**BA Education, 3rd Sem MD: Unit-1; Study Materials Prepared &**

*Presented in the Class   
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**WOOD’S DESPATCH, 1854**

As a part of developmental efforts in education system of British Ruled India Wood’s Despatch was declared on 19 July 1854. It outlined a new system of education for British India, emphasizing the importance of English education, vernacular languages, and vocational training. It is also known as the ***"Magna Carta of English Education in India,"*** was a comprehensive educational despatch sent by Sir Charles Wood, the President of the Board of Control of the East India Company, to the Governor-General of India, Lord Dalhousie. It marked a critical shift toward structured, widespread education across British ruled India.

**KEY FEATURES OF WOOD'S DESPATCH:**

**PROMOTION OF ENGLISH EDUCATION:**

The dispatch advocated for English as the medium of instruction in higher education and encouraged its use in government and commerce.

**VERNACULAR LANGUAGES:**

It also recognized the importance of vernacular languages for primary education, suggesting that schools adopt them as the medium of instruction.

**ESTABLISHMENT OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS:**

The dispatch recommended the establishment of a Department of Public Instruction in each province, along with universities in major cities like Bombay, Calcutta, and Madras.

**GRANT-IN-AID SYSTEM:**

It proposed a grant-in-aid system to support private educational institutions and encourage their growth.

**VOCATIONAL TRAINING:**

Wood's Despatch emphasized the need for vocational training to equip Indians with practical skills for various professions.

**WOMEN EDUCATION:**

It explicitly promoted education for women at all levels.

**MAJOR OBJECTIVES**

* Impart Western knowledge and culture to Indians.
* Develop Indians into capable public servants for British administration.
* Elevate the moral and intellectual character of the populace.
* Promote vocational skills to boost productivity and market development.

**KEY RECOMMENDATIONS**

**1. Responsibility for Education**

Education was acknowledged as a key government responsibility—the East India Company was expected to take the lead.

**2. Department of Public Instruction**

Set up an education department (DPI) in each of the five provinces—Bengal, Bombay, Madras, Punjab, and the North-Western Provinces. Each DPI, led by a Director and supported by inspectors, would submit annual progress reports .

**3. Hierarchical Education Structure**

Establish a graded educational system: primary schools at the base, followed by high schools, middle schools, colleges, and universities at the top.

**4. Medium of Instruction**

* **Primary level:** Vernacular (local languages)
* **Secondary level:** Both Anglo-vernacular and local languages
* **Higher education:** English became dominant

**5. Universities Modeled on London University**

Creation of universities in each Presidency—Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras—functioning as examining and degree-awarding bodies. Faculties were to include English, Arabic, Sanskrit, Persian, law, civil engineering, etc

**6. Grant-in-Aid System**

Private and missionary schools could receive government grants if they provided secular education, allowed inspections, charged minimal fees, maintained proper management, and met performance standards

**7. Teacher Training**

Institutions (normal schools) for training teachers, including specialized instruction in engineering, law, and medicine, were to be established. Scholarships and better pay were advocated.

**8. Professional and Vocational Education**

Push for education in practical domains such as law, medicine, engineering, and other vocations, to foster skills for employment and economic development.

**9. Women’s and Minority Education**

Encouraged education for women and advocated for efforts to bring Muslims and other backward communities into the fold through specialized programs.

**10. Secular Education**

Maintained neutrality regarding religion—education institutions were to be secular, and religious instruction was discouraged.

**IMPLEMENTATIONS AND IMPACT**

1. **Created Educational Awareness among Indians**
2. **Started Higher education in India.**
3. **Dominance of English medium in the Indian education system**
4. **Bestowed responsibilities to enhance Indian education system**
5. **Started separate Institutions and Administration departments to look after the educational activities.**
6. **Universities Established in 1855**: The First Universities in India were established as per the recommendations of Wood’s Despatch in the year 1855 at Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras.
7. **Education departments (DPIs)** were established by 1855 in each province.
8. **Expansion of Schools:** Number of primary schools grew significantly increased from around 3,916 in 1881–82 to 5,124 in 1900–02.
9. **Systemic Influence:** On the basis of Wood’s Despatch recommendations
10. Wood's Despatch laid the foundation for India's modern education system.
11. It led to the establishment of universities and other educational institutions.
12. It contributed to the spread of English education and Western knowledge in India.
13. The dispatch is considered a landmark document in the history of Indian education.

**LIMITATIONS AND CRITICISMS**

* Uneven reach—village and rural areas remained underserved.
* Western education emphasis marginalized indigenous languages and traditions.
* Creation of an educated class serving administration rather than mass empowerment.
* Grant-in-aid suffered from funding gaps and bureaucratic delays.
* Missionary institutions retained favorable positioning; full secular neutrality wasn’t always realized