

Q:2 The Aligarh Movement was a pure educational venture but it had deep impacts on Indian politics. Discuss.

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

1) Historical Background

a) Prevailing Muslim's situation.

b) Initiation of Aligarh Movement

2) Aligarh Movement

a) As an educational venture.

i) Analyzing reasons behind Muslim's reduction to education.

ii) Committee for Muslim-Educational Uplift.

ii) Opening of Academic Institutions.

ii-i) The M.A.O school, Aligarh.

ii-ii) The M.A.O College, Aligarh.

ii-iii) AIMEC.

iii) Familiarizing Muslim's with western Education.

iii-i) Scientific Society.

iv) Teaching Muslims the consciousness of Social Misdemeanour.

iv-i) Tahzcebul Akhlag.

3) Impacts on Indian Politics

a) ~~Muslim's Aloofness from Politics~~

a) Foundation of Two Nation Theory.

b) Increasing Muslim's awareness of Politics

- c) Participation of Muslims in Politics.
 d) Conversion of AIMEC into All-India Muslim League.
 e) Foundation of Pakistan Movement.
 4) Critical Analysis.

1) Historical Background:

a) Prevailing Muslim's situation:

The war of independence (1857) had left Muslims deprived of their basic rights. Its aftermath had created the prejudiced and unprecedented situations for Muslims. The Britishers were considering them disloyal and were of the opinion that:

"If the musalmans could by any means be entirely exterminated it could be the greatest possible step towards civilizing and christianizing the Hindustan."

(Ahmad Saeed, Trek to Pakistan,

2000, p-29).

The Muslims were dominated and humiliated by Britishers. The Muslim's bloodthirsty Hindus were also tightening their grips around them. The Britishers' dominance and humiliation had made Muslims so depressed that they were afraid of taking any initiative. They were compelled to accept the British Raj and were living the life of slavery.

b) Initiation of Aligarh Movement:

The prevailing situation of Muslims had made Sir Syed Ahmad Khan brokenhearted.

After being exhausted of the sufferings of Muslims, he decided to settle in Egypt. However, his national spirit and soft corner with Muslims, did not allow him to leave his people behind and alone in hardships and sufferings. Therefore, he changed his decision and decided to train his people, Muslims, for the welfare of their nation and community.

2) Aligarh Movement:

The efforts and struggle of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, to awake the Muslims for their rights, transformed into a reformist movement, known as Aligarh Movement.

He made the Muslims of India aware of their rights, and made them aware of social misdemeanour and diverted their interests towards modern education by establishing educational institutions and organizations in "Aligarh". That is the reason that his reformist movement is known as "Aligarh" movement.

a) As an educational venture:

The Aligarh Movement was a pure educational venture. Sir Syed Ahmad Khan believed that, in order to change Muslims' status and situation in India, it is important to take them out of the darkness of illiteracy first. The Muslims of India, at that time, had reserved themselves to old schools of thoughts.

Unlike Hindus, they were not interested in modern education. Just because of their less education and skills, they were only getting jobs of peon and clerks. In this regard, Sir Syed was of the opinion that the only solution for muslim's sufferings and hardships is modern education. He only emphasized on the motto of "education and only education." Considering this, Sir Syed initiated a movement, Aligarh Movement, with the only objective of educating muslims and taking them out of the darkest cloud of slavery and ignorance.

i) Analyzing reasons behind muslim's reluctance to education:

Even after Sir Syed's continuous counselling of getting education, muslims were so reluctant to send their children to schools.

They used to keep their children aside from western education for many reasons but the foremost reason was that they were afraid that if their children get western education they will divert from their religion. In so, the first and foremost task of the movement was to analyze reasons behind muslim's reluctance to education and convince them to get education.

ii) Committee for Muslim Educational uplift:

In order to analyze reasons behind muslim's reluctance to education, Sir Syed organized a Committee, namely "Committee for Better

Diffusion and Advancement for learning among the Muhammadans of India." Within a committee, an Essay Competition was organized which aimed at "exploring reasons behind less ratios of Muslim students in schools and their reluctance to education." It was concluded from the Essay Competition that there was a dire need of opening Muslim institutions where Muslims ^{could} get modern education without getting their religious beliefs affected, because they were of the opinion that sending their children to government schools might affect on their religious beliefs.

ii) Opening of Academic Institutions:

The idea of opening a private Muslim institution got a practical shape. Sir Syed, after collecting funds, established a school, college and then laid a foundation of an educational conference where the Muslims not only got modern education but also got their religious education.

iii) The M.A.O School, Aligarh:

The Muhammadan Anglo Oriented school, Aligarh was established in 1875 which earned a rapid progress in less time.

iii) The M.A.O College, Aligarh:

The M.A.O. School, after two years of its establishment was upgraded into a college. In 1877, the Governor-General, Lord-Lytton laid the foundation of M.A.O college, Aligarh. The college helped the Muslims students to

develop and enhance their critical and problem solving skills by designing different societies, Student's Union clubs, within it where students were engaged in debates and speeches.

ii-iii) All-India Muhammadan Educational Conference:

