

Education in India During Medieval Period: Islamic Education

Introduction The period under review covers the system of education in India from about the 10th century A.D. to the middle of the 18th century, i.e. before the British rule. Approximately, for six hundred and fifty years Muslims ruled over India. During this period, apart from the spread of religious education and development of art and music, organisation of land, dispensation of justice and administration made great strides. Several magnificent historical buildings were erected during this period. The Taj, and Red fort of Agra and Qutab Minar of Delhi, etc., are some of the living monuments of this age. In matters of architecture, handicrafts and cottage industries, etc. Muslim period is popularly called the golden period. During medieval period Muslim rulers started a new education system which is popularly known as Maktab-Madrasah system. Side by side the old pathashala system also continued for Hindu students. We shall discuss first of all the Maktab-Madrasah system of education. Like the ancient system of education, there was a good organisation of education in the medieval times also and both systems had great similarities in many respects. The relationship between the teachers and the taught was close and cordial. Students respected their teachers and teachers also constantly strived for their improvement. There was emphasis on religion. People were generally God fearing and propagation and spread of religion was the chief aim of education. Education was imparted at religious places. They were, generally, attached to mosques. Education was free and discipline a rigorous one. Both rewards and punishments were in vogue. Kings held teachers in high esteem and donated liberally to educational institutions. Teaching was imparted orally. Students crammed verses of Quran without grammar and laws were taught. The medium of instruction were Arabic and Persian.

Aims of Education

The aims of education in the medieval period are as follows:

- (i) Enabling the individual for Islamic life.
- (ii) Propagation and Spread of Muslim Religion.
- (iii) Formation of Character.
- (iv) Preparing the students for the next world.
- (v) Organisation of Political and Social System.
- (vi) Preservation and Spread of Muslim Culture.

Education aimed at making the individual capable of earning for himself. The prophet Muhammad has himself said: 'To seek knowledge is a duty for every Muslim (male) and every Musalimah (female).' Islamic faith aims at the revealing of the internal nature of truth, and is noted for its emphasis on the unity of all aspects of life. It emphasises on the reality to individual, by raising his dignity and status, by removing any barrier between him and God. The sanctity of knowledge was so high that its pursuit was considered as pursuit on the path of reaching the Almighty.

It is observed that the two factors which control the behaviour of a Musalman are his religion-moral conscience and the reward or punishment gentleman and who follows principles of

liberality, equality and fraternity in matters of this world and who lives and dies for faith, piety and justice in order to achieve the blessings of his creator in the life after death. Hanafi school advocated progressive trends and entertained a policy of tolerance and assimilation in the circumstances and shunned much of conservatism which resulted ultimately in its popularity. The contemporary scholars opined that the aim of education in Marifat-i-Ilahi, refers of Dinvi Mushkilat, Khat-i-Nafas. Muhabat-i-Mula, Tehsil-i-Duniya or Talb-i-Uqba. The aim of education was not to read some texts and memorize them to each letter, but that it included Mutabeh, Bahas Wa Takrar and Kitabat.

Main Features of Medieval Education

In view of the above discussion, the chief features of this period can be summarised as the following:

- (i) The chief aim of medieval education was to bring the lift of knowledge in the followers of Islam
- (ii) Education was the chief media for the propagation and spread of muslim culture and heritage.
- (iii) Education also helped in strengthening and stabilising the prevailing political system.
- (iv) Preparation for life was one of the essential purposes of muslim education.
- (v) Due emphasis was laid on the formation of character and moral uplift.

Educational System

In the Muslim period education was divided into two stages, namely, the primary and higher. The primary centres of education were called Maktabs and that of higher education Madarsha.

- (i) Maktabs : Maktabs were primary school meant for small children. They were situated adjacent to homes in the mosques organised on the pattern of the indigenous system of education. Children attended these schools in the beginning of their life and crammed the verses of Quran.
- (ii) Madarsha: Higher education was imparted through the institution of Madarsha. They worked as the international centres of learning. Students from other muslim countries of the west were attracted at these centres.
- (iii) Pathsahala : Gurukul or Pathashala system continued to exist in India during medieval period also. During this period the elementary school was mostly of a very generally type It aimed for instruction in three R's. This school also had two types, viz., (1) A Pathshalathe preliminary stage in Sanskritic studies, the initiation of a formal type was necessary for this institution. (2) the general school, called municipal type of Hindu school by Adams in his report, which arranged instruction in different vocational arts like accountancy, carpentry, pottery, washermanship barber's job. medicine and alike jobs.
- (iv) Education Institutions :The school was a natural formation, not artificially constructed. It was teachers hermitage, amid sylvan surroundings bcyon.

distractions of urban life functioning in solitude and silence. Its physical surroundings away from centre of population gave to its students opportunities for constant with nature for solitude.

Teacher-Taught Relationship

The teacher-taught relationship at these centres of education was healthy and cordial. Students had great respect for the teacher and teachers also reciprocated in the same coin, and loved them. They took pride in the knowledge and competence of their wards. Monitor system was in vogue. Higher classes were taught by the teacher himself. Srif S. M. Zaffar in his book entitled Education in Muslim India had remarked the "Teacher integrity was unshakeable and absolute. They occupied a high position in society and though their emoluments were small, they commanded universal respect and confidence."

Conclusion

During the Medieval times the Hindu education continued to operate on the ancient lines. No doubt, some of the prominent Hindu universities of Taxila, Nalanda and Vikramshila, the great centres of learning, suffered a decline on account of the onslaughts of early Muslim invaders. Professor A.L. Srivastava has said, "Muslim invaders destroyed Hindu seats of learning as well as Hindu temples and one of the first and most injurious result of the early Turkish rule was the decline, if not disappearance, of the ancient learning in Northern India." Though the temples and educational institutions suffered destruction at the hands of the Muslim invaders and Mosques were raised, the Hindu institutions continued to be a living reality. Their vitality was not killed or crushed through the Hindu education was deprived of the Government patronage, the individual patrons kept flame; of learning burning. Usually, the local population supported the village school.