

Launching of Primary Education in Bahawalpur State: 1866-1955

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Abstract

The commencement of the modern education began with launching of Primary Mission School in 1866. Now in this school, the education up to Intermediate classes is imparted. During 1868-1869, vernacular schools in almost every town of the State were opened. In 1925-26, the number of vernacular schools had reached 129. In 1915-16, the first ever Anglo Vernacular Primary School was founded in the Bahawalpur city. In 1943, some private schools were established in the State. With the inception of these schools, there was a tremendous increase in the promotion of primary education. Nawab Muhammad Bahawal Khan Abbasi V set up the first ever primary school for girls' education in Bahawalpur in 1904. Hence, according to the need of the hour, a number of educational institutions were established in Bahawalpur. Thus, a number of primary institutes were founded in every nook and corner of the State for the purpose of promoting education. This is my humble effort in the subject which may be appreciated by the scholars and students of social sciences.

Keywords: Primary Education, Establishment, Bahawalpur State, The First Regency Rule, The Second Regency Rule, Launching of Modern Education

I. Introduction

The soil of Bahawalpur region has possessed the academic splendor since ancient times. This fact can be proved with the scattered reminiscent of monuments, and academic institutions scattered in the latitude and longitude of this region. Among these the ancient most monuments is Pattan, an academic institution of the Buddhist, in Rahim Yar Khan District, which also existed in the period of Alexander the Great (356 to 323 B.C.). Even in the deteriorated condition, it is still popularly known as Pattan Minara (light house) (Auj, 1991).

There was also a great university of the Buddhists at a distance of about 30 kilometers from Bahawalpur in the south east whose reminiscent still exist and are known as the stupa of Sui Wahar. Similarly, due to being adjacent to Babul Islam, Sindh, Khita-e-Pak (the sacred land), Uch possessed the status of initial nucleus and center of Islamic learning and propagation of the religion in Indo-Pak subcontinent. In this regard the first ever Muslim scholar and saint Hazrat Safiuddin Gaozroni. (RA) (965 to 1007 A.D.) Emigrated from the Iranian town of Gaozran and settled in Uch in 980 A.D. He established an academic institution in Uch and five hundred students were seeking education from this institution (Shahab, 1930).

Similarly, the Sumra rulers of Sindh also established an institution entitled Madrassah-e-Ferozia attributed to the ruler Malik Feroze during the rule (1032 to 1351 A.D.), which became famous as Shahi Darul Uloom. This institution can be named as the first ever university of Bahawalpur division, as it was patronized by several rulers. In the region possessing such glorious academic and religious background, The Amirs of Bahawalpur State, who were the successors of the great caliphate of Abbasid Dynasty and the magnificent traditions of knowledge and literature, played a significant role in the promotion of knowledge in this region.

II. Launching of Modern Education in Bahawalpur State 1866 -1879

The modern education was launched in Bahawalpur State during the first spell of regency role in 1866, through the establishment of a mission Primary School. This school soon achieved the grade of middle. It was instituted through the joint efforts of Bahawalpur State's political agent and Superintendent C. C. Minchin and the Bishop of Church Missionary Society, Multan, Father Yeats. The expenditures incurred on the school were equally shared by the State and the Missionary Society. Regarding the curriculum the school's status was Anglo Vernacular School and the medium of education was apart from English, Urdu, Persian and Hindi (Tahir, 2010).

But this school could not fulfill the educational needs of the students of the State, hence, owing to this reason, during 1868-69, more vernacular schools were opened in Minchinabad, McLeod Ganj, Bahawal Garh, Khairpur Tamewali, Qaimpur, Khanqah Sharif, Mubarakpur, Ahmed Pur East, Uch Sharif, Allahabad, Pakka Laran, Khanpur, Kot Samaba, Nowshera, Ahmed Pur Lamma, Kot Sabzal, Rahimabad and Goth Noor Muhammad. These 18 schools were named as rural schools, because they were mostly situated in rural areas. The *Imams* of the local Masjid were appointed as the teachers in these schools, and a total of 719 students were getting education in these schools. In 1871, the total number of these schools was raised to 32 and the school of Ahmed Pur East was the largest of all these schools. In this school a total of 154 students were enrolled, which was followed by the rural school of Hasilpur. In the later years the number of these schools immensely increased. In these schools mostly the Muslim students were getting education, while Nagari schools were introduced for the Hindu students, which were launched by the Hindu community on self-help basis. The education of subjects of Hindi and Mathematics were imparted in these schools. In the last spell of the regency rule a *Shastria* school was opened in the *Sarai Bhabhran* (Presently, Shahi Bazaar) of Bahawalpur. This school possessed the status of Government school in the reign of Nawab Muhammad Bahawal Khan IV (Sadiq-ul-Akhbar, 1877).

