

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

### Introduction:

The Aligarh movement headed by reformer, writer and educator Sir Syed Ahmad Khan in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. After the wrath of 1857, identity of muslim was compromised. It promoted modern education among muslims and bridge the gap between British and muslims. Indeed, it was educational venture but it had deep impacts on Indian politics. Muslims owed its freedom to Aligarh movement. It ignited the spirit of separate identity of muslims i.e the idea of two nation theory. Freedom fighters like Muhammad Ali Johar, Maulana Zafar Ali Khan, Chaudry Rehmat Ali were Alumni of Aligarh. Furthermore, the movement was also used as political mouthpiece for Indian muslims, and later became the forerunner of the All India Muslim League. So the little high school founded in 1875 at Aligarh became a full fledged movement and led to the formation of an Independent state on the map of world. According to K.K. Aziz, a historian:

“Sir Syed Ahmad Khan's Political Acumen made the movement's impact go beyond the education and influence Indian politics significantly.”

## Impact on Politics of India:

The Aligarh Movement strengths lie in the efforts to modernize and uplift the muslim community, promoting education and Political awareness.

### 1- Impacts on muslim's relations with

#### British:-

British hostility towards muslims increased after the war of Independence. The Government imposed restrictions to the muslim community affecting their lives, property and social standing. Persian language replaced with English hurt the sentiments of muslims. Sir Syed Ahmad Khan recognized the decline of muslims. In order to bridge the gap between muslims and British, he laid the foundation of Aligarh University. His main objectives were to remove mistrust between the British and muslims. Therefore, the Aligarh movement uplifted muslims in social, political and other domain.

### 2- Political Empowerment of Muslims:-

After the war of Independence in 1857, muslims were subjected to revengeful policies of British. The Government began to doubt the allegiance of muslims.

"The condition had become so bad" said Maulana Khali, "that there was no need to condemn a Muslim. His being a muslim was enough crime." To alleviate this tension, Sir Syed wrote "Kasal-e-Asbab-e

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Baghawat-e-Hind.' magazine. He clarified that it was not only Muslims responsible for revolt but Hindus and many other communities involved. In the same way, he wrote *Legal Muhammadan India* to remove misconceptions between rulers and the ruled. Significantly, the Aligarh movement injected a new life into the Muslim nation's dead body and helped regain its lost glory and prestige. According to Ishtiaq Hussain Qureshi, Sir Syed Ahmad's contribution to the Muslim Renaissance in India can be summed up in one phrase: the inculcation of self-confidence in his people. Aligarh Movement encouraged Muslims to participate actively in politics by raising awareness of their rights and responsibilities. As a result, educated Muslim leaders emerged, advocating for community's interest during struggle for independence. The Aligarh Movement's contributions have had lasting impacts on the Muslim community; shaping their engagement in various spheres and promoting distinct Muslim identity that coexists with modernity.

### 3) Modernization of Muslim thought:

Sir Syed Ahmad Khan did not admire conservative Muslims. He was of opinion that Muslims could acquire modern education to cope up with their crises. Through *Tehzeeb-e-Ilkhiya*, he advocated for a balanced approach that integrated

modern knowledge with Islamic values. The magazine emphasized the importance of ethical conduct, women's education and social reforms, aligning with the borders of Aligarh movement. His efforts played a significant role in shaping the mindset of the Muslim intelligentsia and contributed to the modernization of Muslim thought and society in British India.

#### 4) Establishment of Two Nation Theory:-

Before Urdu-Hindi controversy, Sir Syed believed that two nations were like two beautiful eyes of bride but the establishment of Indian National Congress paved the way for the two nation theory. He was far from disputes but Urdu-Hindi controversy at Banaras in 1867 had a great effect on the life of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan. During the days when the controversy was going on, in a meeting with the Commissioner of Banaras, Mr. Shakespeare asked him, "Hitherto, you have always been keen about the welfare of Indians in general, and this is the first time you have spoken about Muslims alone." In reply, Sir Syed said,

"After the Urdu-Hindi controversy, now I am convinced that these two communities will not join wholeheartedly in anything..... He who lives will see."

5) Fore-runner for All India Muslim League:

Likewise, the Aligarh Movement expanded its influence through various branches across the nation, and in 1886, the Muhammadan Educational Conference held its meetings at various places and carried the message of Aligarh to all parts of country. Although it came into being to spread intellectual message of Aligarh, it was also used as a political mouthpiece for Indian Muslims and later became the fore-runner of All-India Muslim League. Within a short period, the Aligarh Muslim University served as "A nursery of leaders" that later championed the cause of Muslims and contributed much to their intellectual and political awakening in the subcontinent. Sir Syed's vision of a united and politically aware Muslim community laid the foundation for the League's establishment in 1906. The Aligarh Movement empowered Muslims with modern knowledge and skills, enabling them to actively participate in the political sphere. The League became a pivotal platform for advocating political rights and interests with the context of Indian nationalism, shaping the trajectory of the independence movement and Muslim community demands.

### Conclusion:-

In the final analysis, it can be observed that the Aligarh movement created new trends and impulses in the life of Muslims; hence it was fundamentally a cultural movement aiming to regenerate liberal values of literature, social life, religion and education. The Aligarh movement holds a significant place in Indian history for its contribution to education, political empowerment, and the formation of distinct Muslim identity. Its legacy extends to the political development of Muslims. To sum up, its influence on Indian society and education continues to be felt, and its emphasis on modern education and identity remains relevant for the future of Indo-Pak society and politics.