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EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF MUSLIMS IN INDIA: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

The present paper aims to analyse the state wise educational status of Muslims in India. It also aims to compare the educational status of Muslims with the educational status of other religious communities in India. The country level and state level published data have been obtained from census of India. At the same time the association between the educational status of Muslims is sought with their socio-economic development. The results have revealed that the educational status of Muslims in India is not satisfactory and needs special attention. It is found that more than half i.e., 53.95 per cent of the total population of the Muslims in India is illiterate with 17.48 per cent literate people just for the name sake only. Technical education or higher education is meager among the Muslims. From the results it is also clear that Muslims who accounts for 13.46 per cent of the total population of the nation show lowest literacy rate, lowest percentage of higher education and lowest degree of female education. Buddhist who only claim for less than half per cent of the total population of the country are most literate. The percentage of higher education, sex ratio and female literacy rate is also highest in

this religious community.

KEYWORDS : Education, Development, Muslims, Religious Communities.

INTRODUCTION :

Muslims, the largest minority community in the country, constituting 13.4 per cent of the population, are seriously lagging behind in terms of most of the human development indicators. While the perception of deprivation is widespread among Muslims, there has been no systematic effort since independence to analyse the

condition of religious minorities in the country (Sachar Committee Report, 2006).

MUSLIM EDUCATION:

The contribution made by the Muhammadan Kings towards the progress of Muhammadan education and learning in India is an attempt to highlight the education system. But Muslim culture was not promoted by the Delhi Kings alone all over India there sprang up many a small kingdom which was making its own contribution to the general progress of Islamic learning in the country; and an account of Muhammadan education of the period would be incomplete without a survey of the achievements of those smaller kingdoms apart from the work of the



paramount power enthroned at Delhi.

Muslim conquerors energetically attended to the propagation of Prophet Mohammad's teachings. The mosques, the centres of culture, maktab or elementary schools were attached to them where in addition to prayer, recitation of the Holy Quran, the Arabic language and arithmetic were taught. Every village in the Deccan with the Muslim population had a Masjid and invariably a Maktab and in bigger cities Madrasas came into existence.

Almost all Mosques like the churches of medieval Europe provided religious as well as secular education likewise Khanquas, the Dargah or shrines, the tombs of celebrated saints known as dervish who on account of their profound and spiritual knowledge were loved and respected by the people as their Murshids (disciples).

Bismillah Ceremony and Madrasah Education:

The Islamic scholars or moulvis ran the Madrasa's and well-known makhtabs. Parents escorted their children to school where pious and selfless teachers took their jobs seriously, and assumed proper care of the pupils. Initiation started very early for the child, in fact at the exact age of four years, four months and fourth days. The Bismillah ritual was undertaken, where the child was dressed in new clothes, and a feast ensued, to which family members and relatives were invited. The village mullah initiated the boy by making him recite the relevant prayer of Bismillah, and the mullah received nazrana i.e., presents for his services. From the next day onwards, the child attended the near by makhtab, in addition to Persian letters, he learnt songs and moral stories. The book of Shaikh Saadi's Bostan was the most popular text, along with the Gulistan. Arabic, Persian grammar and other language were also taught. Correspondence, terminologies were taught in these Islamic schools.

Life in residential Islamic schools started early in the morning with ablutions and prayer, followed by the lessons. Hand written books were few and usually shared by the youngsters. Self study was important, while memorizing and recitation formed part of a lesson.

During that period education of the Muslim child started after the initiation ceremony called 'Bismillah', then the child attend the nearby maktab. It was necessary for every Muslim boy at least to attend maktab and learn necessary portion of the Holy Quran required for daily prayer. In maktab the curriculum comprise of reading, writing and elementary mathematics. Reading of Persian letters with correct pronunciation were taught. After learning letters they were taught words and then made to read and write short sentences. Writing was practiced in takhteas and on sand with fingers. In addition to Persian letters they learned songs and moral stories, Arabic and Persian grammar was also taught students were not allowed to go for higher studies until they become perfect in the elementary stage, this method was highly appreciable.

