

## Educational Development in Medieval India.

Dr. Samir Kumar Verma  
Associate Professor  
History Department  
Satyawati college (Evening)  
University of Delhi

### Abstract

*Many Mohammedan invasions took place in the early eighth century AD, particularly from the Mediterranean area. Mahmud Ghaznavi conquered the land and used the seized wealth to finance the establishment of a huge number of libraries and schools in his own country. In later years, as the Muslim leader established a stable empire in India, they implemented a new educational system in the country. As a result, the traditional system of education experienced significant transformation. In reality, education during the Muslim era was far less advanced than education during the Hindu period. Except for Akbar, no other Muslim king achieved notable achievements in the sphere of education. While education was primarily focused on the illumination and growth of knowledge, it also served its purpose of spreading Islam throughout the Muslim era. It was the goal of this educational effort to help spread Islamic principles, regulations, and social norms across the globe. The purpose of education was to instil religious principles in pupils, and it was centred on Christian views. Education in Islam was designed to assist students attain both spiritual and financial success.*

**Keywords :-** Education, Learning, Curriculum, Ulama, Medieval India.

### Introduction

The public education system in mediaeval India had been under the direction of Ulama, who had been in favour of the curriculum laid forth by Akbar and who were in charge of the module. During those days, education was closely influenced by religious instruction. In fact, many disciplines including such medicine, Arabic literature, language, and philosophy were debated and taught as well. According to historical accounts, Arab and Middle Eastern peoples transmitted Muslim educational traditions to India throughout both the mediaeval and early modern eras, according to scholars. During the mediaeval era, women's education was widely practised in India. Muslim females from wealthy households were educated at home, and since Persian was the court language of the time, privileged boys were able to attend Persian schools to read literature, history, morality, law, administration, and other subjects. Education in middle Ages thrived primarily during the Mughal era, which lasted from the beginnings of the Mughal governmental presence in 1526 to the end of the Mughal presence in 1848. This was during the later medieval era when the British came in India and created an English-language educational system. Following the entrance of European missionaries in the region, Western education has made tremendous strides ahead in the region. During the mediaeval era, a large number of

**universities and hundreds of colleges were associated, and the popularity of higher education soared during this time period of education rose.**

### **Hindu Education System in Medieval India**

The characteristics of the Hindu education system in medieval India seem to be influenced by the ancient education system. Varanasi, Nadia, Mithila, Madurai, Srinagar, Prayag and Ayodhya were also the major centers of learning during this period. The greatest impact of medieval Muslim invasions was on ancient Indian Hindu centers of learning such as Taxila, Nalanda and Vikramshila University. Three types of Hindu educational institutions are prominently seen in India in medieval times: Pathshalas or primary schools, Tolls or colleges, and Private schools. Since, the main objective of this education system was the development of the personality of the individual, the development of the personality, the preservation of ancient culture and the inculcation of social service spirit in the individual and the performance of religious duty. Under the above circumstances, special attention was given to discipline and self-reliance in Hindu education system. The curriculum of the Hindu education system mainly included subjects like Poetry, Grammar, Astrology, Verses, Niruk and Nayana philosophy. Medicine, history, geography, Puranas and Vedas were also taught in some areas.

Varanasi, which was a major learning center since ancient times, was negatively affected by the religious persecution policies of the leader during the early Muslim. Along with the decline in religious influence, there is also a decline in the Hindu education system in this region, but due to the influence of the Varanasi center, even at that time, Varanasi attracted far-flung scholars. Scholars like Kabir and Tulsidas developed their literary art in Banaras. At the same time, Raja Jai Singh had established a college for the education of princes in Banaras.

Similarly, Nadia in Bengal was another major center of Hindu learning during the Mughal period. This center developed after the destruction of universities like Nalanda and Vikramshila. Nadia University had 3 major branches namely Nawadvipa, Shantipura and Gopalpara which attracted students from almost all parts of the country. Mithila, located in the northern region of Bihar, was a major center of education since early times and its importance remained intact even in medieval times. Consequently, although the education ministry was located in western India during ancient times, the spread of educational institutions switched to eastern India during mediaeval India owing to an increase in Muslim invasions from western areas of the nation.

### **Islamic Education system in Medieval India**

Influencing factors of education system in that time includes the nature of the country (political), the condition of society (social), the economic condition of the people (economic), people's religious beliefs (religion), the country's values, history and customs, and the values of other countries. Generally speaking, they are referred to as political, social, economic, and religious aspects, respectively.

