

Role of Deccan Muslim Institute and Library in Nation Building 1915 – 2014

Abstract

Conventional education among Muslims has yielded much for Muslims during the medieval times, but with the advent of British rule in India, education drastically changed. The educated Muslim leaders realized the importance of imparting modern education to the Muslims. Though modernization of Muslim education commenced in North India, the Deccan too was not lagging behind in this field.

The main objective of the present paper is to study the revival of education in its modern sense in Pune through Deccan Muslim Institute and the great contribution of the Philanthropists to the 'Nation building'. In the period of turmoil these Muslim educationists of Pune has undertaken many patriotic activities and programmes as a part of freedom struggle. Their contribution is to be admired and appreciated in this regard.

Keywords : Deccan Muslim Institute, Quran, Hadis, Baitul Maal, Karz-E-Hasana, Philanthropists, Modern Education.

Introduction

Historical Background

After 1857 revolt when Muslim community faced despair and inferiority complex, it had a demoralizing effect of shaking the whole society. Shah Ahmad Khan Walliullah and Sir Sayyed Ahmed Khan revived the spirit of progress in the community. It was Sir Sayyed who lifted the Muslims from the depth of despondency to hope and faith and made them march in the directions of modernity. He reconciled the intellectualism of the west with the traditionalism of the east. He was convinced that modern education is the only solution at that time and he tried the Muslims outlook from a medieval one to a modern one.

All India Muslim Educational Conference started by Sir Sayyed Ahmed Khan was an organization promoting modern liberal education for the Muslim community in India. All India Muslim Educational Conference, a non-political organization brought Muslim rulers of remaining princely states of undivided British India, social and political leaders, intellectuals and distinguished people from all walks of life on one platform for educational empowerment of Muslim of India.

Foundation of Deccan Muslim Institute and Library

Prof. Shaikh A.Q. Sarfaraz 1915-1918 was actively involved in All India Muslim Educational Conference. He was a scholar of Persian, Urdu, English, Marathi and Arabic languages. He was appointed as Prof. of Persian at Karachi in a Government college. In 1906 he was transferred to Pune in Deccan College as Prof. of Persian. He was convinced that the community should come forward to strive for their own development with sincere, systematic efforts. He also believed that Public libraries were considered to be an essential part of the community development project to accelerate the pace of socio-economic development. He thought that Public Libraries play a vital role in providing initial and continuing education to the common masses. He called an informal meeting at his residence in 1915 to establish Deccan Muslim Institute with the objective of organizing lectures and educational programme and to publish educational and literary periodicals and distribute them among Muslim masses. Maulvi Raffiuddin¹, Sir Haroon Jaffer², Maulana Shibli Nomani³, Sayed Suleman Nadavi⁴, Shahzada Aftab Ahmed Khan were also present for the meeting.

Accordingly the DMI⁵ was established on 30th October 1915 and the same was also registered with Charity Commissioner under the Societies Regulation Act 1860. Prof. Shaikh A. Qader Sarfaraz was elected as first President of Deccan Muslim Institute. He donated many of his personal collection and his own books to the DMI and Public library. Initially it was housed at M.G. Road, Opp. Jama Masjid, Camp, Pune. Mirza Ibrahim Baig took the lead and Mr. Mohammed Ali enrolled members for the said library. They also collected donation for furniture and fixtures.

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Later Maulana Sayyed Suleman Nadavi delivered lectures and donated books, magazines and periodicals. H.H. Hazarat Sultan Jahan Begum of Bhopal also donated books for the library. The total income and expenses for the financial year 1916-17 was income Rs. 643 and expenses Rs. 518/-

Contribution of DMI's Presidents

Shaikh Yaqoob Vazir Mohd. 1918-1919

He was the Collector of Poona from 1931 to 1938. On the disturbed background of Jallianwala bagh massacre he organized various lectures at DMI for creating awareness of the rights of natives in British India.

Sir Gulam Hussain Hidayatullah (1920- 1921)

He was appointed Minister of Social Welfare and Minister of Education. He advocated Hindu Muslim Unity. He took active part in propagating new ideas in order to spread the modern education and organized various seminars at DMI.

Maulvi Muniruddin 1921-1922

He made a distinct contribution in library system by making list of all the books of the DMI. He emphasized on moral education and conducted series of lectures on personality development on the lines of Quran and Hadees. He organized literary, religious and social programmes for the youth and motivated them to take part in national and social activities.

Janab Qadeer Mohd. Hussain 1923-1924

He believed that health is the ignored sector therefore he invited eminent Doctors, Hakeem, Vaidyas to create awareness of integrated medicine. He conducted medical camps for poor people on the platform of DMI.

Khan Bahadur Mohd. Hidayatullah 1940-1944

He got the annual grant from Pune Cantonment Board increased from Rs.60/- to Rs. 120/- p.a. He was chairman of the Muslim Girls Education Committee of Pune. When Bombay Government decided to close down Anglo-Urdu School, he tried his level best to get the land transferred in the name of Maharashtra Cosmopolitan Education Society. The DMI also organized a huge rally of students in support of Quit India Movement.

Janab Meer Mohd. Ali 1944-48

During the testing period of Hindu-Muslim riots he formed Peace Committee and tried for communal harmony. Sardar Mohdi Begum an activist was invited at DMI to deliver a lecture on 'Tahzeeb-e-Niswan'. He organized a Meena Bazar and collected fund for girls' education. In 1943-44 a Committee was formed for Girls Education by Bombay State, Mrs. Zubeda Khatoon was its chairperson. She was invited at DMI to address ladies and to deliver a lecture on 'Importance of girl's education'.

