

Miss Mallinson: An Ambassador of Modern Education in Kashmir

Dr. Deepika Sharma
University of Jammu, Jammu

Abstract: *This paper focuses on the contribution of a very talented and capable lady, who by her hard work and determination changed Kashmir into the modern state. She worked whole heartedly and succeeded in creating awareness among masses about the education of women. The paper highlights how she was accepted by the Kashmiri families where she visited time and again to motivate them regarding the importance of education in their lives. She worked sincerely and devoted her whole life in framing Kashmir with her knowledge.*

Keywords: Female Education, Missionary, Drill, CMS Girls School.

I. INTRODUCTION

“Education is one thing no one can take away from you.”

Elin Nordegren

“If you educate a man, you educate an individual. But if you educate a woman, you educate a nation.”

African Proverb

And this responsibility of educating women hadn't taken by any authority until the advent of Christian missionaries in Kashmir. From long past, Kashmir has been known for its beauty and pleasant weather and this attracted many missionaries to visit the place. Many missionaries came with the aim to spread the word of Christ and they discovered the best chance for their operation in Kashmir Valley. They exposed the people to English language. Prior to them, the natives used Kashmiri, Persian, Urdu, Sanskrit, Arabic and Hindi. Their arrival to Kashmir added a fresh leaf to education and they succeeded considerably in introducing modern education. We found immense work on the contribution of missionaries in education in Kashmir in general but less on female education in particular. And this paper aims at surveying the role played particularly by Miss Mallinson vis-à-vis in the growth of modern education among girls in the valley of Kashmir. She was the true model of inspiration and creativity.

In missionaries' perspective, the education of girls was very significant as they were the guardian of future generations. Therefore, they started the first girl's school at Fateh Kadal, in 1895. The people of Srinagar revolted due to fear in their mind that the character of the girls would be blemished. First prize day was planned where the principle of the school invited the European ladies with the expectation that this would provide support for the girls and their parents. As one British lady walked into the school, someone in the street shouted that the English had come to abduct the girls. Enraged by the notice, people rushed to the school and commanded the girls to jump out of the windows. Before the visitors could enter the school, all the people present had gone. This event resulted in the shutdown of the first girl's school for some time which later on was reopened. Another girl's school namely Modern C.M.S School for Girls was founded by Miss Violet B. Fitz in 1912 (later came to be known as Mallinson Girl's School). In the beginning, she had to face solid confrontation from the people of Srinagar. But amazingly in 1916, the school registered a swell in number of girl students, and in 1918 it was elevated to the middle standard. Regarding the progress of girl's school, Biscoe remarks:

“The Education of girls is progressing much faster than that boys did at its commencement, and I believe that the atmosphere of the city will be changed beyond all conception, when the mothers of this rising generation have been educating for it is they and the priests who are great stumbling blocks on the road of light and truth at present.”¹

¹. Quoted by Khan, Mohammad, Ishaq. *History of Srinagar, 1846-1947: A Study in Socio-cultural Change*. Gulshan Books, 2007.

After Miss Fitze, another valiant spirit who made girl's education tolerable in Srinagar in the center of harsh cold was a young and talented Miss M.P. Mallinson. She was the lady of great confidence and calm willpower. With her coming, a new era of women's education really dawned in the valley. When she came to Kashmir in 1922, there wasn't any single trained lady teacher there. Education among Muslim Girls was banned. Mallinson's commitment to the cause of female education attracted girls to the school and exposed them to modern education. She was a pioneer of female education and served the Kashmir Mission School for 40 years (1922-1962). Her role in the educational and cultural advancement of the school was commendable. In this connection Khan writes:

"The CMS Girls School underwent a radical transformation during the period that Miss Mallinson was a principal (1922-1962). It can hardly be over emphasized that it was Miss Mallinson who was instrumental in bringing about enough educational and cultural advancement among the women of Srinagar."

Under the pleasant atmosphere, helpful efforts were made by her to bring among students more and more excellence in the pronunciation of English words. She also framed out some drill practices for the perfection of English language and its articulation. In this regard, one of the senior faculty members of the Mallinson School, Mrs Chasti states in a personal interview (25 Jan, 2012) that "Miss Mallinson used to deliver lecture to the faculty members for the improvement of English language and pronunciation." During that time English classes were taken by Miss Goamery and Miss Mallinson. Initially they used the translation method as Miss Goamery herself translated the rhymes. In this connection Mrs Chasti states that "while teaching English to students, we used both English and Urdu version of a rhyme like the following:

English Rhyme	Urdu translation
"Bits of paper, bits of paper	<i>kagaz kay tukday, kagaz kay tukday.</i>
Lying on the ground	<i>paday zameen par.</i>
Makes the place untidy	<i>ganda kiya zameen ko.</i>
Pick them up; pick them up	<i>inko uthow, inko uthow."</i>

In this manner students were able to learn English language through translation and play way method. Miss Mallinson introduced activities like drill, camping, mountaineering, cycling, art and crafts and domestic activities too. During that period the subjects taught were Mathematics, General Knowledge, Urdu, Persian and English. Hindi was introduced in 1944 and general Science in 1946-47. She also paid interest to wicker work and other handicrafts. Among her students were many girls who later achieved great heights. Some became social workers, some doctors, some educationists and some of them hold key positions in the state administration, contributing to the progression of female education².