All of these considerations must be taken into account in order to have a proper perspective on education, and especially on its management. Each element works in tandem with the others. The mediaeval kings developed a national totalitarian regime to counter the threat of foreign invasion. Their actions were guided not just by the commands of the Quran, but by the rules of military science as well. As a result, the Islamic monarchs in Delhi Sultanate were governed by the Quranic injunctions and military might. They placed a strong focus on the conversion of quasi to Islam. The leader were in a position of absolute

authority. There was no sign of democracy everywhere. His wishes were carried out in accordance with the wishes of the state. It was absolutely up to the conquerors to deal with the subjugated people (who were primarily Hindus). With just a few notable exceptions, the character of the Medieval state was mostly theocratic. Because of their religious views, Hindus were accepted by a number of kings throughout history (Sher Shah, Akbar, JinalAbedin of Kashmir and Hussain Shah of Bengal) (Sher Shah, Akbar, JinalAbedin of Kashmir and Hussain Shah of Bengal). In terms of theology, both Islam & Hindu share a monotheistic conception of God that is based on the notion of creation. Instead of the universality of the defector's destiny, it was the might of their sword that drove them to bend to the will of victor. Throughout the state's history, Muslims have held all of the most significant jobs, both army and civil, including the president.

It has long been regarded that one of the most essential tasks of an ideal Muslim ruler is to convert non-Muslims to Islam. The contemporary age, there was no idea of secularism or spiritual neutrality, despite the fact that forcible conversion is condemned by the Quran. Non-Muslims were subjected to a barrage of limitations by the state (e.g., payment of a poll-tax termed the Jiziya by the Hindus) They had been overwhelmed. They had not engaged in the army at the time. The Muslims controlled the state's key offices, including the president. Parts of the dominating class were capable of living in luxury thanks of the Islamic state. The great majority of them appear to be corrupt. The bulk of non-Muslims, but at the other hand, were destitute and managed to support their life in some manner. Their condition of living was low, but they had no ambition to pursue a political career. A cultural fusion or synthesis took occurred in spite of all of this, owing to renowned Hindu thinkers such as Ramanand, Tukaram, Chaitanya, Vidyapati, Tulsi Das, Mansingh", Mira Bai, and others who came to prominence in the 20th century, among others

.The Different Types of Educational Opportunities during the Medieval Period

### **Maktabas around (Elementary Education)**

There were a lot of Maktabas, or primary schools, back then. Some of it was tied to mosques, while others were administered independently. Kids in the Maktabas study the basics of the Koranic Karan and Ayats (Prayers). Aside from learning about the Koran, the Maktabas also provide basic education in literacy and numeracy. They also studied the alphabet and language of Arabic and Persian. The instructor tells the youngsters about the legends of prophets & Muslim "Fakirs" in this classroom. The majority of the schooling was centred on the Koran's moral and religious precepts. In addition, the instructor teaches the pupils the skill of writing and speaking. When a Muslim boy is four years, four months, and four days old, he is eligible for admission to Maktabas, or religious instruction.

### **Assailants of the Madrassahs (Higher Education)**

After finishing elementary education, the children were moved to Islamic schools. For the most part, it is a university that is favoured by the kings and queens. Aside from religious studies, Madrasah schools also put a great emphasis on academic pursuits of all kinds. Professors were allocated to other courses, as well. There are several disciplines that are

taught as part of secular education such as Arabic and Persian literature as well as grammatical and rhetorical skills. The Maktabas and Madrasas are thus the principal educational institutions at this period.

### **Khanquahas**

A Sufi brotherhood's Khanqah (Hospice) was built expressly for their meetings and is a spiritual retreat. For prayers, the faithful congregated at the Khanqah owned by a Pir (teacher). Occasionally, the Khanqah offered housing and boarding for visitors. Khanquahs served as the primary school of choice for many families. Khanquahs are only open to Muslim children. Donations were the only source of income for these Khanquahs.

### **Dargahas**

Dargahas, like Khanquahs, served as the educational epicentre for children under the age of eight. Only Muslim youngsters are allowed to attend and receive instruction at these Dargahas. Many people equate dargahs, or places of worship, with khanqah, or Sufi dining and gathering rooms and hostels. They often feature a mosque, conference halls, Muslim fundamentalist schools (madrassas), teacher or caretaker apartments, hospitals, as well as other community facilities. A similar building in Arabic-speaking countries is known as a Maqam, which has similar social connotations and serves as the location of similar ceremonial rituals. Today, the Dargah is regarded as a site where saints prayed and meditatively pondered (their spiritual residence). A shrine is a modern-day edifice that may or may not have a dargah, depending on the circumstances.