In the mission schools, Hindu students would be in majority. Usually, only one teacher used to be appointed in the rural Primary Schools. There was no system of class division. All grades of the school used to seek education at one place on their turn. Even no attendance registers were maintained in most of the schools. Hence, the attendance of the students was not marked daily. There were no official buildings of most of the schools and the teachers trained for modern education were equal to none in Bahawalpur State. As the modern education system had been introduced in Indo-Pak subcontinent and furthermore the very small number of the trained teachers was unable to cope with the academic needs of their particular area. The major reason was that up till that time neither the trend for serving in Bahawalpur State had been produced nor there any incentive or attractive benefits for the motivation to come to Bahawalpur. Hence, the

regency rule launched a *Madrassah-tul-Muallameen* (normal school) for the training of the teachers on 1st August, 1871 in Bahawalpur and Syed Chiragh Shah after being promoted as Sub-Inspector (Schools) was appointed as its first Headmaster. This school had two portions. One portion comprised of training school and the training of teaching was imparted in it. The second portion of normal school possessed the grade of Anglo Vernacular Middle Public School, where the children of the privileged class families would seek education. This was the portion which later on, detached from Normal School and was known as Egerton School and Sadiq Egerton College Bahawalpur. Although, Normal School could not achieve the quality academic institution due to the competency of its teachers and students, but the institutions produced by this school, Egerton School and Sadiq Egerton College, hired the services of very renowned teachers of Indo-Pak subcontinent; and owing to the hard work and dedication of these teachers, Bahawalpur State earned the status of a significant academic center after Lahore (Sadiq-ul-Akhbar, 1871).

The issue of the shortage of the teaching staff was resolved to a great extent with the launching of the Normal School and simultaneously the number of schools kept on rising on annual basis. Hence, in 1875 a Military School was inaugurated in Bahawalpur State for the military training for the new recruits. In this school the training of military drill was also imparted and there was arrangement for education up to primary level. After some time apart from the military recruits, general students were also accorded admission. This educational institution in a short span of time adopted the status of a general school (Report, 1875-76). In various academic institutions of Bahawalpur State, the detail of the students seeking education was as under:

Table 1: The Number of Students in Different Levels during the First Spell of Regency Rule

S. No.	Year	Class One	Class Two	Class Three	Class Four	Class Five	Class Six	Class Seven	Total Students
1	1874-75	611	219	207	111	108	48	Nil	1304
2	1875-76	1131	260	189	158	123	95	02	1957
3	1876-77	1075	306	161	139	159	71	12	1123

Sources: The Administration Report of Bahawalpur State 1875-76, 92, 1876-77, 32.

It is evident from the above-mentioned table that during the first ten years the enrollment of the students in the initial classes was much higher, but with every higher section the students' number kept on decreasing. The reason was that the people of the State would admit their children in schools in the initial classes but when the children would reach the higher classes, they would pull them out of the schools and put them to generate the income resources in the profession of their parents. The second big reason for this drop out was that the schools were located in towns and it was not possible for the parents to afford the expenses of their children education in far flung areas, where proper and cheaper accommodation was not available. There was also a problem of proper care and food availability. Furthermore, psychological problems were also produced due to the combined boarding of the children of various age groups and remoteness from their parents. But in spite of these problems, the head of the interim administration, Major Minchin advised his administrative officers to make efforts for the increase in the enrollment of students in the schools. The teachers were also given incentive of an

increase of one Rupee per year in their salaries, if they make efforts for the enhancement of the students in the schools. This was a better move for the increase in the number of students in the schools, because the salary of a teacher recruited in 1875, used to be Rs. Seven and Eight annas per month (Sadiq-ul-Akhbar, 1874). The education budget of the State also kept on rising, which can be judged from the following table:

Table 2: A Review of the Expenditure of Education During the First Spell of Regency Rule

S. No.	1868-69	1870-71	1872-73	1873-74	1874-75	1875-76
The Educational revenue generated from landlords	6000	7967	-	5288	5851	-
State financial aid	2400	1329	-	5028	5673	-
Total expenses on educational sector	8400	9296	6393	10316	11524	7640 -11-1

Sources: *The Administration Report of Bahawalpur State 1868-69*, 12., *1870-71*, 3., *1872-73*, 18., *1874-75*, 23., *1875-76*, 29., *1876-77*, 32., Further see: *Sadiq-ul-Akhbar Gazette*, August 17, 1874, 1.

