UNIT 6: EDUCATION IN BRITISH INDIA-V (SADLER/ CALCUTTA UNIVERSITY COMMISSION, 1917)

UNIT STRUCTURE

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6.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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

- describe the background of the appointment of Sadler or Calcutta University commission
- explain the recommendations given by the commission on Secondary Education
- analyse the recommendations on University Education given by the Commission
- identify the effect of the recommendations on Indian Education

6.2 INTRODUCTION

We have already learnt that the Government of India had passed a Resolution on Education in the year 1913. While preparing the Resolution on Education in 1913, the Government of India planned to appoint a Commission on University Education. In 1914, a proposal was made to reform the Indian education system under the leadership of Lord Haldane. The proposal was mainly to establish of at least one university in each

province. However, the proposal could not materialise due to the outbreak of the First World War in 1914 and unwillingness from the part of Lord Haldane to accept the assignment.

After the end of the war, in 1917 the Government of India appointed the Calcutta University Commission under the Chairmanship of Michale Sadler, the Vice- Chancellor of Leeds University. The Commission was appointed to enquire into the affairs of the Calcutta University and to suggest measures for reform. The Commission is popularly known as the Sadlar Commission from the name of its Chairman Sir Michale Sadler. The other members of the commission were Dr.Gregory, Sir Philip Hartog, Prof. Ramsay Muir, Sir Ashutosh Mukherjee and Dr. Zia-ud-din Ahmed. In 1916 there were five universities in India out of which the largest was the Calcutta University. A commission was needed for this university as various problems needed reforms.

After hard labour of 17 months during which the Commission visited other universities in British India, it submitted a report in 13 volumes providing a critical account of the working of the Calcutta University and indicating the lines on which higher education in Bengal should develop in the future. The report investigated the problems which were common to the other four universities in India as well, and its recommendations provided the basis for the future development of university education in India.

The Calcutta University commission also studied the problems of the secondary education and made radical recommendations regarding the reorganisation of secondary schools. This commission viewed that the improvement of secondary education was an essential foundation for the improvement of education system.

6.3 SADLER OR CALCUTTA UNIVERSITY COMMISSION ON SECONDARY EDUCATION

The commission wanted to bring drastic changes in the reorganisation of secondary education. The commission observed that "No satisfactory reorganisation of university system of Bengal will be possible

unless and until a radical reorganisation of the system of secondary education upon which university world depend, it carried into effect". The commission first pointed out the defects of the secondary education. According to the commission the main defects of the secondary education were as mentioned below:

- The secondary education was suffering from lack of useful educational tools and equipment.
- Secondary education had become narrow because of being over influenced by public examinations.
- The standard of secondary education had fallen down to a deplorable state.
- The secondary schools were not inspected periodically and they were not given useful suggestions for their improvement.
- Suitable subjects for intermediate classes were not included in the curriculum.

On the basis of the above-mentioned observations regarding the defects of secondary education the commission made the following recommendation for improvement of the secondary education.

- The dividing line between the university and the secondary courses should be at the Intermediate Examination than at Matriculation.
- The commission suggested that the Intermediate classes should be separated from the degree colleges and set-up as a new type of institution called intermediate colleges. The proposal in its best forms was that the two top classes on the present high school course were to be removed from the high schools and combined with two years of intermediate course in the intermediate colleges. These might either be known as independent institutions or might be attached to selected high schools. The intermediate colleges were to provide instruction in arts, science, medicine, engineering, teaching etc.
- The admission qualification for universities was qualification of

the intermediate and not the matriculation examination.

- A Board of Secondary and Intermediate Education should be established and entrusted with the administration and control of secondary education. The board should consist the representatives of the Government, the university, the secondary schools and the intermediate colleges. The Board should be independent from the Education Department of the Government. The majority of the members should be non-official and it should represent both Hindus and Muslims.
- The commission also recommended that sufficient funds should be provided for the improvement of secondary education.
- The commission recommended that mother tongue should be the medium of instruction in the secondary schools and intermediate colleges.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: In which year did the Government of India appointed the Calcutta University Commission?

