

Q4 Explain the role and contributions of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan in Muslim Renaissance in India.

1. Introduction:

Sir Syed Ahmed Khan (1817-1898) is rightly hailed as a visionary figure who played a crucial role in the preservation of British Indian Muslims and their culture in the traumatic post-1857 period. The era in which Sir Syed Ahmed Khan lived and formulated his ideas was marked by a complex social, economic, and political environment in British India. This environment had a profound impact on his thoughts and initiatives, which aimed to uplift the Muslim community and bridge the gap between tradition and modernity. However, his outlook was not confined to religious dogma; he possessed a progressive mindset that sought to reconcile Islamic teachings with modern knowledge and scientific advancement.

2. Role of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan in Muslim Renaissance in India:-

A) Major Challenges Identified by Sir Syed Ahmed Khan for Indian Muslims:

i) **Socio-Political Marginalization:-**

The aftermath of the 1857 rebellion had left British Indian Muslims marginalized in the socio-political landscape. The loss of power, coupled with a deep distrust of British rulers due to their perceived harsh response to the rebellion, led to a sense of resentment among Muslims.

ii) **Existential Threats to Islam and Muslims in India.**

Sir Syed identified that the emergence of Hindu nationalism, coupled with British hostility towards Muslims post-1857, posed an existential threat to Islam and Muslim

community. British colonial policies, often seen as favouring Hindus, further fueled concerns about the preservation of Muslim identity.

iii) Lack of Unity and Sectarianism:-

Sir Syed identified the lack of unity and sectarianism's prevalence of sectarian divisions among Muslims as a major cause of their backwardness. The fragmentation of the community along sectarian lines weakened their collective strength and prevented effective advocacy for their rights and interests.

B) Advice of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan to British Indian Muslims.

Sir Syed Ahmed Khan advised the Muslims, through his countless articles, books and lectures.

i) Accept British Ascendancy and Adapt:-

Sir Syed Ahmed Khan's realization that Mughal rule was definitely over and British ascendancy was the prevailing reality marked a significant shift in the Muslim community's perspective.

He urged Muslims to acknowledge this new reality, accept the British as rulers, and work towards finding ways to collaborate and thrive within the changed circumstances.

ii) Re-interpreting Islam:-

Sir Syed recognized that blind adherence to traditional interpretations of Islam could hinder progress and prevent Muslims from effectively addressing contemporary challenges. He advocated for a critical approach to Islamic teachings, urging Muslims to re-interpret religious principles in the context of modern circumstances.

iii) Education Empowerment:-

Sir Syed Ahmed Khan recognized the crucial role of education in transforming the socio-economic conditions of Muslims. He believed that British-style education, including English language proficiency, scientific knowledge, and modern subjects, was essential for the community's progress. He emphasized the importance of education not just for individual growth, but also collective advancement, enabling Muslims to

compete effectively in administrative and professional fields.

iv) Muslim Unity and Political Pragmatism:-

Sir Syed emphasized the need for Muslim unity and strategic political engagement. He advocated for Muslims to participate in administrative and political roles under British rule, understanding that this engagement was crucial for safeguarding their interests. On the other hand, Sir Syed cautioned against direct involvement in broader Indian politics especially within the Indian National Congress, which he believed was predominantly Hindu-centric and did not adequately represent Muslim interests.

3. Contributions of Sir Syed

Ahmed Khan in Muslim Renaissance

in India:-

A) Ideas given by Sir Syed Ahmed Khan:-

i) Two Nation Theory:-

Sir Syed Ahmed Khan's concept of British Indian Muslims as a separate nation is a cornerstone of his political philosophy. He emphasized the distinct identity of Muslims, based not only on religion but also on cultural and socio-political factors. This idea laid the foundation for the later development of the Two-Nation Theory, which posited that Hindus and Muslims were separate nations with distinct interests and should have separate political entities.

ii) Urdu as the Identity Marker of the Separate Nation:-

Sir Syed Ahmed Khan believed that language played a crucial role in shaping the identity of a community. He championed the promotion of Urdu language as a unifying factor for Muslims.

iii) Education as a Means of Political Empowerment:-

One of Sir Syed's enduring contributions was his belief in education as a tool for

political empowerment. He believed that an educated and informed Muslim community would be better equipped to navigate the challenges of British rule and actively participate in shaping their own destiny.