It is revealed from the above-mentioned data that a very little amount of the budget was spent on education in Bahawalpur State. On the presentation of the annual report for the year 1873-74, the Lieutenant Governor Punjab R. H. Davies (1871-1877) also expressed this opinion that very little amount was being spent on education. For the first time ever on the occasion of receiving the revenue from the farmers an educational tax of 8 annas per 100 Rupees was imposed. The Government's share was also paid and, hence, the expenses on the education remained encouraging. In 1873 a plan for the launching of a *Madrassah-e-Sana'at* (Industrial school) was designed under the department of education in Bahawalpur. The objective of this school was to impart training of foundry works, painting, cartography, sculptors and other professional disciplines to the youth of the State. Apart from this it was also proposed for the under training students for receiving basic education. This institution was similar to the present day's college of technology. The main objective of this school was to prepare educated professionals, who might be able to earn their livelihood through jobs in industries and factories and might also become the source of industrial development in Bahawalpur State (Tahir, 2010).

III. Educational Establishment in the Reign of Nawab Sadiq Muhammad Khan Abbasi IV (1879-1899)

Among the rulers of the Bahawalpur State Nawab Sadiq Muhammad Khan Abbasi IV was the first ruler who sought the modern education from British teachers. Hence, he was aware of the significance of the education of English. Anyhow, he imposed new educational reforms soon after his coronation. The regency council in its rule of previous thirteen years had only focused on the promotion of primary education. Under this policy 47 rural schools were opened in Bahawalpur State up till 1899. Among these 44 schools were Persian while three were Hindi schools (Report, 1878-79)

During the twenty years of reign of Nawab Muhammad Bahawal Khan IV, the numbers of Primary Schools were gradually increased. Similarly, there were only two Anglo Vernacular Schools in the capital city of the State, Bahawalpur, at the time of the mentioned Nawab coming into power. These schools included one Church Mission School and a Normal School. A separate middle school was established in the Normal School, but the number of students in this class was not worth mentioning. As, the

examination of middle class was conducted by Punjab University, Lahore, so most of the students of Church Mission School would fail in the Urdu paper, while in the Normal School the students would fail in English paper. Due to the constant failing of the students in middle class examination, only one student could pass the examination up to 1881. When Nawab Muhammad Bahawal Khan Abbasi IV ascended on the throne then there was no high school or college in Bahawalpur State. But in the academic field Bahawalpur State was ahead of other princely States and some districts of British India. The reason of this supremacy was the primary system of the modern education in the State which was launched in the patronage of the British themselves (Report, 1874-75).

IV. Educational Institutions in the Second Regency and Nawab Muhammad Bahawal Khan Abbasi V Rule (1899-1906)

After the death of Nawab Sadiq Muhammad Khan Abbasi IV from 1899 to 1903, the political agent in the second spell of the interim Government of the regency ruled and from 1903 to 1907, during the reign of Nawab Muhammad Bahawal Khan Abbasi V more reforms were introduced in the educational system. In 1903, a post of Director Public Instructions was established and his duty was to visit primary and middle schools thrice a year to improve the educational standard in the schools. Meanwhile focus was specially emphasized on the worn out buildings of the educational institutions.

A committee was formed for the improvement and development of the educational system in Bahawalpur State in 1903. The members of the committee prepared a questionnaire and sought the opinion of the educated citizens about the prevailing system and compiled the rules and of the new educational system, which were in accordance with the published and proposed University Act of the Government of Punjab. In the reign of Nawab Muhammad Bahawal Khan V more focus was emphasized on the promotion and reforms of the primary education. However, the total number of Primary Schools in the period of 1900 to 1907, remained confined to 32, and there was no increase in the number of Primary Schools during these seven years, but the number of students kept on rising. Nawab Muhammad Bahawal Khan Abbasi V for the promotion of female education, inaugurated a Girls Primary School near the present Farid Gate in June 1906, and also provided a covered transport for the pick and drop of the girl students. In the beginning 32 girls sought admission but after just one year the number increased to 52 students (Report, 1906-07).

