

# Woods Dispatch

Lord Dalhousie, India's Governor-General at the time, received an official letter from Sir Charles Wood, the President of a Board of Control of a British East India Company, in 1854 suggesting a significant shift in India's use of the English language which came to be known as Wood's Despatch.

- Charles Wood Despatch suggested that English should be the primary language of instruction in universities, while vernacular languages should be adopted by primary schools and Anglo-vernacular languages by high schools.
- The growth of English education and female education in India was greatly helped by Wood's letter. Making an English class available to Indians so they could work as employees in the company's administration was one of the best decisions made. He also gave more weight to women's education and vocational training.

## Who was Charles Woods?

Charles Wood served as the president of the English East India Company's Board of Control, established by Pitt's India Act of 1784. He has also served as India's state secretary. He significantly contributed to the spread of education in India.

- Charles Wood gave India its Magna Carta of Indian Education which made a huge impact.

## Magna Carta of Indian Education

The Wood's Despatch came to be known as the Magna Carta of English Education in India. Following are some of the objectives of the Woods Dispatch

- To teach Western knowledge and facts about Western culture to Indians.
- To provide education to native Indians in order to produce a class of governmental servants.
- To promote the next generation's moral development while simultaneously fostering their intellectual growth.
- To enhance Indians' practical and vocational abilities so that a larger variety of goods may be created, as well as to develop a healthy market for the purchase of such products.

## Salient Features of Woods Despatch

The Board of Control's President, Sir Charles Wood, had a significant role in India's establishment of English language teaching and female education. He sent a letter to Lord Dalhousie, who was India's Governor-General at the time, in 1854. Woods Dispatch supported for the use of vernacular languages in primary schools, Anglo-vernacular languages in high schools, and English for college students. He also explains the aims and outcomes of the Company's educational program in India in the first instance. It gave Indian education a higher priority than any other work the corporation had to do.

## Recommendation of Woods Dispatch 1854

Following is some of the recommendations made by Sir Charles Wood:

- A Department of Public Instruction should be established in each of Bengal's five provinces, including Bombay, Punjab, Madras, and in North-Western provinces, according to Wood's Despatch.
- Another important recommendation made by the Woods Dispatch was to increase public education.
- Many efforts were made to increase the number of primary, middle, & high schools once it was recognised that the local people lacked educational opportunities.
- The Woods Dispatch campaigned for the creation of universities in the three major towns of Calcutta, Madras, and Bombay. The University of London was to serve as the inspiration for the universities.
- The universities planned to develop departments of civil engineering, law, Arabic, Persian, and Sanskrit.
- Indian education required a grant-in-aid system, according to Woods Despatch.
- The Woods Dispatch emphasized the value of teaching Indian languages with the necessity of teaching English.
- The Woods Despatch also advocated for continued government funding of women's education.
- The Woods Dispatch recommended opening teacher training programmes in every province. Teachers at special schools should have training in engineering, medicine, and law.
- He promoted the creation of a system of graded schools across the country.

## Impact of Wood's Despatch on Indian Education

Wood's Despatch reflected the following developments:

- In 1857, universities were established in Bombay, Madras, and Calcutta.
- Education departments have been established in all provinces.
- The Bethune School (created by J.E.D. Bethune) was established to educate women.
- An Agriculture Institute in Pusa (Bihar) as well as an Engineering Institute in Roorkee were established.
- The education system in British India was rapidly westernised, with European headmasters & principals in colleges and schools.