

Q. In Sir Syed Ahmad Khan's struggle for uplifting the conditions of the Muslims, we see a conflict between Indian and European tradition and knowledge systems. Explain.

Background:-

The war of Independence, in 1857 brought in its wake untold misery and unending troubles and tribulations for the Indian Muslims. They were made the special target of British wrath. The cruelty that British perpetrated on the Muslims, the torture and agony of it, the words though, yet W.W. Hunter epitomised it saying, "If a politician wanted to create sensation in the House of Commons, he could do it by relating the conditions of a single Muslim family of Bengal." During those days of terror and persecutions when being a Muslim was considered crime enough to invite the white wrath, it took a lot of courage for an Indian Muslim to come to the forefront and hold brief for his nation with the pen or with the words of mouth. In these circumstances, it was Sayyid Ahmad Khan who dared to take up this delicate but highly important task of defending rights of the Muslims.

Sir Syed Ahmad Khan's struggle:-

• Sayyid Ahmad Khan was born on October 17, 1817 in Delhi. He belonged to a family that had been associated with the Mughals.

court at Delhi. He joined the civil service and rose to the rank of Judge. He went to England in 1869 and studied English education system at Cambridge. Sir Syed Ahmad Khan became the first Indian member of the Imperial Legislative Council. In 1888, he was made a Knight Commander of Star of India. He died on 27 March, 1898.

The supreme interest of Syed's life was education - in its widest sense. He began by establishing schools at Muradabad (1858) and Gorakhpur (1863). He laid the foundation of the Scientific Society in 1864. Other societies and organizations include British Indian Association (1866), Mohammadan Civil Service Fund Association (1883), All-India Mohammedan Educational Conference (1886), Indian Patriotic Association 1888, Mohammedan Anglo-Oriental Defence Association (1893).

Sir Syed Ahmad Khan was a man of robust intellect. During his tenure as a Govt Servant, he wrote no less than a dozen books on religious, social and historical topics from 1840 to 1857. His important books include Jam-e-Jum (1840), Jila-al-Duloob Ba-zikar-al-Mahboob (1842), Tuhta-e-Hasn (1844), Asar-us-Snadeed, Tasheeh Aqeen-e-Akbari (1855), Tasheeh Tarikh-e-Peroze Shahi (1862), The causes of Indian revolt (1857 to 1870). In 1867, he was transferred to Benares, a city on the Ganges with great religious

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Significance for the Hindus where a movement started to replace Urdu. This movement and the attempts to substitute Hindi for Urdu convinced Syed that the paths of the Hindus and the Muslims must diverge - the birth of two nation theory.

Conflicts between Indian and European Systems:-

1) Language barrier leads to formation of Scientific Society:-

Due to language barrier, Muslims were unaware of the social, moral, educational and political matters. British ignored the feelings of Indians and forced them to follow English way. In this context, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan founded Society on January 9, 1864 during his stay at Muradabad. Its purpose was to translate books of foreign languages and to provide opportunities for contact and interaction between the Indians and British.

2) Doubts about Islam (Religion):-

British/European writers created doubts about religion of Muslims. They considered Muslims as rebellion nation. Tahzeeb ul Akhlaq, in its peculiar way tried to make the Muslims conscious of social misdemeanors. The purpose of this magazine was to motivate the Muslims to acquire civilization to its perfection to neutralize the hatred with which civilized nations view them so that they may be regarded as respectable civilized nations.

3) Differences in Education system:

Sir Syed Ahmed Khan's motto was to adopt "Education, and only Education" as its motto. But, the Muslims of India avoided sending their children to English schools for various solid reasons. They were genuinely apprehensive that their children might deviate from religion under the influence of western education system. This proposed Muslims educational institution was decided to be established in 1873, then M.A.O college.

The education system of British Government was not welcomed by the Muslims through their inner part. The Muslim thought that it was totally irrelevant from the religion. On the other side, the different other communities accepted new education system. These challenges created more confidence to Sir Syed and took many ways, strategies and policies to make Aligarh Movement successful.

4) Comparison of western and Religious culture:

The type of education that the British introduced in the subcontinent also played a significant role in incensing the Muslim community. In fact, in accordance with Lord William Bentinck's policy of religious neutrality, this new education system did not make any concessions to religious neutrality, this new system of education did not make any concessions to religious neutrality, instruction and Islamic cultural heritage.

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According to K.K. Aziz, the aim behind the spreading of secular education was ostensibly to give full religious freedom to all creeds in subcontinent, including the muslim subjects. Dr Ghanifar Alickhan argues that muslims overwhelmingly objected to the western education provided by the christian missionaries because the purpose of the latter was "neither the education of the Indian natives nor the eradication of backwardness, but only propagation of christian ideas" (Alickhan 2004:45). To back up his statements, he quoted a western missionary saying openly:

"Our great objective was to convey as largely as possible knowledge of our literature and science to the young persons; but another and more vital object was to convey a thorough knowledge of christianity."

Critical Analysis:

Muslim community in India was badly affected by consolidation of British rule as well as faced serious setbacks in all spheres of life. They, Muslims plunged into a sense of humiliation and grief at the loss of their power, and as a result, they developed bitter feelings towards the British. This bitterness was going to lead, by the mid-nineteenth century to major revolt that shook the

company rule to its very foundation.
The single person faced a verity of challenges
from Englishman at his time show
their excellency, dedication, clear vision
and hardwork to change fortune of
muslims. He was a thinker who gave
confidence to muslims of subcontinent,
which were brutally hit by the policies
of British rule. Without any hesitation,
it can be clearly said that muslims
of sub-continent reproduce their life
after lapsing in educational backwardness.
His reform in education described as
sense of national pride as well as
created the identity.

