

# Ottoman Education in Iraq and Its Impact on Iraqi Society

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## **Introduction**

Education is an important indicator of the development and development of societies and the advancement of their culture to the top. Therefore, the developed peoples pay great attention to education in its different stages. As a result of the awareness that prevailed in the Ottoman Empire after the spread of the concepts of reform and change emerged the demand for the need to take care of the education sector, both within the Ottoman state or in its states.

The Ottoman government has paid great attention to the education sector, especially since the second half of the nineteenth century. Attention began from the era of the ruler Daoud Pasha established schools in Iraq and tried to satisfy scientists because of their impact in the stability of the country. The results of educational reforms in Iraq emerged clearly after the enactment of the General Education Law, which was the fruit of the fruits of reform in 1869 by the Ottoman Governor of Iraq Medhat Pasha.

In the constitutional era also issued the general education laws in the Ottoman Empire and its territories. This Search deals with the study of Ottoman education in Iraq since the 1869 until its construction was almost complete by the end of the Ottoman rule of Iraq in 1918. The research focuses on Ottoman education in terms of its origin, development and circumstances, especially in the last Ottoman era. Where Iraq was divided into three states: Baghdad, Mosul and Basra.

The focus was on modern education (military, civilian schools). Its beginnings were during the reign of the governor, Medhat Pasha (1869-1872), who was interested in modern education.

## **The Beginnings of Education in Iraq During the Ottoman Period**

Education in Iraq at the first Ottoman era was confined to the mosques , which existed before the Ottoman conquest of Iraq. Mosques were considered primary

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schools in which students learned limited cultures and specialized in the majority of religious studies, including memorization of the Koran and teaching reading and writing (spelling), and requires only one teacher is often fluent in writing and reading. Children between the ages of 4 and 7 are sent to the schools, which was called (Ketateeb) these are lessons given in mosques for children<sup>1</sup>.

Although the customs and traditions of Iraqi society prevented the education of girls, but found in the late Ottoman period some of the girls' schools taught by the women teachers and most of the young girls who enter these schools from the daughters of middle families, has been limited to the presence of these girls' Ketateeb in the big cities<sup>2</sup>.

The importance of the Ketateeb in Iraq was that it was the only educational basis on which the state relied almost entirely on the provision of educational services in the first stages, even after establishment of modern schools for a long time, the state considered Ketateeb to be primary schools serving as a modern primary schools. The subsequent expansion of the modern school movement led people to look for a better future for their children by sending them to those schools that accepted graduates of the Ketateeb. Thus, the number of children enrolled in the ketateeb increased with the aim of completing their studies in modern schools built by the Ottoman State<sup>3</sup>.

### **Modern Education in Iraq Under the Medhat Pasha (Modern Schools)**

In 1846 the state issued instructions for a comprehensive reform of the educational movement and for the establishment of modern educational institutions in the states of the Ottoman Empire. The establishment of the AL Maaref Council (which is similar to the Ministry of Education at the present time) in Istanbul in the same year has played a role in the development of the education movement<sup>4</sup>. At the time of the promulgation of the Ottoman the education Law in 1869, a basis was laid for the integrated educational system in the states of the Ottoman

1 Jamil Musa Najjar, Education in Iraq in the Last Ottoman Era 1869-1918, Baghdad, 2002, P.71.

2 Abdul Razzaq al-Hilali, History of Education in Iraq in the Ottoman Period 1638-1917, Baghdad, 1959, P.60.

3 Najjar, Op.Cit, P. 80.

4 Muhammad Asfour Salman, Reform Movement in the Ottoman Empire and its Impact on the Arab Orient 1839-1908, unpublished doctoral dissertation, Faculty of Arts, University of Baghdad, 2005, P.254.

Empire, including Iraq. This law provided for the formation of a high council for education and knowledge councils in the Ottoman states<sup>5</sup>.

The law of 1869 included several important things, including<sup>6</sup>:

- 1) Setting a special budget for education.
- 2) Monitor schools and work to upgrade them.
- 3) Repair old schools, and set up new schools.

The Ottoman Empire took clear steps to establish modern schools in Iraq during the reign of Medhat Pasha (1869 - 1872), who distinguished among the governors of Iraq with the capacity of cultural horizons and the urgent desire for numerous reforms and modernization of some aspects of life in Iraq, especially education, so he said "People deserve education and they can make progress when there is an opportunity"<sup>7</sup>.

Medhat Pasha, a few months after his arrival in Baghdad, started to establish a number of modern schools that were the nucleus of modern government education, These modern schools, established by the Ottoman Empire in Iraq were along the lines of European schools, are characterized by their interest in teaching science according to a specific curriculum. It is taught by teachers who have prepared a special preparation for this task<sup>8</sup>.

There were many types of middle school that were built by Medhat Pasha. They were divided into three sections:

**First: Middle School<sup>9</sup> Civil and Military:** Medhat Pasha started his work in the field of educational services with the opening of four schools: middle school civil<sup>10</sup>, (Al Rashidiya) middle school Military, Military Preparatory School, and the School of Arts and Crafts<sup>11</sup>. Although there is no specific date for the start of these

5 Muhammad Asfour Salman, Iraq during the reign of Medhat Pasha (1286 - 1289 AH) - (1869 - 1872), unpublished master thesis, Faculty of Arts, University of Baghdad, 1989,P. 63.