But female education was not the only aim in her life. Her struggle was against violence that Kashmir females were subjected to. She waged a war against child marriage and fought for the self-respect of women. Kashmiri women were kept in absolute isolation; they would not be allowed to move out of their homes. In 1938 she led forty girl students to the Mahadev, 13000 ft. above sea level and proved to be the first lady who planned such girl's camp outside. She had great character traits; she was modest, energetic, active and full of passion. While contributing extreme love to the girls she imposed severe discipline among them. She always bicycled her way from her home at Sheikh Bagh to the school at Fateh Kadal. When she joined the C.M.S school, it was very small. It steadily grew up under her heed. She was well-liked and respected by everybody in Srinagar. High officials and businessmen would stop their cars on the way, get down, and greet her. Miss Mallinson taught girls to pray for the happiness, contentment and wealth of one and all. She taught ethical and religious education to them. She offered them promise, hope and love. Shortage and wretchedness ruled the roost amongst the Kashmiri girls, superstitions would not allow them to develop and grow. Miss Mallinson proved to be lady with the lamp. Truly, the missionaries have revolutionized the Kashmiri mode of existence. They lit lights in thousands of families.

². The first woman matriculate of Kashmir, Begum Zaffar Ali began her career as a teacher in the Girl's Mission High School in 1925.

II. CONCLUSION

Miss Mallinson paid complete attention to female education. She dedicated her life to our kids and developed the relationship between Man and his Maker. She created respect for mothers and daughters, infused self-respect and self-assurance into them. She beyond doubt educated the oppressed sex, for over 40 years. She valiantly fought and beaten illiteracy, unawareness, superstition and other related ills. Miss Mallinson used to pay visits to the homes of each girls student. She would help them solve their problems. She always helped the poor and the unwell. She embedded a new passion into the teachers who were not well qualified. She shared their personal problems and helped them to solve them. She welded them into one whole devoted team. She truly carried the torch of knowledge to the females of Kashmir. Her personality facilitated her moving freely into Kashmiri homes; everywhere she shared her joys and sorrows. She knew that time was running very fast and she was worried that her students should be ready to meet the challenge of a rapidly changing social order, without getting entangled in mental conflicts. It was only at the time of Miss Mallinson's departure in 1962 that the CMS Girls School at Fateh Kadal was shifted to Sheikh Bagh, next to CMS Boy's School in the building still called the Mallinson House. It was during her visit to Kashmir in 1969 that the CMS Girls School was rededicated as the Mallinson's Girls School. Miss Mallinson died in the month of June, 1984.

REFERENCES:

- [1]. Report of the Education Reorganization Committee, Pratap Press, Srinagar, 1939.
- [2]. Chouhan, Amar Singh. (1986). Development of Education in Jammu and Kashmir (1846-1947), Ajanta Publications, Delhi.
- [3]. Whitehead, Andrew. (2015). A Mission Kashmir, Gulshan Books, Srinagar.
- [4]. Neve, Arthur. (2008). Thirty Years in Kashmir, Gulshan Publishers, Srinagar.
- [5]. Biscoe, C.E. Tyndale. (1929). Kashmir in Sunlight and Shade, Mittal Publications, New Delhi.
- [6]. Dawson, E.C.. (2005). Heroines of Missionary Adventure, Kessinger Publishing, Montana.
- [7]. Hassnain, Fida Mohammad. (2012). Historic Kashmir, Gulshan books, Srinagar.
- [8]. Drew, Fredric. (1971). The Jammu and Kashmir Territories - A Geographical Account, Oriental Publishers, Delhi.
- [9]. Sufi, G.M.D.. (1974). Kashmir- Being a History of Kashmir From the Earliest Times to Our Own, Light & Life Publishers, Delhi.
- [10]. Irene Patrie, Ashley Carus and Wilson. (2016). A Missionary to Kashmir, Wentworth Press.
- [11]. Bamzai, P.N.K.. (1987). A Socio-Economic History of Kashmir (1846-1925), Gulshan Books, Srinagar.
- [12]. Thorp, Robert. (1980). Kashmir Misgovernment, Gulshan Publishers, Srinagar.
- [13]. Shoukat Frooqi, Qazi Zahoor and Shafi Shauq. (1997). Europeans in Kashmir, Summit Publishers, Srinagar.
- [14]. Younghusband, Sir Francis. (1970). Kashmir, Sagar Publications, New Delhi.
- [15]. Lawrence, Walter R., (2005). The Valley of Kashmir, Gulshan Books, Srinagar.
- [16]. Lawrence, Walter R., (1999). The Kashmir Gazetteer, Vol. II, Subhi Publications, Delhi.