

History of Elementary Teacher Education in Banu Abbas Regime

Saeedullah* and Rifaqat Ali Akbar**

Abstract

The major objective of the present study was to explore the history of elementary teacher education in Banu Abbas regime. The researchers used a qualitative approach including document analysis in this historical research. The researcher collected data from accessible libraries and some other sources. After document analysis, it was found that teaching of religious education was the important profession of Banu Abbas regime. It was recommended to restore useful aspects of elementary teacher education in Pakistan.

Keywords: History, elementary teacher education, Banu Abbas, religious education

*PhD Scholar, Institute of Education and Research, University of the Punjab, Lahore

**Professor and Director, Institute of Education and Research, University of the Punjab, Lahore

Introduction

Societies and nations across the world establish educational institutions to preserve and transmit their culture, knowledge, and skills to the next generation. An educational institute performs a significant function by providing learning experiences to lead its students from the darkness of ignorance to the light of knowledge. The strategic persons in the institutions who play an important role to bring about this revolution are the teachers (Katitia, 2015; Kusuma & Srivani, 2013). Outstanding excellence of teacher education is the guarantee for nations' development and prosperity. Teachers accomplish all responsibilities needed to fulfill the demands of society. A vibrant system of teacher education proves to be the backbone for a developing country like Pakistan to excel in the future (Roger, 2000). The current system of teaching in Pakistan is a reflection of British India. British rulers prepared that system for their own administrative benefits and to keep the Muslims away from their religion (Chaudhari, 1951; Ghosh, 2000; Mallick, 1961; Rahman, 1953).

Pakistan being a Muslim country should get insight from Muslim history to shape the education system. The education system of the Muslims had prepared philosophers, scientists, jurists, and countless professionals. Banu Abbas regime was the first organized period of Muslim history. They had laid the foundations of several systems for the betterment of societies. The system of teacher education developed by the Muslims in Banu Abbas regime is a base to get an insight into the development of the modern teacher education system in a Muslim society. Since the teacher's role in the development of a society is important, therefore this seems necessary to investigate the system of teacher development in that period.

Moreover, the current society demands high-quality teaching and learning from teachers. Teachers have to retain a great deal of knowledge and skills for quality education. The education system of the Muslims had produced experts in various fields, who had played their vital roles in arts, science, mathematics, etc. This need for historical study motivated the researchers to explore the system of teacher education in Banu Abbas regime. Therefore, the objective of the study was to explore the system of teacher education in Banu Abbas regime. This historical study will be significant for curriculum planners, designers, and developers to prepare a vibrant curriculum for teacher education. This study may also be helpful for the teachers of elementary teachers' training institutes to adopt effective methods of preparing elementary teachers.

Research Question

The objective of this study was to explore the history of the teacher education system in Banu Abbas regime. However, the study responded to the research question: what was the status of the elementary teacher education system?

Methodology

A qualitative approach with document analysis was used in this study. The researchers collected data from accessible libraries and some other available sources. The researchers visited Punjab University Central Library Lahore, the library of Institute of Education and Research, University of the Punjab, Lahore, and library of History department, university of the Punjab, Lahore, and Qaid-e- Azam library Lahore for the collection of data. The researcher cited some famous non-Muslim historians to escape religious favoritism.

The researchers reviewed the books written in the Urdu language: "Ahd-e-Banu Abbas", "Khilafat-e-Banu Abbas", "Tareekh-ul-Islam", "Tareekh Alam –e- Islam", "Tabqat –al-Umam", and "Banu Abbas kay Arooj o Zwal". Moreover, the books written by some Muslim and non-Muslim writers in the English language were also reviewed. These books were: "Golden Age of Islam", "Science and Civilization", "A History of Muslim Education", "Loyalty and Leadership in an Early Islamic Society", "New Horizons in Muslim Education", "The Arab in History", "An Introduction to Arabic Literature", and "A Reader on Classical Islam".

Literature Review

Banu Abbas belonged to Abdullah bin Abbas, the cousin and the follower of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). In Banu Abbas regime, the caliph was usually the son (or closest male relative) of the preceding caliph. Abu al-Abbas al-Saffah (750-754 AD) was the founder of Banu Abbas regime and Abu Jafar al-Mansoor (754-775 AD) contributed much in establishing the rule of the Banu Abbas. He moved the capital from Damascus to Baghdad (Ahmad, 1923; Farhad, 1994; Faris, 2003; Mahmoud, 2003).

