

## EDUCATION OF WOMEN IN OTTOMAN

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### ABSTRACT

Education has an important place in human life. Education of women also has an important role to cultural development in a society. In this study, it will be discussed the education of women and the systems of education which changed from Tanzimat to Turkish Republic. In doing this, it will be mentioned both education of women in the main land and in Cyprus during the Ottoman period. The Ottomans came to Cyprus in 1571. Between 1878 and 1960 the island of Cyprus was administered by United Kingdom and, in this period there were many regulations in education like in all other areas. Therefore, the education of Turkish Cypriot women can be divided into two periods; Ottoman Empire and United Kingdom period. The method of the study is literature review, so the study is based on historical research.

### Introduction

The history of education of women in Turkish educational system can be divided into two main parts: Before and after accepting Islam. After conversion to Islam, the life styles and educational systems of Turks were mainly changed. Before Islam, the basic qualities of women were “mother” and “heroism” in Turks. They have equal rights with men. After accepting Islam, women began to lose their rights and to stay at home. Women has become dependent on man. Before Tanzimat, the innovations in education aimed to opening military schools. Until Tanzimat women’s rights highly restricted in the Ottoman. The basic philosophy of the Ottoman Empire was to educate the young people to help them to be a better person. As the basis of their approach, in the occupied areas the Ottomans restructured and administered the social life and the education institutions according to Islamic religion and culture. By the way, they used to bring a new system by using the history of the civilisations before them and enriched their own culture with such knowledge as well (Hallaçoğlu, 1989: 71).

In 1839 Tanzimat Firman was declared by Mahmud II. Tanzimat was a period that included many reforms to modernize Ottoman state and society. This reforms were a series of edicts declared between 1839 and 1876. Although there was no article which was concerned directly education in the Tanzimat Firman, the reform movements began in the field of education. Because, the success of the reforms mentioned in Tanzimat Firman could only be possible by education. During the Ottoman, women could only attend primary schools (Sibyan schools), there was no need another education. Formal education was began in Tanzimat Period for Turkish women. “The modernization of the military was partly based on the French model and education was a further area which would be similarly influenced” (Smallwood, 2002:13). For example, in 1869 General Education Law (Maarif-i Umumiye Nizamnamesi) was prepared under the influence of Duruy law of France (Kurnaz, 1991:4). Duruy law was enacted 1867 for primary education by Victor Duruy in France, minister of public education. “Duruy argued that the influence of the mother on her children was too great to be ignored. He asserted that the state would have to give greater attention to women's education in the future if it hoped to improve the overall success of education in France” (Horvart, 1975: 86). After enacted 1869 General Education Law (Maarif-i Umumiye Nizamnamesi), some of the most radical changes were made in education system. This law consists of 5 sections and 198 article. According to this law, general schools in Ottoman were divided into three main classes: primary (Sibyan), secondary (Rushdie, İdadi, Sultani) and High schools (Darülfünun).

In general all educational institutions except Enderun were called Madrasa in Ottoman. Enderun was a palace school for the Christians of the Ottoman Empire. Palace education had a special place in Ottoman. There were three schools in the palace; Enderun mektebi (Only boys used to be attend to gain manager trained), Harem or Duhteran mektebi (This school was contributed to education of girls who brought to the palace) and Şehzadegan mektebi (primary school for princes). Until Tanzimat period, there were only two formal educational institutions in Ottoman. These were Sibyan schools and madrasas. “The madrasa system inherited from the Seljuk Turk continued in existence augmented by the contributions of the Ottomans” (Ihsanoglu, 2004: 4). In this study, it was not examined all educational institutions in Ottoman; it was only mentioned schools which women were educated.

