



Educational Status of Women in Medieval India: Fifteen to Sixteen Century

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A female child after her birth generally received a cold welcome not only from the male members of her family, but also from her mother, who deemed it a great honour and derived considerable satisfaction if she gave birth to a son. While describing the birth of a girl in a Hindu family.

C.H. Buck writes: 'On the birth of girl there is very little rejoicing, for daughters cannot carry on the ceremony necessary for their ancestor's souls and they are regarded as expensive luxuries.'

As female education was considered less important than the education of the members of the opposite sex, very scanty provisions were made for its development, during the period under review. Female education on a mass scale was practically unknown. It neighbors and so on. to the rich and well But the girls belonging do classes received their education in their respective homes, without going to any Pathshala or Tol. In Dayaram's "Sarada Mangal", we find that four princesses were studying under a private tutor. The courses of their study included philosophy, grammar, mathematics, rhetoric, drama, music, Kavya (Poetry) and various other subjects relating to the Hindu Shastras and the Puranas.

EDUCATION OF MUSLIM WOMEN:

The Muslim women like their Hindu sisters, normally received their primary education in the same school along with the boys. But, as soon as they grew up, they were segregated from the boys. In most cases, the Muslims girls, due to their strict was confined mostly to the women belonging to the royal and



aristocratic sections, and also to some extent, to the middle class of the society. So far as the education of women belonging to the poor and lower classes is concerned, we find that as they were preoccupied wholly with earning their living, they got very little opportunities for receiving intellectual training.

EDUCATION OF HINDU WOMEN:

The Hindu girls generally started Education of at the age of five. They began their primary education normally in the same Pathshala (Primary School) where the boys also received their lessons. In the contemporary literacy works references are available regarding the coeducation of the Hindu boys and girls in the same Primary. After completing their primary education, the Hindu girls, particularly those belonging to the middle class, got very little opportunity to carry on their studies. The only education was thought to be necessary for them was to acquire the knowledge of the household duties. As their studies were discontinued, and no intellectual training was given further, their thoughts were mainly confined to such things which immediately concerned them, as for example, food, clothings, neighbors and so on. But the girls belonging to the rich and well-to-do classes received their education in their respective homes, without going to any Pathshala or Tol. In Dayaram's "Sarada Mangal", we find that four princesses were studying under a private tutor. The courses of their study included philosophy, grammar, mathematics, rhetoric, drama, music, Kavya (Poetry) and various other subjects relating to the Hindu Shastras and the Puranas.

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for them. In these schools, they were taught by elderly ladies. Generally, they learnt the Quran, Gulistan, Bostan and books on morals. Sometimes, educated widows started schools in their houses and imparted education to the poor girls. It was a common practice among the Muhammedans to celebrate the occasion when a girl or a boy was to be admitted to a school for the first time. The teacher was expected to write an Idi (a verse on something relating to I'd) or a blessing for the child on a coloured or Zarafshani (Illuminated) paper, which was read by the child before the parents. The teacher was given some presents by the parents on that occasion. When the girl finished the reading of the Quran, a special assembly was invited to celebrate the occasion, and the preceptor, again, received some presentations.

After acquiring primary education in Maktabas, the Muslim girls engaged themselves, like two Hindu sisters in learning some practical arts (like Domestic Science etc.). They were put under guidance of some elderly ladies who taught them household duties, such as cooking, spinning, sowing and looking after children. Only the Mughal Princesses, Begums and the mightier of the noble received higher education in their palaces, imparted by some learned elderly ladies or reliable eunuchs, who were employed. Mughal Princesses thus, 'Among them are some who teach reading and writing to the princesses, and usually they dictate to them are amorous verses. Or the ladies obtain relaxation in reading books called 'Gulistan' and 'Bostan', written by an author called Sec Sadi Chiragi (Shekh Sadi, Shirazi)..'" Besides this the Mughal Princesses also received instructions from the Atun the teacher, who mainly taught them how to read and write and also the method of embroidery work.

Although, it is true that education of women in the Mughal period was not prevalent on a mass scale, yet, during the period under review, there was no dearth of educated ladies. It witnessed a number of highly educated, eloquent and



accomplished women, who made notable contributions in the fields of literature and fine arts and were ranked amongst the geniuses of the age.

Like the Mughal sovereigns, some Mughal ladies also evinced great interest in the development of education. They were great levers of learning and refinement and they encouraged scholars, writers, poets and other men of letters they bestowed maximum financial help upon the learned men and thus, established themselves as great patrons of education and learning.

Almost all the Mughal begums and princesses maintained their own libraries. With a view to enrich their libraries, the Mughal ladies exhausted most of their allowances and pensions, which they received as 'pocket money' from the emperor, To collect rare and valuable books the libraries maintained by these ladies became the most attractive centres for learned men and, thus they gained widespread popularity they also established several Madrasas for the benefit of the general mass. Above discussion shows that The Educational Status of Women in Medieval India.

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