

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The growth and development of education in British India against the background of contemporary political developments has been studied mainly in two aspects, viz., policies evolved by the colonial power in response to its own political needs and movements generated in the colony. The growth of education in particular directions and the evolution of educational policies at different times can be studied in a better perspective if political factors like the consolidation of colonial rule and emergence of new classes in the colony are taken into account. It is only after the political power is firmly established that the need arises to create a sub-structure of education to maintain and perpetuate the political structure. Education may now be considered as the resultant of two coordinates, viz., administrative and political necessity. These have their own contradictions and give rise to a revision and readjustment of the educational policies. Major changes in educational policies are directed towards resolving the growing contradictions. The major political variants affecting the educational policies are the need for maintaining the existing political framework and ensuring the future stability of the colonial rule. The first variant orients the educational policy towards

maintaining the existing equilibrium in society and involves a sort of static relationship. The second variant involves a dynamic relationship and brings into operation various groups who may be in alliance with the rulers or in opposition to it. The course of educational development can be studied against the background of shifting alliances of the colonial power with different groups in the colony. A significant development is the emergence of elite groups who identify their own consolidation and growth as an index of the general progress. The consolidation of the elite groups creates the conditions for the emergence of a national movement. This demands a reorientation of educational policies as new areas of conflict arise between the rulers and the elites. The conflicts may also arise within the elite groups which also affect the course of educational development. A significant phase in the development of the nationalist movement is the participation of the masses in it. The study of educational developments during the phase of mass movement has to take into account the form of struggle and the scope and extent of the mass movement. Various educational issues like relative emphasis on mass education and higher education, political education of the masses etc., crop up and assume significance due to the broadening of the political movement. The major direction of educational policies is affected by the dominant political trend in

a particular phase. The formulation of educational policies and various points of emphasis are affected by the convergence and divergence between the programmes initiated by the rulers and the thinking of the nationalist movement. The present study is an attempt to see and present the inter-relationships between the political developments and the growth of education in British India. What we have attempted to do is to study and analyse the evolution of educational policies in colonial India with reference to the theoretical framework developed for this purpose. It is difficult to comprehend the growth and development of modern Indian education without taking into consideration the emergence of new classes under the impact of colonial rule. The role played by these classes in the political movement influenced the direction of educational policies. A common characteristic of the elite groups was a similarity in their attitude towards higher and mass education. While they made higher education as their exclusive preserve, their attitude to mass education was determined by the exigency of the political situation. In the early phase of the political development it was to instil ideas of loyalty among the masses. In the later phases, it was to draw them towards active participation in the political movement. Another important factor in the study of educational developments during the colonial

rule was the emergence of sub-elite groups. Sub-elite groups emerged due to the growth of political consciousness among the lower middle classes in urban areas and among the peasants in rural areas. They also entered the race for higher education with the aim of consolidating their own position. The following general conclusions can be drawn by analysing the growth of educational policies during the period, 1835 to 1904.

- i) The evolution of new educational policy by the British was first and foremost the outcome of political and administrative necessity.
- ii) Education only played a peripheral role in the growth of the new classes. However, the emerging classes used it as a tool to perpetuate their own growth.
- iii) The contradictions between the emerging classes and the rulers did not manifest openly till the political consolidation of these classes had taken place.
- iv) The contradictions appeared on two fronts, viz., between the emerging classes and the rulers and within the classes. Both these had repercussions on the development of education. The first contradiction started a rethinking about the policies towards higher education and the second challenged the very basis of the educational system. The policy of control on higher education was with

a motive to put a curb on the growth of the middle classes which, however, did not succeed.

- v) The demand for the education of the masses did not grow out of any pressure built up by the mass movements. The demand got prominence during the period of contradictions between the rulers and the political leadership as represented by the Indian National Congress. The thinking of liberals dominating the political movement in this period and of the rulers converged on the issue of likely political advantages of mass education. The education of the masses was seen as a guarantee of creating feelings of loyalty towards the empire and to act as an effective check on the influence of radicalism.
- vi) The policy of the Indian National Congress towards education was influenced by its stand on wider political issues. The emphasis was on demands which mainly concerned the growth and development of higher education.
- vii) The emergence of elites among the Muslims was based on the politics of separatism. The educational platform chosen by them was a deliberate policy of maintaining a distinct political identity. The seeds of separatism in education were sown in the period of the consolidation of Muslim elites.