A Brief Note on Khwaja Imaduddin Mahmud Gawan and his Riyaz-ul-Insha or Manazir-ul-Insha:

Khwaja Mahmud Gawan, the great Bahmani Wazir, was one of the most distinguished statesmen of medieval India. He rose to the high position of prime minister under Humayun Shah Bahmani (1457-60) and held office till 1481 when factional intrigue involved him in a plot by his enemies; he was falsely accused of disloyalty and unjustly put to death by order of Sultan, Muhammad Shah Bahmani. This tragedy was the direct result of the animosity of the Deccani Muslim aristocracy against the Afaqis. From the very inception of the Bahmani Kingdom in 1347 many scholars and soldiers of fortune were attracted to the Bahmani court first at Gulbarga and then at Bidar from central Asia, Turkey, Arabia and Iran. Mahmud Gawan was the greatest of these new comers who made the Deccan his home and who write his name in letters of gold in the page of Medieval Indian history. His fame as a statesman spread beyond India to all Islamic lands and rulers of states beyond India and scholars in there distant lands considered it a privilege to be counted assiduously fostered his friendship; his letters to personages in distant lands bear testimony to his greatness and statesmanship. They give an insight in to the strong cultural relations that existed between the Bahmani kingdom and other Islamic countries like, Iran, Turkey, Egypt, Arabia etc. Mahmud Gawan maintained the cultural ties through constant exchange of correspondence with a variety of personnel in different countries. The native of the cultural relations were multifarious

Origin of Khwaja Mahmud Gawan:

Khwaja Imaduddin Mahmud Gawan who hailed from Qawan, a place in the province of Gilan in Iran, was born in 1411. His family was one of the most aristocratic in Gilan, where his ancestors held high offices. After the death of his father Jalaluddin Muhammad, intrigue against the family raised its ugly head. Haji Muhammad minister at the court of Gilan and Sayed Ali, the commander-in-chief of the Gilan army both conspired to poison ruler's ears against the Khwaja's family. This was most uncongenial to the straight forward Khwaja and his mother. The noble lady advised her son's (Mahmud and Shihabuddin) to seek their fortunes elsewhere. And so the brothers left Gilan. During the Khwaja's exile and wandering he was offered minister ship by the rulers of Khurasan and Iraq. But he was in no mood to accept these offers. He then moved on to Cairo in 1440. Here he met the savant Hafiz Ibn Hazan al Asqalan. From Cairo he went to Damascus.

The Riyaz-ul-Insha:

The Riyaz-ul-Insha is a collection of letters written by Khwaja Mahmud Gawan either in his own name or in the name of his master the Bahmani Sultan. The letters contain a vast amount of the most interesting and useful material which throws floods of light on the cultural relations of the Bahmanis with the Islamic countries and gives an insight into contemporary Bahmani history. There are altogether 148 letters in the collection out of which 105 have a direct bearing on the foreign cultural relations.

Development of Persian literature:

The pace of Indo-Persian collaboration was suddenly accelerated by the decision of Muhammad bin Tughluq to transfer his capital from Delhi to Daulatabad. Deccan should acknowledge its gratefulness to this monarch for his enterprise, his eventful decision, of partially shifting the seat of government from Delhi to Daulatabad in the South in 1328 A.D, made a great change in the destinies of the Deccan. Though Delhi was not completely deserted, and it never became such a desolate and dismal ruin "where not even a cat or a dog was left in the buildings and palaces", as was the popular and wrong belief. It still continued to be the centre of administrative activities. It was nevertheless true that a large body of Muslim nobility and gentry was compelled to quit Delhi and to go to the Deccan. This desertion of Delhi vouchsafed an unexpected blessing on the Deccan. As a seat of government, Daulatabad soon became a centre of cultural activities. Amongst hundreds of these unwilling immigrants to the south were many poets, scholars, litterateurs, artists, mystics and divines, whose stayed in the new capital transformed it into a seat of Islamic studies. The celebrated poet Hasan-i-Dehlawi who came along with the caravan of the immigrants to the South, and made Daulatabad his home is said to have breathed his last in the Deccan. This influx of poets, theologians and mystics in the Deccan marks the starting point of our study. Earliest specimens of Persian literature in the Deccan belong to this period.

