

## **Muslim Education in Kashmir During Colonial Period: A Comparative Study**

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When we talk of educational system in the state during Dogra period, the people, it is said, were far behind than the people of other states of India. The old system of education was too primitive. Under that system the education was imparted in *Patshalas* and *Madrassas* which was bound with social and religious institutions. These *Patshalas* and *Madrassas* were run by Hindu *pundits* and Muslim *moulvis* who generally housed temples and mosques for the purpose.<sup>1</sup> Gulab during his tenure (1846-1857) was busy with frontier wars and he made no efforts in this regard. He did not get time to think over this aspect of the administration. It was his successor Maharaja Ranbir Singh who took pains to improve the educational system of Jammu and Kashmir. In this connection a start was made by him and he brought the educational system on modern lines. It is mentioned that he established regular schools and *Patshalas*. The number of schools and *patshalas* in the state as described in the Majmui- report in 1872-73 was 44.<sup>2</sup>

During the early Dogra period, especially during the reign of Maharaja Ranbir Singh, the state Government aimed at encouraging Sanskrit and religious education to enable the people to study religious books. Grammar, logic, rhetoric, physics, philosophy, Sanskrit, Arabic, Persian and Earthmetic were taught in these *Madrassas* and *Patshalas*.<sup>3</sup> Sources have mentioned that *Dogri* was taught in some institutions. The *Patshalas* were at Jammu, Vishnu devi, Utterbani and purmandal. There was also a *Madrassa* at Jammu. There was one *Madrassa* and one *Patshala* in Kashmir province. The pupil who came from outside state were boarded and given food and

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<sup>1</sup> Rahman, S. A., (ed.) *The Beautiful India*, Jammu and Kashmir, (New Delhi, 2005), pp. 251-253

<sup>2</sup> OM, Hari, *Muslims of Jammu and Kashmir- A Study in the Spread of Education and Consciousness (1857- 1925)*, (New Delhi, 1988), pp. 19-20

<sup>3</sup> Khan, Mohd Ishaq, *History of Srinagar (1846-1947) – A Study in Socio-Cultural Change*, (Srinagar, 2000), p. 162

clothes free of cost<sup>4</sup>. It was Maharaja Ranbir Singh who contributed for the promotion of education and research. He gave donations to the Punjab University at Lahore and became its first fellow. He constructed Rangunath temple which became very famous later on. Rangunath Patshala was of immense importance at Jammu. It was a well known centre of Sanskrit education in the whole of Northern India. Darmath department was responsible for the smooth running of this institution. The Maharaja provided library for the growth of these Patshalas which functioned on the lines of Ancient Ashrams. His ambition was to make Jammu a centre of learning in Sanskrit in India just as Kashmir has been in the days gone by.<sup>5</sup> In Srinagar there was one school for teaching of Sanskrit to pundits another school for the teaching of Arabic to the muslims. Both the school had 50 students who were fed and clothed at public expenses.<sup>6</sup>

The system of education gradually changed from Gulab Singh to Maharaja Pratap Singh. It was during Pratap Singh when a material change was experienced in the system of education. The education system not only expanded but progressed day by day. Pratap Singh was influenced by the way and work of Christian Missionaries.<sup>7</sup> Tyndale Bisco mentions that it was some forty years ago that the mission school was started, where English was taught. Then the State followed the suit with a school, and then two schools which in the course of time, became Middle schools, and later were raised to High schools, and affiliated to the Punjab University. The boys read up to matriculation to apply for the Punjab University.<sup>8</sup>

Charles Girdlestone, Resident in Kashmir in 1871 mentions that one or two attempts were made at Srinagar to establish girls schools. Apart from all these there were a few educational institutions run by the Christian missionary, but there was no systematic educational policy. It was said that the educational institutions existing in the state were open to all classes of people.<sup>9</sup> It is noteworthy that a few Christian missionaries had visited the state but they did not receive a good official response. It would appear that from the very beginning the attitude of the Maharaja