The growth and development of education in British India during the period 1904-47 in relation to political developments has been studied in the context of the politics of liberalism, radicalism and communalism. While liberalism formed the mainstream of the nationalist movement till 1920, in the phase of mass movements after the twenties both liberalism and radicalism merged. Communal politics, however, continued in a separate stream, often at cross-purposes with the mainstream of the nationalist movement. The change in educational policy in 1904 was a major challenge to the assumption held till now that higher education acted as a stabilising influence of the British rule. The shift in educational policy was due to an apprehension that the educated middle classes would extend their political influence among the masses. Education of the masses was now considered politically important for the stability of the empire. The conflicts in educational policies between the liberals and the government arose because of the differences on major political issues. Curzon wanted to circumscribe higher education so that it could not be used as an instrument for further consolidation and growth of the nationalist movement. But his policies could not succeed. The next phase in the development of education in British India was marked by a compromise between the liberals and the colonial rulers. The Morley-

Minto reforms placated a section of the liberals and the reassessment of educational policies was with the motive of winning over the liberals and isolating the influence of the radicals. A controversy arose during this period regarding the role of different classes in spreading a feeling of disloyalty towards the empire. There existed a school of thought which believed that it were the educated and professional classes supported by the trading classes who were responsible for seditious activities. It advocated a policy of seeking support from such classes and groups as aristocracy, agriculturists, Anglo-Indians and the like. But Morley realised the necessity of political concessions and the inevitability of maintaining the institutional framework to work out the reforms. It was recognised that a complete reversal of educational policies was neither possible nor desirable. The reappraisal of educational policies during this period finally resulted in the Government of India Resolution on Education in 1913. The criteria against which educational policies were evaluated could be stated as, i) the extent to which education helped in strengthening the forces of constitutionalism, ii) the extent to which it helped in isolating and curbing the influence of radicalism, and iii) the extent to which it provided a leadership needed to maintain the equilibrium necessary for stability and growth in the prescribed direction. It is significant that the 1913 policy statement on education emphasized that the development

of a national system of education in India will have to take into account the political and social organization in which it will be expected to operate. The liberal political leadership generally supported the new educational policy. The support to the education of the masses was still with the motive of ensuring political stability and ensuring support for constitutional procedures. The political leadership linked the policy on higher education with the representation of educated classes in elective and nominated bodies and various administrative services. It was contended that in all these the representation was too small. Hence any policy which tended to place a curb on the growth of higher education was resisted very strongly. Even the move for teaching and residential universities was not given an unqualified support. An apprehension was expressed that this would check the growth of higher education among the poorer classes. But this argument was not very sound as university education was still mainly confined to the upper and middle classes. In higher education, though the government wanted to contain the influence of the educated classes, the policy of political alliances ruled out any possibility of undermining their influence and dominant position.

The political and educational appraisal in 1913 lost its significance due to the changed situation after the

first world war, when constitutional reforms were introduced on the one hand and the mass movement was launched on the other hand. Educational growth was still linked with political reforms but the change in motive was quite noticeable. The conscious response of loyalty to the empire was replaced by an effective participation of the masses in the industrial and general progress of the country and an awakening about the political destiny of the country. Political education of the masses assumed special significance during this period. The role of education in creating an enlightened electorate was emphasized repeatedly. But in the colonial situation, education could hardly perform this role. It could produce an efficient administrator. It could also help in the consolidation of the elites. But as devised and institutionalized, education was a poor instrument of arousing political consciousness among the masses. The role of education as an effective instrument of social and political change is operative only within the boundaries set by the political-economic structure of the society. The ideological orientation developed in one situation becomes inoperative and sometimes obstructive in a different political situation. This is what happened in the phase of mass movement. There was an alarm among the liberals regarding the new forms of struggle in both political and educational spheres. The mass movement was a political as well as an

educational challenge. It was so because it questioned the sanctity of constitutionalism and the ideological obsession of the educated classes. The challenge to the existing system of education was thrown by an alternative national system of education which gained importance during the phase of the mass movement. Due to the weaknesses and contradictions that cropped up in the political movement, the existing system withstood the challenge from national education movement. The policy of containment of the mass movement blurred the line of distinction between the two. But the political developments forced a close scrutiny of the educational system which was adjudged to be most unsatisfactory and in need of a drastic change. Its most signal failure was its inability to check the drift of students towards the politics of radicalism.

In spite of the failure of the educational system in measuring up to the political and economic demands, there was a rapid growth, particularly in higher education, during the period 1922-27. A common view held about the accelerated growth in education was the relative political stability after the withdrawal of non-co-operation movement. But this does not fully explain the educational awareness that was so marked during this period. In fact, the political turmoil created conditions for the participation of larger

sections in the national movement and the consequent political awareness was to a large extent responsible for advance in other spheres as well.