B) Aligarh Movement:-

Sir Syed launched Aligarh movement of which Aligarh was the center. Aligarh movement have the following objectives.

- i) To create an atmosphere of mutual understanding between the British government and the Muslims.
- ii) To persuade Muslims to learn English education.
- iii) To persuade Muslims to abstain from politics of agitation.
- iv) To produce an intellectual class from amongst the Muslim community.

C) Institutions Created by Sir Syed Ahmed Khan:-

Sir Syed Ahmed Khan's contributions through the creation and inspiration of various institutions played a pivotal role in

preserving Islam, fostering education, and ensuring the survival of Muslims as a distinct entity in post-1857 British India.

i) In **1859**, built Gulshan School in Muradabad.

ii) In **1863**, set up Victoria School in Ghazipur.

iii) In **1864**, set up Scientific Society in Aligarh. This society was involved in the translation of English works into the native language.

iv) In **1866**, published Aligarh Institute Gazette. This imparted information on history, agriculture, natural and physical sciences and advanced mathematics.

v) In **1870**, formed Committee Striving for the Educational Progress of Muslims.

vi) In **1875**, Muhammadan Anglo-Oriented School, Aligarh, setup on the pattern of English public schools. Later raised to the level of college in **1877** and university in **1920**.

vii) In **1886**, (build) formed Muhammadan Educational Conference.

viii) In **1920**, MAO College Aligarh to Muslim University.

4. Critical Analysis:-

Sir Syed Ahmed Khan "The Architect of modern India". His most notable contribution lay in charting a roadmap for the survival and progress of British Indian Muslims in the face of marginalization and socio-political challenges. His advocacy for political engagement with British rulers, the pursuit of modern education, and the promotion of English language proficiency empowered Muslims to navigate the colonial system and secure positions of influence. His vision ensured that Muslims were not relegated to the periphery of British Indian Society but actively participated in governance and administration. He advocated for reforms within the Muslim community, encouraging critical thinking and a broader understanding of Islamic teachings.

Allama Iqbal Said:

"The real greatness of the

man (Sir Syed) consists in the fact that he was the first Indian Muslim who felt the need of a fresh orientation of Islam and worked for it."

5. Conclusion:

Sir Syed Ahmed Khan's contributions were wide-ranging and impactful. His vision for Muslims to adapt to the realities of British India while preserving their identity ensured their survival and progress. His efforts in education, re-interpreting Islamic thought, promoting cultural unity, and advocating political engagement left a legacy that not only influenced his contemporaries but also continues to shape the trajectory of modern Muslim thought and empowerment.

Q2 Give an account of the life and services of Shah Waliullah. How did he save the Indian Muslims from political annihilation and religious degeneration?

1. Introduction:

In the eighteenth century, the Muslims of the Indian Subcontinent were socially, politically, spiritually, and economically in a sinister condition. The Mughal Empire was also on a decline that further deepened the conditions of the Muslims. Shah Waliullah, the conqueror of modern Islam in the subcontinent, came forth to eradicate the problems of the Muslims. He regenerated the Islamic teachings into people's lives by translating the Holy Quran into the Persian language, the language of the time. His works cover a wide range of topics including economics, politics, social issues, metaphysics and theology.

2. Life and Services Of Shah Waliullah:

i) Early Life:-

Shah Waliullah, also known as Qutb al-Din Ahmad, was born on February 21, 1703, near Delhi in India. He came from a religious family and received education from his father, Shah Abdul Rahim, at Madrasa-i-Rahimiya. After completing his education, he went on pilgrimage and pursued further studies in Saudi Arabia. During his time there, he decided to promote Islamic values among Muslims and present Islam in a rational manner. Upon his return to India, he started working towards these goals.

ii) Services of Shah Waliullah:-

1) Educational Services:-

In 1738, he translated the Holy Quran into Persian to respond to the questions raised by Christian Missionaries. In his famous work

called "Aqad-al-jaiyad-fi-Ahkam-al-Ijtihad wa-al-Taqlid," he encouraged the use of Ijtihad instead of blindly following others (Taqlid).

