

“Teachers Devotion in Mughal Empire : A historical Facts in Indian Culture”

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1.1 Introduction

Arab and Central Asian peoples brought Muslim educational models to the subcontinent in both the medieval and early modern periods. Within decades of the Prophet Muhammad's death in 632 C.E., Arab mariners began to trade, reside, and intermarry with local women in south India. Turkic peoples and other Central Asians raided northern India around 1000 C.E. and thereafter established several foreign-conquest empires. Muslim rulers promoted urban education by endowing libraries and literary societies. They also founded primary schools (maktabs) in which students learned reading, writing, and basic Islamic prayers, and secondary schools (madrasas) to teach advanced language skills,

India witnessed a large number of Mohammedan invasions in the beginning of the eighth century A. D. Mahmud of Ghazni invaded India and established a large number of schools and libraries in his own country by the looted wealth. Medieval period witnessed a radical transformation in the Indian subcontinent. The country was invaded by various foreign rulers and several traders from around the world came and settled in the country. The tradesmen and the invaders brought with them their own cultures and intermingled with the people of the each district of the state. Besides, religion, society and culture, Education in medieval India also experienced a new perspective. The Mughal rulers came to India and established their rule, Education developed with a fresh aspect during that period as there was an excellent interaction between Indian and Islamic traditions in all fields of knowledge like theology, religion, philosophy, fine arts, painting, architecture, mathematics, medicine and astronomy.

Later on when the Muslim rulers established permanent empire in India, they introduced a new system of education. Consequently the ancient system of education was greatly changed. In fact, the education during the Muslim period was much inferior than that of the Hindu period. No Muslim ruler except Akbar did commendable works in the field of education. Education in medieval India flourished mostly during the Mughal rule from the beginning of 1526 until the end of Mughal political presence in 1848.

However, before the advent of the Muslims in India, there was a developed system of education, but Education in medieval India was shaped with the founding of the institutions of learning. Muslim rulers promoted urban

education by bestowing libraries and literary societies. They founded primary schools (maktabs) in which students learned reading, writing, and basic Islamic prayers, and secondary schools (madrasas) to teach advanced language skills In India. Several Madrasahs were set up by Sultans, nobles, and their influential ladies.

The grants, which were given to ulama in the form of Madad-e-Ma'ash (financial support) lead to the foundation of many madrasahs. The education was given in Sufi centers also. This trend of education continued during the Khilji Dynasty. Though Alauddin himself was uneducated and it was proved as a threat to the future of his dynasty. However, Delhi continued to project as an important center of knowledge, scholars and writers. Due to the influence of Hz. Nizamuddin, there was demand for religious and mystic teachers as well.

The minister of Alauddin Khilji, Shamsul Malik patronized the knowledge. During this period there was a tremendous progress in fiqh, theology, lexicography and exegetic writing during this period. The study of Greco-Arab medicine was also given special attention. The most important physician of this period was Badruddin Dimashqi and Juwaini.

Sultan Sikandar Lodhi brought some changes in the system of education. Apart from religious educations, rational educations were also included. Under him the progress of philosophy took place. The students used to copy themselves since the books were rare. Learned men from Arabia, Persia and Central Asia were invited to take charge of education in India. The tendency that started in the time of Sikandar Lodhi found its culmination in the reign of Akbar. He introduced reforms in the curriculum of primary schools and included the logic, arithmetic, moral, mensuration, geometry, astronomy, agriculture, physiognomy, and public administration, in the course of study. In studying Sanskrit, students ought to learn the Bayakaran, Niyai, Vedanta and Patanjali.

1.2 Chief characteristics of Muslim education:-

(1) Patronage of the rulers: The rulers helped in the spread of education. They built educational institutions and universities. They endowed them with the funds. Big landlord also provided financial help for the spread of education. The rulers patronized the men of learning.

(2) No state control: The rules neither claim any authority over the educational institutions nor interfered with their management.

(3) Religion dominated education: In the words of S.N. MUKERJI, "The whole educational system was saturated with the religious ideals which influenced the aim, the contents of study, and even the daily life of the pupils." The pupils acquired knowledge as a religious obligation.

(4) Countryside as the centre of education: By and large, educational institutions flourished in the countryside.

