

Pakistan Affairs - Mock Paper 2025

Question 3.

Keeping in view the socio-political circumstances of sub-continent, discuss the role of Shah Waliullah who revived Islamic Ideology and established Muslim identity in sub-continent.

↳ Shah Waliullah: A Reformist Scholar

Shah Waliullah was the first reformer to appear during the period of Muslim decline. He realized that the Muslim community had to be emancipated both militarily and morally. He strove for the restoration of Muslim rule in which Ulema would play an important role. His ability to interpret the Quran was such that he declared himself a *Qayem-al-Zaman*, a semi-divine personality given the mission by Prophet (SAWW) himself to reform the faith.

“Shah Waliullah was a transitional figure between the medieval and the modern age, somewhat as Dante was in Europe and like Dante,

he was far more medieval than Dante."

Freeland Abbott, Islam &
Pakistan - Shah Waliullah.

The Socio-Political Landscape of the Indian Subcontinent.

The socio-political circumstances of the Indian subcontinent during Shah Waliullah's era were characterized by:

1: Political Fragmentation:-

The Mughal Empire, which had once been a formidable centralized power, was in decline. This period saw increasing fragmentation and regionalism as various local powers asserted their independence.

2: Emergence of Regional Powers:-

Various regional powers began to emerge, such as the Marathas in western India, the Sikhs in Punjab, and the Nawabs of Bengal, Awadh and Hyderabad. These powers often clashed with each

others and with the remnants of mughals.

38 Impact of Colonialism-

The British East India Company was gaining strength during this period, gradually expanding its control over parts of India through economic dominance and political maneuvering. This led the stage for later British colonial rule.

Shah Waliullah: Revitalizing Islamic ideology and Establishing muslim identity

Shah waliullah was a zealous guardian of muslim identity in the subcontinent.

Freeland Abbott in his book Islam and Pakistan described muslim's condition during mughal decline:

"The painful collapse of the mughal Empire, forced into extended reflection those orthodox muslims who were not content merely to hide themselves

in the swamps of Kismet. All Muslims were bewildered, even though they continued to look to Delhi as the final arbitrator. "

• His services for Muslim revival can be categorized into several key areas:

- ↳ Religious and Theological Reforms
- ↳ Political Thoughts
- ↳ Educational Contribution

Religious Reforms

1. Reviving Authentic Islamic Practices

Shah Wali-

-ullah forbade the adoption of Hindu customs for two reasons

- First, he believed a beleaguered minority needed to assert its distinctive identity.
- Second, he emphasized the need to return to the Quran and Sunnah, advocating for the purification of Islamic practices.

2. Translation and Accessibility of Quran :-

He attributed muslim decline to lack of direct access to the meaning of the Quran. He took the bold step of translating the Holy Quran into Persian. He sought to curb the influence of the Ulama as a class, and for this reason he also favoured ijtihad over taqlid.

3. Sectarian Conciliation :-

One of the most important steps he took was towards conciliation between sects and approaches. He realised the necessity of muslim solidarity. Husain Qureshi has pointed out that Shah Waliullah believed what God has revealed is beneficial for mankind :

" God is not a tyrant revelling in getting himself obeyed ; such a conception is unworthy and exonerous. In his great mercy He has shown the way which leads to mundane and spiritual well-being and progress! "

4- Thought on Jihad:-

He realized that the war was the lesser Jihad and the greater Jihad was against the temptations facing one's own soul. Therefore, the greater and longer part of his mission was to effect a moral reform of community.

Social Reforms

1- Promotion of Social Justice:-

Shah Waliullah emphasized the importance of justice and equality in society. He advocated for fair treatment of all individuals, and condemned practices that led to social discrimination.

2- Educational Reforms:-

He reformed the educational system by promoting a curriculum that combined religious studies with contemporary knowledge including logic, philosophy and science. This holistic approach aimed to produce well-rounded and knowl-

-edgible individuals who could contribute positively to society.

3- Women's Rights:-

While not a primary focus, Shah waliullah's teachings included elements that promoted the dignity and rights of women within the Islamic framework.

4- Justice and Balance:-

His guiding principles of reforms were *adl* and *tawazun*; therefore Shah waliullah was in favour of an equitable distribution of wealth in society. He found it objectionable for anyone to be a burden on society.

Political Reforms

1- letter to Ahmad Shah Abdali:-

He realized that the muslim community had to be emancipated both militarily and morally. The Maratha power was the threat. To this end he wrote to Ahmad Shah Abdali to remind

him of his duty as a muslim king to liberate the muslim community, and the result was the maratha defeat in the 3rd Battle of Panipat in 1761.

2- Revival of Islamic Governance :-

Shah Waliullah called for the restoration of a just and righteous Islamic government. He says :

" A corrupt government, which neglects satisfying the basic needs of life, should and must be overthrown by hooks and snooks. If it is allowed to continue, its corruption will spread like a cancer, first in some members of the administration, which, if it is not cut out from its very root, will go on spreading till the whole body will disintegrated. "

3- Defence of muslim interests :-

In response to the political and military challenges faced by muslims in India, including the threat from the marathas and other non-muslim powers, Shah Waliullah supported military efforts

to defend muslim territories and interests.

4- Emphasis on Sharia :-

Shah Waliullah believed that the decline of the muslim community in andia was due to their departure from the principles of sharia. He advocated for the strict implementation of islamic law in governance and daily life.

Conclusion

Shah Waliullah was a significant figure in islamic history, known for his efforts for islamic revival. His teachings emphasized the importance of understanding and practicing islam in a contemporary context while remaining faithful to its core principles.