



LATE 19th CENTURY FEMALE EDUCATION IN HARYANA: AN ASSESSMENT

Sarita Yadav

Research Scholar

Department of History K.U. Kurukshetra,(Haryana)

Women have always remained subject to suppression since ages. They have suffered a lot at every level in one way on the other. Eighteenth century Haryana presented a dismal view of female education scenario in the state. The paper discusses the factors responsible for the poor turn out of female education in Haryana in late 19th century.

Education in the nineteenth century was largely distributed on the basis of caste system. The Brahmin who constituted the priestly class ward through formal schooling instruction through the study for religious literature formal education was not permitted for the shudras as well as women in that century with upper class women an exception. The situation of Haryana was more or less the same in this centered.

Therefore, a modest attempt has been made to highlight the education scenario of Haryana in terms of women.

In the beginning of the nineteenth century education in Haryana was in every way in a quite slumbering state.

During the Company's rule the state of women education was very poor. All established native of education exist for the benefit of the male sex only and the whole of the female sex is systematically consigned to ignorance¹ in Haryana Women education did not receive impetus under the British East India- Company education was largely neglected.² The Adam's Report stated Haryana showed the existence of women teachers and a small number of girls attending schools.³ A slight change in the outlook of British becomes evident.

F.L. Brayne, an enlightened Deputy Commissioner of Gurgaon who had said, "if a boy is educated only one person is educated, but if a girl is educated, a whole of family is educated."⁴ But as far as Haryana of late nineteenth century was concerned, women education though not exactly a taboo, was something like it. In the beginning a villagers could not even think of a girl going to school. The Deputy Commissioner of Gurgaon observed in 1860 that the Jats considered educating their daughters to be an ill-omen.⁵

Even in towns the situation was not a great deal different. Barring a few upper classes, the common people did not send their daughters to schools⁶ As they foresaw no advantage in educating their women- folk and on the contrary considered it as a probable evil.⁷

The Government was somewhat aware of the seriousness of the problem and after 1870, we notice some positive initiatives in the opening of various schools. But these schools could not serve any substantial useful purpose because the people did not respond favourably.⁸

In sum female education simply failed to take off in the region. For instance, in Ambala, the number of girls school decreased from 9 in 1870 to 4 in 1900 and in Karnal from 10 in 1870 to 4 in 1900. Gurgaon, Rohtak and Hissar showed a slight improvement at the end of nineteenth century. It may be mentioned here that all these schools were only of the primary standard and there was no middle or high school for girls throughout Haryana up to 1900.⁹ The Table further illustrates this point.

WOMEN EDUCATION IN HARYANA: 1860-1900

District	1860		1870		1880		1890		1900	
	Schools	Students								
Ambala	10	172	9	203	-	-	-	-	4	232
Rohtak	1	13	1	16	-	-	1	124	5	209
Karnal	5	58	10	117	2	88	1	97	4	87
Hisser	2	18	9	133	-	-	1	12	5	197
Gurgaon	15	294	4	188	4	105	8	188	11	243

Source: The figure in the Table-XIII have been taken from the Administration and Education Reports and the census of Punjab for the concerned years.

As in other district of Haryana the education of women remained neglected in Ambala. It was only in the past quarter of the 19th century that some efforts were made to provide schooling to girls. In 1877-78 there were only two Govt. Vernacular Primary schools with only 37 girls on roll in the entire district.¹⁰ The number of girl's school rose to 8 and that of girls students to 244 in 1891-92.¹¹ There was, however much private teaching almost exclusively religious by Hindu, Sikhs, Mohammadans and Christaian Missions. A feature of these years was the steady increase of voluntary organization in the field of women education.¹²

The education of women however had been totally neglected in Karnal and till 1880 there was no school for girls.¹³ There was only one missionary girls school at Hissar.¹⁴ The pace of the education of women was very slow in Rohtak district and only about 1 percent of the female population was reported to be literate in 1901.¹⁵ Education of women remained completely neglected in the areas now forming Sirsa district till the close of 19th century. Female education was confined to religious instructions only and that too was imparted to them in their homes.