### **Sibyan Mektebi (Primary Schools)**

Sibyan schools were primary schools and they were also called neighborhood schools. These schools used to be found near a mosque. Education was free and compulsory in these schools. In these schools, basic principles of Islam, reading, writing and mathematics were taught. Five or six years old boys and girls attended Sibyan mektebi (primary schools) and they educated together. However, after graduated primary schools, girls could not attend any school. On the other hand, boys could attend Madrasa. In 1876 there were 290 sibyan mektebi in Ottoman (Kurnaz, 1991:6). Sibyan mektepleri was reorganized during the Tanzimat. These schools were called İptidai schools during the Mahmud II. "Primary education was not required by law until 1876. By 1883, there were 224 State sibyan schools for girls in İstanbul: with a total of 11, 132 pupils" (Smallwood, 2002:16)

### **Inas Rushdies (Middle Schools For Girls)**

In Ottoman secondary education system was divided into three schools; Idadi, Rushdies and Sultani. Inas rushdies were the women's middle school in Ottoman. The first rushdie for girls, named Cevri Kalfa İnas Rushdie, was opened in 1859 in İstanbul (Akyüz, 2004:151). Darülmaarif was another important Inas Rushdie, founded in İstanbul by Bezmialem Valide Sultan who is the mother of Abdülmecit. This school was opened to train students for Darülfünun. The opening of Inas Rushdies (secondary schools for young women) was a very significant development in the Turkish history of education. In these schools religion, history, geography, Arabic, Ottoman language grammar, sewing were taught. The duration of education was four years in these schools. There were two Inas Rusdies in cities; one of them for Muslims students and the other for non- Muslims students. "In the 1894-95 school year, of the 2,028 girls registered in İstanbul Rushdies schools, 46 gained a diploma, whilst 440 left for various unspecified reasons" (Smallwood, 2002: 17).

### **High Schools**

Idadis were another secondary schools in Ottoman. The first Idadi for girls was opened in 1880 in Babiali. This school was the first example of high school education for girls. "The intention was to teach European languages and feminine accomplishments such as music and embroidery in these schools. It was closed down after two years due to lack of interest" (Smallwood, 2002: 18). Turkish women could not attend higher education until constitutional period. The length of secondary education was made seven years that a combination of the four years of the Rushdie schools and the three years of the idadi schools.

### **Darümuallimat (Girl's Teacher Training College)**

In 1869 General Education Law (Maarif-i Umumiye Nizamnamesi) was enacted. After this law, to train teachers for girls primary schools and Inas Rushdies, Darümuallimat was opened in 1870. Darümuallimat was the girl teacher training college. The duration of education was three years. 32 students enrolled in the school for the first time, but only 20 students graduated from the school. The number of graduated students has decreased every year compared to the number of registered students. (Kurnaz, 1991: 24-27). Darümuallimat was the highest education institution for girls until the Darülfünun was opened.

### **Darülfünun (University)**

The idea of Darülfünun appeared in 1846, but it was started in 1863. Darülfünun was used to refer university, because of accepting students who graduated from Rushdies, actually it was not at the same level of the university. Darülfünun was reopened the name of Darülfünun-i Sahane in 1900 (Akyüz, 2005: 217). However, Turkish women could not attend higher education until constitutional period. The first university for girls, Inas Darülfünun was opened in İstanbul in 1915. Students who passed entry exam was accepted to this school. "Presumably they would have been expected to match the proficiency of the graduates from the Darümuallimat" (Smallwood, 2002: 26-27). Inas Darülfünun was closed in 1921 because of female students' boycotting.

### **The Education System In Cyprus During The Ottoman Empire**

The education is one of the most essential aspects of life for the Ottomans. They brought their education system where they went (Özkan, 2010:1983). So they brought their education system to Cyprus when they came to Cyprus in 1571. Until 1878 in order to improve the social life and cultural structure The Ottomans considered special importance to education and they placed their own system in every region and territories they occupied in Cyprus.

In Ottoman Empire the education system was funded by the State Foundations (Vakıflar) until the period of Tanzimat. So The Ottomans carried out the same political issue in Cyprus as well and they gave the responsibility of the education system to the State Foundations, independently separated from the other state issues (Haşim, 1986:112).

So when the Ottomans occupied Cyprus, they established State Foundations and through them they formed the formal and informal education systems. In formal education system the schools were Sibyan schools, Iptidai schools, Rushdies and Madrasas. On the other side dervish lodge, mosque and library were the institutions which formed the informal education system (Atalay, 2002: 29).

In 1869 General Education Law (Maarifi Umumiye Nizamnamesi) was enacted. According to this law, education system was improved. So after this law the state schools were established in 3 sections; primary, secondary and high schools. The name of the institutions for primary schools were Sibyan mektepleri, Iptidai ve Rushdie, for secondary schools the name of the institutions were Idadi ve Sultani and for higher education Darülfunun and Vocational High schools were formed (Akt. Demirtaş, 2007:177).