6 Karim al-Waeli, Education in Iraq in the Late Ottoman Period <http://www.m.ahewar.org>

7 Quoted in , Ibid , P. 3.

8 Ahmed Jouda, History of Education in Iraq and its impact on the political side 1534 - 2011, Baghdad, 2012,P.44.

9 It was named during the Ottoman period (Al Rashidiya schools).

10 Jouda, OPCit , P. 44.

11 Ismail Nuri al-Rubaie, the history of education in Iraq in the Ottoman and royal era, [www.iraqcenter.com](http://www.iraqcenter.com).

schools in the work, but came in the one of the Ottoman documents, the name of the city of Mosul Within the names of the Twenty-ninth Ottoman provinces which contain high school, in 1865<sup>12</sup>. in Mosul, there were four high school in the state center, Sulaymaniyah, Kirkuk and Rawanduz. Baghdad had 13 schools, two of them in the state center<sup>13</sup>.

Middle school initially allowed students who had received the of their primary education in the Ketateeb to enter the schools, because the modern primary schools were not yet established<sup>14</sup>. The students were subjected to a literacy and numeracy examination to determine their eligibility for school enrollment. The period of study was four years, and the language of teaching is the Turkish language. The curriculum is geography, history, Turkish grammar, Arabic and Persian, arithmetic, line drawing, principles of engineering, principles of religious sciences<sup>15</sup>.

Schools for girls were established, the first school for girls established in the city of Mosul, was opened in 1898, and counted twenty students. This was the first high school s for girls established in Iraq during the Ottoman era. The middle school Girls' in Baghdad was founded shortly after its founding in Mosul. middle school girls' were divided into two sections: Section primary and secondary section, the number of years of study in which six years. School curriculum in girls' schools did not differ significantly from those in male schools<sup>16</sup>. In order to provide teachers permanently, the Ottoman Empire decided to open institutes for teachers in Iraq<sup>17</sup>.

After the establishment of the civil high school, Medhat Pasha founded the military middle school, in 1870. In preparation for the establishment of a military High schools to prepare Iraqi students to join the military college in Istanbul. In this school there were a number of students who completed their first studies in the schools. The duration of the study was four years, during which they studied some theoretical subjects, including Arabic, Turkish, Persian, history, geography, religion. their teachers were Turkish military personnel serving in the 6th Army,

12 Fadhel Mehdi Bayat, Education in Iraq in the Ottoman Period (A Historical Study in the Light of the Ottoman Salmants), Vol. II, Al-Muored Magazine, No. 1, Baghdad, 1994,P.10.

13 Ibid.

14 Al-Zawra Newspaper, No. 173, 10 Jumada Al-Akhirah, 1288 AH (1871).

15 Najjar, Op.Cit , P. 111.

16 Ibrahim Khalil Ahmed, The Evolution of National Education in Iraq 1869 - 1932, Basra, 1982.P.37.

17 Ibid .

which was based in Baghdad. The school was free and provided all the needs of its students<sup>18</sup>. The school was considered a first step to the graduation of Iraqi officers for the Sixth Army in Iraq.

To achieve the idea of preparing Iraqi army officers, a military preparatory school was established in Baghdad in 1871, and the duration of the study was three years. The government has pledged to bear the expenses of the students, and the graduate qualified to enter the military college in Istanbul and the duration of study in three years also. Twenty-five students were enrolled in the study. This explains the fact that the number of Iraqi students in this college was more than the number of students coming from the rest of the Arab provinces<sup>19</sup>.

**Second: High Schools:** high schools come after middle schools at the educational level. The instructions specify that the student wishing to enroll must have an intermediate certificate. the high school has become an internal one and has imposed a fee on the well-off students, and the poor have been accepted free of charge at this school. Medhat Pasha also decided to build a building for the poor students next to the school to be their dwelling place. The first high school was opened in Baghdad in 1873, the Ottoman government took great care of this school and appointed a full staff of teachers, its director and most faculty members until 1875 were army officers<sup>20</sup>.

The number of students in 1896 was 60 students and the number rose in 1906 to 226 students, 195 of whom were Muslims, while the remaining 31 were non-Muslims. According to an Ottoman document (Sallanama Baghdad, 1896), a royal order was issued to transfer the school to an internal school where the students would reside. opened another high school in the province of Mosul in 1895, and opened two other schools in the provinces of Shehzore (Kirkuk) and Sulaymaniyah<sup>21</sup>.

The curricula taught in high schools were the same as those of middle schools in the first three grades. In the fourth and fifth grades, they taught the Koran, religious sciences, Arabic and Turkish, ethics, French, mathematics, geography, history, science<sup>22</sup>.

