NIOS D.EL.ED **IMPORTANT** QUESTIONS SERIES PART-2



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1.3 Genesis of the Indian Education Today: Preindependence period

Check Your Progress – 2 1.3.1 Macaulay's Minutes





a. Describe briefly, the "downward filtration theory"

Ans: During the British rule in India the downwards filtration theory was adopted in the country. Filtration means coming of something to the bottom from the top. Thus the filtration theory in education meant coming down of education or knowledge from the top to the bottom, i.e., from the higher class people to the lower classes or the general people.

There were many reasons for adopting this policy. Different views have been expressed about this policy. Some people think that this policy was adopted because of the narrow-mindedness and selfish attitudes of the English who intended to educate only a few for getting clerks for running their administration.

They adopted this policy also because they wanted to create an elite group which would be given high posts in the administration and this group in turn would influence the general public for accepting the British rule in the country.

In fact, according to some persons, the main reason for adopting this policy was the meager financial resources with the Company for educational purposes.

The Company thought that it could not provide education to entire mass. So it decided to educate only a few. But this 'few' were the people of the higher classes, because they alone could catch up the opportunity for English education. The downwards filtration theory had the following three chief characteristics:

1. To educate only the high class people in order to give them higher posts in the administration with a view to strengthening the roots of British empire in the Country.

- 2. When the higher class people would receive English education their culture would be improved and the general public would accept them as their models. As a result, the lower class people would also be educated after being influenced by the higher class people.
- 3. To educate the higher class people who might undertake the responsibility of educating the general people.
- Besides the occidental-oriental controversy, the Company had to face another problem during this period. This 'problem pertained to the education of the general masses the Company was to decide whether to limit itself to the education of the higher class people alone, or to provide for education of all.
- The Company took no time in reaching a decision in this regard, as the Board of Director, gave- clear-cut directions in this context. Lord Macaulay explained the same by observing that "the aim of education in India was to anglicize the Indians through English education and to make black-colored Indian English in their way of living, behaviour, thought, culture, traditions and morality", as such persons were likely to serve as the connecting link between the British Government and the general public.

Failure of the Downwards Filtration Theory of Education

- Full purposes the downwards filtration theory could not be that could have only a partial achievement in the sense Government got a few educated Indians who could in running the administration.
- But these few Indians could not serve as connecting links between the British Government and the general people. The English educated Indians could improve their culture and ways of living, by they formed a class of their own and drifted away from the general people.
- Thus the general public was in a way ignored by them as by and large they became more interested in making themselves richer and richer. As a result, education became concentrated only to those who had money. Thus the filtration theory really failed. There were two principal causes for its failure.
- The first cause of the failure of the filtration theory was that too many English educated Indians came out in the field and it was not possible for the Government to give them suitable employment according to their expectations.
- This situation led to unemployment. For ending their unemployment, these persons opened some schools on the Western pattern. Thus a number of new English schools sprang up and the educational need of the people was met upto some extent.
- The second cause of the failure of the filtration theory was that it created a feeling of self-respect, national honour and independence in the English educated Indians.
- These re-awakened persons could not be tempted by Government services and they took a vow to fight for national independence. For regenerating the people these enlightened persons began to spread education. Thus education ultimately reached the people.
- However, the filtration theory continued its impact till 1870 somehow or other. But because of the aforesaid two main causes this theory could not achieved its objectives fully. It was only a partial success. Private enterprises engaged in the field of education did a lot towards educating the people and creating in them a love for freedom. Thus the work for national regeneration and educational expansion began.

b. Why did Macaulay propose to spend the Govt. funds for the improvement of English, rather than Oriental literature?

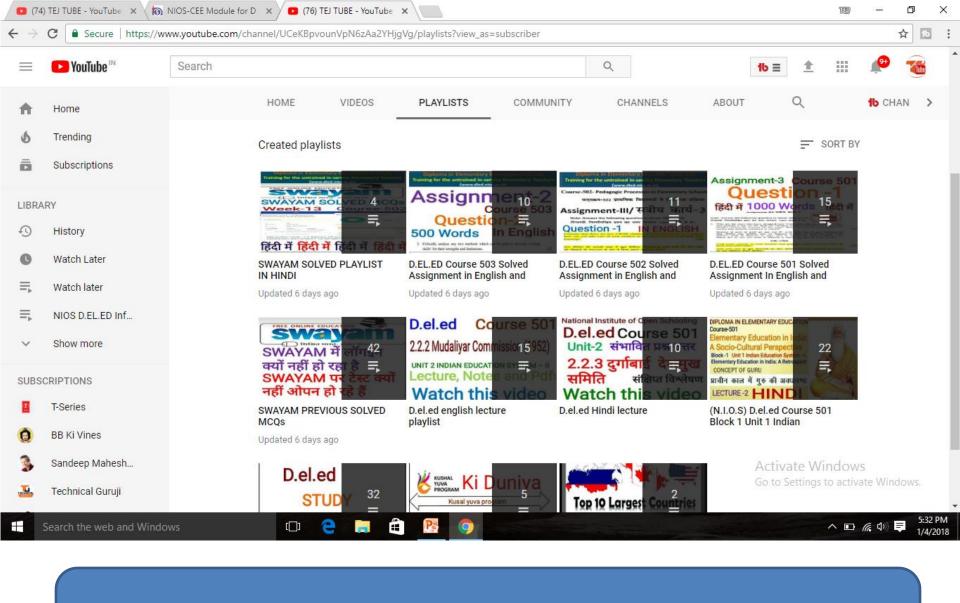
On July 31, 1837, Lord Macaulay again explained his point of view by stating that the purpose of the Company was only to educate the elite group which would educate the general public later-thus fulfilling the goal of educating the masses in general.

In 1839 the General Committee of Public Instruction again repeated the stand that education would be given only to the higher class people who should shoulder the responsibility of educating their countrymen.

During the Company's rule Missionaries were encouraged to work in the field of education and they opened a number of schools and colleges for educating children of the higher class family.

They thought that if they succeeded in educating the higher class people and converting them to their own Christian faith, these converted persons would preach Christianity amongst the lower class people.

Evidently, the educational efforts of the Missionaries were religiously motivated and not politically. But only some lower class people could be influenced by these Missionaries and the bulk of the Indian Population remained unaffected by them. That is why did Macaulay propose to spend the Govt. funds for the improvement of English, rather than Oriental literature.



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