UNIT 5: EDUCATION IN BRITISH INDIA-IV (GOKHALE'S BILL, 1911)

UNIT STRUCTURE

5.1 Learning Objectives

5.2 Introduction

5.3 Gokhale's Resolution 1910

5.4 Gokhale's Bill 1911

5.5 Impact of Gokhale's Attempts

5.6 Government Resolution on Educational Policy 1913

5.7 Let Us Sum Up

5.8 Further Reading

5.9 Answer to Check Your Progress

5.10 Possible Questions

5.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- discuss the role of Gokhale for Compulsory Primary Education in India
- analyse the Gokhale's Resolution 1910
- explain the Gokhale's Bill 1911
- discuss the Government Resolution on Educational Policy 1913
- identify the impact of Gokhale's Attempts for making Primary Education Compulsory in India

5.2 INTRODUCTION

As you know that the twentieth century was a very important period in the history of Indian education. During this twentieth century the spirit of nationalism was generated. Indian people fought for their freedom. In this freedom struggle many great personalities had emerged in the national scenario. Along, with regard to the history of Indian education this period was highly important.

You have already gained an idea in the previous units that the policy of Lord Curzon on primary education received great momentum for expansion. But even after this expansion, primary education did not meet the Indian expectation. Therefore, the opinion of the Indian people, launched an extensive agitation with regard to the introduction of compulsory primary education in India. Gopal Krishna Gokhale (1866-1915) was one of the great personalities of that period. He was the chief advocator of compulsory primary education in India. He was the principal of Poona Fergusson College for many years. He was also the President of the Indian National Congress. He was also the founder of the Servants of India Society and the member of the Bombay Imperial Legislative Council.

The demand for compulsory education was strengthened by the fact that the Gaekwar of Boroda had introduced compulsory education throughout his state in 1906. Gokhale moved the resolution for compulsory primary education in 1910 but withdrew it on an assurance from the Government that the whole question would be examined more carefully. As nothing was done seriously, Gokhale introduced the bill in the Imperial Legislative Council on March 16, 1911. The bill was debated for two days and was rejected by 38 votes to 13. This did not come as a blow to Gokhale who had anticipated the result correctly and earlier in the debate had already referred to the expected result of the voting. In this unit, a clear picture is drawn to explain the Gokhale Bill and its resolution in detail.

5.3 GOKHALE'S RESOLUTION 1910

As already stated above that in the year 1910, Gopal Krishna Gokhale moved a resolution for making primary education free and compulsory in the Imperial Legislative Council. In the Council, Gokhale moved the resolution thus, " That this Council recommends that a beginning should be made in the direction of making elementary education free and compulsory throughout the country, and that a mixed commission of officials and non-officials be appointed at an early date to frame definite proposals."

- Through this resolution Gokhale made some suggestion to the Government for making Primary education compulsory. Important suggestions contained in the Resolution were as follows:
- Free and compulsory education should be introduced for boys between the age of 6-10 years.
- The expenditure of education should be shared by the government and the local bodies in the ratio of 1:2.
- A secretary should be appointed to organise, supervise and look after the primary education.
- There should be a separate Department in the Central Government to draw up a scheme for the expansion of primary education.
- In the budget statement there should be a portion describing the progress of primary education.

The resolution was discussed in the Legislative Council. However, even after discussion the expected progress was not made in the field of primary education. As stated above that on the assurance of the government, Gokhale withdrew the resolution. In 1910 a Department of Education was created in the Central Government and a Secretary was appointed. The record of the progress of primary education also started to be published by the Government. However, the Government did not make primary school education free and compulsory, which was the main mission of Gokhale's resolution.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: Mention the year and the council in which Gopal Krishna Gokhale moved a resolution for making primary education free and compulsory?

.....

Q 2: In the year 1910, a …….. was created in the Central Government and a Secretary was appointed based on Gokhale's Resolution. (Fill in the blank)

.....

Q 3: State any three suggestions contained in Gokhale's Resolution.

.....

5.4 GOKHALE'S BILL 1911

Gokhale made further attempt to draw the attention of the people of India and the British Government to the state of the education. Therefore, Gokhale again introduced a private Bill on March 16, 1911 in the Imperial Legislative Council. The objective of the Bill was to provide for gradual introduction of free and compulsory primary education in India. This Bill contained the following suggestions:

- Gokhale suggested through his Bill that compulsory primary education should be introduced in the areas where certain percentage was fixed by the Governor-General in Council.
- After securing the sanction of Government, the local body shall enforce the rule. Local Bodies at their end had the right to introduce compulsion in whole or part of the area under their jurisdiction.
- Local bodies were also given the right to levy cess to meet the cost of free and compulsory primary education.
- Expenditure on education was to be spared by the Local Bodies and the Provincial Government in the ratio of 1:2.
- Gokhale also suggested that primary education should be made compulsory for the boys of the age group of 6 to 10.
- The defaulting guardians should be penalised for non-compliance of the provisions of sending their wards to recognised primary schools.
- It was also suggested that primary education would be made compulsory for girls.
- Guardians whose monthly income was less than Rs.10/- were not to be asked to pay any fee.