18 Bayat, Op.Cit , P.13.

19 Salman, Iraq in the era of Medhat Pasha, Op.Cit , P. 64.

20 Ahmed, Op.Cit , P. 40.

21 Bayat, Op.Cit ,P. 13.

22 Ibid , P.12.

**Third: Vocational Education and Training:** When Medhat Pasha arrived in Baghdad and began setting up schools, he saw that there were orphans and very poor families, these Children do not have the ability to learn in modern schools. So he thought of setting up a vocational school, and entered the orphaned children and children of poor families in these schools. Medhat Pasha decided to build the school on the bank of the Tigris River, and bore the state construction costs. In the beginning of 1870 the school was opened, and there were several sections, namely: Blacksmith , spinning and weaving, shoe making .The number of students at the opening (144)<sup>23</sup>.

Medhat Pasha paid great attention to the construction of vocational schools (schools of industry) in an attempt to prepare technical workers for the projects that he planned to establish in Iraq, such as the extraction of oil from the wells of Khanaqin, the textile factory which he founded during his rule, and other industrial projects<sup>24</sup>. The importance of vocational education in the development of some industries according to modern methods ,which the Ottoman Empire tried to quote from European countries<sup>25</sup>.

Medhat Pasha used to train students in these industries to some skilled trainers from Iraqis, he succeeded in covering the expenses of the school from the income of production Which amounted to (1000) Lira Ottoman annually. The school's treasury provided a financial loan to the graduating students so that they could continue their craft they had trained it in school<sup>26</sup>.

Vocational schools were interested in teaching Ottoman and geographical history, Turkish and Persian languages, mathematics, hand drawing, mechanical drawing and religion. The practical training was conducted in the fields of blacksmithing, turning, plumbing, carpentry, sewing and footwear manufacturing<sup>27</sup>.

Another vocational school opened in Kirkuk in 1871 through donations from wealthy Iraqis, The State was quick to develop the school curriculum and send the trainers to this school<sup>28</sup>. This shows the extent of cooperation of the people with the state and vice versa.

23 Abbas al-Azzawi, Iraq between two occupations, Baghdad 1956, part 7, p.206-209.

24 Saleh Abdullah Soria, Development of Industrial Education in Iraq, Baghdad, 1969,P.54.

25 Najjar, Op.Cit, P.114.

26 Salman, Iraq in the era of Medhat Pasha, Op.Cit,P. 68.

27 Mosaarh Al-Rawi and others, Industrial Education in Iraq, Baghdad, 1968,P.47.

28 Salman, Iraq in the era of Medhat Pasha, Op.Cit,P. 68.

The Law School was established in the late Ottoman era, and in the era of (Nazim Pasha) in 1908. Baghdad celebrated the opening of Baghdad (School of Law) and gave the poet Mohammed Sidqi al-Zahawi, a teacher also, a poem entitled (chapters) in which he expressed joy at the opening of the school. In its early stages, the school consisted of four classes, and the number of students ( 30-40 ), with the exception of the fourth grade, which exceeded the number of its ten students. In 1911, Iraq celebrated graduated the first batch (Laws) and the number of ten students, the names of some of them in the fields of multiple life<sup>29</sup>.

### **Conclusion**

- 1) Iraq witnessed a tangible development in the educational aspect, especially after the reform movement in the Ottoman Empire. In 1846, the Ottoman government issued instructions for a comprehensive reform in the educational movement and the creation of modern educational institutions in all Ottoman states. The establishment of the Council of Knowledge Management in the Ottoman States in 1846 played a role in the follow-up of the education movement and the organization and supervision of education affairs in the Ottoman states.
- 2) Medhat Pasha undertook the task of putting the first building blocks in the government education system in Iraq and implementing the educational policy of the state in this part of the country. This policy was aimed at achieving urgent goals related to the power of the state and its preservation. Medhat Pasha realized these goals and set them in mind when he started the establishment of modern schools in Iraq, leaving his distinctive mark on the educational policy that began to apply in Iraq because of his characteristic character of love for reform, and diligence in the methods of implementation. Medhat Pasha succeeded in establishing these schools in conditions that were not prepared for such work, both by the Iraqi society, which was very conservative at the time about everything new, or from the material side and to provide funds for the establishment of modern schools. Despite this, Medhat Pasha managed to overcome many of the administrative and technical obstacles that stood in the way. His reforms in education and culture have been remarkably successful in raising intellectual awareness in Iraq.
- 3) The Ottoman Empire began the process of establishing modern schools and

29 Raja Dawood, a law school in Qusla, Mother gave birth to the leaders <http://www.narjesmag.com>,

the spread of modern state education in the states of Iraq in 1869, and before that date the Ottoman state had a role in sponsoring the religious education that existed in the country. Some of the prefectures established several religious schools, which numbered at the beginning of the twentieth century (113) schools distributed in the cities: Baghdad, Mosul, Najaf, Karbala, Kadhimiya, Samarra, Basra.

- 4) The civil schools founded by Medhat Pasha in Baghdad in 1869 were the first public school to represent the beginning of the state's activity in the opening of modern schools in Iraq. The State has focused on these schools to fill government posts and support civil administrative institutions with newly educated elements. The number of these schools reached 40 schools in the three states of Iraq at the end of the Ottoman rule.



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