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Q 2: The Calcutta University Commission is popularly known as the ……. Commission from the name of its chairman …….. (Fill in the blank)

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Q 3: In 1916 there were …….. universities in India out of which the biggest was the …….. University. (Fill in the blank)

Q 4: The Calcutta University commission recommended that …….should be the medium of instruction in the secondary schools and intermediate colleges. (Fill in the blank)

Q 5: State any two defects pointed out by the Calcutta University Commission regarding Secondary Education in their report.

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6.4 SADLER COMMISSION ON UNIVERSITY EDUCATION

As we have discussed above the commission thoroughly examined the problems of the Calcutta University which was also applicable to other universities. Following a detailed study, the commission found that the university had expanded and the number of students and colleges affiliated to it became too large to be effectively dealt with by a single institution. The commission thus, mentioned that it was not possible for the University to perform its task successfully. Therefore, the Commission gave the following recommendations:

- A unitary teaching university should be established immediately at Dacca.
- The Calcutta University should be made a real teaching university and various colleges within the urban area should be organised into one university.
- The colleges in the rural areas should be so developed as to make it possible to encourage their gradual rise to university centres.
- The university may be relieved of secondary and intermediate education.
- College teachers should be entrusted with more power over academic affairs of the university.
- The regulations of the universities should not be rigid. Representative bodies like 'Court' and 'Executive Council' should be formed instead of the senate and Syndicate.
- An academic council having independent powers in all academic questions affecting courses of study, examination and degrees should be setup.

- Various faculties and boards of studies should be formed.
- To meet the needs of the students, Honours courses should be separated from Pass courses and it should be instituted in the universities.
- Teachers should be properly trained.
- The Department of Education should be started in the universities of Calcutta and Dacca for teacher training. Education should be taught as a subject in M.A. and B.A. courses.
- The duration of the degree course should be of three years after the intermediate stage.
- For organising teaching work there should be a Head in each department.
- A full-time and salaried Vice-Chancellor should be appointed.
- Professors and Readers should be appointed by special selection committees including experts.
- Tutorial work and superior research works should be organised.
- Study of Modern Indian Languages should be encouraged and these should be included among subjects for pass and honours degree.
- The examination system should be radically changed.

6.5 COMMISSION ON OTHER EDUCATIONAL ISSUES

The Commission made some important recommendations on several other educational issues. These were as mentioned below:

- Considering the backwardness of the Muslim community, every reasonable means should be taken to encourage them and safeguard their interest with regard to education.
- Purdah schools should be established to encourage girls of conservative families. A special board of Women's Education should be established in the Calcutta University to safeguard female interests with regard to education.
- A Directorate of physical training should be appointed in each

university whose duty would be to look after the health and physical welfare of students. A Board of Student Welfare should also be established in each university to supervise the general welfare of the students.

- The university should include applied science and technology in its courses, and recognise their practical study with degrees and diplomas.
- Regarding vocational education, the commission observed that the students in India were specially interested in literary subjects. The commissioned observed two reasons for this tendency. Firstly, the students in universities came from rich homes and they were not interested in any particular vocation of life, except in obtaining higher education for procuring good services. Secondly, there was no provision for vocational education and it was not possible for the youth to understand its importance. In view of the above mentioned facts, the commission recommended that vocational education should be started at the intermediate stage. The university must make provision for the efficient training of personnel needed for the industrial development of the country.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 6: The Sadler Commission recommended that the duration of the degree course should be …….years after the intermediate stage. (Fill in the blank)

Q 7: The Sadler Commission recommended to establish ……. schools to encourage education of girls from conservative families. (Fill in the blank)

Q 8: State the observations of Sadler's Commission regarding vocational education. (within 100 words)

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6.6 CRITICISM AND EVALUATION OF THE SADLER COMMISSION

The recommendations of the Commission though meant only for Calcutta University served as a guidelines for the entire university education in the country. Most of the recommendations of the Calcutta University Commission were influenced by the Haldane Commission which was constituted to enquire into the organisation and functions of the London University. Therefore, some of the recommendations of the Calcutta University Commission were unsuitable to Indian situation at that time. For example, development of rural colleges into future university centres and pooling together of the teaching resources in Calcutta to create a real teaching university on the pattern of Oxford or Cambridge were beset with great difficulties and complications. Creating a separate board of high school and intermediate education was also considered as much ahead the time.