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<sup>4</sup> OM, Hari, op. cit., pp. 21-23

<sup>5</sup> Seru, S.L. *History and Growth of Education in Jammu and Kashmir 1872 A.D to 1973 A.D*, Srinagar, p. 37

<sup>6</sup> Ahmad, Bashir, *Gazetteer of India, Jammu and Kashmir State, Kashmir Region*, Vol. 1, (Srinagar, 1999), p. 137

<sup>7</sup> Hassnain, F. M., *British Policy Towards Kashmir 1846-1921 (Kashmir in Anglo- Russian Politics)*, (New Delhi, 1974), p. 102

<sup>8</sup> Bisco, Tyndale, *Kashmir and Its Inhabitants*, (Delhi, 1998), pp. 254-55

<sup>9</sup> OM, Hari, op. cit., pp. 24-26

towards the Christian missionaries was one of suspicion and hate. On the other hand the British were of the view that the Kashmiris needed spiritual as well as bodily help.<sup>10</sup>

The first missionary which had some genuine interest in philanthropy and evangelization was established by the church missionary school of England towards the end of nineteenth century. This society opened the first school on western lines at Srinagar in 1880. The founder of the school was J Hinton Knowles. It was in 1880 that he laid the foundation of the C M S (Christian Missionary School) School on the hospital premises in Srinagar. Lack of school buildings was one of the problems which the Christian Missionaries faced. The Govts, Orders prohibiting the missionaries from renting a house for school building were still in force. It is clear that in the beginning the attitude of state authorities towards the missionaries was hostile.<sup>11</sup>

The pattern of education imparted by schools and colleges in the rest of the country began late in the state. The mission school, first to follow the university syllabus was originally established by the Rev. J. S Doxy in 1881 with only five boys on roll. The good missionary content at having made a beginning and confident of its expansion preserved in his labours for two years after which he was succeeded by the Rev. J Hinton Knowles who worked hard, and with his untiring zeal and tact the school made rapid progress. In 1892 when he handed over the charge to Rev. Tyndale Biscoe the number on the role was over 500.<sup>12</sup> The school made sustained progress under Rev. Biscoe and produced boys not only educated in English and other subjects, but molded in the best traditions of an English public school.<sup>13</sup>

In Kashmir the Christian missionaries had to face many problems. The popular response was unsatisfactory. Dr. Ernest Neve writes that the Muslims were very conservative in the matters of education. The Government was however, influenced by the missionary school at Srinagar and ultimately opened the first high school, named Jammu High School on modern lines at 1890 that education of the state was established on modern lines. In 1889 there were two public schools one at Jammu and another at Srinagar. There were some other public schools run

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<sup>10</sup> Hassnain, F. M., op. cit., p. 102

<sup>11</sup> Khan, Mohd Ishaq, op. cit., pp. 162-63

<sup>12</sup> Bisco, Tyndale, *Kashmir in Sunlight and Shade*, (New Delhi, 1921), p. 263

<sup>13</sup> Bamzai, P. N. K., *Culture and Political History of Kashmir*, Vol. 3, (New Delhi, 1994), p. 717

at Government expenditure. The schools in villages have the insufficiency of teachers. There was not a good supervision.<sup>14</sup>

In the absence of proper supervision and a well organized scheme of studies, the system of teaching was extremely irregular, the teaching staff was inefficient and insufficient, and although the schools had existed for a number of years not a single boy had gone up for or passed a university examination.<sup>15</sup>

In reviewing the progress that has been made during the past three years, it is worthy of note that within the increase of rupees 8,563 in the annual expenditure, there are now one high school, four middle schools and 29 village and 10 indigenous branch schools, giving instruction to 3, 776 boys. The teaching staff is thoroughly efficient and is closely supervised by the inspector and education is regulated by an improved system both as regards standard and regularity of attendance.

