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Website- www.aarf.asia, **Email :** editor@aarf.asia , editoraarf@gmail.com

Female Education in Lucknow (1854-1947)

Dr Fozia Bano

Associate Professor

Shia Post Graduate Collage Lucknow

The basic ingredient of the progress of a nation is education. It is the history that tells us that development of human race is the outcome of learning and knowledge. The formal English education system was introduced very late in the united provinces of Agra and Awadh. But before governments coming forward in Lucknow, the Christian residents and the missionaries were the pioneers of bringing western ideas and different forms of education.

It is a fact that Lucknow was the cradle of education before the advent of Europeans in India. The city maintained its traditions and gave a befitting place to the English education, also keeping in view that it was the residential place of the Governor and other British officials. The education of girls from the beginning of English education was the most neglected field. The East India Company did not consider it necessary to educate the fairer sex perhaps because female staff was not required for administrative purpose. But the mission played an active role in the field of female education. Most of the girls' school were run by missionaries and a few by private bodies. According to the will of Major General Claude Martin who was a French national and a soldier in the East India Company, La Martiniere School for Girls came into existence in the year 1869 A.D. It was shifted to Khursheed Manzil in 1876. Khursheed Manzil was a large double storey built by Saadat Ali Khan which was completed by his son Ghazi-Ul-Din Haider. It was built in the form of a castle fortified by moat 12ft. wide, over which there was formerly a draw bridge. After the British annexation of Awadh, in 1856, Khursheed Manzil was known as the mess house. Another institution, Loreto Convent School was established by the object of teaching European children.

There were sixty-six girls in Loreto Convent in the year 1876. The Lalbagh Girls' School, which was established by an American Episcopalian Mission in 1870 with six girls was a prestigious institution of Lucknow. Isabella Thoburn College was another important institution of the city. The school began functioning from April 18, 1870. Though the position of these provinces in regard to female education was not satisfactory, Lucknow had a special place in the field of female education, not only in the sense of literate population of girls but also in the sense of the existence of special institutions like La Martiniere School for Girls' and Isabella Thoburn College. The La Martiniere Girls' School was established in 1869 and was located at Moti Mahal. It was shifted to Khursheed Manzil in 1876. Khursheed Manzil was a large double storeyed mansion marked by low towers at the corners. Built by Saadat Ali Khan, which was completed by his son, Ghazi-Ul-Din Haider. It was built in the form of a castle fortified by a moat 12ft. wide, over which there was formerly a draw bridge. After the British annexation of Awadh, in 1856, Khursheed Manzil was known as the mess house. The house was originally granted to the girls' school on November 27, 1876 as a gift to the La Martinere charities for the use of the girls' school. Extensive additions and improvements were made to the building at a cost of more than one lakhrupes from La Martiniere Female Education Fund. In 1889 Government promoted the school to final standard of Education for Europeans. The school was recognized for the overseas Examinations of the Cambridge University, later known as the Indian School Certificate Examination. According to the will of Major General Claude Martin, who was a French national and a soldier in the East India Company, the La Martiniere School for Boys was established in 1841 A.D. and its sister institution came into existence in the year 1869 A.D. La Martiniere Trust transferred Rs. 1,27,111 to La Martiniere Girls' School for its establishment. It was a government aided institution. In the beginning it was only for the Europeans and Eurasian children, however with the passage of time the attitude changed and the authorities of the institution allowed Indian girls to be admitted also. In 1871 the total strength of girls was 71 of whom 15 were boarders. The school was under the agreement of the Board of Governors and it was assisted by a Ladies' Subcommittee, the members being Miss Pennington, the Head Mistress and an assistant teacher Miss Mayer. The La Martiniere School had three sections, the lower primary, the upper primary and the middle section. The number of students in lower primary was 24, in the upper primary 13 and in the middle section it was 10. The standard of the institution was very high according to the report of Director of Public Instruction, "this school had made great progress since its establishment, one reason of the

progress and improvement was the efficient teaching by Miss Pennington and her assistant Miss Mayor.

