter of recruiting men for the Judicial Service has worked satisfactorily,

and surely this system may be safely extended to the other services, of course, with modifications suited to their varied requirements.

(4.) The absolute silence of the Resolution on the place to be accorded to the classics of India in the studies of the Indian Universities is an ominous circumstance, especially under a *regime* when the Chancellor and the Vice-chancellor of our University are men that have themselves imbibed the splendid culture of Oxford, and leads us to entertain the gravest apprehensions. It is perfectly superfluous to dwell at large on the culture and the discipline afforded by classical studies to young minds. This singular omission comes rather ungracefully after the spirited protest made by our Vice-Chancellor against the prejudices of Herbert Spencer with regard to linguistic studies. Have the Government of India at last been converted to the views of the great philosopher and come to consider classical studies as purely ornamental?

(5.) The new system of University education contemplated by the Universities Act and the Government of India's Resolution under review, will produce a veritable millenium, we are told. It will create an University life and an University ideal; it will foster a spirit of original thinking, of research, of investigation, of experiment; it will breed scholars, scientists, *savants*; it will furnish our young men with all that is needed for a complete art of living. Fifteen years' experience as a teacher has, however, deadened our enthusiasm, thickened our vision and made us too lame to follow with the cry. We must beg pardon of our readers if we 'take the growing glimmer for the gleam withdrawn,' for after all we see what is near and ugly, and fail to see what is far off and fair. We naturally ask ourselves the simple question—how far the new order of things will enable our young men to write correct English (an indispensable qualification in modern Indian life) and how it will qualify them for enriching their country's literature (an ambition by no means to be deprecated in young Bengal.) We are sorry to find after a careful study of the masterly Resolution that the results of the new policy are likely to prove disastrous in both these lines.

First, as regards proficiency in English Composition. According to the system laid down here, the boys should learn their Vernacular up till their 13th year, nay, learn all subjects through the medium of the vernacular, or, in other words, pay exclusive attention to their mother-tongue. This would, we are assured, obviate one grave defect of the existing system, viz it would not compel the boys to get up their knowledge through the medium of a foreign tongue, a course which inevitably produces cram. We apprehend, however, that the indubitable result of the change would be that in seeking to do away with one evil, the new system would produce another and a worse evil.

The conditions of Indian life render it imperatively necessary that English should become a second native language among all the educated classes in India. Now the process of making a people deliberately adopt the language of a foreign race is a highly artificial, we were going to say, unnatural process, and the ordinary principles of teaching a foreign language are not adequate under such peculiar conditions. It would not be enough if our young men acquire as much of English as ordinary English school boys acquire of Latin or of French. The method therefore must be more thorough and the process should begin as early as practicable. It will not be possible for Indian youths to acquire a new language if they begin its study rather late in life. It would perhaps sound pedantic to quote the authority of Bacon's dictum 'Late learners cannot so well take the ply', on an occasion like this; but actual experience may be appealed to in support of our contention. It is a notorious fact well known to all teachers of High Schools that students who join these Schools after passing the Middle Vernacular Examination usually find very great difficulty in acquiring English at such a late stage in their school-life—and they are usually shaky in their English even in later life. The writer of the present article knows several cases of very brilliant Middle Vernacular Scholars who failed to pass the B. A. Examination after successive attempts. It is to be feared that the drawbacks that had so long affected only one class of students going up to the University

will now affect the entire community of students under the new system announced in the Resolution.

Now, let us turn to the second point. We have seen that no provision has been made in the new scheme for the study of Sanskrit. Further, the boys up till their 13th year are not to be permitted to take up the study of English. Then again there is the distinct principle laid down in another part of the Resolution that the text-books in the vernacular should not be written in a *literary* style. The combined effect of these three principles cannot fail to be in the highest degree detrimental to the further development of the Vernacular literature of Bengal.