The material improvements affected are –

- a) The discontinuance of the old objectionable system of awarding scholarships indiscriminately, without regard to merit.
- b) The introduction of a system of awarding scholarship and prize books to really deserving boys.
- c) Free supply of class books to poor boys in Srinagar school.
- d) Promotion of primary classes twice a year after half yearly examinations.
- e) Regular annual inspection of schools by the inspector.
- f) The introduction of the scheme of studies prescribed by the Punjab University.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Rehman, S. A., op. cit.,pp. 252-255

<sup>15</sup> Report on the Administration of Jammu and Kashmir State for the Hindi Year 1948 (1891-92) , Compiled by Pandit Bagh Ram and Rai Bahadur, Judicial Member and the Secretary to the Council of Jammu and Kashmir State, Jammu, 1893.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

Description of schools	1891		1892	
	No	Average daily attendance	No	Average daily attendance
High school	1	332	1	334
Middle schools	3	389	4	505
Primary schools	19	576	26	1,167
Indigenous schools	9	613	10	757
Dharmarth patshalas	2	100	2	142
Total	34	2,010	43	2,955

Average daily attendance of students during the year 1891-92<sup>17</sup>

A census has been made in 1901 which showed that the little attention was paid towards the education. The census showed that only 2% of the population could read and write. The male population who can read and write were 3.8% while as the female was counted as 1260. It was generally noted that Hindus were more educated than Muslims. For the upliftment of education the state authorities maintained 87 schools and in 1905 the number of schools had risen to 154 which included two high schools, a normal school, 7 Anglo- Vernacular and 12 vernacular middle schools and 133 primary schools. Girl's schools were maintained both at Srinagar and Jammu.<sup>18</sup>

The Pandits of Srinagar, who had a monopoly over the state service took advantage of the mission school and got acquainted with English language. Thus they acquired an advantage over Muslims. Thus they were able to occupy posts of importance in several branches of administration. Although their population did not exceed 6% of the total population, they had obtained about 90% of total posts.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Imperial Gazetteer of India, Vol. xv, Karachi to Kotayam, (Delhi, 1908), p. 111

<sup>19</sup> Rehman, S. A., op.cit., pp. 252-55

After 1911-12 religious education became a part of the curriculum in the Government schools. What happened, the schools then began to commence their working with a prayer, the members belonging to different religions assembling in separate groups. After this was over, short lectures were given by the teachers on important moral subjects.<sup>20</sup>

<b>Religion</b>	<b>1891</b>	<b>1892</b>
Hindus	2,101	2,861
Sikhs	66	72
Mohammedans	494	839
Others	4	4
Total	2,665	3,776

Classification of pupils by religion<sup>21</sup>

The department was under the control of Foreign minister who was assisted by an inspector and two assistant inspectors of schools. It has been noted that 17 scholarships granted to students gaining knowledge at Lahore. The total expenditure on education in 1905-06 was 1.05 lakhs compared with only Rs 45000 in 1900-1901.<sup>22</sup>

After the creation of state council in 1889 education became the focal point of the administration. Before introducing some reforms, the condition of education in the state was thoroughly checked. The council felt that the time had come to look into the matter and to adopt a definite educational policy. The Government encouraged and improved school education at Srinagar and Jammu. The high school staff was strengthened by appointing four more teachers. A new scheme of studies was introduced for Punjab University. The want of proper school buildings was felt. Some schools were held under the shades of the trees or in private houses or shops.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Kapoor, M. L., *Social and Economic History of Jammu and Kashmir State (1885-1925)*, (New Delhi, 1992), p 195

<sup>21</sup> Report on the Administration of Jammu and Kashmir state for the Hindi year 1948 (1891-92), op.cit.