The La Martiniere School had the facility of a boarding house also but the fee charges of this institution were very high. The average cost of each girl per annum was Rs.21. The tuition fee was again raised by the authorities of the school and due to the costly fee, the number of scholars started to decline. Out of 185 girls only 71 took admission of whom 25 were boarders and the rest were day scholars. According to the administration of La Martiniere Trust Fund the girls' institution had no legal claim to General Martin's original bequest and their claims were strictly limited to the Debaters Fund. In contrast, the boys' school was exclusively entitled to the original fund. The result was that while money was being lavishly spent on the boys' institution, the girls' school got a very meagre amount to run its institution. The inspector of European schools of the North-Western Provinces and Awadh Mr. C. Dodd wrote in his report that nearly fifteen annas out of each rupee were awarded to the boys whereas only one anna to the girls. Only one girl could be educated for every 3.5 boys, though female education was 44% cheaper than male education. A high fee was charged from the girls in comparison to low fee from the boys. The teachers of boy's school were allowed liberal sums of pension but the Lady Principal and other teachers in the girl's school had no such liberties after retirement. Due to the structure of the college, the girl's institution was compelled to ask for aid or help and also went to the extent of borrowing money from the boy's institution. To meet the expenses of the school, the government sanctioned a sum of Rs. 1,55. But this institution never had a satisfactory financial basis. The La Martiniere institution was a prestigious girls' institution. Its teaching standard was very high. La Martiniere School's contribution in the field of girls' education was remarkable. It flourished in the city of Lucknow with the Co-operation both of the government and Lucknow citizens. An excellent institution in this school was a Literary Club, the exponent of which was the Lucknow La Martiniere Girls' Magazine. The constitution to which by the girls themselves were always interesting. The Principal herself taught the senior classes on domestic economy, practical lessons on cookery and music also. Therefore, in many respects La Martiniere Girls' School was more advanced than most of the girls' school in these provinces.

Isabella Thoburn College was another institution of the city. The school began functioning from April 18, 1870 in a one room house of Aminabad Bazar, with six girls. The school was shifted a few weeks later to a vacant room in Dr. Waugh's bungalow and later to a rented house. A year later, they purchased the

Lalbagh house at a cost of Rs. 14,000 silver coins. This house was the residence of the treasurer of the last Nawab of Awadh. Gradually, the number of students began to increase in this institution. By 1876, there were 65 boarders and 51 days scholars on roll. In the year 1884 two students Lilavati Singh and Sharat Chakravarti appeared in the entrance examinations of Calcutta University but only one succeeded. The Lucknow women's college began functioning as such on July 12, 1886 upto F.A. classes, affiliated to the Calcutta University. In 1899, two girls appeared in the first arts examination but here also only one succeeded. By 1896, the girls passed the Inter Mediate Examinations and the first batch of students qualified to appear for the B.A. degree. The demand for higher education grew slowly but steadily. By 1902, five students had obtained the B.A. degree. The I.T. College Lucknow was placed on the grant-in-aid list. The Isabella Thoburn College at Lucknow maintained its high reputation and sent up six candidates. For the entrance examinations from the year 1904, Isabella Thoburn College started a teacher's training classes. A curriculum was adopted somewhat similar to that of the Allahabad training college. There were twelve students under training in these classes and worked under a competent mistress. In the year 1905 the government gave a grant of Rs. 11,000 towards the college. One student of Isabella Thoburn College received the Government scholarship and took admission in M.A. class in Muir Central College. The enrolment was gradually increased in the Isabella Thoburn College. The number of students was 23 in the college class, 21 in the training class and 156 in the high school but only half of the college students belonged to these provinces and the remaining half came from Bengal and Punjab.

Isabella Thoburn college received Rs. 40,000 as a gift from an American citizen. The college was the pioneer of higher education for girls. But the shortage of staff was a very serious problem for this institution. The Principal stated that it was necessary for the staff to be increased, but unfortunately the desire was not always accompanied by the means of satisfying it. On top of this problem, the college continued to progress and the enrolment was well maintained. The number of high school students rose to 188. In the year 1912, the college strengthened its staff by appointing six missionaries and two resident Indian teachers. The Isabella Thoburn College was facing the problem of building since its establishment. The college authorities felt the need of separating college and school classes. In 1921 when Miss Florence Nichols arrived in Lucknow; she realised the need for establishing the college as an institution separated from the school. In 1923, the college was shifted from Lalbagh located within half a mile of the university. In 1922 a large modern building was at once visible. A sign which provided

classroom laboratories, hostels and the library. In 1923 the beautiful chapel was built in memory of Clotida Lyon McDowell. The college received Rs. 60,000 as a grant from America for building extension. In 1921 the Isabella Thoburn College was affiliated to the Lucknow University along with the staff which consisted of two file readers and one lecturer besides the Principal.