### **Quran Schools**

Teachers at these schools solely teach the Quran. Groups were taught in Arabic writing and then pushed to memorise verses from the Quran by memory at these institutions, as according to De La Fosse. These schools did not provide instruction in any other topics.

### **Persian Schools**

In the Middle Ages, Persian was the official language of the country. To become a government employee, one must attend one of these schools to learn Persian. Students were exposed to the teachings of Sheikh Sadi and Hafiz, as well as Muslim culture. All faiths, including Hinduism, were welcome in these institutions. At Arabic schools, students were also taught Arabic language and literature. In actuality, all of these educational establishments are privately run, with some getting public financing. That's why in Muslim times, education was considered a personal concern.

## **Centers of Learning in the Medieval India**

### **Delhi**

Delhi was created as the capital city of the early Islamic kings. As a result, it became a centre for Islamic studies and practises. Nasiruddin set up a school for Islamic education in

Delhi, and Shiraz was the board chairman at that time. Other madrasas in Delhi were founded by Allauddin Khilji, which drew some of the city's most eminent teachers. Over 40 Muslim scholars and academics were employed by these organisations. Delhi under Allauddin Khilji was also a hub for literature and the arts. It was during Muhammad Tughlaq and his son Firoz Tughlaq that Muslim learning and scholarship reached their pinnacle in Delhi. In addition, Humayun established an astrological and geographical institution in Delhi. Because of their efforts, Delhi's renown as a cultural and educational hotspot has been sustained.

## **Agra**

Agra became a major educational hub during Sikandar Lodhi's time. In this metropolis, he erected a slew of Maktabas and Madrasas, which attracted students from all over the world. Madrasas were erected in Agra by Babur & Humayun after Sikander Lodi's death. Akbar also turned Agra into a cultural, educational, and artistic hotbed. Schools were established at Fatehpur Sikri, a suburb of Agra, by Akbar. A number of new educational and religious institutions were built after his death, thanks in part to the generosity of Jahangir and Shahjahan. Despite this, Agra's prestige has fallen after the demise of the Mughal dynasty.

## **Jaunpur**

During the reigns of the Turks, Afghans, and Mughals, Jaunpur was also an important centre of Muslim education. It was home to a diverse assortment of institutions. Students travel from all around the world to study history, politics, philosophy, and even warcraft. Ibrahim Sharki created many "Madarssas" in Jaunpur, as well as providing financial support for them. It was a place of study for the kings during the Mughal era, from Humayun to Shahjahan. During this time, Mohammad Shah established 20 institutions in this city..

## **Bidar**

The southern city of Bidar was a renowned educational centre. Mohammad Gawan built several Maktabas and a big Madarsa. At these establishments, one of the most knowledgeable employees was hired. A huge library at Madarsa housed over 3,000 volumes on religion, theology, art, philosophy, medical technology, astrology, history, and agriculture. As a result of their efforts, Arabic and Persian became widely spoken around the world. Every Bahmani-ruled hamlet has at least one academic establishment. As a result, Bidar became a prominent centre of Islamic education in southern India.

## **Malwa**

*Mahmud Khilji, the sultan of Malwa in the 15th century, made it a major centre of Muslim scholarship. According to Farishta, Malwa was regarded as the literary equivalent of Shiraj and Samarkand. It became to be a centre of learning and culture for philosophers and writers from all across the Malwa kingdom, as well as from other nations.*



## **Educational Activities in the Medieval time**

Prithviraj Chauhan was defeated by Mohammad Ghori in 1192 AD. Muslim control was established after his defeat. After him, successive Muslim dynasties strengthened their authority over Delhi one after the other. History refers to these dynasties as the Khilji, Tughlaq, Sayyid, and Lodi families. As a result, the development of Muslim education was largely dependent on the particular leader's attitudes and interests.