<sup>22</sup> Lawrence, Walter R., *Provincial Gazetteers of Kashmir and Jammu*, (New Delhi, 1985), p. 79

<sup>23</sup> Hari OM, op. cit.,pp 25-26

The primary education of masses was much realized and even the Christian missionaries took initiative in the field of primary education. They started the first primary vernacular school on western lines in May 1891. When we compare the primary education of Jammu and Kashmir provinces, the primary education of Jammu province was far better than Kashmir.<sup>24</sup>

An important reform which the state council introduced at beginning to encourage education was the introduction of few scholarships for the deserving students and to end the discrimination. In 1889-90 another important step taken was the free distribution of books to boys in Srinagar Middle School. The state council had taken many steps like this and in 1892 it announced that a sum of 37,000 per annum for the improvement of education. At that time Home and judicial member of the council was in charge of education department.<sup>25</sup>

There were two town schools, one at Jammu and other at Srinagar, besides village schools maintained at state expense in 1889-1890. The state council was determined to extend primary education by gradually setting apart funds for the establishment of the village schools and has accordingly made a beginning by providing a sum of Rs. 5000 for that purpose in the budget for 1890-91.<sup>26</sup>

Board of education was also set up to meet and discuss the educational scheme. It was set up under the guidance of Pratap Singh. He recommended the introduction of Kindergarten system of teaching on experimental basis. The board of education had a definite educational policy to enhance the education of the state. All the information which was made in this policy was presented to the resident in Kashmir. The Resident mentioned that “every one of the suggestions which the educational conference made was not only sound but urgent.” There is not one measure which the conference has considered and which the durbar ought not to adopt immediately if funds were available.<sup>27</sup> Kindergarten teaching was considered of great value. Resident at the same time pointed out that there was paucity of funds and once the funds would be available educational conference would carry out the rest of the features to fulfill the aims of

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<sup>24</sup> Report on the Commission Appointed Under the Orders of His Highness the Maharaja Bahadur dated the 12<sup>th</sup> Nov. 1931 to Enquire into Grievances and Complaints, State Archives Jammu.

<sup>25</sup> Report on the Administration of Jammu and Kashmir State for 1889-90, Compiled by Pandit Bagh Ram and Rai Bahadur, Judicial Member and the Secretary to the Council of Jammu and Kashmir State, Jammu, 1893.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Reskhi, T. S., op. cit., p. 82 ; see also Old English Record, File No., 241 p/6, Year 1912.

the education. Pratap Singh gave a special grant for the imperial coronation Darbar of 1911, which helped for more than 80 primary schools. With the passage of time in order to improve the primary education the state council abolished the study of both Sanskrit and Persian in primary schools. However, in 1914 S. M Fraser, the Resident in Kashmir opposed this move and took up the question of the promotion of Sanskrit learning.<sup>28</sup>

Maharaja Pratap Singh also laid stress in the introduction of modern education. Schools were established in Srinagar where the medium of instruction was English and education was made free upto primary level. A technical college was established during his reign after the name of his brother Raja Amar Singh at Srinagar. Pratap Singh told to the education member that two schools properly equipped are better than four unequipped ones. It clearly indicates that Pratap Singh believed in quality rather than in number.<sup>29</sup>

The first education department which came into being was on 28<sup>th</sup> October 1907, a conference which was attended by officials of several departments like revenue and judicial departments, to discuss the future plan of education. Reorganization of the inspection staff of the education department took place in 1919 and stress was given on efficient educational system on the frontier illaqah. More attention was paid on the frontier region that had been educationally backward and no step was taken to enhance their condition. It was during 1919 when need of Assistant Inspector was felt. Education in primary schools was enquired and inspections often took place.<sup>30</sup>

Under the Presidentship of H. Sharp, Pratap Singh appointed an education commission at the end of 1915, who was the educational commissioner of the Government of India. The commission was appointed to enquire into the education system and to suggest some necessary measures which aimed at the improvement of this system. Mr. Sharp made a careful survey and noted some distinctions. His investigations revealed that in secondary schools 24.7% of teachers were Muslims and in primary schools 29.8%. It was averagely above 40% in all schools. He noted that the quality of education was almost satisfactory. Talking about education of Muslims H Sharp mentioned that they were still backward. He visited all the districts of the state with the

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<sup>28</sup> OM, Hari, op. cit.,pp. 38-39