The Isabella Thoburn College was maintained by the Women's Foreign Missionary Society of America. The Principal, Miss Shannon, went to America to collect funds because the college authorities felt an immediate expansion of hostels, classrooms and a science laboratory. Though the American society gave large funds towards the erection of a new hostel as an addition to the college, management also hoped for an assistance from the government as a grant for construction purposes. The college maintained a continuous contribution in the field of girls' education. The students thronged from all parts of India as well as from Ceylon. In the year 1936, the total number of students rose to 76 in the college section. It became the best girls' institution not only in India but also in Asia. Its contribution was remarkable in the field of girls' education in these provinces. The development of female education was very backward and unsatisfactory in the United Provinces and Awadh. Although there had been a commendable change in the attitude of both the government and people in the later year in these provinces, but there was a great disparity between the education of boys and girls. In 1945-46 only 0.6% girls received education. Though the Christian residents and British residents played their important role in the progress of female education, no step was taken by the British Government in these provinces till the Wood's Despatch came into effect. But after the Wood's Despatch the government encouraged female education by means of liberal government aid. According to the Education Despatch of 1854 the total number of girls' schools was 17 in the North Western Provinces. The Indian Education Commission of 1882 again recommended expansion of the girls' education by the means of much easier terms in the grant-in-aid for girls' school.

In 1883, Lucknow showed a remarkable growth of female institutions generally established by the missionaries. But till 1881, there was not a single Government girls' school in Awadh above primary section. To speak about the female education in those provinces, it can be said that hardly any progress was being made. In Lucknow division, the total number of population of women consisted of 28,01,152 till the year 1898-99 out of which the number of girls' scholars was 2,680. The percentage of school going females was very low, i.e. 6% only. The reason behind the slow progress of female education was that despite the policy of

liberal grant-in-aid, the government spent insufficient money on girls' education. In Lucknow division, the total expenditure of the government on female education was a meagre Rs. 35,023. The public funds were Rs. 8,852. The principal funds contributed to Rs. 3,520 and from other sources a sum of Rs. 82,641 were spent. Besides the government, social factors were also responsible for the slow progress of female education. All which led to the setback was firstly, the purdah system, child marriage, indifference of parents to their daughter's education, financial pressure on the middle classes, lack of women teachers and girls' schools, absence of suitable curriculum and lack of material consideration. The vernacular press launched a powerful attack on these prejudices and gave a favour to the female education. However, the role of the different communities in the progress of female education was generally negative. The Muslim community was very much reluctant about female education. Only a few educated Muslims favoured education of Muslim girls. Syed Karamat Hussain promoted female education and established a Muslim girls' school in Lucknow and donated a sum of Rs. 2 lakhs for it. This institution was also supported by then Raja of Mahmudabad, Sir Muhammad Ali Muhammad Khan who donated his land for this purpose.

The Hindu community was also very rigid regarding the female education. William Adam wrote that the people were hardly interested in the education of their daughters. The customs of early marriage and purdah system greatly interfered with female education. The Governor of the United Provinces decided to appoint a committee consisting of the prominent men of the province to consider the best means of spreading the education among Hindu women. The committee suggested that the foundation of a local committee of prominent Indians in every town to help the popularization of female education. According to the recommendation of the above committee, the authorities enhanced the strength of the staff in La Martiniere School Lucknow for which a sum of 10,610 was demanded. The Government of India in 1915, introduced a more liberal grant-in-aid policy. It decided to award sympathetic government attitude, the missionary devotion and the efforts of educated Indians in the field of female education. The feeling of passive apathy was changed into active sympathy owing to sentimentalization and materialisation. Parents gradually realised that the education of their daughters was as much a part of their duty as the education of their sons. The first quarter of the 20th century was marked by the rapid disappearance of all prejudices against women's education. Even the Muslims who consistently opposed all efforts to educate their daughters in public schools throughout the 19th century began to concede at least in theory inimportance of girls' education. Many girls' institutions were established in

Lucknow. Gradually female education became popular. There was a demand amongst the lower classes to follow in the footsteps of higher society in the interest of the female education. On the whole it can be said that the impact of the two World Wars on the socio-economic and political order of the country and its national movement launched by Mahatma Gandhi inaugurated a new era in the growth of education. There was a growing demand of some further means of educating the girls.

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