

Begamat-I-Bhopals': Role in the Development of Female Education under Colonialism

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Abstract : The colonial Urdu literature has played a significant role in uplifting the overall status of the Indians. Taking example of the Bhopal State, the contribution of the Royal ladies holds no match in the contemporary age. Similarly, the efforts of the Begamat-e-Bhopal in the field of education had been acknowledged across the Sub-continent. It had been noticed that with the downfall of the Mughal Empire at the hands of the British Raj, the local culture in the Indian sub-continent in general and in Bhopal State in proper got deteriorated. This led to uncertainty, chaos and an anti-British sentiment which created hatred against them in the entire sub-continent. Likely, in Bhopal State, the role of women in field of education also vanished. However, this change was felt by the ladies in the Royal Household where they struggled for restoration of the status quo with their personal efforts. The prominent contributors from the Royal household included Qudseya Begum, Nawab Sikander Begum, Nawab Shah Jahan Begum and Nawab Sultan Johan-they are known as Begamat-i-Bhopal. They established schools, colleges and universities to impart formal and non-formal education respectively. Their systematic approach and continued efforts constituted a dynamic aspect of women' empowerment. Focused on the female education, however, one of the by-products of their efforts was an introduction of socio-cultural and politico-religious awareness among the middle class womenfolk. Unfortunately, the role of these Bagamat-i-Bhopal has been left untouched or ignored by the academic scholars. This study critically analyzed the role of Beghamat-i-Bhopal regarding female education in Hindustan in general and in Bhopal in particular. Similarly, the contribution of the contemporary writers in development of female education in Bhopal has also been discussed in this paper. This paper is based on the 'historico-textual' approach following structural reason which has established a justifiable argument. The researcher, therefore, has taken into consideration all the chronological nuances in order to accord greater visibility to the contents. The data has been described, analyzed and interpreted inclusively and in generalized manner.

Keywords : colonialism, Begamaat e Bhopal, female education, State of Bhopal

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