The educational system was again taken up for review alongwith the review of the working of dyarchy. The synchronising of political and educational appraisal showed the eagerness of the rulers to reorient education to the changing political situation and make it sub-serve the political structure. The educational system was evaluated on two broad issues, viz., creation of an enlightened public opinion on civic and political issues, and creation of a directing class capable of an inspiring leadership in the political field. An enlightened electorate through mass education and a directing class through higher education was a typical imperial reaction and recognised a permanent cleavage between the 'classes' and the 'masses'. But the national movement whose main emphasis was now outside the legislative chambers, was not bound by these educational aims. It affected the educational system in a different way and its impact was felt in generating a feeling of revolt against the existing system, a striving for an alternative system of national education, weakening of faith in the institutional set-up and growth of revolutionary groups among the youth. After the suspension of Civil Disobedience Movement in 1934 and the emphasis laid on constructive

programme by Gandhi, education was also included as one item of the programme of national reconstruction. But it was only after the assumption of office in the Provinces in 1937 by the Congress that education, as an item of the overall national development plan, was seen in a better perspective. The alternative system of education presented before the country was Basic Education as spelled out in the educational conference held in Wardha. The intervention of war and the 'Quit-India' movement of 1942 again relegated educational issues to the background. When political negotiations started for the transfer of power, educational planning was again taken up. But educational planning was done under the limitation of political uncertainties. Two major attempts were made to present a blue print for the development of a national system of education for the country. One was the post-war educational development plan prepared by the Central Advisory Board of Education and the other was by the National Planning Committee. Both these committees recognised the necessity of developing a national plan of education within the broad framework of national development in economic, political and social spheres. Economically an independent India was to move towards rapid industrialisation with a secure agricultural base. Politically it was to adopt a democratic form of government and socially there was not to be any distinction on the basis of religion, caste or sex. Educational development plans

in the projected socio-economic and political structure were spelled out by the National Planning Committee in the following terms.

- i) Provision of free and compulsory basic education.
- ii) Protection of the culture, language and script of the minorities and of different linguistic areas.
- iii) Equal rights to all citizens for education.
- iv) Adequate arrangement for the education of the masses with a view to raise them intellectually, economically, culturally and morally.

It was accepted by the National Planning Committee that the educational plans formulated could not be implemented till basic changes in the economic structure were made. As the transfer of power did not disturb the institutional framework, the basic direction of educational policies which was elitist also did not change. The acceptance of the institutional framework precluded any revolutionary changes in the educational system. The machinery to implement new programmes of education was hardly fit to do the task as it lacked convictions in the policy of making any radical departure from the accepted pattern.

The analysis of changes in educational policies in the context of radical politics have given some new insights in understanding the growth and development of Indian education during the colonial rule of the British. The growth of radicalism in Indian politics could be

traced to the contradictions that developed in the middle class political leadership in the late nineteenth century. It had two distinct phases of development, one till 1920 and the other after 1920. Till 1920, it drew its main inspiration from the revivalist movement. But after 1920, it drew more towards the ideology of the left. It was only during the radicalization of politics that the political significance of mass education was emphasized. The issue of compulsory and free primary education has been studied in the context of the growth of radical politics. A few additional facts have been discovered to support the contention of Dr. B.S. Goel in his thesis, 'Development of Education in British India' (1905-1929), that Gokhale was not the first to advocate the cause of free and compulsory primary education. But the study of official notes and correspondence during this period proves convincingly that the growth of radicalism in politics was an important factor which forced the government to pay serious attention to the issue of free and compulsory primary education. The role of radicals in popularising the idea among wider sections of the society is also significant. The government emphasized on providing free primary education to people with the motive of weaning them away from the influence of radicals. The spread of education among the lower classes also assumed political

significance and was considered necessary in view of the growing influence of radicalism. The motive was to prepare elite groups among the lower classes which could counter the influence of elite groups among the higher classes. The controversies regarding mass education and higher education receded into the background when the political movement assumed a truly mass character. The political emphasis shifted again to the education of elites, as it was called preparing a 'directing class' by the Hartog Committee. The education of the masses was only seen in the context of preparing an enlightened electorate. A few distinct effects of the politics of radicalism which affected educational growth directly and indirectly may be noted.

- i) A section of the western educated classes was drawn away from liberal political path.
- ii) Effect of radicalism was more on the lower middle classes than middle or higher classes.
- iii) Students and teachers were drawn towards radicalism in large numbers. Changes in educational policies were affected considerably by the participation of students and teachers in radical politics.
- iv) Radicalisation of politics created a general discontent with the educational system. The political motive of extending education among the masses to create feelings of loyalty towards

the empire was challenged. The role of education as an instrument for resurrecting Indian nationalism was stressed.

- v) The education of the masses and spread of higher education among the lower classes assumed special political significance.