(5) Provision of various discipline: Through education was primarily religion- oriented, it included the study of many intellectual activities like mathematics, astronomy, grammar, polity and politics. Art and literature were also encouraged.

(6) Norms of conduct: Adequate stress was laid on well- defined norms of behaviour, pattern of thought, building up personality and character of the pupils.

(7) Teacher-pupil relationship: In the Muslim period also the teacher was respected as during the Brahmanic or Buddhist period. There was intimate relationship between the teacher and the pupil, although the practice of living with the teacher was not as common with the Muslim as it was in the case of Brahmanic and Buddhist period.

(8) Learned teachers: Teachers took to teaching for love of learning. They were held in high esteem. Prof. S.N. Mukerji has observed, "Learning was prized for its own sake and as a mark of the highest human development and teaching was never handicapped by examination requirements

(10) Individualized instructions: Since the number of students with the teacher was limited, he paid individual attention to each students .

(11) Monitorial system: Although a teacher did not have many pupils to teach yet, still the teacher would take the help of senior and advanced students to teach theyounger or the junior.

(12) Discipline: Punishments were quit severe. Truants and delinquents were caned on their palms and slapped on their faces. A strange mode of punishment was to make the children hold their ears by taking their hands from under their thighs while sitting on their tiptoes.

(13) Types of institutions: Primary education was imparted in 'Maktabs' and secondary and high education in 'Madrasahs'.

(14) Vocational education: Provision was also made for vocational, technical and professional education. Emperor Akbar took considerable interest in education as is evident from the passage of from the 'Ain-in-Akbar'. The passage makes interesting reading and provides valuable information on the system of instruction, i.e., curriculum, methods of teaching etc.

1.3 Aims of Education

The foremost aim of education during the Muslim period was the extension of knowledge and the propagation of Islam. During this period education was imparted for the propagation of Islamic principles, laws and social conventions. Education was based on religion and its aim was to make persons religious minded. It further aimed as the achievement of material prosperity.

1.4 Teacher Pupil Relationship

Teacher-pupil relationship: In the Muslim period also the teacher was respected as during the Brahmanic or Budhist period. There was intimate relationship between the teacher and the pupil, although the practice of living with the teacher was not as common with the Muslim as it was in the case of Brahmanic and Budhist period.

In the modern civilization nature of relationship between the teacher and the taught does not count. But in Islamic scheme of education it holds a very crucial position It considers the teacher as guide (murshid), and the student as seeker (Taalib). Both are to be sincere in their attitude towards each other. The relationship between the two is to be governed by certain Qur'anic principles.

Since the Prophet is the role model for Muslims, he is to be followed by the teacher in his teaching profession. The teacher has to interact with his students in the way their biological fathers treat them. A father loves his children and is always concerned about their welfare; he wants to see them developing from all angles, physically, emotionally, morally, and intellectually. The teacher has also to feel concerned about how to ensure his students' growth, mentally as well as morally. It is clear that the secret of the Prophet's success, among other things, was his gentle and kind approach to his disciples. A teacher who has the mission of imparting knowledge to his students has to act in the same manner so as to ensure success in his task.

The social status of teacher was high and they are men of character, though their emoluments were small they commanded universal respect and confidence. A teacher was never confronted with any serious problem of discipline. Pupils were humble, submissive and obedient owing to the high honour and prestige of teachers in society.

A Muslim teacher's conduct, whether in public or in privacy, should correspond to his assertions. If the teacher's person does not reflect Islamic character, students may not be expected to be sincere to him in learning from him. This disturbance of relationship between the teacher and the taught may disturb the whole process of education, causing students to feel confused.) Learned teachers: Teachers took to teaching for love of learning. They were held in high esteem. Prof. S.N. Mukerji has observed, : Teachers took to teaching for love of learning. They were held in high esteem.

The number of students with the teacher was limited, he paid individual attention to each students . Although a teacher did not have many pupils to teach yet, still the teacher would take the help of senior and advanced students to teach the younger or the junior. Punishments were quit severe. Truants and delinquents were caned on their palms and slapped on their faces. A strange mode of punishment was to make the children hold their ears by taking their hands from under their thighs while sitting on their tiptoes.