### **Mohammad Ghori**

In addition to his brother Ghiyath ad-Din Muhammad, Muhammad of Ghor was the Sultan of a Ghurid Empire from 1173 to 1202, and from 1202 to 1206. He was the only ruler of the empire from 1202 to 1206. Aristotle is often considered to be the architect of Muslim dominance in the Indian subcontinent, which endured for many centuries after his death. He ruled over a vast region that included portions of present-day Iraq, Bangladesh, Iran, North-western India, Pakistan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan, among other countries. He was a powerful ruler. In the First Battle of Tarain, which took place in 1191 CE, he was destroyed by a unified Rajput Confederacy commanded by Prithviraj III. However, After Shihabuddin came with a force of mounted archers; he beat the Rajputs under Prithviraj on the same ground in 1192 CE. This victory paved the way for the Muslim conquest of much of Northern India within a decade thereafter. The fight also resulted in the widespread loss of Hindu dominance in Northern India, as well as the establishment of a strong Muslim presence in the region. As a result of Ghiyath's death in 1201, there was a frantic fight among the surviving Ghurid leader, and the Khwarizmi was eventually able to seize

### **Muhammad Tughlaq**

In 1325, Muhammad Tughlaq, one of the most learned and able scholars of his time, ascended the throne. In the regime of such a great scholar, education should have taken long strides of progress. Also, he built a Madrasas in Delhi in 1346. In the time of his successor, Firoz Tughlaq, there was a great advance in the higher education of Muslims. He was an educated man and a patron of scholars. According to the historian Ferishta, he built and endowed thirty Madrasas or colleges. Of these, the most famous was the Madrasas-i-Firoz Shahi near Hauz-i-Khass.

### **Sayyid and Lodi kings**

The Sayyid and Lodi kings ruled from 1414 to 1526. Sikandar Lodi built Madrasas in all parts of the kingdom and invited qualified teachers from distant places to take charge of the institutions built by him at Agra and other places. He insisted on the compulsory education of even his military officers. Also, he founded Madrasas at Mathura and Narwar which were open to all without any distinction of caste or creed.

### **Babur**

Babur, the first of the Mughal Emperors (1526-1530), was a man of refined taste for poetry, with knowledge of Arabic, Persian and Turkish. Thus, he had established his

reputation as a scholar by writing his autobiography 'Tuzuki-i-Baburi'. He opened a department "Shuhrat-a-Aam" for providing literary works. This ruler's time was the building of schools and colleges.

### **Humayun**

Babar's son Humayun, had a passion for study. During his lifetime he opened many Maktabas, Madrasas, and libraries. In Delhi, he built Madrasas, and the special arrangement was made for teaching Mathematics, Astronomy and Geography, his favorite subjects. When he regained his kingdom after defeating Sher shah Suri he converted the Shermandal into a library.

### **Akbar (1556 to 1605)**

Akbar's reign marks a new era for the education system in schools and colleges. He built Madrasas or colleges at Agra, Fatehpur Sikri, Gujarat, and other places. These Madrasas were residential and maintained by the state. In Madrasas, subjects include certain important subjects such as Logic, Arithmetic, etc. This scheme gave a secular bias to the entire educational system of the country. More brilliant students were taught the following sciences: Ethics, Arithmetic, Accountancy, Agriculture, Geometry, Astrology, Economics, Physics, Logic, Natural Philosophy, and History.

Besides, state schools and colleges, there were also private educational institutions for post-graduate work in Music, Painting, Philosophy, and Mathematics. Hindu boys began to study with Muslims and went through the same curriculum. For this, Akbar made arrangements in his later years for the education of Hindu youths in schools and colleges. Akbar orders a large number of Sanskrit and other books to be translated into Persian. He encouraged Music, Painting, Calligraphy, and fine arts. As he was personally interested in mechanical experiments, he built Karkhanas which served as centers for Technical and vocational training.

### **Jahangir (1605 to 1627)**

Jahangir was a scholar and lover of arts and literary works. Following his father's policy, he did maintain the progress of education in his kingdom. Jahangir patronized painters, artists, musicians, historians, and poets.

### **Shahjahan(1627 to 1653)**

In all the Mughal emperors, Shahjahan was the greatest lover of arts. He was more interested in arts than in education, but he did not neglect education. He encouraged learning by granting rewards and stipends to men of intellectual ability and poets. In 1650, he founded Madrasa near the Jama Masjid of Delhi, the so-called Imperial College.

### **Aurangzeb (1657 to 1707)**

Aurangzeb was highly educated but he was narrow-minded in religious matter. He put an end to the liberal policy initiated by Akbar. But at the same time, he extended every

encouragement to Muslim education. H.G Keene writes that "he founded numberless colleges and schools for Muslims."

