



Development of education in Kashmir during colonial period

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Abstract: *In pre-British days, Hindus and Muslims were educated through pathsala and madrasa respectively, but their advent created a new place of learning i.e. missionaries. So, the system of education in Jammu and Kashmir to the late nineteenth century was informal and indigenous. The purpose for the introduction of modern education includes to explore the genesis of modern education in Kashmir; to highlight the role of British missionaries in the introduction of growth of modern education in Kashmir; to study and explore the response of Dogra Government towards modern education; to highlight the impact of modern education in different aspects of life; to create a class that could help British India with the task of administering the vast country; the state believed to give education to the upper crest of the society and thus the commoners, the majority of whom happened to be the Muslims remained outside the purview of the state educational policies. Basically the impact of colonial intervention on education in the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir was not deliberate. It was indirect which resulted in half-hearted attempts by the state council to reform educational sector which in turn created a context for the Kashmiri leadership to launch the educational reform movements. This paper seeks to understand the nature of colonialism and the nuances of education system in Kashmir.*

Keywords: *Education, British Missionaries, Development, Reform movements, Dogra Govt.*

1. INTRODUCTION:

In pre-British days, Hindus and Muslims were educated through Pathsala and Madrasa respectively. With the advent of the British, their policies and measures breached the legacies of traditional schools of learning and this resulted in the need for creating a class of subordinates. To achieve this goal, they instituted a number of acts to create an Indian canvas of English colour through the education system. Initially, British East India Company was not concerned with the development of education system because their prime motive was trading and profit-making. To rule in India, they planned to educate a small section of upper and middle classes to create a class "Indian in blood and colour but English in taste" who would act as interpreters between the Government and the masses. Many steps were taken by the British for the development of Education in India. Due to this that British mediation in the processes of educational reform brought the princely state and Kashmiris into closer contact with the ideologies and movements prevalent in British India at the turn of the twentieth century. The relationship between the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir and the colonial state was a complex and evolving one in the last few decades of the nineteenth and the first few decades of the twentieth century..The Kashmir Valley came under Dogra rule (1846-1947) with the ominous terms of the treaty of Amritsar signed between Raja Gulab Singh of Jammu and the British in 1846, where by the British agreed to "transfer and make over for ever in independent possession to Maharaja Gulab Singh and the heirs male of his body all the hilly and mountainous country with its dependencies situated to the eastward of the River Ravi including the Chamba and excluding Lahul, being part of the territories ceded to the British Government by the Lahore State.. In return for this transfer, Gulab Singh had to pay the British seventy-five lakhs of rupees. This paper highlights some of the main dimensions of this relationship in an attempt to point out that British intervention in Jammu and Kashmir on the introduction of growth of modern education in Kashmir.

2. Methodology ;

The methodology adopted for this research study is the secondary research methodology. The data for this paper is taken from books and magazine, articles and other secondary sources.



3. Objectives :

- To explore the genesis of modern education in Kashmir.
- To highlight the role of British Missionaries in the introduction of Growth of modern education in Kashmir.
- To study the role in indigenous muslim reformers and their movements aimed at the educational advancement of muslim community.
- To study and explore the response of Dogra Govt. Towards modern education.
- To highlight the impact of modern education in different aspects of life.

4. Colonial Intervention and the Educational Reform Movements in Kashmir

The system of education in Jammu and Kashmir to the late nineteenth century was informal and indigenous. Although Maharaja Rambir Singh, Gulab Singh's successors was first to take an active interest in education and made some feeble attempts at founding a few state supported institutions, the system of education continued to be unregulated and religious. The first modern agency to have started educational work in kashmir was the one man effort of Dr, Elmslie a scot, who arrived here as the first Christian medical missionary in the spring of 1865, but the real work was started by J.H. Knowles who arrived in 1880 and started the Christian Missionary school .Later, in 1891, C.E Tyndale Biscoe arrived who took it upon himself to spread the modern western education in kashmir. However, the dogra state didn't welcome the initiative of the Christian missionaries to establish schools in kashmir. And more importantly the state didn't even consider education its responsibility.