For, whatever may be the defects of the old University system which is going to be abolished, it is an undeniable fact that it and it alone has produced a splendid vernacular literature of considerable power and beauty within fifty years. We are certainly justified in inferring that this unique phenomenon has been the product of the two-fold culture of the *alumni* of our University. Modern Bengalee owes its vocabulary and diction to Sanskrit, and its ideas and ideals to English. And as the child receives healthy nourishment so long as the mother is fed with wholesome food, modern Bengalee literature would go on developing so long as the University encourages the simultaneous study of English and Sanskrit. It is true that the combination of the elements (English and Sanskrit) has not in every case been in the same proportion. In men of the earlier generation with Pandit Vidyasagar at their head, the Sanskrit element was much more pronounced, whereas, in men of the later generation with Bankim Chandra Chatterji and Hem Chandra Banerji as their best representatives, the element of English culture has been the predominant factor. It will be an evil day for Bengal if these factors that have conduced to the enriching of its vernacular literature are to receive scant courtesy from the new-model University. Under the new system, the education of the majority of our boys will cease at a stage, when they have not been brought within the sphere of influence of such studies as can

enable them to improve their country's literature. And even the chances of the fortunate few who proceed to a higher course, will be seriously hampered by the omission of Sanskrit and English from the curriculum of their earlier studies.

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## বাঙ্গলা ভাষা ।

### কালোয়াতি বনাম সাকরেদী ।

আমি ছেলে বেলা থেকে ইংরেজী পড়িতে আরম্ভ করি। খাটী বাঙ্গলা স্কুলে কখন পড়িয়াছি, কি না, তাহা আমার ঠিক মনে পড়ে না। ক্রমে এণ্ট্রেন্স, এল এ, বি এ, এম এ পাশ করিয়া কালেজ হইতে বাহির হইলাম। লোকে বলিতে লাগিল, এ এদটা দিগ্গজ পণ্ডিত হইয়াছে। আমার বাড়ী আজ পাড়াগাঁয়ে, দেখানে লোকে আমার কেবল পূজা করিতে বাকী রাখিল। সে কি আজ কালের কথা! এখন যে সকল এম এ দেখিতে পাই, তাহার পনের আনা তিনকড়া তিন ক্রান্তি তখন জন্মে নাই। যাহা হউক সকলে আমাকে পণ্ডিত বলিতে লাগিল। আমার মনেও য পাণ্ডিত্যের অভিমান হয় নাই, তাহা বলিতে পারি না। তবে আমি স্মৃদ্ধি কি না, সেজন্ত সে অভিমানটা মনে মনে চাপিয়া রাখিলাম।

কিন্তু পণ্ডিতলোক পাণ্ডিত্য প্রকাশ না করিয়া কত দিন থাকে! শীঘ্রই অবসর উপস্থিত হইল। ইংরেজীতে এক প্রবন্ধ রচিয়া ধবরের কাগজে পাঠাইলাম। তাহারা আমার পাণ্ডিত্য বুঝিল না, কাগজে প্রবন্ধ বাহির করিল না। মনকে নানা রূপ প্রবোধ দিলাম, কিন্তু মন কি প্রবোধ মানে?— প্রবোধ যেন বালির বাধের মত ভাসিয়া যাইতে লাগিল। অবশেষে অনেক চিন্তার পর স্থির করিলাম, ইংরেজী ছাড়িয়া, বাঙ্গলার এস্তেজারি আরম্ভ করি। ইংরেজীওয়ালারা আমার পাণ্ডিত্য বুঝিল না, দেখা যাক বাঙ্গলানবিশরা বুঝে কি না? বাঙ্গলানবিশদের নিকট স্থান পাইলাম বটে, কিন্তু তাহাও অতি কষ্টে। যাহা হউক, সেই অবধি আজ পর্যন্ত বাঙ্গলাতেই লিখিতেছি। কিন্তু এখন দেখিতেছি, বাঙ্গলা লেখাও বুঝি ছাড়িতে হয়।

বাঙ্গলা-লেখা-রূপ যাত্রায় এখন দুইটী দল হইয়াছে। এক দল কালোয়াতি ও এক দল সাকরেদী। কালোয়াতি দলের আখড়ায় গতয়াত করিয়া দেখিয়াছি। সুর বাধিতে, তাল মিলাইতে, ছাদ ছাঁদিতেই তাঁহারা ব্যতিব্যস্ত, তান লয় মানের গভীর গবেষণায় তাঁহারা দিশাহারা, কিন্তু তাঁহাদের গানেত দস্তফুট করিতে পারিলাম না। তাঁহাদের পদাবলি কোন্ ভাষায় রচিত, তাহাই ঠাওরাইতে পারিলাম না। ধবর লইয়া জানিলাম, ইহা কেবল