In the early period of Banu Abbas, educational institutions were different than those of the present time. The religious scholars either used mosques or their homes to deliver their lectures. As books and writing material were rare, the learners were expected to memorize the lectures of their teachers and the rich persons noted the lectures on parchment or papyrus (Ziauddin, 1988). The Arabs became familiar with paper production from the Chinese in the mid of 8th century and they established the first paper production plant in Baghdad at the end of that century. The manufacturing of papers revolutionized the education system and assisted writers to copy the books for scholars and students (Ashraf, 1985; Asma, 2003; Bernard, 1950; Campanini, 2001; Shah, 2009).

In Banu Abbas regime, early childhood education was home-based and at the age of 6 years, boys were sent to schools and started their formal education in Madrasah (schools). These institutions were located in mosques, in special centers, and sometimes in teachers' homes. In addition to these mosque schools, Maktabs were used for elementary education. Reading, writing, basic mathematics, and traditions of the Holy Prophet were taught in these schools. Some religious poems were also part of the elementary school curriculum (Deborah, 2009; Goddard, 2001; Imamuddin, 1976).

After completing elementary education, the male students went to a new institution or another place to attend lectures, there was no fixed curriculum or syllabus and, the teachers were autonomous to select the study material. The government restricted only religious violations. Besides Quran and Hadith, space science, biological science, arts, and humanities had been also taught to intelligent learners (Broadbridge, 2008; Nasr, 2009; Peter, 1998).

Teacher Education System

The formal system of teacher education in Banu Abbas regime was different than that of the present time. Most of the teachers had become famous for teaching because of their competencies. The innovative scholars, after getting mastery over their favorite subjects started the teaching. Education was not a restriction to only rich persons. Everyone had a right to get an education and to select teaching as a profession. The wealthy people hired teachers for their children. Famous scholars remained busy studying the subjects of social sciences and natural sciences e.g. philosophy, space science, and mathematics (Helaine, 1997; Qureshi, 1999; Siddiqi, 1963).

Reading, writing simple mathematics, and recitation of the Holy Quran was in elementary school. The elementary school teacher was known to be a Muallim. To possess the status of Muallim, one had to learn the basic knowledge related to the recitation of the Holy Quran. There were seven basic types of knowledge of recitation of the Holy Quran, known as "Saba Ashrah". If a Muslim got mastery over these types of knowledge, then he/she started to teach Quran. The status of the teachers of elementary education was not attractive as compared to that of teachers of secondary and higher education (Hitti, 1960; Kabbani, 1996; Mawdudi, 1998; Watt, 2003).

Another class of teachers had been taught the siblings of the rulers and the rich persons. This class of teachers had been known as Muaddib (tutor or preceptor) have to promote both moral and intellectual qualities. This class of teachers was superior to the teachers of elementary schools. Education of children of royal families and had been carried out in the royal palaces and homes (Antony, 2001; Roy, 2001; Stenley, 1957; Zaman, 1988; Zwemer, 2008).

Analysis

Documents were analyzed and the following aspects of elementary teacher education were explored.

Findings

It was found that the medium of instruction for all types of knowledge was the native language. The teaching of science subjects had been taught in the local language. Therefore, a scientific attitude was developed in the society and laid the foundations of new disciplines of knowledge both in religious studies and modern sciences. Another aspect of teacher education was sharing of knowledge as a religious duty. The aim of education was not only the training of the human mind but that of the whole being of the persons.

Therefore, some of the persons holding high positions tried to find some time to teach at least a small number of students to claim the high social status of a scholar. The caliphs, the governors, and the rulers endowed educational institutions to serve humanity. The government had been supported the schools, colleges, and libraries financially. The teachers' noble status induced some rulers to become teachers and scholars.

Discussion

The present study covered the research question: what was the status of the teacher education system? There was no specific institution to provide training for prospective teachers. These findings confirm the study of Mawdudi (1998). The brilliant students acquired teaching as a profession after the permission of their teachers. In religious institutions (Deeni Madaris) of subcontinents, teachers are appointed on the same pattern as that of Banu Abbas regime. Naumani (1994) and Ismaeel (2005) reported the same findings.

Conclusion and Recommendations

From this discussion, it can be concluded that the system of teacher education in Banu Abbas regime was different than that of the present time. Sharing knowledge as a religious act had proved an impetus for the society to be educated. The greatest contribution of some scholar rulers e.g. Mamooun-ul- Rasheed was the establishment of separate institutions for education. The Muslim rulers arranged a permanent source of income for these institutions.

