

Educational development in Mithila : In The Darbhanga Maharaja Era

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Abstract :

Mithila is the name of the part of the state of Bihar which is bound on the north by the Himalayas and on the east, south and the west by the rivers Koshi, Ganga and Gandak respectively. Mithila has been a centre of learning. The Ashrams, of famous vedic Rishies viz, Gautama, Viswamitra, Yajnavalkya and other who were the authors of various vedic mantras. Maharaja Lakshmeshwar singh came forward to moderate the whole social life of Mithila after he ascended the throne in 1879. Maharaja upgraded the existing Raj Anglo Vernacular School to the matriculation standard and made it a free institution. There were a number of free Raj middle school in different parts of the estate. An attempt for establishing an English school at Darbhanga was made in 1891 by James Forlong, general manager of Darbhanga Raj. Thus the educational plan inaugurated under the court of words administration continued in the times of the successive rulers also. That is why besides the traditional education of sanskrit, attention was also given to vernacular education, English education and Female education.

Keyword:- Mithila, Darbhanga Maharaja, Lakshmeshwar, Anglo-Vernacular, Raj School.

Introduction :

From the 19th century a new era begins in Indian History. A new feeling and consciousness aroses as a result of its contact with the western civilization which effected its outlook of life, literate, art and education. The condition of Mithila was more or less the same Mithila has been a centre of learning. The Ashrams of famous vedic Rishies viz Gautam, Viswamitra, Yajnavalkya and other who were the authors of various vedic mantras, ancient laws as well as chancellors of their respective educational centres were located in Mithila. The devotion of Mithila to learning continued till the arrival of the East India Company. It is worth mentioning that Darbhanga Raj was perhaps the only zamindar in the country to introduce an educational scheme for its tenanty.

This could be possible due to the enormous resources of the estate and the liberal education received by Maharaja Lakshmeshwar Singh (AD 1879 to 1898) and Rameshwar Sing (AD 1899 to 1999) under the court of wards administration. Thus the education plan inaugurated under the court of wards administration continued in the times of successive rules also.

About the year 1866 the Darbhanga Raj devised a scheme of spreading elementary instruction throughout its territory. The General Manager J. Forlong (1891-68), began correspondence with the government for its approval and also with the proprietors of the several Indigo factories of the estate for contributing their respective shares to the establishment of such schools. Very encouraging letters were received from all the proprietors in reply. They all agreed to continue 1/2% of their total rental for the cause. The scheme finally received the sanction of the government with some modification. Besides providing school houses the Raj spent Rs. 38.00 per month on each school. It also supplied text books to the boys and teachers.

Lala Ganesh Prasad was appointed as Raj Deputy Inspector of schools. The total number of students in these schools were 702. Some pathshalas came to be established within few hundreds yards of the Raj Schools. The Raj, also encouraged by the success of the existing schools, established in 1873 five new primary schools in Pargana Kharagpur providing each with a monthly grant of Rs. 5/-. In order to further extension of primary education among tenantry the Raj proclaimed its willingness to grant an aid of 50%. If the village themselves were ready to meet half the cost of running schools.

The Raj and was also required to make up the deficiency, caused by the reduction of government grant for primary education during

these years. Although the government grant of Rs. 10,000/- for primary education was in subsequent years restored to the district of Darbhanga, the aid was continued on the speed request of the District Education Committee.

But for various reasons a number of these Raj Vernacular Schools were abolished by the close of the last century. In some localities the Ryots for whose benefit these schools had been established were averse to education and preferred their children helping them in the field to receiving instruction in the school. In some case the ryots of some village behaved very badly and stopped paying rent to the Raj and consequently the Raj either shifted the schools to some other villages or abolished them. In all these schools the students belonged mostly to the low castes and did not pay much attention to the education. They attended the school for a year or so and then left it for ever, acquiring only superficial knowledge in arithmetic and some other subjects as were necessary for their respective vocation.

Maharaja Lakshmeshwar Singh had a special love for Hindi. At that time there was no arrangement for teaching Hindi in Calcutta University. Maharaja made Calcutta University grant of Rs. 50,000/- to start the teaching of Hindi. The Maharaja had also love for the Urdu language and this is shown by the fact that in 1884 he donated a sum of Rs. 12,000/- to the famous Calcutta Madarasa for the creation on

two scholarship for the study of Medicine and Engineering. Thus credit goes to Maharaja Lakshmeshwar Singh for making the people of Mithila rise over the traditional education of Sanskrit. He, therefore first introduced vernacular education in which all the subjects were taught in native language Hindi and this paved the way for English education.

When the first Anglo vernacular school was established in 1844 at Muzaffarpur, no upper class people sent their children to the institution. Again when a similar school was established at Darbhanga in 1855 on the initiative of some local government officers, it has to be closed down within a period of two years for want of students.