1.5 Women education in India during the medieval period

Education for girls was the exception rather than the rule Muslim girls of affluent families studied at home Koranic exegesis, prophetic traditions, Islamic law (shari a), and related subjects. Often attached to mosques,

Islamic schools were open to the poor but were gender segregated, often only for boys. Muslim girls of affluent families studied at home, if they received any education beyond learning to recite the Koran.

Although there was Pardah system during the Muslim period yet Islam did not oppose the education of women. These two contrary factors influence the education of women in two ways. The girls were entitled to receive education equal to that of the boys up to a definite age but thereafter their education was stopped. However, the girl to higher classes used to continue their studies at home.

Primary education was imparted through the 'Maktab' which were attached with mosque or were independent of the mosque 'Khanquahs' of the saints also at some places served as centres of education. Several learned men also taught students at their residences: Almost every village had at least, one 'Maktab'. There were several 'Maktabs' in town and cities. The 'Maktabs' were run under the guidance of the learned 'Maulavis'. They were supposed to be very pious.

In Maktabs children were made to remember the tenets of 'Quran' (Koran). Reading, writing and primary arithmetic were imparted to them. Besides they were given the education of Arabic script, Persian language and script. The stories of Prophets and Muslim 'Fakirs' were also told to the children. Children were also imparted the knowledge of art of writing and conversation. The system of oral education was mostly prevalent in those days.

1.6 Curriculum and Mode of Instruction:

- (i) During those days there were no printed books for the beginners. Wooden books (taktis) were used.
- (ii) The Quran : After alphabets, words were taught to students
- (iii) Stress on Calligraphy: beautiful and fine handwriting was an important element of instruction.
- (iv) Teaching of Grammar: Grammar was taught as it was considered very valuable in teaching the languages.
- (v) Religious Instruction: Instruction imparted in the 'Maktabs' was religious through and through.
- (vi) Books other than Quran: After the Quran, the 'Gulistan' and the 'Bostan' poems of poet Firdausi were taken up.
- (vi) 'Paharas': Students also learned 'Pahars' (multiple of numbers). Students memorized these while uttering collective in a loud voice.

The famous Persian Islamic philosopher and teacher, Ibn Sina (known as Avicenna in the West), wrote that children can learn better if taught in classes instead of individual tuition from private tutors, and he gave a number of reasons for why this is the case, citing the value of competition and emulation among pupils as well as the usefulness of group discussions and debates. Ibn Sina described the curriculum of a Maktab school in some detail, describing the curricula for two stages of education in a Maktab school

Ibn Sina refers to the secondary education stage of Maktab schooling as the period of specialization, when pupils should begin to acquire manual skills, regardless of their social status. He writes that children after the age of 14 should be given a choice to choose and specialize in subjects they have an interest in, whether it was reading, manual skills, literature, preaching, medicine, geometry, trade and commerce, craftsmanship, or any other subject or profession they would be interested in pursuing for a future career.

1.7 Madrasah

Madrasah literally means “a place where learning and studying are done”. The word is also present as a loanword with the same innocuous meaning in many Arabic-influenced languages, such as: Urdu, Bengali, Hindi, Persian, Turkish, Azeri, Kurdish, Indonesian, Malay and Bosnian. In the Arabic language, the word Madrasah simply means the same as school does in the English language, whether that is private, public or parochial school, as well as for any primary or secondary school whether Muslim, non-Muslim, or secular. Unlike the understanding of the word school in British English, the word madrasah is like the term school in American English, in that it can refer to a university-level or postgraduate school as well. For example, in the Ottoman Empire during the Early Modern Period, Madrasah had lower schools and specialized schools where the students became known as danişmends. The Hebrew cognate Midrasha also connotes the meaning of a place of learning; the related term midrash literally refers to study or learning, but has acquired mystical and religious connotations. However, in English, the term Madrasah usually refers to the specifically Islamic institutions.

Madrasah is the Arabic word for any type of educational institution, whether secular or religious (of any religion). Madrasah stems from Academy in Persian these Universities in Persia were renowned academy of learning in the city of Gundeshapur during late antiquity, the intellectual center of the Sassanid Empire. It offered training in medicine, philosophy, theology and science. The faculty was versed not only in the Zoroastrian and Persian traditions, but in Greek and Indian learning as well. According to The Cambridge History of Iran, it was the most important medical center of the ancient world.