Prior to the powers taken over by the last interim Government of the Bahawalpur State, the education from primary to Intermediate level was continued, but the increase in the literacy rate was still not encouraging. Only one per cent among the boys of school going age and only one girl out of every 9000 girls of the same age would attend the school. With the increase in the grades of the education, the tendency of slump in the number of the students belonging to the State was observed while increase in the students from out of States' boundaries showed a remarkable increase in proportion to the State students. The main reason of this situation was that the State students were the product of the feeder schools. The strategy adopted by the regency Government in its 17 years long rule is reviewed as under:

During the regency council rule there were also Primary School, but these were of vernacular type. However, in 1915-16, an Anglo Vernacular Primary School was established in Bahawalpur, in which 111 children were admitted. The launching of this

school was a positive step. However, up till the end of the regency council Government in 1924, no more institution like this school was established, and on the other hand the number of rural primary schools kept on rising, but even with the increase in the number of students the requirements of the population of the State could not be fulfilled. There was a need to take further measures for the propagation and promotion of primary education (Report, 1915-16).

The volume of development achieved by the primary education institution during the last spell of regency council rule can be judged by the following table:

Table 3: The Number of Primary Schools And Students From 1907-1926

Year	Number of Vernacular Schools	Total Number of Students
1907-08	32	1469
1908-09	35	1437
1910-11	39	1574
1911-12	42	1782
1912-13	42	1781
1913-14	52	2391
1915-16	61	2685
1917-18	100	2439
1918-19	100	2878
1919-20	100	2963
1920-21	100	3352
1921-22	100	3421
1922-23	100	3549
1924-25	129	3549
1925-26	129	4938

Sources: *The Administration Reports of Bahawalpur State 1907-08, 25., 1908-09, 16., 1910-11, 16., 1911-12, 15., 1912-13, 32., 1913-14, 31., 1915-16, 34., 1917-18, 19., 1918-19, 19., 1919-20, 14., 1920-21, 16., 1921-22, 24., 1922-23, 36., 1924-25, 29.*

In 1815-16, for the first time ever an Anglo Vernacular Primary School was established in Bahawalpur. Initially, 111 students got admission in this school. But, in spite of the beneficence of this school, more schools of this type were not launched during regency council rule. Almost in all Primary Schools and in old and new middle schools along with the newly established Sadiq Dane High School established in 1911, the education in primary classes had also been provided. Even in the first ever institution of the British education system, Mission School, the facility of Anglo vernacular primary classes had also been provided. Hence, the primary education system, in the last year (1924) of the regency rule, had been established to great extent (Report, 1915-16)

V. Setup of Primary Education during the Reign of Nawab Sadiq Muhammad Khan Abbasi V

During this period of rule Bahawalpur State was in a strong grip of an economic crisis. Hence, 40 Primary Schools were abandoned initially. Some of these schools were given under the control of municipalities and no dues were levied up till the education of

primary classes. But after the financial condition improved special attention was focused on the educational institutions. After 1931-32, the number of the Primary School kept on rising annually. Regarding the population, one school was required for the population of every 1000 souls, but at that time one Primary School for a population of 7000 existed. However, when the situation further improved, then in the regions with the population possessing old ownership rights were provided a Primary School for population of every 5023 persons. While in the heavily populated areas there was a Primary School for population of every 4486 persons. The difference between the provision of Primary Schools in the ancient and new settlements was due to the fact that either they were living very far from the schools or they were under the influence of the landlord or feudal lord, who was least interested in imparting awareness among his peasants and tenants to continue his supremacy on them. Hence, they were not keen to establish the educational institutions in their areas. Furthermore, in the colonies area of the newly settled persons, there was the facility of organized and residential buildings, where the setting up of schools was not an issue. The settlers were aware of the significance of education. They would consider this factor as a guarantor of their progress. Due to their sentimental attachment with the new settlements, they were also making efforts for the educational development of these areas. Although, the provision of the educational facilities in the newly settled areas was a welcome measure, but the State Government emphasized more focus on the academic progress of the settlers and hence, the ancient regions of Bahawalpur State comprising of the Saraiki speaking majority became the victim of the deprivation due to the biased attitude of the State functionaries. In this period due to these administrative practices and deliberate efforts, more schools were built in the settled areas than the disorganized and ancient parts of the State. This was the initial step that provided assistance to the settlers in the achievement of higher education and a boost to settlers in gaining superiority not only in the lower and higher employments, but also played a significant role in providing political and economic dominance.

