

Educational Activities Under the Sultans of Gujarat and Making Muslim Society

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Abstract: This paper presents an overview on educational activities under the sultans of Gujarat and making Muslim Society.

Keywords: Activities, Educational, Muslim society, Sultans.

1. Introduction

The story of the entry of the Islam in India is for many centuries. We are pointed here the Education in Muslim Society, but it is more important to discuss about the arrival of them in Western part of India. The western state of Gujarat has history of trade for a long time, as it has the major seaports. There were rich list of Arab merchants who later settled in Gujarat. Ibn-Battuta noted that there was thriving settlements of Muslim foreign Merchants.*

There was a remarkable growth of trade and commerce, Ibn-Battuta describes Anhilwara (Patan) and Cambay the important cities of West*. Cambay in Gujarat was famous for textiles and gold and silver work. Hindu and Muslim merchants led a luxurious life. Barani* tells us that the Muslim merchants were so rich that gold and silver were to be found abundance in their houses. The economic life was further improved by the development of communication.

From the eighth century to arrival of turks, it is found that many Muslim Saints, Sufis, Faqirs and Scholars were come to Gujarat by Afghanistan or by sea route with the Islamic way of life*. The Macca gate of Cambay is the best landmark.

The first Muslim invasion on Gujarat was the Governor of Sindh in 73 A.D. and there was continues invasions of Gazanvi up to 1025 A.D. at Somanath and Allaudin's on Karandev in 1297A.D. Gujarat now passed under the central of Delhi.

The real founder of the independent Kingdom of Gujarat was Nasir-ud-din Muhammad Shah who becomes its ruler in 1404 A.D. In the reigns of Ahmed Shah (1411-1443) the founder of Ahmadabad and Muhammad Begrah (1458-1511), the prosperity of Gujarat continued unabated.

2. Muslim Education

The school of the Muslims in its initial stage was a simple affair. It may have been under Palm-tree, in a tent or in a private house; nevertheless, it was a school. Even so late as the second half of the ninth century A.D. the saint Shama-i-burhani, set up a woollen tent on the other side of the Sabarmati and began to

teach the people*.

Islamic teaching method prevalent in Arabia, Iran, and other Muslim countries brought with them in India. First of all the Islamic recitation was propagated in Sindh and Punjab. In the thirteenth century, when the Mongols invaded Central Asia and destroyed the Muslim Kingdom, many of its scholars settled in India. The sultans appointed these scholars as teachers in India. Within a century after its foundation was laid, the sultanate became unrivaled in the field of Muslim Education. According to 14th century Arab traveler, there were about thousands Madrasahs in Delhi alone, and Muslim Education now propagated in every part of sultanates including Gujarat.

A. Basic features

The traditional educational system of the Muslims in Gujarat, as in the parts of India, was a transplantation of the one prevalent in the other parts of Muslim World. There were the 'Maktabs' or the elementary schools attached to the Mosques, where the principles of reading and writing, recitation of the Quran and the basic principles of religion were taught; and beyond them were the 'Madrasahs' where instruction in the higher branches of learning was imparted.

The sultans appointed these scholars from Central Asia as teaches in Muslim schools, and the Muslim education propagated it's in their reign.

B. Muslim schools were called Maktabs and Madrasa.

1) Maktab

This educational system of the Muslim in Gujarat as the maktabs or the elementary schools attached to the mosque. The curriculum of the Quran and the Maktabs had the Quran s its centre. The teacher gave the knowledge necessary to read the Quran to enable a student to perform his religious duties. It was in the maktabs itself that several pupils embarked upon the memorization of the Quran. Usually, a student became a 'hafiz' by the age of ten to twelve.

After the pupil was able to memorize the Quran, he was practiced reading and writing in Persian. After the pupil had acquired a considerable proficiency in the Persian language of an elementary level, he was introduced to some books of a higher standard, like Yusuf-Zulaikha, Laila Majnun and Sikandar nama.

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2) Madrasas

After completing Maktab Education, he got an admission in 'Madrasahs.' Madrasahs offer both life oriented and traditional education. Practical education included such subjects as Arabic grammar, prose, literature, logic, philosophy, law, astrology, mathematics, history, geography, medicine and life-skills. Traditional education consists mainly of the Quran, its interpretation, the life and ideals of the prophet. Teaching work in Madrasahs done through lectures. It would be taken another subject only after mastering in one subject. The student was independent in his choice of subject.

Every student would be given a topic or subject for independent research and learning. There was a library in every Madrasah for reading and research. Students were selected in bureaucracy with good academic record in higher education.

3. The Madrasahs of Gujarat

The arrival of Muslims in Gujarat started from seventh century and their settlement were established at various places in the coastal areas of Gujarat. It is indeed a thousand pities that rarely do we come across detailed accounts of all the madrasahs or educational institutes as such in the history of Gujarat. Hulvi Shirazi was a poet in the court of Ahmad Shah-I, had composed a history of Gujarat in Persian verse. This history was extant till the days of Akbar.