Later before the Islamic invasion: The Nezamiyehs are a group of the medieval institutions of higher education established by Khwaja Nizam al-Mulk A Persian, in the eleventh century in Iran. The name nizamiyyah derives from his name. Founded at the beginning of the Seljuk empire, these Ash_ari-Shafi_i theological schools are considered to be the model of Madrasah, or Islamic religious schools.

From the time of Iltutmish to the reign of Sikandar Lodhi the curriculum of the madrasahs followed a set pattern. According to Barani, the main subjects taught at the Madrasah Firoz Shahi were tafsir, hadith and fiqh. In ma'qulat, Sharhi Shamsiah and Sharhi Shafia were included. Besides these subjects, grammar, literature, logic, mysticism and scholasticism were also taught.

The children were sent to Madarsas after completing the primary education. There were separate teachers for different subjects. Special emphasis was given to the education of Islam. Religious and secular subjects also taught in Madarsas. The religious education included the study of Quran, Mohammed and his conventions, Islamic laws and Islamic history etc. The secular education included the study of Arabic literature, grammar, history, philosophy, mathematics, geography, politics, economics, Greek language and agriculture etc. The 'Madrasahs' imparted secondary and higher education. Often these Madrasahs were attached to mosques. The term 'Madrasahs' is derived from Arabic word 'dars' (a lecture) and means a place where lecture is given. There was difference in principles between the Madrasa and other mosques. When a particular room was set apart in a mosque for the teaching purposes it was called a Madrasah. Sometimes it was quite close to a large mosque. It functioned as college of higher education where eminent scholars taught different subjects by using the lecture method supplemented by discussions. Management was usually private supported by state grants and endowments. The content of the curriculum was both religious and secular and covered a period from 10 to 12 years. Religious education comprised deep study of the Quran, Islamic law and Sufism. Literature, logic, history, geography, astronomy, astrology, arithmetic, agriculture and medicine were the secular subjects taught in madrasa. Some madrasa had hostels attached to them which provided free boarding and lodging.

There was provision for both secular and religious education in the Madrasha. The total duration of the course was ten to twelve years. The medium of instruction was Persian, but the study of Arabic was made compulsory for the muslim students. The secular education included the subjects Arabic Grammar, Logic, Prose, Literature, Law, Philosophy, Astrology, Arithmetic, History, Geography, Medicine, Agriculture etc. The muslims generally followed in the field of handicrafts and architecture the traditional Indian system.

1.8 IMPORTANT EDUCATIONAL CENTRES

Many cities played a prominent part in imparting higher education during the Muslim period in India. It is desirable to discuss about a few of them in detail.

(i) DELHI

It was Nasiruddin, who established —Madarsa-i-Nasiria' in Delhi under the Chairmanship of 'Shiraz'. Other rulers of Salve dynasty also maintained Delhi as an important seat of Muslim education. Allauddin Khilji established many Madarsas in Delhi and appointed renowned teachers therein. These institutions had more than 40 learned Muslim theologians and teachers of Muslim Law. During the days of Allauddin Khilji, Delhi had

become a centre of Literateurs and Arists. During the reign of Mohammad Tuglag and his successor, FirozTughlaq Delhi continued to enjoy the status of an important seat of Muslim education.

During the reign of the Moghuls. Humayun had established institution for the study of astronomy and Geography in Delhi. Akbar added certain institutions to it where Arabic, Persian, Grammar, Philosophy and astronomy were also taught. It is said that even akbar's 'Aaya' had established a big institution in Delhi in 1561, and the famous scholar Badayuni had received education in this very institution. Jahangir and Shahjehan also maintained the status of Delhi and contributed to its importance in whatever way they could. Aurangzeb tried to transform Delhi into a city of orthodox Muslim education. with this point in view he established many new educational institutions and gave financial aid to the existing ones. After him the decline of the importance of Delhi started.