The people of Mithila saw the Raj Kumar receiving English education. This removed their fear of English education on the ground of religion. It may be added here that higher education in Darbhanga district synchronizes with the accession of Maharaja Lakshmeshwar Singh to the throne. It was in 1879 that the Darbhanga Raj School was upgraded. Credit for the establishment of an Anglo-Vernacular School, at Darbhanga on a sound footing, goes to the first general manager, James Forlong. By 1871, another Anglo-Vernacular School was founded at Madhubani, a subdivision of district then, it received aid both from the Raj and the government. The prejudices against English education had begun to disappear. In the annual report of 1875. It was noted that Tirhaliyas both Kayasthas and Brahmis, who were as

a rule averse to the English education have began to appreciate the same.

Soon the Raj School became the premier educational institution in the district. The middle and higher education in the district, in a sense, because of the monopoly of the Raj Darbhanga. Later in May, 1888, he submitted a memorandum on the improvement of the Raj High School and branch M.E. School at Bakerganj.

In the beginning of 1898, Babu Langat Singh of the village Darbhanga in Muzaffarpur district was said to have come to Darbhanga and met the Maharaja. The mission of his visit was probably to request the Maharaja for establishing a college at Darbhanga. It was said that Maharaja Lakshmeshwar Singh had accepted his request and this news even spread among the general public but due to the Maharaja's sudden death this could not materialize.

The Maharaja knew that the people of Mithila would be unable to buy books to study. So he decided to establish a fixed rate library at Darbhanga. Maharaja Lakshmeshwar Singh had an immense love for education. He wanted to contribute to the fund for sending Indian students to appear at the I.C.S. examination in England.

The Bengal residents had opened a girls section in the Bengali Middle English School at Darbhanga in the early eighteen of 19th century. The secretary of the school approved Maharaja in Feb 1889

for aid. As this was the first attempt to female education at Darbhanga, it would have been a matter of great pity should the undertaking have to be abandoned for want of funds. The Maharaja sanctioned a monthly grant of Rs. 40/- for the school besides the use of the house free of rent. Thus the spread of education made possible the shaping of Modern Mithila.

Results and Importances :

The royal family of Darbhanga played a role in the spread of education in India. Darbhanga Raj was a major donor to BHU, Calcutta University, Allahabad University, Patna University, Darbhanga Medical College and Hospital, Lalit Narayan Mithila University, Aligarh Muslim University and many other educational institutions in India.

Maharaja Rameshwar Singh donated Darbhanga House (Navlakha Palace) at Patna to Patna University. The Maharaja played an important role getting Maithili introduced as a subject in Patna University and in 1920, Maharaja Kameshwar Singh donated his ancestral house, Anand Bag Palace, on 30 March 1960, along with a rich library and land surrounding the palace to establish Kameshwar Singh Sanskrit University.

Nargona palace and the Raj Head Office were donated in 1972

to the government of Bihar. The buildings are now part of Lalit Narayan Mithila University, Raj Darbhanga donated to 1935 books to Lalit Narayan Mithila University for its library.

Raj School in Darbhanga was founded by Maharaja Lakshmeshwar Singh Bahadur. This school was established to provided the English medium of education and to introduce modern teaching methods in Mithila. Several other school were also opened throughout Raj Darbhanga.

In 1951, Mithila Snatkottar Shodh Sansthan located at Kabraghat, was established on the initiative of Dr. Rajendra Prasad, First President of India. The Maharaja of Darbhanga were the main partrous, trustees and finanacies of Mahakali pathshala, Maharani Rameshwari Bhartiya Chikitsa Vigyan Sansthan at Mohanpur is named after the wife of Maharaja Rameshwar Singh.

Conclusions :

Maharaja Lakshmeshwar Singh of Darbhanga was the champion of social progress and development. As a mattter of fact not in mithila but in the whole of Bihar, social changes could be possible only when they got recognition from both the local chiefs and pandits,

where ever a crisis arose the common people looked up to their local zamindars for the lead. Maharaja Lakshmeshwar Singh came forward to moderise the whole social life of Mithila after he ascended the throne in 1879. His education through English removed peoples' fear of English education on the ground of religion. Maharaja upgrade the existing Raj. Anglo-Vernacular School to the matriculation standard and made it a free institution.

People wouldn't have learnt English just or the sake of knowledge. From contemporary records it is known that students passed from the Raj School got employed in Railway, Post office and Government and Private Schools. The Bengali residents had opened a girl's section in the Bengali Middle English School at Darbhanga in the early eighteen of 19th century. The influence of education its professional nature and the impact of modern concepts about social equality and justice, individual freedom and the place of religion in life have brought about in the course of time the series of remarkable changes in the customs, manners, beliefs in the general sense of value in Mithila society. Thus the present paper is an attempt to trace the circumstance leading to the rise and growth of educational institution and work of Darbhanga Maharaja and evaluate their contributions to society.

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