

HISTORY

Chapter 11: Civilising the “Native”, Educating the Nation



CIVILISING THE “NATIVE”, EDUCATING THE NATION

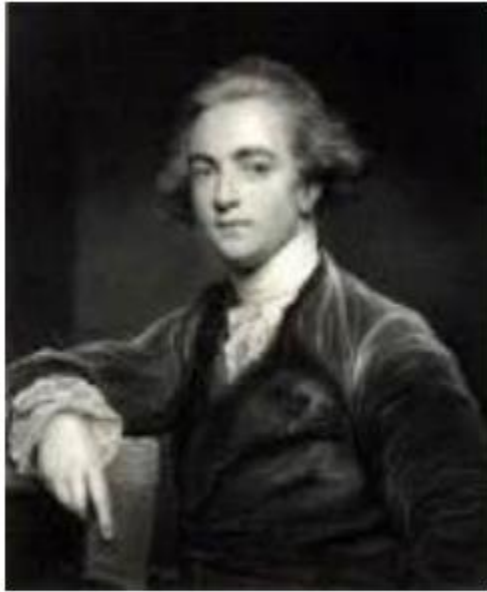
Education in India during the Initial Years of the British Rule

After the British conquered India, many changes came into Indian political, economic, educational, social, and cultural aspects. Education was one of the fields which were impacted by British policies.

Orientalism

- Orientalists are people who have scholarly knowledge of the culture and languages of Asia.
- William Jones was a linguist who had knowledge on Greek, Latin, French, English, Persian and Arabic.
- After he arrived at Calcutta, he learnt Sanskrit grammar and poetry from the pundits. He also studied Indian texts on law, philosophy, politics, morality, arithmetic and medicine.
- Many Englishmen such as Henry Thomas Colebrook and Nathaniel Halhed had the same interests as Jones. Along with them, Jones set up the Asiatic Society of Bengal and started a journal known as Asiatick Research.
- Jones along with Colebrooke had a deep respect for the ancient cultures of the East and the West. According to them, the ancient texts of the country were important for understanding the religions and the laws of the country which could further help them to rule the nation.
- Both of them discovered, read and translated many ancient Indian texts. They believed that the discovery and translation of the ancient Indian texts would not only lead to the discovery of the lost glories of the ancient Indian texts but would also help the British to learn from Indian culture. This would also help the British to become the guardians and masters of Indian culture.
- At this time, many officials of the Company argued for the promotion of Indian learning and that institutions should be set up to encourage the teaching of classical languages such as Sanskrit and Persian. Further, educating the natives through the languages in which they are familiar would help the British to win their hearts.
- With this objective, a madrasa was set up at Calcutta in 1781 to promote the study of Persian, Arabic and Islamic laws. Similarly, the Hindu college was set up at Benaras in

1791 to encourage the learning of ancient Sanskrit texts. This would also help the British in administering the country.



William Jones

Opposition to the Orientalists

- However, not every British official thought like Jones and Colebrooke. Most of them contended that the knowledge of the East was unscientific, illogical and irrational.
- James Mill, a British administrator historian, attacked the orientalists. He believed that Indians should be given the knowledge of scientific and technical advancements which have been made in the West.
- Thomas B. Macaulay was a firm critique of the orientalists. To him, India along with the other Asian countries was uncivilised, and the British had the responsibilities of civilising them. He believed that even a single shelf of a European library was worth the whole native literature of Asia and Arabia.
- Macaulay in his famous Minute on Education in 1835 emphasised that the Government should spend money on promoting Western scientific learning through the medium of the English language. Based on his Minute on Education, the English Education Act was introduced. In this Act, a decision was taken to make English the medium of instruction for higher education.
- This Act also recommended the discontinuing of the promotion of oriental institutions.

Wood's Despatch of 1854

- Wood's Despatch of 1854 was issued by Charles Wood. The following were some important features of the despatch:
 - The despatch outlined the importance of Western learning over Oriental learning.
 - One of the economic aspects of the Act was to create a class of Indians who would adhere to British tastes, lifestyles, and desires. This would create the demand for British goods in India.
 - The Act also emphasised that European learning would improve the moral character of Indians as they would become honest and truthful. This would create a class of Indian civil servants who would help the British in administering the country.
 - The Act argued that the literature of the East was full of errors, and it cannot develop the skills required for administering the country.
- As a result of this Act, several changes were made in the education system in India. These were
 - The Government established educational departments to control all matters which were related to education.
 - Efforts were made to set up a system of university education. In 1857, the universities of Calcutta, Madras and Delhi were established.