### **Sibyan Schools In Cyprus During The Ottomans Period**

Just like in Turkey in Cyprus Island during that times a Turkish Cypriot girl can go to “Sibyan Schools” or in other words neighborhood schools (Local primary school in the hood). Pupil started their education at the age of 5-6 until the age of 13-15 at Sibyan schools (Ergün: 2004:1). At first in those schools they gave only the writing lessons, then they started to give basic knowledge about Islam religion. Until they graduate, the students should learn to read the Kur’an by heart. This should be in three years until the age of 10. After they finished Kur’an they could study for more three years and could study grammar, speaking, literature and history lessons as well. These schools were shut on Thursday afternoons as well as on Fridays (Demirtaş, 2007:176). On the other hand the citizens of Cyprus who were not Muslim can go to these schools as well. After Sultan II. Mahmut’s firman which is called Talim-i Sibyan it was made compulsory for 4-7 years old children to go to Sibyan schools (Unat, 1964:74).

After the Ottoman occupied Cyprus island the first education institution formed by the State Foundations was Ayasofya Sibyan Mektebi (1571-1600). During the Ottoman period in Cyprus there were education institutions which did not belong to State Foundations, instead they were formed by special persons (eg. philanthropist) and other formal institutions (Atalay, 2003: 53).

The first Rushdie school opened in Cyprus during the Ottoman was İlmiye Mektebi or it was called Rushdie of Selimiye as well in 1860. Rushdie schools were at the same stage of secondary schools and their education period was 3 years (Behçet, 1969:144). With Rushdie schools the education system started to be the class system with the desks and rows (Kıbrıs’ta Türk Eserleri, 1982: 13). But the Turkish Cypriot girls could not go to these Rushdie schools at that time.

### **Iptidai Schools In Cyprus During The Ottoman Empire Period**

According to the General Education law the students study writing, and reading, history, maths, geography, religious knowledge for 3-4 years at the Iptidai schools. According to Kodaman (1991: 27), during Tanzimat period Iptidai schools started to give education beside the sibyan schools. Because they realised that the sibyan schools were not sufficient. So instead of traditional methods a new education method (Usul-i Cedide) was started to be used in Idadi schools and at Sibyan schools as well (Akt. Gökmen, 2006:152-153).

According to Akyüz (2008), after this reform they began to use desks and rows in the class-rooms. On the other hand, teacher’s desks, maps and black boards were used as training tools as well. He added that, through these reforms, the student’s capacity were upgraded, they progressed and the teachers possessed very special features, by the way they began to be paid salary.

### **Education In Cyprus During The British Administration Period**

When the United Kingdom hired the Cyprus island from the Ottomans in 1878, a few years later in 1880 they reformed and established a new educational system. And they separated the educational system of Turks and Greeks. They founded Lefkoşa Turkish Educational Committee. The British administration formed a new Education Law in 1920. Through this law they took the control of the education system. But the Greek people rioted against this new Education law in 1931. So, English administration put strict regulations and bans. After these regulations the Turks and Greeks couldn’t bring books from Turkey and Greece. Instead English History would be given in schools and Royal family song would be sang and English flag would be hoisted. And the teachers from Turkey and Greece would not come to Cyprus any more (Feridun, 2002: 69; Akt. Temiz, 2009:635).

Before this law, when Cyprus Island hired by United Kingdom in 1878, the number of Schools in Cyprus were 65 Sibyan, 7 Medrese and 1 Rüşdiye which belonged to State Foundations. At that time, there were 114 teachers, in those schools; 47 of them came from Turkey, 47 came from State Foundations and 20 came from the villages (Süha, 1971: 44).

By the time passed The English administrations lower the number of schools through new regulations in every 10 years. So, in 1900 the number of Sibyan schools were 14, in 1910 it would be 11 and in 1919 it was 6 (Behçet, 1969: 82). Until 1920 schools in Cyprus were financially sponsored By The Ottoman Empire. Then after the new Education Law, United Kingdom cut off the connection with Turkey. In 1905 Sibyan schools were upgraded from 4 years to 5 years. And until 1935 the curriculum would be same with Turkey. So the Alphabet Revolution would be implemented in 1929 while it was formed in 1928 in Turkey. And other implemantations were made, like Kur'an-i Kerim and other Religious lessons cut off from curriculums at the same time as Turkey (Weir, 1952: 72).

