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THE EXPANSION OF HIGHER EDUCATION FOR WOMEN: A REVIEW OF JALPAIGURI DISTRICT

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In 1947, India was divided into two countries, India and Pakistan. Jalpaiguri district was also affected by the partition of India. A large part of Jalpaiguri, covering an area of about 6245 sq km, lies within East Pakistan (present-day Bangladesh). The partition policy adopted by Radcliffe is attributed behind this division. That is, Patgram, Tetulia, Boda, Pachagarh and Debiganj East Pakistan present Bangladesh) are included. As a result, it goes without saying that the size of the district was naturally reduced during this period. Much has already been made about who was responsible for the aftermath of the partition, who had more of an investigative responsibility or whether the partition could have been prevented. The point to be made here is that the Rajvanshi, Kshatriya Samiti were largely responsible for the partition of this country. In this context, Dr. Anandagopal Ghosh has shown in his research that just as West Bengal's borders were contracted, East Pakistan's borders were expanded to support Pakistan's proposal before the partition of the country. Two of the three MLAs of the Kshatriya Samiti were from Rangpur, one from Dinajpur supporting their demand for Pakistan, the entire Rangpur district, three thanas of Jalpaiguri were annexed to Pakistan. Boda, Debiganj, Patgram in Jalpaiguri district were Rajbanshi dominated thanas. If these members had not supported the Pakistan claim, this police station and some police stations in Rangpur district would have been annexed to West Bengal. This not only extended the boundaries of West Bengal but also placed the Rajvansis on the map as a powerful community in the northern part of West Bengal (1).

However, it is better not to enter into a debate about what did not happen. The course of history is ever changing. The country was divided, India gained independence. Meanwhile, Pakistan emerged as a new state. But the situation that arose in contemporary times was dire. In other words, when the Hindus of East Pakistan came to West Bengal after leaving the land of the 14 people, they generally met with insults, insults and intolerance at the official and unofficial levels. This was the universal appearance (2). That is, as a result of partition, a panic and horrible situation was created here.

As it is true that an adverse effect of the partition of the country came to the public mind at this time, at that time many people were displaced or refugees and moved to the other side of Bengal, who are called refugees in English. They came here and started living in different parts of the city. In other words, they started to build colonies here due to living conditions. Many Hindu families migrated from East Bengal during this period, and they started settling here. Now the question may arise where is the relationship between education and research We will try to find the answer. New colonies began to spring up on the outskirts of the city and were named at the same time. Of course, even though they were displaced, they could realize the absolute

necessity of education in the life of common people, at the same time, it can be said that they were influenced to some extent by the educational policy adopted by the British government. It has already been mentioned that the number of schools in Jalpaiguri district is less than the requirement. The picture is more deplorable in the case of girls, meanwhile, as the population increased due to the development of new colonies in the city, the desire to be educated was also noticed among them. It was noticed that the situation was changing from time to time, that is, it can be said that the work of building schools in various colonies, keeping in mind the needs and demands of the local residents, started from this time.

It has already been mentioned that before independence the number of schools established for girls in the district towns was very negligible, meanwhile after independence when the population of the district continued to increase, the need to establish schools was also felt. Keeping this need in mind, the State Girls' School was established in the town of Jalpaiguri. It is true that the slow pace of expansion of the girls' education system in the district was observed before the independence, but after the independence there was some tide in that trend, so far all the educational institutions for girls in the district were established by private initiatives, and at the same time private initiatives were also observed. It happened, after independence, the first state girls' school was established under the government initiative, that is, a revolutionary change in the education system of the district was observed from this period. However, let's talk about the school.

In this context, it must be mentioned that at the birth of independence, three government girls' schools of undivided Bengal remained in the then East Pakistan. It was decided to set up three new government schools in West Bengal in place of those three schools. The decision to set up a new school was not only to fill this vacancy but also to create employment opportunities with due status for the teachers and staff of the three government girls' schools who remained in East Pakistan who wanted to come to this country. One of those three girls' schools was 'Khastgir Government High Girls' School' of Chittagong. Jalpaiguri Government Girls School was established as a supplement to that school. Jalpaiguri was the leading city in all areas of education and culture in the whole of North Bengal during the post-independence period (3).

