

HISTORY RESEARCH JOURNAL

ISSN : 0976-5425

Certificate of Publication

This is to certify that the article entitled

EVOLUTION OF FEMALE'S EDUCATION IN THE PRINCELY STATE OF COOCHBEHAR (1872-1950)

Authored By

Mr. Ranjit Roy,
Assistant Professor, Department of Bengali, Birpara College, Birpara, Dist: -Allipurdwar,
West Bengal & Ph.D - Research Scholar, Raiganj University.

Published in

History Research Journal

ISSN 0976-5425 (P) with IF= 7.86

Volume : 31, Issue: 05, No; 01, September-October: 2024

UGC CARE Approved Group I, Peer Reviewed, Referred Journal

Published By

Marathwada Itihas Parishad, Aurangabad



EVOLUTION OF FEMALE'S EDUCATION IN THE PRINCELY STATE OF COOCHBEHAR (1872-1950)

Mr. Ranjit Roy, Assistant Professor, Department of Bengali, Birpara College, Birpara, Dist: -Alipurduar, West Bengal & Ph.D - Research Scholar, Raiganj University.

Dr. Jitesh Chandra Roy, Associate Professor; Dept. of History, Panskura Banamali College (Autonomous), Panskura R.S., Purba Medinipur, WB.
Email: jiteshchandraroym@gmail.com

ABSTRACT: -

Coochbehar was one of the most important native states in India during the British rule. Surrounded by the Teesta, Torsa, Jaldhaka, Kaljani and Raidak rivers, this district is at the foot of Bhutan and now belongs to West Bengal. The documents on the progress of women's education in the pre-independence and post-independence states of Coochbehar contain significant details. To know in detail about this progress, we first need to be aware of its background, which was based on the social system, culture and general education trends of the time. In the middle of the nineteenth century, Coochbehar came under direct British rule and as a result considerable changes took place in the administrative structure as well as in the field of education. Until this time there was no attempt to spread education among the masses; it was confined to the confines of the royal family.

Keyword: - Princely State, female's education, Enlightened, Encouragement.

Introduction: -

The social and cultural background of the time was not conducive to the spread of education. According to the 1872 census, out of 176396 male inhabitants, only 1, 60,212 belonged to the peasant community and no interest in education was observed among them. Another notable issue is the lack of a conscious enlightened, culture-minded middle class in the society of Hole Coochbehar. There was no middle class between the royal family on the one hand and the peasantry on the other. The year 1864 can be identified as a landmark year in the history of Coochbehar. At that time, the British Commissioner, Colonel Houghton, undertook a number of activities to promote education. The progress of education was made possible under the supervision of Mr. Hutton and under the patronage of the King of Coochbehar. In the case of education, there was a special advantage which is enviable in any province of British ruled India. "There was no shortage of money in an important field like education." He made this remark after inspecting various places in the state in 185-6. From this time onwards, the education system was introduced as per the schedule laid down by the eminent educationists of Bengal and the educational facilities in the state began to improve.

Material and Methods: -

Women's education began after the arrival of Mr. Hutton. No idea of this had ever arisen among the inhabitants before. Nothing is heard about women's education in the late sixties of the nineteenth century. No one had helped in the spread of women's education in Coochbehar as in the case of Chastain Missionary or any other non- governmental organization in Bengal. However, some enlightened educated men of this state deeply felt the need for wife education. In a session of the Coochbehar Hitaishini Sabha in 1865, Tribhanga Mukherjee, assistant secretary of the meeting and headmaster of Jenkins School, said if women are educated, they will face the rules of our country. Harimohan Roy, another teacher at Jenkins School, said the same thing everyone must pay attention to the manner in which a girls' school is established in this country. If there is no possibility of establishing a girls' school soon, then the ladies present should take special measures for the education of their girls.

Although the Coochbehar education program was adopted late, the pace of its implementation was not slow. In 1864 there was only one school in the state and the attendance of students there was almost negligible. In 1868-69, the number of schools for boys and girls stood at 25 and 6 respectively. According to Mr. Hunter's report, there were 23 girls' schools out of 245 in the early 1875's and 352 girls out of a total of 6,497 students. At the end of 1878, 560 girls were getting education in 43 girls' schools. In 1879 the number of educational institutions and students increased to 50 and 651. The improvement in the average daily attendance rate of girls in schools is noticeable. 414 in 1878 and 445 in 1879, compared to the whole of Bengal, Coochbehar lagged far behind in terms of wife education. In 182, only one in 100 girls in the state attended school. In Bengal at that time one out of every 89 people was educated.