After presentation of the Bill by Mr. Gokhale, it was circulated among the local governments, universities and some private bodies for opinions. The Bill was taken up for debate in the Legislative Council and it continued

for two days. As we have already discussed above the Bill was rejected as there was 38 votes against the bill and only 13 votes in favour of it.

Gokhale's Bill on making primary education free and compulsory was rejected by the Government of India on the following grounds:

- There was no popular demand raised at that time to make primary education compulsory.
- The people of the country were not ready to accept compulsory education.
- The state government were not in support of the Bill.
- A section of the educated class of Indian people did not support the Bill.
- The local authorities were not willing to levy educational cess.
- While executing the Bill, many administrative difficulties were likely to come up.

While Gokhale's Bill was rejected, however it focused attention of the entire country on compulsory primary education. The British Government reconsidered its policy on education and a new educational policy was launched on 21 February, 1913.

5.5 IMPACT OF GOKHALE'S ATTEMPTS

Although Gokhale failed in his efforts to get the Bill passed, yet his efforts served a great purpose. Gokhale's Bill had a great practical impact on primary education in the following years. He had drawn a very elaborate picture of the educational condition of that time and tried to give concrete suggestions for its reform. It focussed the attention of different sections of population in India on the importance of this issue. Most educated Indians began to realise the need of free and compulsory education. A Department of Education was created under the Central Government. The movement for elementary education advanced rapidly in the country. In the newly created North West Frontier Province, elementary education was made free in 1912.

As a result of Gokhale's Bill, the Government of India sanctioned a recurring grant of 50 lakh and a non-recurring grant of 80 lakh for the

development of primary education. During the period of 1910-1917, there was also considerable progress of primary education in the country. The provincial governments started feeling the need of compulsory primary education. In 1918, Bethal Bhai Patel for the first time raised a Bill for making primary education compulsory in the province of Bombay. Similar acts were passed in Bengal, Punjab, UP, Bihar and Orissa, Madras and Central Province in 1920. You are also aware that in Assam Compulsory Primary Education Act was passed in 1926. We can say that all these were the outcome of Gokhale's attempt made in 1910-1911.The Government was also compelled to reconsider its policy on education and a new educational policy was launched in 1913 with the passing of Government Resolution on education.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 4: Fill in the blanks

i. Gokhale again introduced a…….. Bill on March 16, 1911 in the Imperial Legislative Council.

ii. In the newly created North West Frontier Province, elementary education was made free in the year ……

iii. In Assam Compulsory Primary Education Act was passed in……..

Q 5: State any three grounds on which Gokhale's Bill on making primary education free and compulsory was rejected by the Government of India.

.....

5.6 GOVERNMENT RESOLUTION ON EDUCATIONAL POLICY 1913

While Gokhale's Bill on primary education was pending at the Imperial Legislative Council, King George V and his wife Queen Mary visited India.

King George addressed the Delhi Durbar on 12 December 1911; he announced an additional grant of fifty lakh of rupees for primary education. As we know that Gokhale's Bill was rejected in March, 1912. After the rejection of the Bill the Under Secretary of State for India admitted in the House of Commons in course of his discussion on the Indian budget. In order to make comprehensive survey and study in the field of education, the Government of India passed the Resolution on Educational Policy on February 21, 1913. Following are the main suggestions of the Resolution:

- There should be sufficient expansion of lower primary schools, where along with instruction in the three R's, children should be taught drawing, knowledge of the village map, nature study and physical exercises.
- Simultaneously, upper primary schools should be opened at the proper places and if necessary, the lower primary schools should be raised to the status of upper primary schools.
- Local Bodies' schools should be established in place of private-aided schools.
- Maktabs and Pathshalas should be adequately subsidised.
- The inspection and management of private schools should be made more efficient.
- In most of the parts of India, it may not be practicable to prescribe separate curricula for rural and urban, but in the urban schools there is sufficient scope for teaching geography and organising school excursions etc.
- The teachers may be drawn from the same class to which the students belong. They should have passed vernacular middle examination and received one year's training. Provision should be made for refresher courses for the primary school teachers during vacations.
- A trained teacher should get salary not less than Rs.12 per month. Again there should be provision for his/her increment in terms of salary, pension and provident fund.

- The number of students under one teacher should generally range between 30 and 40.
- Improvement should be made in the condition of middle and secondary vernacular schools and their number should be increased.
- Schools should be housed in hygienic, spacious but inexpensive buildings.
- Emphasis was laid on the education of women too. Suggestions were put forth concerning special curriculum of practical utility for girls. It was clearly stated in the resolution that too much importance should not be attached to examination in the education of girls.
- Number of women teachers and inspectors should also be increased.
- The state should not completely withdraw from the field of secondary education.
- Further establishment of state institutions was proposed to be stopped.
- Existing institutions should continue to serve as models and proper grant-in-aid should be sanctioned to private institutions.
- Curriculum and examination system should also be improved.
- The Resolution provided for the expansion in university education. The existence of 5 universities and 185 colleges was considered to be insufficient in view of the vast needs and demands of the country.
- Universities and high schools should be assigned distinct areas of activities.
- The universities should be relieved from the responsibility of granting recognition to high schools and they should be kept under Provincial Governments.
- The Resolution suggested that separate universities should be established for teaching and examination.
- Recommendations were made concerning the inclusion of subjects of industrial importance in the curriculum and provision of facilities to the students desirous of pursuing research work.