Changes in Local Schools during Colonial Rule

Schools during the Pre-British Period

- William Adam, a Scottish missionary, was given the responsibility of providing details about the schooling system in India to the British officials.
- According to the surveys made by him, there were over one lakh 'pathshalas' in Bihar and Bengal which together were educating about 20 lakh children. These institutions were established either by rich people or by local communities.
- One of the significant features of these schools was that they were flexible in many areas. For example, fees were not fixed—while the rich paid more, the poor paid less. Further, classes were not held during the time of harvests so that children could help

their parents in the fields.

- There were no separate school buildings, no benches, no printed books, no attendance register and no annual examinations.

Changes in Indian Schools after 1854

- After 1854, the Company tried to impose rules and regulations over local vernacular schools.
- The Government appointed many pundits who were given the responsibility of visiting pathshalas and improving the quality of education.
- The teacher or the guru had to take regular classes according to a regular timetable. A system of annual examination was started.
- Schools were provided with printed textbooks, and students had to pay regular fees, attend school regularly, sit on fixed seats and obey all the rules and regulations.
- The Government granted aid to schools which followed the new rules and regulations. Those schools which were not willing to adhere to the new system were denied any government aid. The latter category of schools found it difficult to compete with aided schools.
- Because new regulations demanded regular attendance, the children from poor families now found it hard to attend schools as they found it difficult to take leave from school during the period of harvesting.

National Education

Many Indians in the nineteenth century began to express their views regarding the education pattern which should be followed in the country. Many Indians believed that it was necessary for Indians to receive Western education. They urged the British to open more schools, colleges, and universities. However, another set of Indians believed that educating fellow countrymen in western sciences and languages would not be fruitful. Mahatma Gandhi and Rabindranath Tagore belonged to the latter category of people.

Mahatma Gandhi and his Views on Education

- Gandhi believed that colonial education filled Indians with an inferiority complex, because they were made to believe in the greatness and superiority of western education. This destroyed their pride in their own culture.

- He further stated that after receiving western education, Indians would gradually begin to admire the British rule. This would enslave the Indians.
- Gandhi wanted education which could instill a sense of pride, self-respect and dignity among the Indians. During national movements, he urged students to leave governmental educational institutions.
- He believed in imparting education through local vernacular languages.
- Educating Indians through the English language distanced them from their own social surroundings.
- According to Gandhi, western education focused more on textbooks rather than practical education. To him, the purpose of education should be to develop the mind and the soul of the people. Simple reading and writing should not be considered education.
- The main aim of education according to him should be to learn a craft and various skills and to develop the mind of individuals.

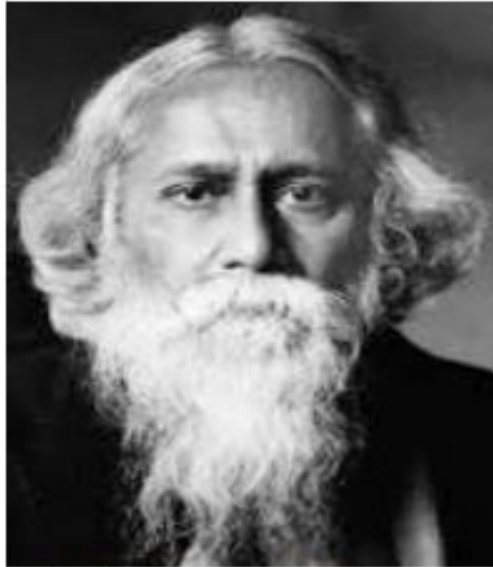


Mahatma Gandhi

Rabindranath Tagore

- Rabindranath Tagore did not like the idea of the British system of schooling where children were enclosed in classrooms. He compared such classrooms with the prison. He wanted to establish schools where children were happy, free and creative, and could explore their own thoughts and desires.