From 1880 to 1890, women's education was disrupted due to several reasons. Most likely the early interest of the parents in the education of the daughters was short-lived. In addition, after 181, school grants were reduced in accordance with the policy of the state government. As a result, a few more schools including 10 girls' schools were closed. Moreover, in the pubs of 1891, the money allocated for primary education was often spent on higher education. As a result, the spread of general education had shrunk. The same situation continued with the expansion of women's education. In 1881-82, the number of girls' schools decreased to 34 and the number of female students stood at 383. At that time, the number of general educational institutions was also reduced to 215 and students stood at 5,623. In the second half, however, the situation gradually improved. In 1887-88, the number of schools increased from 215 to 260 and the number of students was 7,046. But the number of girls' schools had not decreased. In 1891-92, there were 10 upper and lower primary schools for girls and 214 female

Material and Methods: -

Women's education began after the arrival of Mr. Hutton. No idea of this had ever arisen among the inhabitants before. Nothing is heard about women's education in the late sixties of the nineteenth century. No one had helped in the spread of women's education in Coochbehar as in the case of Chastain Missionary or any other non- governmental organization in Bengal. However, some enlightened educated men of this state deeply felt the need for wife education. In a session of the Coochbehar Hitaishini Sabha in 1865, Tribhanga Mukherjee, assistant secretary of the meeting and headmaster of Jenkins School, said if women are educated, they will face the rules of our country. Harimohan Roy, another teacher at Jenkins School, said the same thing everyone must pay attention to the manner in which a girls' school is established in this country. If there is no possibility of establishing a girls' school soon, then the ladies present should take special measures for the education of their girls.

Although the Coochbehar education program was adopted late, the pace of its implementation was not slow. In 1864 there was only one school in the state and the attendance of students there was almost negligible. In 1868-69, the number of schools for boys and girls stood at 25 and 6 respectively. According to Mr. Hunter's report, there were 23 girls' schools out of 245 in the early 1875's and 352 girls out of a total of 6,497 students. At the end of 1878, 560 girls were getting education in 43 girls' schools. In 1879 the number of educational institutions and students increased to 50 and 651. The improvement in the average daily attendance rate of girls in schools is noticeable. 414 in 1878 and 445 in 1879, compared to the whole of Bengal, Coochbehar lagged far behind in terms of wife education. In 182, only one in 100 girls in the state attended school. In Bengal at that time one out of every 89 people was educated.

From 1880 to 1890, women's education was disrupted due to several reasons. Most likely the early interest of the parents in the education of the daughters was short-lived. In addition, after 181, school grants were reduced in accordance with the policy of the state government. As a result, a few more schools including 10 girls' schools were closed. Moreover, in the pubs of 1891, the money allocated for primary education was often spent on higher education. As a result, the spread of general education had shrunk. The same situation continued with the expansion of women's education. In 1881-82, the number of girls' schools decreased to 34 and the number of female students stood at 383. At that time, the number of general educational institutions was also reduced to 215 and students stood at 5,623. In the second half, however, the situation gradually improved. In 1887-88, the number of schools increased from 215 to 260 and the number of students was 7,046. But the number of girls' schools had not decreased. In 1891-92, there were 10 upper and lower primary schools for girls and 214 female

Sen. The school first played an important role in the state of Coochbehar. The school was recognized by Calcutta University as a cultural, religious and social center in nineteenth century Bengal, later in Central Bengal, later in Middle English, and finally in 1928 as a high school. Here a question naturally arises as to why an educated, elegant and socially conscious woman like Maharani Suniti Devi, despite having the opportunity and benefits to spread women's education on a large scale, confined it only to Suniti Vidyalaya. In this context, two more enthusiastic persons can be named who established a girls' school in the 1870's by providing financial assistance - one Krishna Kumar Lahiri of Bamanhat in Dinahata and the other Chhatrapati Singh, the Rajpat Jotdar of Mekhliganj. A girls' school was set up in Coochbehar town on Saturday.