Now let's talk about the setting up of the school. In the initial phase, the school started in D. Jalpaiguri. At Noormanjil Bhawan on BC Road. It was the residence of Olia Rahman, the then richest man of the city. At present, however, the office of the District Primary Education Council is located in this building. As this school started in 'Noormanjil' building, it came to be known as 'Noormanjil' School (4). Also, this day is observed as the day of establishment of the school as the school classes started from 28th July.

Later, when the number of female students in the school began to increase, accommodation in Nurmanjil became difficult. Later, in 1958, the school's own building was constructed in the club road area of Jalpaiguri. At this time the place was known as 'Taltala'. The then Minister of Works Khagendranath Dasgupta Mahashay took a special role in the construction of this new school building and the then Chief Minister Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy Mahashay(5) inaugurated the school. Which was a matter of pride for the people of Jalpaiguri. At present the school is progressing successfully after more than 50 years. The students of the school have been able to highlight their achievements in all aspects of studies and sports. That is to say, one of the important educational institutions for girls in Jalpaiguri is another government higher girls' school named after Suniti Chander. In terms of age, Sunitibala Sadar Girls are much older, but in terms of pursuits, both schools are on the same path (6). At the same time, it can be said that these two educational institutions have played a glorious role in the expansion of education system in Jalpaiguri city. Briefly discussed about the school.

The expansion of education (especially for girls) in Jalpaiguri district did not stop with the establishment of schools here. The decision to establish the college was taken at this time with a view to expanding higher education among girls. A change in the educational system of the district was marked during this period, especially in the case of girls. Although Ananda Chandra Mahavidyalaya was established in this phase by 1942. Co-education was prevalent in it but after several years the decision to set up separate colleges for girls only was taken.

This university was established by the year 1950. Now let's discuss in a few words about whose initiative the university was established.

It is true that the touch of higher education in non-Pandava areas like the city of Jalpaiguri came quite late, although a couple of schools were established in the early stages, those who were interested in higher education had to go to Calcutta, which was very inconvenient keeping in mind the Prasannadev Mahila Mahavidyalaya as a higher institution at that time. Whatever the decision was taken to build this women's college, it was the cultural mindset and active enthusiasm of the citizens of Jalpaiguri that worked behind it. At the same time, it must be mentioned that even though the directors or officials of Jalpaiguri tea garden took an active role, this university was built under the patronage of Rani Ashramati Devi (7). She donated 1.25 lakhs of rupees for it, and Prasannadev Mahila Mahavidyalaya was built with that money. (8) It can be said that an initiative was taken by the Jalpaiguri Rajbari to expand higher education for girls in the district at that time, but in addition to this, one more thing must be mentioned in connection with the establishment of this university is that the building of the Imperial Tobacco Company was recently purchased and today this modern Ramya Soudha was built. Initially, however, the college was held at Jalpaiguri Sadar Girls School for some time. Then the college started sitting at Anand Chandra College of Commerce. The professors stayed in the Rajbari for a while, but later on the Imperial Tobacco Company's house built their royal residence and female students' residence, then this (9) of today was built. So much about the setting up of universities, besides this, it is necessary to discuss about the present image of university education. While discussing in this context, it can be said that in the initial phase, honours were taught in only four subjects in this university. There were only pre-university courses in science and geography, currently this university teaches honors in ten subjects including science, the number of students also exceeds two thousand (10). That is, there has been an increase in girls' interest in getting higher education, which can be said to be a positive aspect. Finally, it can be said about the university that the efforts to build this university were taken by the shapers of modern Jalpaiguri, co-education was in vogue in Anandachandra College of the district, only they realized the need to expose girls to intellectualism in their own environment, moreover, since 1949, numerous families from East Pakistan came to Jalpaiguri. A co-educational college in Alipurduar sub-division and a co-educational college for girls only at Jalpaiguri were built when the West Bengal government and the central government agreed to finance the higher education of boys and girls from these marginalized families (35). However, it is also true that after independence, no other girls' college was established in the district, so girls have to depend on this school for higher education, so it can be said that it is quite important as the center of higher education in the district.

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