The present study suggests some measures for the teacher education system in Pakistan. The first and foremost suggestion is to have a belief in education as a service for humanity. The second is to have a belief in the values of the prosperity of individuals

and society. The practical measures that are suggested include: making higher education institutes financially strong, by giving incentives to teachers and elevating their social and economic status. Moreover, Urdu language is easy to comprehend for most of the population the medium of instruction may be the national language to involve the maximum human potential of the society to national development.

References

- Ahmad, S. (1923). *History of Muslim education*. Luzac & Co.
- Antony, B. (2001). *The history of Islamic political thought: From the Prophet to the present*. Routledge.
- Ashraf, S. A. (1985). *New horizons in Muslim education*. Hodder and Stoughton.
- Asma, A. (2003). Medieval Islamic discourse on legitimate leadership and its modern implications. *The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences*, 20(2), 80-94.
- Bernard, L. (1950). *The Arab in history*. Goodward Books.
- Broadbridge. (2008.). *Kingship and ideology in the Islamic and Mongol Worlds*. Cambridge University Press.
- Campanini, M. (2001). *History of Islamic philosophy*. Routledge.
- Chaudhari, N. C. (1951). *The autobiography of an unknown Indian*. Macmillan.
- Deborah, G. (2009). A tale of two murders: Power relations between caliph and Sultan in the Saljuq era. *Journal of the German Oriental Society*, 159, 279-297.
- Farhad, D. (1994). *The assassin legends: Myths of the Isma'ilis*. I.B.Tauris.
- Faris, N. A. (2003). *The revival of the religious sciences*. Ashraf Publishers.
- Ghosh, S. C. (2000). *The history of education in modern India*. Orient Longman.
- Goddard, H. (2001). *A history of Christian-Muslim relations*. Edinburgh University Press.
- Helaine, S. (1997). *Encyclopedia of the history of science, technology and medicine in non western cultures*. Kluwer Academic Publisher.
- Hitti, K., P. (1960). *The history of Arabs (7th ed.)*. Macmillan.

- Imamuddin, S. M. (1976). *Arab Muslim administration*. Najmah and Sons Publishers.
- Ismaeel, S. M. (2005). *Ebrat namah Undlas*. Maqbool Academy.
- Kabbani, S. M. (1996). *Islamic beliefs and doctrines according to Al-Sunna: The repudiation of 'Salafi' innovations*. As-Sunnah Foundation,
- Katitia, D. O. (2015). Teacher education preparation program for the 21st century. Which way forward for Kenya? *Journal of Education and Practice*, 6(24), 22-34.
- Kusuma, A. & Srivani, G. (2013). Teacher education. *Conflux Journal of Education*, 1(3), 46-67.
- Mahmoud, A. (2003). *The crisis of Muslim history: Religion and politics in early Islam*. One world Publications.
- Mallick, A. R. (1961). *British policy and the Muslims in Bengal*. Asiatic Society.
- Mawdudi, A. (1998). *The Khilafah and the kingdom: A critical evaluation of the history of Islamic governance*. Mizan.
- Nasr, S. H. (1984). *Science and civilization in Islam*. Dewan Pustaka Fajar.
- Naumani, A. S. (1994). *Al-Maamun*. Maktaba Al-Quresh.
- Peters, F. E. (1998). *A reader on classical Islam*. Princeton University Press.
- Qureshi, I. H. (1999). *Education in Pakistan*. University of Karachi.
- Rahman, F. (1953). *New education in the making in Pakistan*. Cassell & Company.
- Roger, A. (2000). *An introduction to Arabic literature*. Cambridge University Press.
- Roy, M. (2001). *Loyalty and leadership in an early Islamic society (2nd ed.)*. I.B. Tauris.
- Shah, A. (2009). *Banu Abbas kay arroj o zival*. Darul Undlas Publishers.
- Siddiqi, A. H. (1963). *Caliphate and sultanate*. Noor Publisher.
- Stanley, A. (1957). *Muslim education in the middle ages*. Luzac & Co.
- Watt, W. (2003). *Muslim intellectual: A study of al-Ghazali*. Kazi Publication.

Zaman, M. (1988). The relevance of religion and the response to it: A study of religious perceptions in early Islam. *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, 2(3), 265-287.

Ziauddin, S.M. (1988). *Muslim educational thought in the middle ages*. Atlantic Publishers and Distributors.

Zwemer, S. (2008). *A Moslem seeker after God: Showing Islam at its best in the Tife and teaching of Al-Ghazali*. Fleming H. Revell.