- He believed that instead of concentrating on books, teachers should be imaginative, understanding and should help children in developing their curiosities.
- He wanted education to be imparted in a natural environment. This is the reason that he set up 'Shanti Niketan' about hundred kilometers away from Calcutta.
- Children in the institution were living in harmony with nature where emphasis was laid on cultivating their creativity.

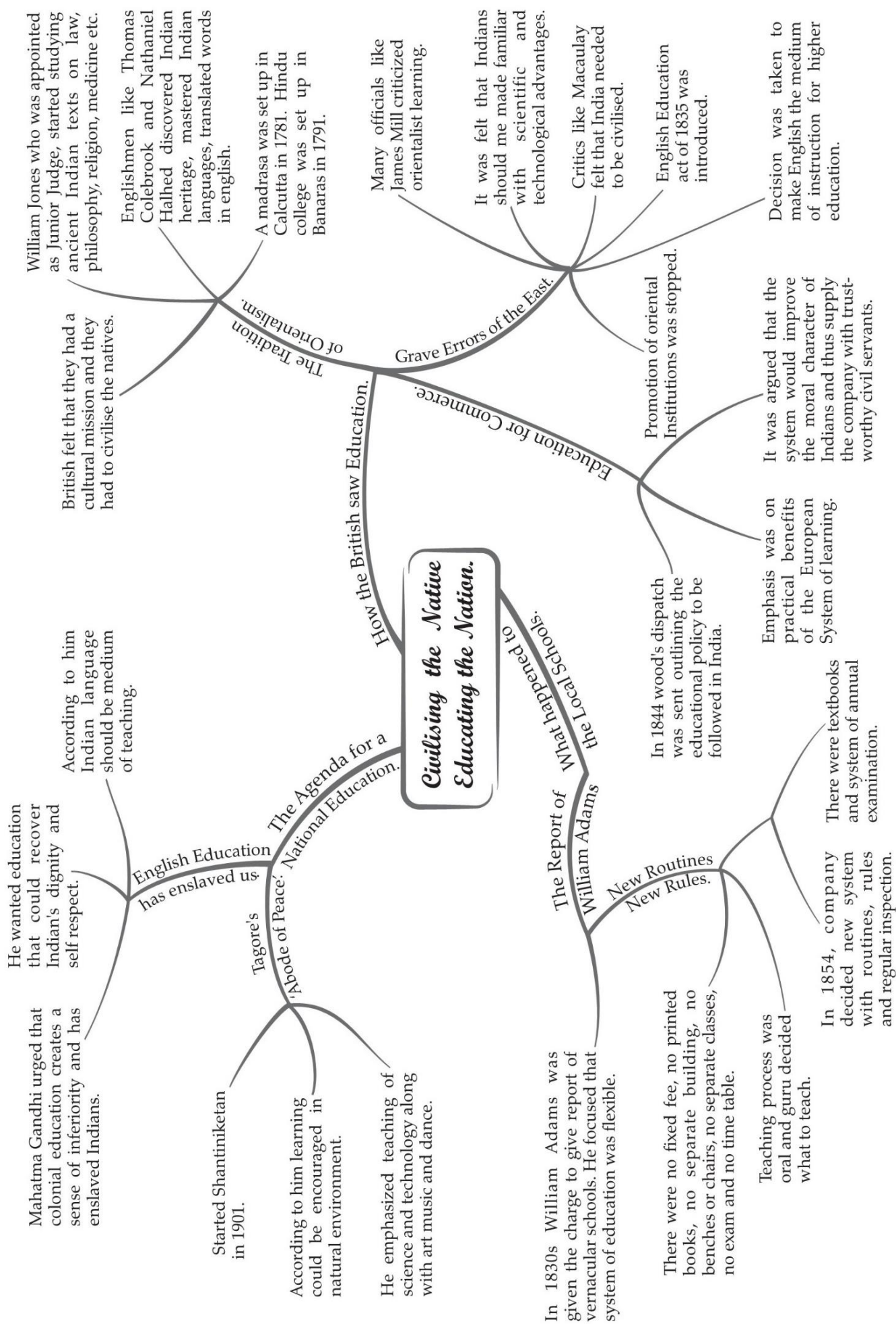


Rabindranath Tagore

Differences between the ideas of Gandhi and Rabindranath Tagore

Although most of the ideas of Gandhi and Tagore on education were similar, there were certain areas in which they differed. While Gandhi was not in favour of imparting education in Western Sciences through English as a medium of instruction, Tagore wanted to combine the elements of both western and traditional learning. Children were taught sciences and technology with art, dance and music at Shanti Niketan.