<sup>29</sup> Ahmad, Bashir, op. cit.,pp. 140-141

<sup>30</sup> Reorganisation of Schools for Imparting Education in Gilgit, File No. 86, Year 1898..

exception of those Raisie. Ladakh and Gilgit. According to him Muslims formed 75.9% of population of the state. In the Kashmir province the proportion was 94%. Sharp marked that the amount spent on the muslim students was inadequate.<sup>31</sup> . But no one cared for the report because the Maharaja was not interested in educating his subjects, but to keep them illiterate. The All India Mohammadan Educational Conference, Aligarh passed a resolution deploring the backwardness of Muslim education in the state and demand educational facilities. The Resident took measures to stop the entry of Bolshevic literature and ideas in Kashmir. A strict watch was ordered to be kept on the communists in 1919. Despite all these precautions, the political ideas continued to infiltrate into the valley. The muslims of Kashmir submitted their memorandum of grievances to Lord Reading, Viceroy in India in 1924 and also rose against Maharaja Hari Singh in 1931. Naturally the British alarmed by possible repercussions in British India could neither tolerate nor sympathize with the Kashmiri uprising.<sup>32</sup>

The muslims of Srinagar tried to enhance the conditions of their education. They pressurized the Government that steps should be taken to remove the muslim subjects from the clutches of the darkness. Thus it was under the pressure of the public opinion that in 1916 Maharaja Pratap Singh invited Sir Henery Sharp, the educational commissioner, Government of India, to suggest various ways and means of extending educational facilities for the muslims of Kashmir. Mr. Sharp made a thorough enquiry into the grievances of the muslims, and after examining the muslim demands, submitted a report.<sup>33</sup>

Mr. Sharp emphasized the need of the primary education and attempts should be made to establish a school in every village of 500 or more inhabitants. Sharp has mentioned about the practical training and technical education to the students. He recommended some scholarship for muslim students so that they may not face any problem any in the future education. He also proposed the state High school be entrusted to the care of a muslim Headmaster.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Kapoor, M. L., op. cit.,pp. 197-98

<sup>32</sup> Hassnain, F. M., op. cit.,p. 114

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Report on the Commission Appointed Under the Orders of His Highness the Maharaja Bahadur dated the 12<sup>th</sup> Nov. 1931 to Enquire into Grievances and Complaints, op. cit.,p. 9

During the time of Maharaja Hari Singh the number of institutions doubled. In 1930 compulsory primary education for Srinagar, Sopore, Udhampur and Jammu was legalized for children in the age group of 6 to 11. Students in these compulsory schools got free books.

To popularize education amongst the backward classes a large number of scholarships was set apart for their children. In government schools 66% of students enjoyed freeships. By 1947 the enrollment was doubled of what it was in 1925. The educational budget swelled to 11 lakhs in his time. As soon as the report of the Wardha education Committee convened at the behest of Mahatma Gandhi and headed by the late Dr. Zakir Hussain, was released, the Jammu and Kashmir was perhaps, was the first state to give practical shape to the recommendations of the committee. The state government invited Dr. Zakir Hussain to advise it on the implementation of the scheme. At his advice, Mr. K G Saiyidain, Principal of the Teachers training College, Aligarh was appointed as director of education of the state.<sup>35</sup>

To conclude we can say that the education system during the initial years of dogra period was very nascent and poor but with the passage of time as the dogra rule matured the system of education changed and spread in many directions. It is very unfortunate to mention here that the participation of muslims subjects in education was very low both because there was monopoly of Kashmiri pandits not only in this sector but also in the government services and also the muslim masses were backward and did not realize the need and importance of the education. The steps taken and the policies framed by the rulers were not sufficient for the encouragement and upliftment of educational system of muslim subjects in the state. In order to increase their lot the Christian missionaries had done a wonderful job in giving education to the Kashmiri masses which not only helped them to recognize their rights but also made them aware about the policies of the state administration.

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<sup>35</sup> Seru, S.L. *History and Growth of Education in Jammu and Kashmir 1872 A.D to 1973 A.D*, Srinagar, p. 37