

The Aligarh Movement was a pure educational movement but it had deep impacts on Indian politics. Discuss.

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Introduction.

After the great revolt of 1857, Muslims were marginalized and deprived of every facility that could be beneficial for socio-economic and political well being, of Muslims. At that time, the Aligarh movement, an educational movement established by the great man Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, injected a new life in the dead souls of Muslims and helped them to regain its glory and prestige. The Aligarh movement presented a platform ~~for Muslims~~ not only for educational uplift but also for political gain for Muslim community. As far as the politics is concerned the movement provided an intellectual generation that ultimately organized themselves to establish their own political party "All India Muslim League", that helped the then Muslims to protect their fundamental rights and separate electorate. From the separate electorate to the separate homeland, it was all due to the strong basis of institution that helped to achieve the milestone.

Making sense of Aligarh Movement:

Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, being a close observer of downfall of the Muslims, from rulers to be ruled, was worried about the demise and wanted to regain their prestige. Being a social reformer and educationist he took several steps for this purpose including establishment of scientific society, establishment of MAD college and Muhammedan educational

conference. The establishment of MAO college at Aligarh paved the way for a great movement known to be the Aligarh movement that helped Muslims to acquire modern scientific and English knowledge. Moreover, the intellectual development of students beside religious education was proved miraculous. ~~At~~ At the time of opening ceremony of MAO College Sir Syed Ahmed Khan said:

"From the seed which we sow today there may be spring up a mighty tree whose branches, like those of the banyan of the soil, shall in their turn strike firm roots into the earth and themselves send forth new and vigorous saplings. This college may expand into a university whose sons shall go forth throughout the length and breadth of the land to preach the gospel of free enquiry, of large hearted toleration, and of pure morality."

The two main objectives of Aligarh movement was to remove the misunderstanding between the Muslims and the British government and to avail opportunities under the new regime without deviating in any way from the fundamentals of their faith. The movement created new friends and impulses in the life of Muslims and promoted cooperation between all groups and races and welded them to create an enlightened society. In a nutshell, the Aligarh movement was fundamentally a cultural

movement aiming at the regeneration of liberal values of literature, social life, political life, religion and education.

Political impacts of Aligarh movement:

Although politics was not the object of the Aligarh movement in early days, but due to rising Hindu dominance and marginalization of Muslim community some prominent personalities of Aligarh institute took steps to ensure fundamental rights and motivate the community politically. Thus it had some impacts on Indian politics to provide shelter to Muslims from demanding separate electorate to separate homeland.

a) Urdu Hindi controversy and emergence of two nations theory:

In 1867, some orthodox Hindus of Banaras started agitation against the official language Urdu and demanded its replacement with Hindi in Devanagari script. Despite being majority of Hindus in United Provinces and in overall country, Urdu was used since the Mughal era in Persian script as an official language. Due to the controversy, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan with other prominent leadership from Aligarh institute

who were in favour of Hindu muslim unity till that time, realized the dominance and propaganda of Hinduism to marginalize muslim community. As a result, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan and his companions concluded that both muslims and Hindus are separate nations according to any definition of a nation. In future, it seems impossible to live together in a single community. Thus, first time in history politically and ideologically muslims were announced a separate nation by the leadership of Aligarh institute.

b) Generating intellectual and politically motivated leadership

During early days of Aligarh movement, Sir Syed Ahmed Khan prevented muslims to abstain from politics but with the passage of time, gradually the medieval muslims started learning western scientific, political and religious knowledge and intellectually developed themselves. At that time, some prominent leaders/teachers of Aligarh including Nawab Wajid-ul-Malik, Nawab Mohsin-ul-Malik, Mohammad Ali and Shokat Ali tried to work on political representation of muslims in contrast to Hindus that have their own platform as India National Congress. A no. of leaders emerged as a result of the movement who worked successfully on different important positions

of their prime minister, Chief Minister, Chief of staff and many more. Thus, it was all due to the movement's successful policy of education that generated a politically aware youth that took part in Pakistan movement.

c) Establishment of All India Muslim League and demand for separate Electorate

On October 1, 1906, a delegation of 35 members under the leadership of Sir Aga Khan met with Lord Minto at Shimla to discuss about political rights of Muslims. According to 1901 census, over 62 million Muslims were lived in India making it $\frac{1}{4}$ of total population. The Muslim delegation demanded their separate electorate and political representation in government. In a reply, Lord Minto was agreed to allow Muslim their separate representation. As a result, during the annual Muhammadan Educational Conference in 1906 at Dhaka, Nawab-Mohsin-ul-Malik laid the foundation of All India Muslim League to represent Muslims through India sub-continent. Thus, this was the result of Aligarh movement that lead ultimately Muslims their political representation in central government.

d) From Separate electorate to separate homeland.
a turmoil journey.

After the establishment of All India Muslim League, Muslims of sub-continent got a platform to discuss their social and political problems facing by Hindu's dominance in India. During 1937-1939, the Congress led government compelled Muslims to think about their separate homeland to live their life according to the teachings of Islam. The atrocities that Muslims faced during the Hindu regime led the Muslims to decide on 23rd March, 1940 at annual session of All India Muslim League for their separate homeland comprising of Muslim majority areas including Sindh, NWFP, Balochistan and Bengal. With collective efforts, Muslims of sub-continent succeeded in their efforts and got their separate home in 1947. Thus, due to the charismatic leadership and political awareness Muslims got during their journey in Aligarh institute results in political awakening and ultimately separate homeland.

Analysis:

Conclusion:

Although Sir Syed Ahmad Khan led Aligarh movement was started to uplift Muslims from demise condition and to improve better relations with rulers, but due to certain incidents and politically and intellectually developed personalities of Aligarh institute led movement imparted their efforts in political awakening of Muslims, demanding for their fundamental rights, representation on legislative and government. As a result, Muslims gathered on a single platform and demanded their separate homeland and ultimately succeeded. Hence it's all due to the spirit that was injected by Aligarh movement showed up its result.