CHAPTER-8



Important Questions

Multiple Choice Questions-

1. Name the person who arrived in Calcutta in 1783 and was appointed as junior judge at the Supreme Court.
 - a. Warren Hastings
 - b. Lord Comwalis
 - c. William Jones
 - d. Henry Thomas
2. Those with a scholarly knowledge of the language and culture of Asia were known as:
 - a. Vernacular
 - b. Orientalists
 - c. Anglicists
 - d. Munshi
3. Hindu College was established in Benaras in:
 - a. 1781
 - b. 1773
 - c. 1777
 - d. 1791
4. Charles Wood despatch was also known as:
 - a. Wood's Despatch
 - b. Wood's Commission
 - c. Macaulay Committee
 - d. Court of Directors
5. In 1830's a Scottish missionary who toured the districts of Bengal and Bihar was:
 - a. Williams Carey
 - b. William Adam
 - c. Thomas Babington
 - d. Charles Wood.
6. What would you call a person who knows several languages?
 - a. Biographer
 - b. Linguist

- c. Biolinguist
 - d. Translator
7. Complete by choosing the most appropriate word from the following list of options. The introduction of brought with it ideas of democracy, liberty, fraternity among the minds of Indians
- a. Western education
 - b. Subsidiary alliance
 - c. Doctrine of Lapse
 - d. Expansion policies
8. Who started the journal Asiatick Research?
- a. Henry Thomas Colebrooke
 - b. Warren Hastings
 - c. William Jones
 - d. Max Muller
9. The temples of darkness that were falling of themselves into decay. Who said these words about the Calcutta Madrasa and Benares Sanskrit College?
- a. Lord William Bentick
 - b. Lord Dalhousie
 - c. Lord Ripon
 - d. Lord Macaulay
10. How did the European learning improve the moral character of Indians?
- a. It would expand the trade and commerce
 - b. It would make them truthful and honest
 - c. It would make the Indians realize the importance of developing resources of the country
 - d. It would make them change their tastes and desires and create a demand for British goods
11. Tagore wanted to combine the elements of with traditional Indian Education.
- a. Eastern Education
 - b. Western Education
 - c. religious education
 - d. Local education

12. Rural which accepted new rules were supported through government grants by the Company.
- Pathshalas
 - Shops
 - temples
 - colleges
13. The established the University of Bombay.
- British
 - French
 - Dutch
 - German
14. city is situated on the banks of river Hooghly.
- Madras
 - Calcutta
 - Delhi
 - Lahore
15. had argued that English education had enslaved Indians
- Mahatma Gandhi
 - Raja Rammohan Roy
 - Sardar Patel
 - Rasbehari Bose

Very Short:

- Define the term linguist.
- What was main aim behind establishing Hindu College in Benaras in 1791?
- What is meant by an Orientalist?
- How did Thomas Babington Macaulay see India?
- Why was the English Education Act introduced and in which year?
- Who toured the districts of Bengal and Bihar in 1830's?
- When did the Company decide about improving the system of vernacular education?
- Name the institution established by Rabindranath Tagore.
- Who was William John.

10. Which languages were learnt by William Jones?
11. By whom was the Asiatic society of Bengal was setup?
12. From whom did William Johns learnt Sanskrit language?

Short Questions:

1. In what sense does Gandhiji and Tagore's thoughts were similar and different about western education?
2. Why did Tagore hate going to school in his school days?
3. What did Mahatma Gandhi say about western education?
4. What consequences were there of the new rules and routine over the earlier pathshala students who accepted the British rules?
5. What did James Mill declare while attacking the orientalists?

Long Questions:

1. In view of Mahatma Gandhi, why was practical knowledge very much essential for development of person's mind and soul?
2. Explain the William Adam's report produced on the progress of education in vernacular schools.
3. Explain Wood's Despatch. What was mentioned in its provision?