(ii) AGRA

Sikandar Lodi made Agra an important centre of Muslim education. He had established many Maktabas and Madarsas in this city where students of foreign countries also came to study. In the words of Mr. Jaffar, —In course of time a splendid city sprang at the selected site and took the name of Agra which played prominent part in shaping the destinies of India in her future history. After Sikander Lodi, Babar and Humayun also established certain Madarsas in Agra. But it was Akbar who made Agra not only a centre of learning and education but also a seat of culture, craft and fine arts. During his reign, Agra had become a huge university where scholars and learned men came from far and wide. Mr. Jaffer has described this situation very nicely : —Men of learning and erudition from Arabia, Persia, and Bokhara poured into it in ever increasing number at the prospect of receiving better patronage from the Rulers of India, who were remarkable for their munificence.... The result was that in course of time Agra grew into a great literary city, containing several schools and colleges where people flocked from far and wide for higher education.

Near Agra there is a famous city of Fatehpur Sikri, where Akbar had built many schools. After his death, Jahangir and Shahjehan added certain Madarsas and education institutions to the existing ones and also gave financial aid to them. During the reign of Aurangzeb Agra had assumed a very important place as a seat of Islamic Education.

(iii) JAUNPUR

Sher Shah Suri received his education in one of the schools of Jaunpur city. This seat of education had institutions of various and varied type. Here students from far a wide received education and acquired knowledge of history, political science, philosophy, and warcrafts as well. Ibrahim Sharki was the man who established many Madarsas in Jaunpur and arrangement for their finances was made by the State. Moghul rulers from Humayun to Shahjehan paid due regard to this city and tried to maintain it as a seat of learning. This city was famous for handicrafts and fine arts as well. During the rule of Mohammad Shah 20 institutions were established in this city

(iv) BIDAR

. It was a famous seat of learning and Mohammad Gawan had established many Maktabas and a big Madarsa over here. In this Madarsa very learned Maulvis, had been appointed. Attached to this Madarsa there was a big library which housed about 3,000 books on Islamic theology, culture, philosophy, medical science, astronomy history, agriculture etc. There were Maktabas in the rural as well and through them Arabic and Persian were spread. Bahmani rulers were very particular about spreading education. There was not a single village under this rule, which did not have at least one institution. It was, therefore, quite natural for Bidar to be a very important seat of Islamic education in South India.

Ajmer

Muhammed Ghori is reported to have established several madaras at Ajmer, to be followed by a chain of madaras at different places by successive rulers. Madaras enjoyed political patronage with lands to maintain their structure and organisation often with individual cash or land grants to the teachers and students as well.

1.9 HINDU SYSTEM OF EDUCATION DURING THE MEDIEVAL PERIOD

Lack of state support: With the advent of the Muslim rule, the state support for the Hindu system of education almost ended. Now it depended upon the rich people, scholars and village communities. Of course where there were no Muslim rulers, it received state support. Gradually there remained a few such areas..

Religion Oriented Education: The system of education, by and large was dominated by religion. Elementary education was imparted in 'pathshalas' which existed both in villages and towns.

Pathshalas

Usually pathshalas were held in the verandah of some house or under trees. There were also separate houses for pathshalas. Specific type of buildings for them did not exist. Premises of the temples were also used.) The 'Pathshalas': Elementary education was imparted in 'pathshalas' which existed both in villages and towns.

Fees:

No regular fees were charged from the students. The parents gave presents to the teachers. Students were required to render personal service to the teachers. Sometimes teacher also engaged themselves in part time work to supplement their income.

1.10 Conclusion

There were four stages of Instruction at the elementary stage. In the first stage writing letters of the alphabet on sand was taught to students. In the second stage, the teacher wrote on palm leaves and the students traced over them with red pen and charcoal ink. These could be rubbed very easily.

In the third stage, the student wrote and pronounced compound components. Excessive practice was given to the students in this regard. Common names of persons were used for this purpose. At this stage also, the student was taught to use the words in the formation of sentences. He was also taught to make a distinction between written and colloquial languages. The students were taught to rules of arithmetic and multiplication tables repeated by the entire class. In the fourth stage, students were taught to use paper for writing .

Knowledge of weights and measures was considered essential therefore; arithmetic was a compulsory subject at the elementary stage. According to Dr. Krishnalal Ray,(1989),the elementary schools were mainly for giving instruction to these R's and them practical application (such as composition of letters and business documents.). Moral and religious instruction also had a secondary place in these schools. In some schools, salutation to Goddess Saraswati (the Goddess of learning) was learnt by heart by the students. Instruction in mythology and sacred love of the Hindus was also given in some schools.

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