The establishment of the British residency in kashmir resulted in some reform measure in the field of education. A few primary schools were established by the state council, with the number rising from 8 to 31 during 1891-92. There was a corresponding increase in the number students in town and village schools from 836 in 1889-90 to 4214 in 1892-93. The schools in the state were reorganised along the lines of the Punjab university syllabus and affiliated to the university. An arts college was established at Jammu in 1905 to commemorate the royal visit of the prince of Wales .The government opened girl's schools in several parts of the state. The state also instituted a number of college scholarships for the students of the state studying in Punjab. The council also took steps to encourage private enterprise to promote education.

By the first decade of 20th century, however, it became clear that the kashmir administration under the auspices of the British indian government failed to impart education to the vast majority of its subjects. There were two reasons for why the state council did not make any serious attempt to impart education to the vast majority of the people. Firstly, the purpose for the introduction of modern education among the native subjects in British india was to create a class that could help with the task of administering the vast country. Contrarily, this need was not felt in jammu and kashmir as the state simply imported these individuals, particularly from Punjab, to run its growing bureaucracy. The only native class who had a good share in the administration was the Kashmiri pandit class. They were well versed in the administrative affairs because of being the collaborators of the dogra state right from the start. And it was the same class who took to modern education as soon as it was introduced. Secondly, the state believed to give education to the upper crest of the society and thus the commoners, the majority of whom happened to be the muslims, remained outside the purview of the state educational policies.

The Kashmiri Muslim leadership realized that they were far behind in reaping the fruits of state-sponsored education. But it was the dogra state which was mainly responsible for keeping them backward in the educational field for the simple reason of keeping them out of the power structure. The leadership recognized the fact that the traditional system of education was going to lead them nowhere as far as the state employment and a power sharing was concerned. So it was in response to this challenge the state's policy of keeping the Muslims out of its enterprise of education- that the Muslim leaders took upon themselves to launch various educational reform movements. The main focus of these movements was to infuse a new spirit in the Kashmiri Muslim community and to overcome the powerlessness and the backwardness they were in due to the discriminatory educational policy of state.

The first and the most important of these organizations was Anjuman- i-Nusrat-ul-islam (the unity of Allah).Mirwaiz Rasool Shah, head preacher at the Jama Masjid in Srinagar, claimed the leadership of the Kashmiri Muslim community through his activities on the educational front, founding the first reform association for Kashmiri Muslims, with an affiliated school. Founded in 1889 with the financial assistance of eminent Punjabi Muslims, the Anjuman Nusrat-ul-Islam, literally meaning the Society for the Victory of Islam, sought to unite the Kashmiri Muslim community around the concept of Tawheed, or the unity of Allah. The Anjuman opened its doors to all Muslim sects, to clean the Kashmiri Muslim community of its "un-Islamic" aspects. A madrasa was soon attached to the Anjuman with a view to improving the lot of the Kashmiri Muslim population through pure Islamic education. This organization also aimed at facilitating



the education for the most backward children of the muslim community and help them in their educational endeavours in the best possible manner. It desired to persuade the Muslims to take to education by urging upon the parents to send their children to the school. With this end in view, a maktab was established. It was this maktab which developed stage by stage into Islamia High school in 1905. The aim of the school until the early years of the twentieth century was to provide its students with a traditional Islamic education to create a class of religious leaders who would guide the community on the path to pure Islam. The traditional syllabus of the school, with an emphasis on Arabic and Persian to facilitate memorization of the Quran, bears testament to this goal. Similar moves were made by the heads of various shrines to establish schools within a few years of the foundation of the Madrasa Anjuman Nusrat- ul-Islam. For instance, the Sajjadanashin (spiritual head) of the Khanqah-i-Mualla Shrine, Pir Yusuf Shah Khanqahi, helped found a school in the courtyard of the shrine, which was also dedicated to furthering religious education among Kashmiri Muslims. The organization also intended to instill the spirit of islam among the people and to inculcate in them the good manners, a sense of, mutual cooperation and unity.

Following the suit, the Muslim leaders in other parts of the valley founded a number of schools on the same pattern as that of Anjuman-i-Nusrat-ul-Islam-I, Anjuman-i- Taraqqi Talim-l Musalmanan, Anjuman-i-Talim-wa-ittihaad, Anjuman-i-Hamdard islam, Anjuman-i-islal-ul Musliminand, Anjuman-i- Hanfia were some of the other prominent organizations which took the task of imparting education to the Kashmiri people. The vision of the kashmiri leadership was to awake the people of the benefits of getting modern education.