Answer Key:

MCQ:

1. (c) William Jones
2. (b) Orientalists
3. (d) 1791
4. (a) Wood's Despatch
5. (b) William Adam
6. (b) Linguist
7. (a) Western education
8. (c) William Jones
9. (d) Lord Macaulay
- 10.(d) It would make them change their tastes and desires and create a demand for British goods
- 11.(b) Western Education
- 12.(a) Pathshalas

13.(a) British

14.(b) Calcutta

15.(a) Mahatma Gandhi

Very Short Answer:

1. Linguist is someone who knows and studies several languages.
2. Hindu College was established to encourage the study of ancient Sanskrit texts that would be useful for the administration of the country.
3. Orientalists were those who were having scholarly knowledge of the language and culture of Asia.
4. He saw India as an uncivilized country that needed to be civilized.
5. Following Macaulay's minute, the English Education Act of 1835 was introduced.
6. In 1830's William Adam, a Scottish missionary toured the districts of Bengal and Bihar.
7. After 1854, the Company decided to improve the system of vernacular education.
8. Santiniketan' was established by Rabindranath Tagore in 1901.
9. William Jones was appointed as Junior Judge at the supreme court of company.
10. Greek, Latin, French and English.
11. By William Jones.

Short Answer:

Ans: 1. In many senses Tagore's and Gandhiji's thoughts about western education were similar. There were several differences too. Gandhiji was highly critical of western education, civilisation and its worship of machines and technology.

But Tagore wanted to combine elements of modern western civilisation with the best within Indian tradition. Tagore emphasized on the needs to teach science and technology along with art, music and dance

Ans: 2. He found school suffocating and oppressive. The school appeared like a prison to him as he could never do what he felt like doing. And the experience of Tagore's school days in Calcutta shook his ideas of education. These were reasons why he hated going to school in his school days.

Ans: 3. Mahatma Gandhi said that western education focused on reading and writing rather than oral knowledge. It valued textbooks rather than practical knowledge. He argued that education ought to develop a person's mind and soul. Literacy or simple learning to read and write by itself did not count as education.

Ans: 4. In the earlier system of Pathshala, students from poor peasant families had been able to go to pathshalas as the timetable was flexible before adoption of rules of the British government.

The discipline of the new system demanded regular attendance, even during harvest time when children of poor families had to work in the fields. Inability to attend school came to be seen as indiscipline, as evidence of the lack of desire to learn.

Ans: 5. James Mill attacked the orientalist and declared that the British should not make efforts to teach what the natives wanted or respected, in order to please them. 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 advancements that the west had made, rather than with the poetry and sacred literature of the orientals.

Long Answer:

Ans: 1. Mahatma Gandhi believed that western education focused on reading and writing rather than lived experiences and practical knowledge. He argued that education ought to develop a person's mind and soul. Literacy – or simply learning to read and write by itself did not count as education.

People had to work with their hands, learn a craft, and know-how different things operated. This would develop their mind and their capacity to understand. This is why Mahatma Gandhi believed that practical knowledge was very much essential for development of person's mind and soul.

Ans: 2. William Adam had been asked by the Company to report on the progress of education in vernacular schools. The report Adam produced was interesting.

Adam found that there were over 1 lakh pathshalas in Bengal and Bihar. These were small institutions with no more than 20 students each. But the total number of children being taught in these pathshalas was considerable over 20 lakhs. These institutions were set up by wealthy people, or the local community. At times they were started by a teacher (guru).

The system of education was flexible. Adam discovered that this flexible system was suited to local needs. For instance, classes were not held during harvest time when rural children often worked in the fields. The pathshala started once again when the crops had been cut and stored. This meant that even children of peasant families could study.

Ans: 3. In 1854, the Court of Directors of the East India Company in London sent an educational despatch to the Governor-General in India, issued by Charles Wood, the president of the Board of Control of the Company. It has come to be known as Wood's Despatch.

It emphasized once again on the practical benefits of system of European learning.

One of the practicals uses the Despatch pointed to was economic European learning.

It said, it would enable Indians to recognize the advantages that flow from the expansion of trade and commerce.

Wood's Despatch argued that European learning would improve the moral character of

Indians.

It would make them truthful and honest and would supply the Company with civil servants who could be trusted and depended upon.

The literature of East was believed to be full of errors and also couldn't instill in the people a sense of duty and a commitment to work nor could it develop the skill required for administration.