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Batch # 50

Pakistan Affairs.

Q The Aligarh Movement was a pure educational venture but it had deep impacts on Indian Politics. Discuss?

Ans. **Aligarh Movement**

The Aligarh movement was a social reform movement in India that was launched by Sir Sayyid Ahmed Khan in 1875. It was initially established as an educational initiative aimed at the upliftment of the Muslim community. However, over time, its impact extended beyond education and had significant implications for Indian politics.

Services of Aligarh movement

Sayyid Ahmed Khan's Aligarh Movement played a significant role in bringing about an intellectual revolution among the Indian Muslims. Thus, it succeeded in

achieving its major objectives, i.e. educational progress and social reform.

Educational Initiatives:

The Britishers replaced Persia with English language. This change was welcomed by Hindus because for them both the languages were stranger. But Muslims were very disappointed due to this change therefore; they were anemic towards western English Education. They were hostile to the new system of education due to four reasons.

- 1- They considered this new English education inferior to the traditional Islamic learning.
- 2- They considered that this education was being forced on them.
- 3- They were of the opinion that this education had no need and use for them.

4- They were thinking that modern education will divert them from their true religion and that it is against the verses of Quran.

The result was that they remain backward in education. During the period of 1859-1875, only twenty Muslims got BA/B.Sc degrees. While on the other hand, Hindus who welcomed this education system were seven hundred and fifteen in number who did their graduation. At this critical stage, Sir Syed Ahmed Khan came forward and guided the Muslims in the right direction. He believed that Muslims can not go for progress without right direction and modern education. He removed all the illusion from the Muslims mind. For him the real value of modern education lay in the fact that it was design to improve character and social morals

and make its recipients better citizens. Equipped with education, Muslims would thus be able to discharge their social obligations and work for the progress and welfare of their country.

The Aligarh Movement focused on modernizing Muslim education by introducing western science, literature, and rationality into the curriculum. The Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) was founded as a result, with an emphasis on imparting western-style education while incorporating Islamic education. This educational approach aimed to equip Muslims with the knowledge and skills required to compete in various professional fields.

Political awareness :

Sir Syed Ahmad Khan's effort in politics was to keep the Muslims away from joining the Congress. He strongly advised the Muslims against joining the Hindu

dominated congress. He was in favor of reserved seats for Muslims and also promoted the idea that Hindus and Muslims are two distinct nations. This idea led to the two-Nation theory.

Prefer education over politics:
Sir Syed wanted to keep the Muslims away from congress because the Muslims were very weak educationally as well as economically. Sir Syed wanted that they should just concentrate on education which was the only solution to their problems.

Fear of exploiting by the Congress:
Sir Syed Ahmed Khan has also the fear that due to the lack of education they might be fooled and exploited by the congress. The congress was demanding for the introduction of representative government in India which would lead to the government

of majority and Hindus were in majority, so ultimately the Muslim community would fall in slavery. Therefore, Sir Syed was not favouring their joining in congress.

As Muslims gained access to modern education, they became more politically aware and engaged. The movement's emphasis on rationality and knowledge fostered critical thinking, leading Muslims to analyze their socio-political situation. This, in turn, contributed to the development of a political consciousness among the community.

Influence on Political Discourse

The political awakening resulting from the Aligarh Movement contributed to the broader Indian political landscape. The educated Muslims who emerged from the movement

played pivotal roles in shaping political ideologies and participating in the movements for India's independence.

They collaborated with their other communities to advocate for their rights within the framework of a united India.

Social Awakening:

Sir Syed worked for the revival of social conditions of the Muslims. He did not like the conservative attitude of the Muslims. He desired the revival of the Muslims in social life.

Steps for social awakening:-

- 1- He published the most influential magazine "Tahzib-ul-Akhlag" in which he outlined the ethical aspects of the Muslims life.
- 2- He opened a number of

Orphan houses where the orphan children of the Muslims were looked after the provided shelter.

3- He worked sincerely for the promotion of Urdu which was the language of Muslims of sub-continent.

4- He founded "Anjuman-e-Tahrik-i-Urdu" which worked for the protection of Urdu.

5- He wrote another book (magazine) as "Akkami-e-Tasam-e-Ahle-Kitab" in which the principles and etiquettes of eating and dining in Islam were discussed.

Modernization :-

This movement emphasized the need for Muslims to adapt to modernity and technological advancements.

This led to social awakening among the Muslim community, encouraging them to embrace new ideas and

adapt a more progressive outlook. The movement encouraged Muslims to break away from traditional practices that were hindering their progress.

Religious Services?

Aligarh movement rendered services for the safeguard of religious freedom of the Muslims of India.

He stood for rational approach in religion. To him religion was not static or a thing based upon some fixed dogmas. He wrote exegesis of the Holy Quran.

He wrote "Khutbat-e-Ahmadiya" to answer Sir William Muir, who had written a book "Life of Muhammad" in which he made highly objectionable remarks about the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.O.W).

Pointing similarities b/w Muslims and Christians?

For this purpose he wrote a commentary on Bible

known as "Tabaeon-al-kalam"
so through this book he
pointed the similarities between
Islam and Christianity.

Love for Holy Prophet and Islam:

He has great love for Holy
Prophet (S.A.W) and also for
Islam. In this context
his memorable work, "The
essays on the life of the
Muhammad" is an ample
proof. His services for
Islam and the Muslims
show that he was a true
Muslim and had a firm
faith in Islam.

Promotion of Unity:

The Aligarh movement attempted
to unite Muslims across
India under a common
banner. This unity was
based on shared educational
aspirations and a desire
for social and political
progress. The movement
aimed first to address
the challenges faced

by the Muslims community.

Conclusion:

The Aligarh movement began as a pure educational endeavor, its impact on Indian politics was profound. By promoting modern education, social awareness, religious and political consciousness among Muslims, it contributed to their participation in the broader political discourse and struggle for independence.

The movement's emphasis on unity and the harmonization of tradition and modernity left a lasting impact on the development of the Muslim identity and their role in shaping India's history.