From the above provisions of the Resolutions, it is clear that the Government of India Resolution of 1913 agreed with Curzon's policy of stricter control of education for greater efficiency. It summarised the government policy in this respect as "the encouragement of privately managed schools under suitable bodies maintained in efficiency by government inspection, recognition and control, and by the aid of government funds." But unfortunately, the occurrence of the First World War delayed the developments planned in the Resolution and many important items were postponed due to financial stringency.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 6: In which date did the Government of India pass the Resolution on Educational Policy in order to make comprehensive survey and study in the field of education?

.....

.....

Q 7: State any three main suggestions of Government Resolution on Education Policy, 1913 Resolution.

.....

.....



5.7 LET US SUM UP

- Gopal Krishna Gokhale, a member of the Imperial Legislative Council, raised the issue on making primary education free and compulsory.
- Gokhale placed a Resolution in the Legislative Council in 1910 for making primary education free and compulsory.
- According to him free and compulsory education should be introduced for boys between the age of 6-10 years.
- The resolution was discussed in the Legislative Council but unfortunately no steps were taken by the Government on the resolution.

- On March 16, 1911 in the Legislative Council, Gokhale waged a stronger fight regarding free and compulsory primary education and it is known as Gokhale's Bill, 1911.
- The Bill was rejected as there were 38 Votes against the Bill and only 13 Votes in favour of it.
- Despite its failure, the Bill had a great practical impact on primary education in the following years. Most of the educated people in India began to realise the need of free and compulsory education.
- The provincial governments started feeling the need of compulsory primary education. In 1918, Bethal Bhai Patel for the first time raised a Bill for making primary education compulsory in the province of Bombay. Similar acts were passed in Bengal, Punjab, U.P. Bihar and Orissa, Madras and Central Province in 1920.
- In Assam, Compulsory Primary Education Act was passed in the year 1926.
- Due to Gokhale's effort, the government reconsidered the policy on education and a new educational policy was passed on February 21, 1913 which was known as the Government of India Resolution, 1913.



5.8 FURTHER READING

1. Aggarwal, J.C. (2005). History of Modern Indian Education. New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House Pvt.Ltd.
2. Chaube, S.P. (1999). History and Problems of Indian Education. Agra: Vinod Pustak Mandir.
3. Dash, B.N. (2014). History of Education in India. New Delhi: Dominant Publishers and Distributors Pvt. Ltd.



5.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: 1910, Imperial Legislative Counsil

Ans to Q No 2: Department of Education

Ans to Q No 3: The three of suggestions contained in Gokhale's Resolution are as follows:

- Free and compulsory education should be introduced for boys between the age of 6-10 years.
- A Secretary should be appointed to organise, supervise and look after primary education.
- There should be a separate Department in the Central Government to draw up scheme for the expansion of primary education

Ans to Q No 4:

- Private
- 1912
- 1926

Ans to Q No 5: The grounds citing which the Government of India rejected Gokhale's Bill on making primary education free and compulsory in the country are as mentioned below:

- There was no popular demand raised at that time to make primary education compulsory.
- A section of the educated class of Indian people did not support the Bill.
- The local authorities were not willing to levy educational cess.

Ans to Q No 6: February 21, 1913.

Ans to Q No 7: Three of the main suggestions of the Government Resolution on Education Policy, 1913 are as follows:

- There should be sufficient expansion of lower primary schools, where along with instruction in the three R's, children should be taught drawing, knowledge of the village map, nature study and physical exercises.
- Simultaneously, upper primary schools be opened at the proper places and if necessary, the lower primary schools should be raised to the status of upper primary schools.
- Local Bodies' schools should be established in place of private-aided schools

5.10 POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

Short Questions (Answer each question in around 150 words).

Q 1: In which year did Gokhale introduced his Private Bill on Education? State some of the suggestions contained of the Bill (any five).

Q 2: On what grounds did the Government of India rejected Gokhale's Bill regarding free and compulsory primary education.

Q 3: Write a short note on Impact of Gokhale's attempt with regard to Primary Education in the country.

Long Questions (Answer each question in around 300-500 words)

Q 1: Describe the Resolution taken by Gopal Krishna Gokhale on Compulsory Primary Education in the year 1910.

Q 2: Discuss the salient features of Gokhale's Bill of 1911. Why was the Bill rejected? Narrate the contribution of Gokhale towards the development of primary education.

Q 3: Give a brief account of Gokhale's attempt to make primary education compulsory in India. Explain how far it helped in the development of primary education in India.

Q 4: Write the major provisions of Government Resolution on Educational Policy, 1913.

*** ***** ***