In the beginning the role of these reform movements remained limited to impart religious education to the students. But soon the need of introducing the course of study on modern secular lines was felt by the organizers. Though secular education was introduced in the schools founded by these organizations, yet Islamic theology was retained as a compulsory subject for all the muslim pupils.

Maharaja Pratap Singh while refusing to accept the demands of these Muslim organizations declared that he had not only 'provided equal oppertunities for all classes of his subjects' but in fact gone further to furnish 'special facilities' for Muslims. Therefore, he concluded that the Muslims had no one but themselves to blame for their educational backwardness. Their deficiency in the matter was only evidence that they did not particularly value either education or state service, probably finding themselves more drawn to other vocations. This statement demonstrated the utter incomprehension of and reckless disregard by the Kashmir government of the concerns of the kashmiri Muslims. It pushed the kashmiri leadership to step up the pressure on the state. In 1924, on the occasion of the visit of the viceroy- Lord Reading- to Kashmir, they presented him with a memorial demanding, besides the other things the more government jobs and better educational facilities for muslims. The Maharaj responded with ruthless repression of the presenters of the memorial. Initially the Dogra state's response to the Muslim leadership's demands was one of dismal. In fact, any representation was ruthlessly suppressed. But as much as the kashmiri Muslim leadership grew outspoken, the Dogra state realized the dangerous political undertones of the situation and in an effort to contain this trend, adopted some 'soft' approach with regard to the demands of the kashmiri Muslims. The kashmiri muslims finally gained some recognition from the Darbar which is manifested in some reform measures taken to 'eradicate' their backwardness. Special scholarships were announced for the Muslim students. Moulvis were appointed in the primary schools having more than ten Muslim boys on the roll. In 1914 the state appointed a Mohammadan Assistant inspector of schools whose 'chief' topic duty was confined to the improvement and propagation of education among this backward community. The education department had also provided 70 primary schools with Arabic teachers for making education popular and raising the number of muslims scholars in public schools. By doing so, in its view, the state was bridging the gap between secular education as provided by state schools and religious education as provided by madrasas, so that muslims, seem as being inherently more religious, would be attracted to these schools. The Maharaja announced the award of additional state scholarships to the Muslim students. More and more private institutions began to receive grants-in-aids.

The British intervention in the princely state of jammu and Kashmir resulted in the half-hearted attempts by the state council to reform the educational sector which inturn created an environment for the kashmiri leadership to launch the educational reform movements. It was after consolidating their position through these reform movements that the kashmiri leadership with aid and advice of different political and social organizations of British India, particularly the Punjab, began pressuing the state to play a more active role to address the socio-economic and political issues of the people of kashmir. The advent of the British on the Kashmiri political scene and the simultaneous state regulation of the education system had given the Kashmiri Muslim leadership the opportunity to press its social and political demands on the state. Since the Dogra State was modeling its education system on British lines, it also followed that those who went through the system would be advantageously placed for state employment. Moreover, the Kashmiri Muslim leadership could always point to colonial educational policies towards Indian Muslims, some of which were designed to provide incentives for Muslim educational progress. Education thus came to mean more than just an



advancement of Kashmiri Muslim civilization, since it now also held the additional rewards of employment in government service, the traditional preserve of Kashmiri Pandits. This, combined with the decline in the traditional system of Muslim education, enhanced the Kashmiri Muslim leadership's stake in being recognized by, and included in, the state system of education.

5. CONCLUSION :

Colonial intervention had a profound impact on the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir. The intervention not only shaped the forms of legitimacy employed by the Dogra princely house to rule the Kashmir Valley, but it also led to the centralization and bureaucratization of state structures along lines of British India. Due to the British intervention in the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir resulted to reform the educational sector which in turn created an environment for the Kashmiri leadership to launch the educational reform movements that attempted to bring Muslim demands to the forefront of the state's agenda. The main focus of these movements was to infuse a new spirit in the Kashmiri Muslim community and to overcome the powerlessness and the backwardness they were in due to the discriminatory educational policy of state. It also highlights the advent of the British on the education system that had given the Kashmiri Muslim leadership the opportunity to press its social and political demands on the state.

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