2) Religious Services:-

During his time, there was a lot of hostility between Shias and Sunnis, and this was causing divisions among Muslims. To address this, Shah Waliullah wrote "Izalat-al-Akhifa" and "Khilafat-al-Khulafa" to help clear up misunderstandings between Shias and Sunnis.

3) Political Services:-

During 18th century, the Marathas became a powerful political force and posed a threat to take over the rule in Delhi. Shah Waliullah wrote a letter to Ahmed Shah Abdali, asking for ^{his} help in protecting the Muslims. As a result, in the Third Battle of Panipat, Ahmed Shah Abdali decisively defeated the Marathas.

4) Economic Services:-

Shah Waliullah talked about four basic ideas in economics: producing wealth, using wealth, sharing wealth, and exchanging wealth. He believed that wealth should be distributed among the entire nation because everyone contributes to its production.

3. Shah Waliullah Saves Indian

Muslims from Political Annihilation:-

The political context of Shah Waliullah's time was marked by the decline of the Mughal Empire and the rise of regional powers, which threatened the political and social stability of Indian Muslims. He realized that political stability was crucial for the survival of Islam in India and took several steps to address these challenges.

1) Correspondence with Muslim Leaders:-

Shah Waliullah wrote letters to various Muslim leaders, urging them to unite against

the encroaching Marathas and other non-Muslim forces. He highlighted the importance of political solidarity among Muslims to preserve their religious and cultural identity.

2) Alliance with Ahmad Shah Abdali:-

One of his most notable political actions was inviting Ahmad Shah Abdali to invade India. This move was aimed at curbing the rising power of the Marathas, who posed a significant threat to Muslim rule in northern India. The subsequent Battle of Panipat in 1761, where Abdali defeated the Marathas, was a turning point that temporarily checked the decline of Muslim political power in the region.

3) Promotion of Islamic Governance..

He advocated for the establishment of a governance system based on Islamic principles to ensure justice and moral integrity. Therefore, his contributions in the political field are

worth remembering.

"Balance and Uniformity
in the system is a must."

4. Shah Waliullah Saves Indian

Muslims from Religious Degeneration.

Shah Waliullah regained the lost glory of Islam through his services in British India.

1) Translation of the Quran.

The most influential work of Shah Waliullah was his translation of the Quran into the Persian language. Afterwards, his sons translated the Holy Quran into Urdu. It helped the Muslims of the Indian Subcontinent to learn closely from the Quranic teaching in every field of life.

2) Bridged Gap between Mystics and Religious Scholars:-

Shah Waliullah bridged the gap between mystics and religious scholars, emphasizing their differences. He also forbade people to avoid blind taqlid rather than consulting the Quran and Sunnah of the Holy Prophet (PBUH). In his outstanding book, **Hujjatullah al-Baligha**, he told people how to live their lives according to the codes of the Quran.

3) Open the doors of Ijtihad:-

He opened the doors of Ijtihad. Thus, he stands a top to revitalize eighteenth-century India's Islamic teachings through his moderate thinking.

"His approach was so liberal as it was difficult to understand which school of thought he belonged."

5. Critical Analysis:-

Undoubtedly, Hazrat Shah Waliullah lay

the foundation of modern Islam in the subcontinent. During his time, Islamic society was on the verge of destruction after the death of Aurangzeb, the last powerful Mughal emperor. However, he revived the Islamic values in the subcontinent through his foresightedness in religious and worldly matters. Furthermore, his practical work on Islamic values won him the honour of rejuvenator of Islam. Nonetheless, his work for socio-political and economic uplift for the people and the empire is still written in golden words.

"What defines us is how well we rise after falling."

6. Conclusion:

Conclusively, recuperating Islam in the Indian subcontinent in the 18th century was only possible through the selfless struggles of Hazrat Shah Waliullah. He emphasized adopting the Islamic values in life and translated the Holy Quran and Hadiths to set practical examples to adopt

morals easily. However his political services by stopping the growing threat of Marathas, Sikhs and Hindus also proved fruitful. Nevertheless, he wrote fifty-one books to carry the legacy for future generations.