In 1935 through the Education Law (Maarif Kanunu –Tevhid-i Tedrisat) Sibyan schools were closed and instead of them primary schools were opened. And the duration of education of the primary schools was upgraded from 5 to 6 years. But when the curriculum changed, English people used this situation and brought their own curriculum (Süha,1971: 44).

Until 1943-1944 education year there was only one secondary school in Nicosia, then Turkish Cypriots opened new schools in other teritorries as well. When Victorian Girls' School (Viktorya İslam İnas Sanayi Mektebi) was established in Nicosia at 1901, its education level was at the secondary school level, but in 1952 it was upgraded to a Lycee.

### **The Education Of Turkish Cypriot Women In Cyprus**

Through the Treaty 1878 United Kingdom took the administration of Cyprus island. From 1878 until 1960 Cyprus was administered by United Kingdom. During those years there were so many regulations in every area, including education on the island. Through these regulations in education new schools were opened. On the other hand, when the British administration took the control of the education in Cyprus they established the "Muslim Education Committee" in 1884. In 1896-1898 this committee was planning to open Lycee (Idadi) and a girls' school at the stage of secondary school. One of these schools and the most important one for the girls was Victorian Girls' School. Both these schools were opened by "The Muslim Education Committee" (Dedeçay, 2008: 21). After the establishment of Lycee of Cyprus in 1897, The Muslim Education Committee decided to open a girls' school and dicated to give sewing and embriodery lessons. For this school they dicated to use the same program for Rushdie's as well, and it was at the same stage as the secondary education, thus the girls could not go to, after they graduate from Sibyan schools, until Tanzimat Firman in Turkey (Behçet, 1969:114-115)

On the other hand although the first girl schools established in 1778, the first girls secondary school (Girl's Rushdie) opened in Turkey in 1862 (Yaraman, 2001, s.29).

### **Victorian Girls' School (Viktorya İslam İnas Sanayi Mektebi)**

The British administration and The Turkish philanthropists came together to cover the construction costs of the Victorian school, in return English colonial administration requested the school should be named after Queen Victoria. The Victorian Girls' School was established in 1901 and started its educational activities in 1902. Before that time, The Turkish Cypriot girls could not go to school after they graduate from sibyan schools. So it was an important improvement especially for the Turkish Cypriot girls for that time. After the school opened in 1902, the first students graduated from the Victorian Girls' School in 1904-1905. The graduated students had a chance to be assigned as a teacher at the school as well. (Önge ve Kanvaz, 1977: 9). Up until 1925, the education period was 3 years, then later it was increased to 4 years (Çapa, 2016: 101). 90 pupils were educated at the school and the education period was increased to 6 years in 1935 (Dedeçay, 2008: 32- 50).

Victoria Girls' School played an important role in the history of the educaion of Turkish Cypriot women. Thus, this school both changed the statues of women and had a positive impact on the development of the society. In addition, this school had took an important role in adoption of the Atatürk's Revolutions.

### **Conclusion**

Changes in the educational system have also led to a change of the status of women in society. After accepting Islam, the status of Turkish woman in society began to change and they began to lose their effectiveness in society. Until the establishment of Turkish Republic women were neglected in all areas included education. During the Ottoman, women could only attend primary schools (Sibyan schools), there was no need another education. Formal education was began in Tanzimat Period for Turkish women. Although there was no article which was concerned directly education in the Tanzimat Firman, the reform movements began in the field of education. Because, the success of the reforms mentioned in Tanzimat Firman could only be possible by education. After enacting General Education Law (Maarif-i Umumiye Nizamnamesi) in 1869, the first girl teacher school (Darülmualimat) was opened. On the other hand, Turkish women could not attend higher education until Constitutional period. Although from the Tanzimat to the Republic there were some regulations in education and new schools were opened for women, Turkish women gained the right to education and place they deserve in society in Turkish Republic. Today, women access to education easier than previous generation.

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