The conference was established to facilitate all the Muslims of India. Sir Syed believed that the M.A.D. college was not enough to quench the thirsts of education of all the Muslims of India. Therefore, the first meeting of conference was arranged on December 27, 1886, which adopted following aims and objects:

a) It would seek to arrange for higher studies for the Muslims.

b) It would apprise itself of the state of religious education in the English schools for the Muslims and try for its improvement.

c) It would aim at popularizing the education of oriental studies and Diniyat and helping the Ulama in their effort to carry the task forward.

d) It would try to comprehend the causes of the decline of religious institutions and tide over them.

iii) Familiarizing Muslims with western Education:

The foremost task of Sir Syed was to familiarize Muslims with western education and to change their way of living in

accordance with western life. For this he put efforts in each and every way possible, one of his efforts include Scientific Society.

iii.) Scientific Society:

The Scientific Society was formed in 1864 with the primary objective of translating foreign languages books and providing opportunities for the interaction between Indians and British. After two years, the society launched Aligarh "Institute Gazette." It was a two-way projection project with the objective of informing British about the problems of Indians and familiarizing Indians with the British Government and their way of life. The primary objective of AIG was to bring both the nations closer by clothing the English views in Indian dresses and the Indian views in English outfits.

iv) Teaching Muslims the consciousness of social misdemeanour:

The Aligarh Movement transformed Muslims completely. With the ray of education, it lightened wholistic development of Muslims. Sir Syed Ahmad Khan not only emphasized on getting western/modern education but also developed the sense of social behaviour among Muslims. Through his writings and wisdom he nurched the behaviours of Muslims.

iv.i) Tahzeebul Akhlaque:

Sir Syed Ahmad Khan established a magazine in 1870, Tahzeebul Akhlaque. Its purpose was to motivate the Muslims to acquire civilization to its perfection to neutralize the hatred with which even civilized nations view them so that they may be regarded as respectable civilized nation. It also tried to make Muslims conscious of social misdemeanours and helped them to improve their social behaviour.

3) Impacts on Indian Politics:

The Aligarh Movement, no doubt, was an educational venture but it had its deep impacts on Indian politics. By providing ways of getting modern education, it made the Indians aware of their identity and rights. The Muslims, after getting education, realized their strengths and potential to fight for their rights. That spark of education enlightened the ways for Muslim's awareness of politics, the foundation of two nation theory and at lastly the formation of separate homeland. The Aligarh Movement, for Muslims, proved as a key to unlock the doors to enter in Indian Politics.

a) Foundation of Two Nation Theory:

The Hindus and Muslims were considered as a one nation initially. Even after being deprived of their basic rights and Hindus

dominance, Muslims had not complained, even they were unaware of their separate identity. ~~However~~ They had separated themselves from official works and were unaware of social problems. However, when the Aligarh movement started, the Muslims, after getting education became aware of their surroundings. Their participation and engagement in official works increased and they learned to deal with national and official issues. The Hindus being jealous of muslim's progress, couldn't bear muslim's participation in official works and the controversies like Hindu-Urdu language and the extremist movements gave arose. The situation convinced muslims that both of the Nations have separate interests and different practices and they can not participate in anything together.

b) Increasing Muslim's awareness of Politics:

The muslim's realization progress in educational field made them aware of what was happening in their surroundings. The Aligarh Institute Gazette (AIG) helped muslims to know more about British Government. They explored the ways through which they were governed by British Government and the techniques through which they were dominated by Hindus.

c) Participation of Muslims in Politics:

Sir Syed Ahmad Khan had always

advised Muslims to keep themselves aside from politics and only focus on education. His advice was productive and effective for the Muslims at that time. However, after his death, with the initiation of Aligarh Movement and Muslim's progress in education, the situations changed completely. The Muslims felt that their aloofness from politics, after being educated, will only provide ways to their fellow natives, Hindus, to rule on them. Therefore, they started taking part in politics.

d) Conversion of AIMEC into All-India Muslim League:

The Muslim's initiative of participating in politics made them realize that they needed a political party through which they could represent themselves in Indian politics. Hence, they converted All-India Muhammadan Educational Conference into All-India Muslim League.

e) Foundation of Pakistan Movement:

Beside the Two-Nation Theory, it laid the foundation of Pakistan movement. The Muslim's progress in education and politics was not bearable to Hindus. They were opposing each and every possible way of settling with Muslims and living together. Even the Hindus were not accepting Muslims participation in British Council and Government. This situation provided the Muslims a straightforward way to

struggle for their separate homeland, Pakistan.

4) Critical Analysis:

The Aligarh Movement, inspite of being an educational ventures left its deep impacts on the Indian politics. Introducing Muslims to the modern education, it helped them to see the things with different perspectives. The Muslims who, after the war of independence, were living the life of slavery and ignorance, changed their life style and studied hard to Govern the policies. Muslim's progress in education and their awareness of western life compelled British Government to introduce different Acts in Indian Council. It not only brought amendments in Indian politics but also laid the foundation of other reformist movement which resulted in Pakistan Movement.