Inspite of the above shortcomings the utility of the recommendations of the Commission cannot be ignored. The recommendations of the Commission brought about many developments in the university education in India. Many new universities were established during 1917-1921. A unitary teaching and residential university was set up in Dacca. Besides this the universities at Patna, Lucknow, Aligarh, Agra, Delhi, Nagpur, Hyderabad and Mysore may be mentioned. The recommendations of the commission revolutionised the status of secondary education.

In conclusion we can say that the report of the commission was an important document in the history of Indian education. It created great passion among the Indian public.



6.7 LET US SUM UP

- On 14 September, 1917 the British India Government appointed the Calcutta University Commission.
- Dr. Michael Sadler, the then Vice-Chancellor of the University of Leeds was appointed as the Chairman of the Commission. That is why the commission is also known as 'Sadler Commission'.

- After a detailed survey for long 17 months, the commission submitted its report in 1919 consisting of 13 parts.
- The commission presented a very comprehensive and constructive account of the secondary, collegiate and university education prevalent in India during that period.
- The commission suggested forming the Secondary Education Board with an aim to free the Universities from the responsibility of secondary education.
- It also suggested to bridging the gap between the universities and the Department of Education.
- The commission suggested that Mother tongue should be used as the medium of instruction in Intermediate colleges.
- The commission also examined thoroughly the problems of the Calcutta University and felt that the university had expanded and the number of students and colleges affiliated to it was huge to be dealt by a single university efficiently.
- The commission suggested that Directorate of Physical training should be established to pay attention to the health and physical welfare of the students.
- The commission recommended that teachers should be trained.
- The commission also suggested that the Department of Education should be established at the Calcutta University.
- After the report of the Sadler Commission a large number of universities were established in India between the period of 1917 to 1922.



6.8 FURTHER READING

1. Chaube, S.P. (1999). History and Problems of Indian Education. Agra: Vinod Pustak Mandir.
2. Dash, B.N. (2014). History of Education in India. New Delhi: Dominant Publishers and Distributors Pvt. Ltd.
3. Ghosh, Suresh C. (2007). History of Education in India. New Delhi: Rawat Publications.

6.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: 1917

Ans to Q No 2: Sadler Commission, Sir Michale Sadler

Ans to Q No 3: Five, Calcutta University

Ans to Q No 4: Mother tongue

Ans to Q No 5: Two of the main defects of secondary education pointed out by the Calcutta University Commission were:

- The standard of secondary education has fallen down to a deplorable degree.
- Suitable subjects for intermediate classes are not included in the curriculum.

Ans to Q No 6: Three

Ans to Q No 7: Purdah School

Ans to Q No 8: Regarding vocational education the Sadler commission observed that the students in India were specially interested in literary subjects. The commissioned stated two reasons for this tendency. Firstly, the students in universities came from rich homes and they were not interested in any particular vocation of life, except in obtaining higher education for procuring good services. Secondly, there was no provision for vocational education and it was not possible for youths to understand its importance. In view of the above-mentioned facts the commission recommended that vocational education should be started at the intermediate stage. The university must make provision for the efficient training of personnel needed for the industrial development of the country.

6.10 POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

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

Q 1: What were the defects of secondary education as pointed out by the Sadler Commission?

Q 2: State any three important recommendations of put forwarded by the Calcutta University Commission for improvement of secondary education.

Q 3: Write any five recommendations of Sadler Commission regarding university education.

Q 4: Write a short note on - Shortcomings of Sadler or Calcutta University Commission.

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

Q 1: Describe briefly the important recommendations of Sadler Commission of 1917.

Q 2: Discuss the effect of Sadler Commission on Indian higher education.

Q 3: Critically discuss the recommendation of the Sadler Commission to solve the problems of Calcutta University.

Q 4: Discuss how the recommendations of the Sadler Commission affect the subsequent developments of university education in India.

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