Adv. Abdul Qadeer Khan 1948-1950

He registered the Maharashtra Cosmopolitan Education Society (Mces) in 1948. He was the President of Mces, Pune From 1948 to 1957. He started Pune Baitul Mal to give financial assistance to poor and needy students. He created social and legal awareness among masses. The Deccan Muslim Institute was shifted to Blundell Road near cantonment market in 1949. He collected donation for infrastructure, books and other activities. He formed various peace committees to have interaction and dialogue with other communities. The Dmi was registered with the Curator of Libraries and regular

inspection was carried out. The library and Free Reading Room was given 'C' grade.

He made new members for the Dmi including some Parsee people who were interested in Persian literature. He created a fund for the welfare of poor muslim and gave scholarships to poor muslim students for their education, girls marriage and also for the last rites of poor Muslims. Due to his efforts the DMI was shifted to 2015-B, Gaffar Baig Street in the Islamia School Babajan Chowk, Poona. The financial position of the Institute was sound. The no. of readers also increased. The total income and expenses for the financial year 1954-1955 was income Rs. 1291/- and expenses Rs.1011. The assets were worth Rs. 795/-. At this time the DMI gave a loan of Rs.7800/- to the Maharashtra Cosmopolitan Education Society Poona as a Karz-e-Hasana⁶.

Mohd. Hidayatullah 1952-1954

Due to his efforts the Pune Cantonment Board enhanced the annual grant from 120/ p.a. to Rs. 240/ p.a. He strengthened the administration of Dmi and conducted many personality development programmes for the poor and needy students. He did counseling of illiterate parents as regards to their children education.

Shaikh Mohd. Taher Ameer 1955-1961

The timings of the Public Library were only 3 hours in the morning session as there was no staff to manage the library. He realized the importance of qualified librarian hence he appointed a qualified librarian for Dmi with a monthly salary of Rs.35/- p.m. He collected books for Dmi as donations and also purchased books for children so that they develop the habit of reading. He also organized programmes like Lecture Series, Mushaira, Book reading competition, Spoken Marathi, Eid Milad Programmes, Sports Competition.

Haji Abdul Hakeem Qureshi 1961-1987

In 1965 there was a communal violence in Pune and many people were made homeless. He carried out rehabilitation programme successfully. In the year 1966 the Trustees of the Islamia School Babajan Chowk, Poona filed a case bearing Application No.3 of 1967 u/s. 51 of Bombay Public Trust Act, 1950 against the Deccan Muslim Institute to vacate the premises and on 24-2-67 the Asst. Charity Commissioner Poona decided the case against the Institute and it had to vacate the premises and move to Tayyabia Yateemkhana at 2410-East street, Poona-1. In 1970-71 he collected thousands of books and made DMI Public Library as 'A' grade library under Maharashtra Public Library Act 1967. Various magazines and weeklies were collected for free reading room. A charity Film Show was organized and Rs.5000/- was collected as fund raising.

During his Presidentship an appeal was made to Maharashtra Cosmopolitan Education Society to allot a piece of land in the Anglo Urdu School Campus in lieu of the loan i.e. Karz-e-Hasna given to them and accordingly 4000 sq.ft. land was allotted towards eastern side of S.No.522 K.B. Hidayatullah Road, New Modikhana, Pune Camp. Meanwhile in the year 1972 the Haji Gulam Mohd. Azam Education Trust was registered under the Bombay Public Trust Act 1950. Hence the entire land held by the Maharashtra Cosmopolitan Education Society was transferred to the Haji Gulam Mohammed

Azam Education Trust. Therefore a registered lease deed was executed between the Haji Gulam Mohammed Azam Education Trust and the Deccan Muslim Institute on 23-2-1972 on a long lease of 50 years, at a nominal lease rent of Rs.50 p.m. A spacious building admeasuring 2320 sq.ft.was constructed on this piece of land with a cost of Rs. 60,000/- out of which the Govt. of Maharashtra Directorate of Libraries Bombay gave a grant of Rs. 24,000/-. On 11th January 1974 the Institute shifted to the present location.

Mrs. Abeda P. Inamdar 1998 – Till Date

She gave donation from P.A. Inamdar Trust of Rs.6,00,000/-. The DMI's Public Library was named as DMI^s ARS Inamdar Public Library and Free Reading Room. She could also get building construction grant from the Directorate of Libraries Govt. of Maharashtra Rs. 50,000. and Rs. 1, 45,000/- from well wishers, the Institute was totally furnished and computerized. All India council for Professional Training and Research Pvt. Ltd., Mumbai gave affiliation to Dmi's Computer Center. A study center of Maulana Azad National Urdu University, Hyderabad was set up at DMI. This is a distance education for under graduate and post graduate in Arts and Commerce. Calligraphy course of NCPUL, Spoken Arabic, Spoken English courses were started at Dmi. A Scholarship Cell was established at DMI to give information regarding various government and private scholarships.

Conclusions

The contribution of Philanthropists is exemplary towards education of Muslim masses in Pune. During the British rule the Muslim masses were ignored as far as education in general and modern education in particular is concerned. The Presidents of Deccan Muslim Library and Institute has played the pivotal role in bringing about the transformation in imparting the modern education to Muslims of Pune. Apart from this there is commendable contribution of Philanthropists of Pune in the freedom struggle of India. The DMI has not ignored any aspect of development of Muslim masses neither during pre-independence nor post-independence period. Recently the Deccan Muslim Institute has taken proactive measures to inculcate Skill Development Programmes among Muslim Minority students in concurrence with the National Mission on Skill Development.

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