

Pakistan Affairs

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

Background

The War of Independence in 1857 ended in terrible outcome for Muslims. The British blamed the Muslims for the uprising against them and regarded them as enemies as the British had removed them from power. The British made English the primary language in schools removing Arabic, and Persian as well as banning religious education. Due to this, the Muslims started boycotting schools and colleges, sticking to the madrasa education and refusing to learn English.

The Hindus, on the other hand, started benefiting from the western style of education and readily accepted British customs. Already targeted by the British, the Muslims were left far behind the Hindus.

In this critical time, Sir Syed Ahmed Khan

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took the initiative as a rescuer for his fellow Muslims and took the Muslims out of the darkness of ignorance through his Aligarh Movement.

Aims of the Aligarh Movement

keeping education and social reform as the two planks of his program, Sir Syed Ahmed Khan launched the Aligarh Movement with the following objectives:

- 1) Protection of Islam against on-slayt of orientalisists.
- 2) Remove bitter enmity between the British and Muslims, and create an ~~unde~~ atmosphere of mutual understanding between the two.
- 3) Create harmony between religion and science and between religion and philosophy to produce an intellectual class amongst the Muslim community.
- 4) Provide and teach a rational and enlightened view of life to the Muslims.
- 5) Persuade Muslims to learn English and maintain Urdu.

Even though, the Aligarh movement was educational in nature, it was not devoid of its political impact.

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Political Aspect of Aligarh movement

In addition to his pivotal role in improving education for Muslims, Syed Ahmad's liberal political services regenerated Muslim community. His political services through the Aligarh Movement were:

1) Protection of Urdu in Hind-Urdu Controversy

In 1867, a movement started to replace Urdu with Hindi, in Banaras. These Hindus formed various organizations to achieve this goal, however Sir Syed and his followers made multiple efforts to protect the Urdu language like his writings, publishes, foundation of schools, colleges and etc.

2) Two-Nation Theory

Until the uprising of 1867 to replace Urdu with Hindi, Sir Syed was an exponent of Hindu-Muslim unity. However, after this, Sir Syed became convinced that the paths of the Hindus and Muslims must diverge as the large community (Hindus) will always dominate the smaller community. Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, in his two famous speeches in 1883 and 1887, pointed out that "as

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far as European style elections and democracy are concerned, it was unsuitable in a country where different races and creeds are living together. The larger community would totally override the interests of the smaller community.

This eventually led to the Muslims realizing that they were a separate nation and should demand a separate homeland of their own.

3) Literary Works

The most significant of Sir Syed's literary works that helped bridge the gap between Muslims and British were the pamphlets: *Loyal Muhammadans of India* and *Asbab-e-Baghawat-e-Hind* (Causes of the Indian Revolt). The pamphlet on the Causes of the Indian Revolt provided a factual analysis of the causes and criticized the Company rule. The pamphlet showed the revolt was the outcome of the frustrations and accumulated wrongs of decades by the Company rule. Widely read by British officials, this pamphlet had considerable influence on British policy towards Muslims.

4) Sense of Muslim identity

Sir Syed was the first Muslim leader who used the word "nation" for the Muslims of the sub-continent and supported the idea of a separate electorate for Muslims in 1883. Sir Syed made efforts to change the role of Muslims in the society, important for creating a political identity.

5) Opposition to Muslim participation in politics

Sir Syed Ahmed Khan asked the Muslims of his time not to participate in politics until they received modern education. He believed that Muslims would not succeed in the field without knowing the system of Western Politics first. Moreover, he urged the Muslims to distance themselves from Congress, because in his justified opinion, it was a party that was solely devoted to the cause of the Hindus.

Sir Syed argued that as the ^{enmity} ~~enmity~~ of the British towards Muslims had not completely eradicated, it was not the right time for Muslims to join politics as it was important to first gain the trust of the British.

Effects of his Political Services in Aligarh Movement

1) Role in Pakistan Movement

Sir Syed's Two-Nation Theory was a founding principle of the Pakistan Movement and the partition of India in 1947. He is rightly called the chief architect and inspiration behind the philosophy that led to the creation of Pakistan.

2) First Political Platform provided to Muslims

Sir Syed organized the All-India Muhammadan Educational Conference in 1886 that met annually to promote education and provide the Muslims with a common platform. Until the founding of the Muslim League in 1906, it served as the principle national centre for Indian Muslims.

3) Emergence of Sense of Muslim Nationalism

4) Development of Urdu as a Language

5) Reconciliation with British

6) Demand of separate Electorate

7) Formation of All-India Muslim League

8) Emergence of Political Leadership

Political leaders, such as:

- a) Liaquat Ali;
- b) Khwaja Nazimuddin;
- c) Maulana Muhammad Ali Johar;
- d) Maulana Shaukat Ali; ~~and many more~~
- e) Mohsin-ul-Mulk, and many more.

9) Simla Deputation

Due to efforts of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan in the Hindi-Urdu Controversy, Two-Nation Theory and his political services, Muslims realised the wrong-doing through the Indian Council Act of 1892, which led to the Simla Deputation. Within the deputation, most of the members were connected with the Aligarh Movement, with Mohsin-ul-Mulk playing a significant role.

Conclusion

These arguments show that even though Aligarh Movement had mainly educational objectives, it resulted in huge impacts on Indian politics. Mohammad Qaid-e-Azam Ali Jinnah termed the Aligarh Movement

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as Arsenal for Pakistan movement.