This explains us that in the reign of Ahmad Shah-I, there was a number of madrasahs in Ahmadabad. On the authority of the Mirat-i-skandari, we can say that Mahmud Begara's reign also boasted of many madrasahs. Similarly we find that Sulatan Muhmud-II also upheld the traditions of his forefathers by showing a great zeal in the propagation of learning and by building madrasahs. With help of different sources we shall try to give an account of madrasahs that flourished in Gujarat under the Muslim rule.

4. The Earliest Madrasah of Gujarat

We mentioned the arrival and early settlement of Muslims in Gujarat as above but there were many Muslim settled in the time of Rashtrakuta kings, then. The Solanki kings were more appreciative than Muslims came in large numbers. From that time Muslims started establishing madrasahs in Gujarat.

The earliest madrasahs that are recorded to have existed in Gujarat was one established in 1038 A.D. at Broach. The founder of this madrasah was Baba Raihan, a scholar from Khorasan. Baba Raihan built a Khanqah, also on the bank of the Narbada. Qadi Zainul Abidin grandfather of Qadi Nuruddin of Broach, mentions in the manuscript of his memoir that madrasahs of Maulana Ishaq was founded in 1038 A.D. In 1257, there was built a glorious Mosque at Anhilwar Patan, where the ruler was Hindu King and also built a madrasa. This madrasa gave all type of traditional education. Maulana Abu Yusuf Yaqub was the administrator of this madrasah. There was also built madrasahs in every part of Gujarat such as Ahmadabad, Patan, Surat, Cambay etc.

A. The Sarkhej Madrasah

We shall begin an account of some of the madrasahs that flourished in the Ahmadabad city with Shaikh Ahmad khattu's madrasah (1445 A.D.). This great saint came to Gujarat in 1399 A.D. and settled at Sarkhej. He was one of the four Ahmads who participated in the founding of the City. After his death the saint was buried at Sarkhej. Soon after his death a big madrasah sprang up at Sarkhej.

B. The Khan Sarovar Madrasah

The famous Khan Sarovar in Patan (1451 A.D.) had a number of imposing buildings. One of these buildings was a madrasah. Who was founder of this madrasah is not known. It was Maulana Qasim bin Mahammad Gujarati who was contemporary of Qutubuddin Ahmad Shah associated with this madrasah.

C. The Shaikh Uthman's Madrasah

One of the greatest sufis of Gujarat, Saiyed Uthaman Shama-i-Burhani was the spiritual successor of Hadrat Qutub-i-Alam. Ahmadabad was on its growing age, on the other side of Sabarmati, where Usmanpura is now, the population gradually increased so much that the Shakh had pitched his tent there. After increasing of population a magnificent mosque and madrasahs were built there in which traditional education was imparted. Quran, Hadith, tafsir, fiqh and Usul were specially taught. There were also rooms next to the mosque for students to stay.

D. The Shaikh Hisammuddin Madrasah

This madrasah in Patan was attached to the tomb of Shaikh Hisammuddin Multani, where Maulana Tejauddin and his son Muhammad bin Taj lectured on Hadith. Both of them were regarded as great scholars and teachers of their age.

E. The Shah Alam Madrasah

This madrasah was established by the successor of Shah Alam as his memorial. It teaches all kinds of knowledge and sciences, from there great scholars came out with education. It had also hostel arrangements where students living and received scholarships.

F. The Shah Wajhuddin Madrasah

The boast of Ahmadabad was, the madrasah of Shah Wajhuddin Alawi. He was brought to Ahmadabad from Champaner by Muzaffar-II who built a seminary for the Shaikh. Later on the madrasah was rebuilt for him by Sadiq Khan. Shah Wajhuddin spent sixty five years of his life in teaching in this madrasah.

From the starting of the Gujarat Sultanate age there were many madrasahs at Ahmadabad, Patan, Surat, Cambay and Broach. There is numbers of famous madrasahs in Patan like Shakh Abdul latif al Fatani, in Surat the Saiyed Jafar Sadiq madrasah and others. These numbers of madrasahs in every part of Gujarat were the great example of twilight of Islamic education and harmony under the Gujarat Sultanate time. And it is the graph of every culture in history that we can assume the development of their by the literature or the educational

institutes they developed.

5. Muslim Libraries in Gujarat

In the beginning when the mosques were the centers of education the libraries were gradually brought together from gifts and bequests, for it was a common practice of scholars to give their books for the use of the ahl-al-Im.

We have discussed about madrasahs at various places, the libraries almost linked to these madrasahs. The Sarkhej library, The Shah Alam library, Shakh Uthman or Shama-i-burhani library, and the library of Sultan Ahmad Shah who was a great patron of learning. There were also libraries in Patan, Surat and Cambay, but some of them were established after the Sultanate period.

6. Conclusion

We can say from this discussion that Educational institutions were in better condition and there was a support of Sultans for

promoting it. We can see in some places that students got scholarships and support from state. Muslim education developed many subjects with it like languages, grammar, Islamic science and its law. The educational institutes were also built scholars who propagated Islam and it was very supportive to the state. After the arrival of the European especially British, the educational system was changed. We can't point out sure that how English and other languages replaced Urdu and Persian. There was the lack of proper data it can't be assumed. But Educational development in the Gujarat Sultanate period was rich and Ahmadabad the capital was also named as good academic place.

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