Girls were not allowed to go outside their homes for education. It was only in the beginning of the twentieth century that a primary school was opened for girls at Sirsa.¹⁶ The school was aided by municipal funds. Majority of the students in this school was Mohammedans and the Urdu script was used.¹⁷ It was only during the last decade of the nineteenth century that a non-aided girl's school was started at Bhiwani by the Baptist Mission.¹⁸

Thus the picture of women education in Haryana at the turn of the century was dismal. The district wise percentage of literate female to total was as given in table.

**PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL LITERATES AND FEMALE
LITERATES IN HARYANA TO THE TOTAL POPULATION**

BY 1901

District	Total Percentage	Female percentage
Hissar	2.67	0.60
Gurgaon	2.54	0.05
Ambala	4.16	0.17
Karnal	2.34	0.05
Rohtak	2.65	0.04

Source: Uday Shankar and C.L Kundu (Ed). Education in Haryana

The failure of female education to develop in this region could be accounted for due mainly to the attitude of society on the issue as well as official antipathy. Poverty also stood in the way of people educating their children. The Punjab Education Report for 1887-88 bears a testimony to this fact. In the Delhi circle, it says, "the attendance has been affected by an unusually sickly reason" and also due to "enhanced rates of school fees". Thus ignorant and poor, the people here did not understand the usefulness of education.¹⁹

The government was also not over-anxious to encourage educational development in Haryana because of vengeance, as the people of the region had actively participated in the uprising of 1857.²⁰ Moreover, the chain of foreign invasions in territory had led to rise of various social evil especially the confinement of women to the inner parts of homes. As a result the people of Haryana became backward in education, but more particularly in the sphere of women's education.²¹

But regarding the Haryana districts in particular when compared with other districts of Punjab. The region as whole lagged far behind in terms of literacy rates quality of education facilities etc. This was a fact that came to be remedied only after Haryana emerged as a separate state in 1966.²²

For the spread and development of women education in the Haryana state, apart from government the socio-religious organizations also played an important role. These included the Arya Samaj, the Dev Samaj and Sanatan Dharma Sabha.

It can be concluded that in the early nineteenth century the women education was kept at margin. But by the end of this century the awareness spread among the people of Haryana.

References

1. A.N. Bass (ed.). Admn's Report, Calcutta
2. K.C Yadav, Haryana: Itilas Evam Sanskrit, Vol. II, New Delhi, p. 69
3. K.K. Das, Developments of Education In India, New Delhi, 1986, p. 188.
4. F.L. Brayne, Village Uplift in India, Allahabad, 1927, p. 3.
5. Punjab Education Report 1862-63, p.25
6. Ibid.
7. Punjab Administration Report, 1901-1902, 1902, p. 29.
8. U. Shankar and C.L. Kundu (Ed.) Education in Haryana. P. 7
9. Ibid.
10. Ambala District Gazetteer, 1883-84, p. 217.
11. Gazetteer of Ambala District 1892-93 Table No. XXXVIII, p. XXXIV.
12. Imperial Gazetteer of India, Provincial series, Punjab, Vol. I, 1908, p. 140.
13. Karnal District Gazetteer, 1890, pp. 224.
14. Hissar District Gazetteer, 1982, p. 224.
15. Rohtak District Gazetteer, 1910, pp. 173-174.
16. Sirsa District Gazetteer, 1988, p.260.
17. Ibid.
18. Bhiwani District Gazetteer, 1982, p. 445.

- 19.U. Shankar and C.L. Kundu (Ed.), Education in Haryana, Kurukshetra, 1971,
p.8.
- 20.Ibid. Report of the Haryana Development Committee, Chandigarh, 1966, pp.
136-150.
- 21.B.S. Saini, The Social Economic History of Punjab 1901-1939, Delhi, 1975, pp.
1965-1967.