### **Educational Condition of the Women:**

Muslim invaders affected almost every aspect of Indian society. In those times, it can also be seen on the freedom of women of the wider Indian Hindu society. From the point of view of security, women were deprived of education during this period and also had to face problems like Parda System. The Muslims were the favourite children of the state. The state accorded to them a preferential treatment. Social distinctions prevailed even among the Muslims. Men of noble birth were usually appointed in high offices. Wine drinking and gambling were the common vices. There was definite evidence of slave trade. A boy or girl was sold at high prices. Slavery was common and women had no liberty. Social conservatism was deeply rooted in the soil. The Hindus raised a wall of conservatism against the Muslims. The Hindu intellectual class maintained a splendid isolation. There was, of course, social intercourse at the lower level which led to social integration. Most of the common Hindus as well as Muslims were poor.

Women of poor Hindu families served as maid-servants in the houses of aristocratic Muslims. The practice of Sati was in vogue. Polygamy was also practised in both the Hindu and the Muslim communities. Caste system prevailed in the society. Child marriage was the order of the day.

### **Conclusion**

To summarise, we might say that the Muslim monarchs established a lasting dominion in India. These kings developed a whole new educational system. As a consequence, the medieval education system underwent a significant transformation. However, of all of the Muslim monarchs, Akbar was particularly notable for his contributions to education. Normally, despite the fact that they are paying tuition fees, the most deserving students used to get all forms of aid from the institution's administration, including food, learning resources, and other necessities. The Paradha system was exclusive to Muslims alone. However, he is not opposed to the education of females. Female education programs in India suffered a significant setback during the Muslim era, particularly at the secondary level. The girls were receiving education up to the elementary level, and some parents made its own arrangements for their daughters to get education at their residences.

### **References**

1. Alam, Muzaffar. Crisis of Empire in Mughal North India: Awadh & the Punjab, 1707–48 (1988)
2. Ali, M. Athar (1975), "The Passing of Empire: The Mughal Case", *Modern Asian Studies*, **9** (3): 385–396, doi:10.1017/s0026749x00005825, JSTOR 311728, on the causes of its collapse



3. Asher, C.B.; Talbot, C (2008), *India Before Europe* (1st ed.), Cambridge University Press, ISBN 978-0-521-51750-8
4. Black, Jeremy. "The Mughals Strike Twice", *History Today* (April 2012) 62#4 pp. 22–26. full text online
5. Stephen P. Blake, "The Mughal Patrimonial-Bureaucratic Empire," *Journal of Asian Studies*, 39 (1), 77–94, doi:10.2307/2053505, JSTOR 2053505, November 1979.
6. Michel Conan (2007). *Questions, Methods, and Resources in a Multicultural Perspective: Middle East Garden Traditions: Unity and Diversity* The Dumbarton Oaks. ISBN 978-0-88402-329-6.
7. Stephen F. Dale, *The Muslim Empires of the Ottomans, Safavids, and Mughals*: (Cambridge U.P. 2009)
8. William Dalrymple (2007). *The Last Mughal: Delhi, 1857, and the End of a Dynasty*. Incorporated by Random House Digital, Inc.
9. "The Forgotten Prince: Mirza Hakim and the Formation of the Mughal Empire in India," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 48 (4): 487–523, doi:10.1163/156852005774918813, JSTOR 25165118, about Akbar and his brother; MunisFaruqui (2005)
10. *Mughal Warfare: Indian Frontiers and Highways to Empire* (Routledge, 2002) online edition by Jos Gommans
11. *Marathas 1600-1818: The New Cambridge History of India II*, 4: (Cambridge, 1993).
12. Habib, Irfan.. *Political and Economic Maps of the Mughal Empire* (1982).
13. Edited by Claude Markovits (2004) *HistoriadelIndeModerne* (First published in 1994). 1480–1950: A chronology of India's modern history (2nd ed.). Anthem Press, ISBN 978-1-84331-004-4, London, United Kingdom.
14. *A Concise History of Modern India* by B. Metcalf and T.R. Metcalf, 2nd edition, Cambridge University Press, ISBN 978-0-521-68225-1
15. This was first published in 1987, but it was republished in 2015. *In 1595, a statistical analysis of the Mughal Empire's economy* (2nd ed.). Oxford University Press, ISBN 978-0-19-908549-1.
16. "A voyage to Persia, Armenia, and Asia Minor" by James Morier *The Monthly Magazine*. R. Phillips, 34th Edition.
17. John F. Richards, age 17 (1996). Cambridge University Press, *The Mughal Empire*, ISBN 9780521566032.