Nawab Sadiq Muhammad Khan Abbasi V was an enlightened ruler. He faced a lot of issues after the Second World War. In spite of all these problems, he framed a five year plan of the educational development, 1942 to 1946, and in accordance with this plan, a Primary School would setup for every population of 1200 or more, but with a condition that the population must comprise of an area of 3 square miles. Furthermore, the announcement for the provision of State buildings and the qualified and experienced teachers was also made. In 1943, some schools in the private sector were also launched. Owing to these private schools the cause of the primary education was further promoted. Besides the setup of two District Boards on March 1, 1943, also helped in the founding of more Primary Schools (Report, 1942-43)

In the first year funds were allocated for the buildings of twelve Primary Schools. Public Works Department was entrusted the responsibility of constructing the school buildings. But due to the shortage of building material the construction work could not be started before 1945. In the same year the local fund engineering was founded and the responsibility of building was shifted to this department. After that till the merger of the State the increase in the number of Primary Schools continued and new buildings were also constructed. However, the majority of the children of school going age were deprived of seeking education. There were 1, 14,000 children out of a total population 13, 41,000 of the State, which were eligible for primary education and were 14 per cent of the total population. But only 21,962 children were going in the Primary Schools. Hence,

in the second five year plan from 1947 to 1952, not only the arrangements for the admission of 92,038 children in the schools had to be made but school buildings for 16000 boys and 4700 girls had also to be provided. Furthermore, an attempt was made to impose the law of compulsory primary education for the boys from 6 to 14 years of age, in November 1946, in Bahawalpur State. In the same year a grant of Rs.1200 per year was approved for the private schools, for the first time in the history of the State, to promote the primary education and in a number of Primary Schools the arrangement for the physical growth of the children, the facility of the local games was also provided. In brief, several projects for the promotion of primary education were planned, but some of these projects were completed while others were left incomplete. Due to the heavy expenditure of Sutlej Valley project and World War II, the institutions of primary education in proportionate to the population could not be setup, but within the available resources the number of schools was enhanced on a limited scale. In the beginning of that period there were only 154 Primary Schools in the State, while about 5000 students were seeking education in these schools. In 1947, the number of schools raised to a total of 50 with the total enrollment reaching the height of 22925. In addition to this total all middle schools, mission school, Sadiq Dane High School and about 50 private Primary Schools were extending the facility of primary education. In that period most of the schools were of vernacular school type and a few were of Anglo Vernacular type (Report, 1945-46)

The detail of the number of Primary Schools and the students seeking education in these schools is given hereunder:

Table 4: The Number of Primary Schools and the Students Seeking Education in These Schools during the Rule of Nawab Sadiq Muhammad Khan Abbasi V

Year	1924-25	1930-31	1931-32	1942-43	1943-44	1944-45	1945-46	1946-47
Total Government Primary Schools	147	185	145	269	277	305	339	405
Schools Sponsored by Municipalities	07	16	15	16	16	16	16	16
Charity Primary Schools	-	17	17	17	17	17	80	80
Total Primary Schools	154	218	177	302	310	338	435	501
Total of Students in Primary Schools	5000	5216	5532	12652	15000	15071	17716	22925
Primary Schools Setup in Official Buildings	-	-	-	95	95	95	107	110
Primary Schools Setup in	-	-	-	174	184	243	232	391

Private Buildings								
Total Expenses Incurred on Primary Schools	-	30872	56489	1,03912	-	-	-	-

Sources: *The Administration Reports of Bahawalpur State 1924-25*, 280., *1942-43*, 90-91-95-134., *1943-44*, 100., *1944-45*, 89., *1945-46*, 109., *1949-50*, 37. Further See: Muhammad Yar Khan, *Education Report 1931-32*, 1-2-7.

In June 1906 Nawab Muhammad Bahawal Khan V inaugurated the first ever Girls Primary School at Farid Gate for the promotion of girls education. A covered carriage was also provided for the pick and the drop of the girl students in accordance with the rich Islamic traditions prevailing in Bahawalpur State. Initially, thirty girls sought admission in the school, but gradually the number of girl students rose to 52 within the first year of its inception. The annual expenses of the Girls Primary School were Rs.659, 00 (Report, 1906-07)

VI. Conclusion

Although no education department existed during the initial 139 years (1727 to 1866) of the inception of the State, but the arrangement of stipends and trust was regularly made for educational objectives. In spite of the strenuous efforts of the State government, Bahawalpur State population-wise remained backward in the field of education. According to statistics of February 8, 1958, Bahawalpur's ratio in education remained very low and most of the population still remained illiterate and ignorant, which affected their lifestyle. The social and economic condition of the people remained miserable and they could not get any political awareness. Due to this reason, the people of this area became the victim of ignorance in view of the opinion and vision. While on one side the public could not adorn their children with the jewel of education due to economic constraints, on the other side the child seeking education under these circumstances and the lack of resources, paucity and poverty, would always remain the victim of inferiority complex, which would further affect their growing potential and talent. Then the children with this social background would stretch their education not farther than middle or matric and afterwards their family circumstances would not permit them to seek education beyond this.

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