Poets and Poetry:

Isami: The first great poet of the Bahmani period is 'Isami', the composer of 'Futuh-us-Salatin' or the Shah Nama of medieval Muslim India. Though the great Firdousian epic had a number of major and minor imitations, in its own native soil, no masnawi on its model was attempted by any Indian poet before 'Isami. The first versified history in Persian of the Muslim conquest of India, narrating events from the advent of Islam upto the establishment of the Bahmani regime was composed in the Deccan. Futh-us-Salatin was written at Daulatabad in A.H 751 at the behest of Sultan Alauddin Bahmani, to whom it was dedicated also. This voluminous masnawi of about 12000 verses was completed in a very short time of five months and nine days an average of about 80 verses composed per day. Excepting Amir Khusrau, who is proverbial for his speedy versification, no other poet, so far as is known, has composed such a voluminous work in so short a time.

Futuh-us-Salatin:

It is the first comprehensive work of the history of medieval India written two and a half centuries before the Tabaqat-i-Akbari or Tarikh-i-Ferishtah. Though Isami has not mentioned even a single source of authority for his work, a close study of his history reveals that he has utilized Amir Khusrau's Miftah-ul-Futuh, Qiran-us-Sadayn

and Khizarkhan-Duwalrani. Being the first compendium of medieval Indian history, Futuh-us-Salatin is unquestionably a work of unique importance to historians of medieval Indian history.

Azari-e-Isfarayini:

Shaikh Hamza bin Abdul Malik Azari-i-Tusi (Bayhaqi) of Isfarayin. His father held high administrative office at Isfarayin, a town in the principality of Khurasan. He was born at Marw, and probably educated at Isfarayin. In his early youth, he was fascinated by the Muse of poetry. Very soon he attained great popularity as a poet, and commenced his career by enlisting himself in the services of Prince Ulugh Beg.

Naziri:

Naziri was a poet of Alauddin Ahmed-II and Humayun Shah Bahmanis period. He was a native of Tus and a disciple of Shah Nimatullah Wali and his descendants. He probably came to India along with Shah Nimatullah's grandsons and was enlisted in the service of Malik-ut-Tujjar Khwaja Mahmud Gawan through whose influence; he became the poet laureate of the Bahmani court. Naziri is reported to have written many panegyrics of Shah Khalilullah and his sons of whose spiritual leadership the poet had deep conviction. He has lamented the death of Shah Khalilullah in a marsia. In these poems, he has described his spiritual preceptors as heroic personages.

Hindu Education:

Paithan and Nasik were two seats of Brahmanic learning and they continued to maintain this tradition through the Bahmani period. Nevasa, where the Jnaneshwari was composed in 1290 A.D, was known for its pundits and Shastris during the fourteenth century. Gangapur was also a place where Vedic learning flourished. This is seen in the Gurucharitra which also mentions many places in Bahmani dynasty where traditional education imparted by Brahman scholars flourished. Salotgi near Bijapur was famous in the Yadava period for its Agrahara (college); it had large endowments and it was also supported by voluntary gifts from local people. Beside these seats of learning learned Brahmans at various places accepted pupils who stayed with their gurus and received instruction from them. In return these pupils were expected to perform such chores for the preceptor and his household as they were called upon to do.

CONCLUSION

Thus, it can safely be said that the educational status of Muslims in India is not satisfactory and needs special attention. It is clear from the Tab 1 that more than half i.e., 53.95 per cent of the total population of the Muslims in India is illiterate with 17.48 per cent literate people just for the name sake only. Technical education or higher education is meager among the muslim population. From the results it is clear that more than eighty per cent of the total population belongs to Hindu community. Muslims accounts for 13.43 per cent of the total population, whereas, a little less than ten per cent of the total population is constituted by Christian, Sikh, Budhist, Jain and other religious communities. Literacy rate is highest (84.09 per cent) among the jains who only accounts for less than half per cent of the total population; Christian occupies the second position followed by Budhist, Sikh, Hindu and the last Muslims in this order.

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