

Civilising the 'Native', Educating the Nation

Questions to be done in CW

I) Answer in a sentence –

Q1. Define the term 'orientalists.'

Q2. Who set up the Asiatic Society of Bengal?

Q3. Why was a Madrasa set up at Calcutta in 1781?

Q4. What is meant by the term 'vernacular'?

II) Answer the following –

Q1. What differences existed between the views of Mahatma Gandhi and Tagore with respect to education?

Q2. What was the controversy between the Orientalists and Anglicists scholars?

ANS: The Orientalists believed that the British ought to promote Indian rather than Western learning. They felt that the study of ancient Indian texts and Sanskrit and Persian literature and poetry should be encouraged in India.

The Anglicists argued that Indians should be taught Western scientific knowledge through the medium of English language.

III) Answer in detail –

Q1. Who was William Adam? What were the main points of his report on vernacular education?

Q2. What was the Wood's Despatch? What were the practical benefits of Western education according to it?

Q3. 'After 1854 the Company decided to improve the system of vernacular education.' Explain.

Q4. Why did William Jones feel the need to study Indian history, philosophy and law?

Q5. Why did James Mill and Thomas Macaulay think that European education was essential in India?

ANS: James Mill argued that the aim of education ought to be to teach what was useful and practical. So, Indians should be made familiar with the scientific and technical advances that the West had made, rather than with the poetry and sacred literature of the Orient.

Thomas Babington Macaulay saw India as an uncivilised country that needed to be civilised. No branch of Eastern knowledge, according to him could be compared to what England had produced.

He urged that the British government in India stop wasting public money in promoting Oriental learning, for it was of no practical use.

He felt that knowledge of English would allow Indians to read some of the finest literature the world had produced; it would make them aware of the developments in Western science and philosophy. Teaching of English could thus be a way of civilising people, changing their tastes, values and culture.

Q6. Who laid the foundation of Santiniketan, and why?

ANS: Rabindranath Tagore started Santiniketan in 1901.

He wanted to set up a school where the child was happy, free and creative. He felt that childhood ought to be a time of self-learning, outside the rigid and restricting discipline of the schooling system set up by the British. He believed that the existing schools killed the natural desire of the child to be creative and her sense of wonder.

Tagore was of the view that creative learning could be encouraged only within a natural environment. So, he chose to set up his school 100 kilometres away from Calcutta, in a rural setting. He saw it as an abode of peace (Santiniketan), where living in harmony with nature, children could cultivate their natural creativity.

Q7. Why did Mahatma Gandhi think that English education had enslaved Indians?