The trend of Coochbehar progress in the field of education at the end of the nineteenth century was due to the encouragement and sincere efforts and enthusiasm of this state. There was a college, 4 English, 39 Middle English and Middle Bengali, 5 Persian schools, 44 night schools, 15 girls' schools, 6 Sanskrit tolls and 245 pathshalas. This progress in the short term is certainly commendable, but the list below shows that there was much to be done in expanding education, especially in the field of women's education. The number of educated is 10000 per 1016 among Hindu men and only 31 per ten thousand among women. Again, 813 out of every 10,000 Muslim men and 19 out of every 10,000 Muslim women were educated. In this context, it is noteworthy that Coochbehar was ahead in the field of education from the adjoining English ruled Rangpur, Jalpaiguri and Dinajpur districts.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the trend of women's education was going on in the same way. In 1901, out of the total population of 5, 56,116 in the state, 107 per cent males and 4 per cent females were educated. In 1913, out of the total population of the state of 5, 93,052, only 517 girls were studying in schools. This number proves that women's education was still in its infancy. The rate of female education increased from 06 percent in 1911 to 39 percent in 1921. It is to be noted that out of the total population of 5, 90,599 in the state this year, 2, 76,861 are women.

Over time, as the door to English and higher education was opened to and for girls, there had been a promising improvement in women's education. In addition to Mathabhanga and Mekhliganj High Schools, the girls continued to study in the intermediate and undergraduate classes at Victoria College. Suniti College itself had 306 female students in 1932-33 and the total number of female students in different institutions this year was 1,090. However, the number of female students is much less than the total number of 5, 89,053 students in the state. In 1931, the female literacy rate stood at 12 percent. Excluding Suniti Academy, the number of women's educational institutions in the state was 12 and there were 3 Middle English schools in Dinahata, Mekhliganj and Haldibari; in 1939-40, the number of schools increased significantly and stood at 24th. The number of students in all types of educational institutions was 2,028 out of which 712 were studying in girls' educational institutions and 1,316 were

studying in educational institutions designated for students. Of these 2,028, 1,292 were primary school students and 736 were secondary school students. From this time on, the number of students studying in schools started increasing.

In 1912-13, Sukriti Bala of Mekhliganj Girls' School won second place in the Rajshahi Central Bengali Scholarship Examination and was awarded a special prize of Rupees Twenty. Out of the (total) 22 candidates, 19 passed in the first section and 1 in the second section. 1920-21 test results are even better. Out of 20, 19 are in the first division and 1 in the second division. In 1922-23, the girls came second in the Middle English examination, first in Central Bengal and first in the upper primary. The one who passed the matriculation examination from Suniti Academy passed the first section. In 1933-34, only 4 candidates passed the first division. One of them took fourth place among all the male and female examinees of that center. According to the above list, the high position achieved by the students in the scholarship examinations and in the general competition with the students is not only admirable but also wonderful.

Conclusion: -

Later, in 1950, until the state of Coochbehar became a part of India, girls' primary and secondary education continued to flourish. The incorporation of the state into India resulted in a large influx of foreigners and a significant increase in population. The rate of education among women is also increasing and they are advancing in primary, secondary and higher education. Most of the educated were city dwellers. The picture of the evolution of women's education in Coochbehar from the above review is undoubtedly a brilliant chapter in the history of that state. The self-consciousness of the neglected women of the nation awakened in the nineteenth century. The transformation from self-forgetfulness to self-consciousness is a landmark event. Its tide also reached the backward marginal state of Coochbehar.

REFERENCES:

1. Coochbehar State Gazetteer Statistics, 1901-02, Coochbehar.
2. Females Education in Bengal, Calcutta, 1936.
3. Hunter, W. W, A Statistical Account of Bengal Vol -10, London, 1876.
4. Chakraborty Usha, Condition of Bengal women around the second half of the 19th Century, Calcutta, 1963.
5. Mitra, A., Census 1951. West Bengal District Hand book, Coochbehar, Calcutta, 1953
6. Maunder Durga das, West Bengal District Gazetteer, Coochbehar, February, 1977, Calcutta

7. Benerjee, A.C.; History of India; A. Mukherjee & Co., Private LTD; Calcutta, 1974.
8. Benerjee, A.C. ; The New History of Modern India, 1707-1947; K. P. Bagchi & Company; Calcutta, New Delhi 1983.
9. Brining, J.J. ; The Textile Trade of seventeenth Century Northern Coromandel, University of Wisconsin Madison, 1987.
10. Booze, F; Brides of the Sea: Port Cities of Asia from the 16th to the 20th Centuries; University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu, 1989.
11. Campbell, G.; The structure of slavery in Indian Africa and Asia, 1st edition, Rout ledge, 2003.
12. Campbell, G.; Slavery and the Trans-Indian Ocean World Slave Trade; Oxford University Press; New Delhi, 2007.
13. Duding, G. and O'Rourke, K.H. and Enclosure, L.P.D.L.; Trade and Empire; 1700-1870; Trinity Economics papers; Dublin, 2008.