

# **Saddler University Commission (1917-19)**

## **Introduction to the Saddler University Commission**

In 1917, the Government of India appointed a Commission to study and report on the problems of the Calcutta University following the enactment of The Universities Act of 1904. The commission was mainly constructed with the express motto to enquire into the condition and prospects of the university of Calcutta and to consider the question of a constructive policy in relation to the question it presents. The commission was appointed under the chairmanship of M.E. Saddler who was the vice Chancellor of the university of Leeds. The Saddler University Commission also included two Indian Members, namely Sir Ashutosh Mukherjee and Zia-ud-din Ahmed. The Saddler University Commission reported that the condition of the secondary education need to be improved in order to improve the standard of university Education.

The commission visited all the university centres and after 17 months, submitted its report in 1919. It is a very long and significant report. The report consist of 13 volumes, giving a critical and comprehensive survey of educational problems of secondary, collegiate and university education in India. Although it deals with the Calcutta University only, the problem that it studied were more or less common to the other Indian Universities also. The suggestions, therefore, were equally applicable to other universities in the country. Hence, the report of the commission had far reaching consequences upon the development of university education in India as a whole.

## **Recommendations of the Saddler University Commission**

- In the opinion of the Saddler University Commission, it was not possible to bring about revolutionary changes in the field of higher education without making changes in secondary education. Therefore, some fundamental changes were suggested in the secondary education for the sake of improving the university education.
- The Saddler University Commission hence recommended that the dividing line between the university and the secondary courses should be drawn at the Intermediate examination rather than at the Matriculation and the Government should create a new type of institution called Intermediate Colleges.
- The curriculum of these Intermediate colleges should constitute courses related to Arts, Science, Engineering, Industrial education etc.
- After clearing the intermediate examination rather than the Matriculation Examination, the students would be entitled to enter the university.
- The duration of the degree course after the intermediate state should be limited to three years. For these two different branches was made in the Intermediate colleges. For the eligible students the provisions of honours degree and for the general students, there was the provision of Pass Course.
- Board of Secondary and Intermediate Education, consisting of the representatives of Government, University, High Schools and Intermediate Colleges be established and entrusted with the administration and control of Secondary Education.
- The commission also recommended less rigidity in the framing the rules and regulations of the universities.
- It also recommended the establishment of an Inter University Board for coordinating the activities of different Indian universities.
- Autonomous institutions were to be given more encouragement.

- Centralised residential-teaching universities were to be encouraged. These institutions were also to be given autonomy to facilitate their day-to-day working.
- Women education was to be encouraged in a big way. The establishment of a special Board of women Education in the Calcutta University besides many other facilities that would help more and more women take up course in school, colleges and Universities.
- Provisions of facilities was to be made for training teachers and setting up the Department of Education at the Universities of Calcutta and Decca.
- The Saddler Commission recommended for the centralised unitary teaching autonomous bodies. A unitary teaching university was recommended for Dacca so that the burden of students can be reduced from the Calcutta University.
- Further the Saddler Commission also emphasised the growth of colleges in the towns.
- It encouraged the growth of new university centres so that the higher education could be propagated properly.

## **Its Impact**

- It led to increase in the number of universities. Due to the suggestions of the Saddler University Commission, a number of new universities were opened in the country. Of these, the universities at Patna, Osmania, Aligarh, Dacca, Lucknow, Delhi, Agra, Nagpur, Hyderabad and Annamalai may be mentioned. The number increased upto 30 within 1930.
- It led to starting of teaching work by the universities. It not only increased in numbers, teaching work also started in different universities. It is worth mentioning that the functions of the first three universities established in India, namely, Calcutta, Bombay and Madras were confined to affiliation, examination and conferring degrees. Teaching was the function of degree colleges and there was no provision for post-graduate education. But after the recommendation of the commission the number of teaching universities and residential universities increased. Most of the newly established universities were teaching universities.
- The recommendations of the Saddler University Commission proved fruitful in the development of academic standard. Academic activities increased in the universities and colleges with the introduction of Honours courses. The studies of different Indian languages started and facilities for higher studies and research were also created. The post of professor was created in the universities and the process of inviting learned faculties from abroad to broaden the academic outlook was also started. The department of Education was opened in Calcutta and Dacca universities.
- Development of internal administration of the universities can also be seen due to the steps proposed by the Saddler University Commission. Internal administration of the universities improved due to the formation of university court and Executive Council in lieu of previous Senate and Syndicate. Beside these, the creation of the Academic Council to deal with academic matters, such as, curriculum construction, examination, research etc. greatly helped in improving the academic standard of the universities. As suggested by the commission an Inter University Board was also set up in 1925 for connection and coordination among the different Indian universities.
- Also the Saddler University Commission had a provision for Students welfare. For the first time attention of the universities were directed towards students welfare. A Board of Students Welfare was formed in each university.