The main thrust of radical politics after the twenties was in influencing the national movement towards the ideology of the left. It gave a new content to the political demands by espousing the cause of the exploited classes, mainly workers and peasants. It brought home the truth that any major transformation in the educational system could not be effected without first introducing basic economic and political changes.

The growth of communal politics and the emergence of separatism in education were of great consequence in the political and educational development of the country. Education was used by the emerging Muslim elites for their political consolidation. The acceptance of the principle of separate representation for the Muslims started a chain reaction in favour of the demand for separatism in education. Special educational facilities for the Muslims were demanded on the basis of their numerical strength as well as political importance. The demand for a separate university for the Muslims also got fillip due to this. Separatism in education and special

facilities for the Muslims were justified on the ground of comparative backwardness of the community in education and their religious susceptibilities. However, separate educational provisions for the Muslims were an incentive only in the earlier period of educational growth. However, the negative effects of this policy outweighed the advantages even at the initial stages. After the twenties and particularly in the thirties when the education of the Muslims caught up with the all-India index of the educational growth, there was hardly any justification on educational grounds to continue the policy of separatism in education. It only helped the vested interests among the Muslims in strengthening their own political position and in using education as a plank for political bargaining. For the common people, the policy of segregation in education hampered their growth politically as well as educationally. The separatist ideology in education developed over years helped the leadership of the Muslim League to enlist active cadres for political purposes, especially during the forties, when the demand for Pakistan was voiced. The condemnation of the Wardha scheme of education by Jinnah, on the ground that it was conceived behind the back of Muslims and was nothing but an attempt to help the revival of Hinduism, showed the extent to which separatist ideology was working. Till the partition of the country and the transfer of

power, the demand for separate educational facilities for the Muslims were demanded by the votaries of communal politics. A special committee of the All India Muslim Conference demanded the continuation of denominational schools, separate curriculum for Muslim elementary schools, separate schools for Muslim boys and girls and non-acceptance of basic education as a national system of education for all.

Some important facts have come to light in the study which we give below.

- i) The contention that Muslims were all through backward in education is not based on proper evidence. The comparison of educational growth of the Muslims with that of the high castes among the Hindus, especially Brahmins, does not give a true picture. The regional differences were so much that an all-India comparison gives a distorted view of the total picture. To blame religious prejudice among the Muslims for their reluctance to adopt the western system of education is also not very convincing. Regional imbalances and economic conditions were the prime factors behind the educational backwardness of the Muslims.
- ii) The demand for a separate Muslim University was on cards since the beginning of this century. To relate it to the demand for a Hindu

University at Banaras is not true. On the contrary, the initial demand for a National University for India put by Mrs. Annie Besant was dropped in favour of a Hindu University, when the demand for a separate Muslim University got more vocal. The acceptance of separate representation for the Muslims strengthened the demand for a separate university.

The study of the history of Indian education in relation to political developments during British regime remains incomplete if the major international events affecting the political developments in the country are not taken into account. Three major events which influenced the political developments and consequently the educational thinking were the victory of Japan over Russia in 1905, First World War and Russian Revolution and the Second World War. All these events mark a significant phase in the history of education in India. Japan's victory over Russia initiated the thinking on the need for a national system of education for India and using education as an instrument for national reconstruction. The first world war brought political awakening among a large section of the population. At the same time it weakened British imperialism. The heightened political expectation extended educational awareness and a polycentric development of elite groups

took place which later exercised considerable influence in the growth of the nationalist movement and the course of educational development. The bolshevik revolution in Russia emphasized the need for giving an ideological orientation to the nationalist movement. Education was looked upon as an important ingredient of the national movement. For the rulers the impact of bolshevik revolution was an alarming feature and the educational reforms proposed talked of moral education, need for restoring discipline and role of education in exerting a steadying influence. The defeat of fascism in the second world war made democracy, freedom and equality living slogans. The educational ideals were now tailored to fit in with these broad political aims. But the limitations of these ideals to be translated in practice were obvious in the colonial setting of India. However, the general effects were marked in the following directions.

- i) No piecemeal reform of the educational system would be able to deliver the goods.
- ii) Policy of isolationism in education would have to be discarded.
- iii) Urgent need for developing vocational and technical education was emphasized.
- iv) The elitist orientation to education was considered detrimental.
- v) The value of a national system of education was re-emphasized.

- vi) The value of education for the soldier was realized.
- vii) Any scheme of educational development had to fit in the overall plan of national development.

The main effects of the political changes brought about by the second world war were to expose and pinpoint the weak spots in the educational system in India and to introduce a sense of urgency for reconstructing the whole educational structure.
