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Pak Affairs

Q.NO.1

The Evolution of Muslim Separate Identity in the Subcontinent:

INTRODUCTION:

→ The evolution of the Muslim separate identity in the subcontinent is a complex historical process shaped by cultural, religious, political and social factors. Starting from the Medieval period from the arrival of Muslim scholars such as Al-Biruni and conquerors, this identity evolved over centuries shaping Two Nation Theory. Theory that lead to the partition of subcontinent in 1947. This analysis will incorporate key figures such as Al-Biruni, Shaykh Ahmed Sirhindi, Shah Waliullah, and Modern political thinkers that became prominent during British colonial rule)

Advent of Islam in the Subcontinent:

→ Although Arabs and people from Subcontinent had trade relations for a long time, but the initial entry of Islam in Subcontinent came with an expedition led by Muhammad Bin Qasim in 711 AD. He was sent by Umayyad Caliphate to rescue Muslim families and defeat Dahir, the ruler of Sindh. Muhammad Bin Qasim defeated Dahir in 712 AD and conquered the Sindh province. This is why Sindh is also called Bab ul Islam and Karachi's second port is named after him. Nevertheless, a Muslim state was established that had its own government but was connected to Umayyads and Abbasids later on. As a result, many new cities were built, and the official language became Arabic. Because of coastal trade and the presence of a Muslim community in Sindh, there were cultural exchanges and introduction of Holy teachers

to the subcontinent. More and more people converted to Islam, so the influence of religion continued to grow. This was the very first development that established the basis for the creation of Pakistan too, as Quaid-e-Azam stated;

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Pakistan came into being when the first Hindu was converted to Islam. 77

→ Because that was the very first event that distinguished Muslims from Hindus through different religious, political and social ideologies. In fact, both had a totally different way of life that was right pointed out by the later scholars. This drew a line between the two communities that led to political, social, economic, lingual, and religious conflicts.

Contribution of different Personalities for highlighting Muslim Separate Identity in the Subcontinent:

(1) Al-Biruni's Observations (11th Century):

→ Al Biruni was a Persian Scholar who arrived in India with Mahmud Ghaznavi in the early 11th century. His seminal work Kitab ul Hind is considered one of the earliest systematic studies of Indian Society, culture, and religion by a Muslim Scholar.

Observations :-

→ Al-Biruni studied Indian culture, language, and religion, noting significant differences between Islam and religion. Hinduism.

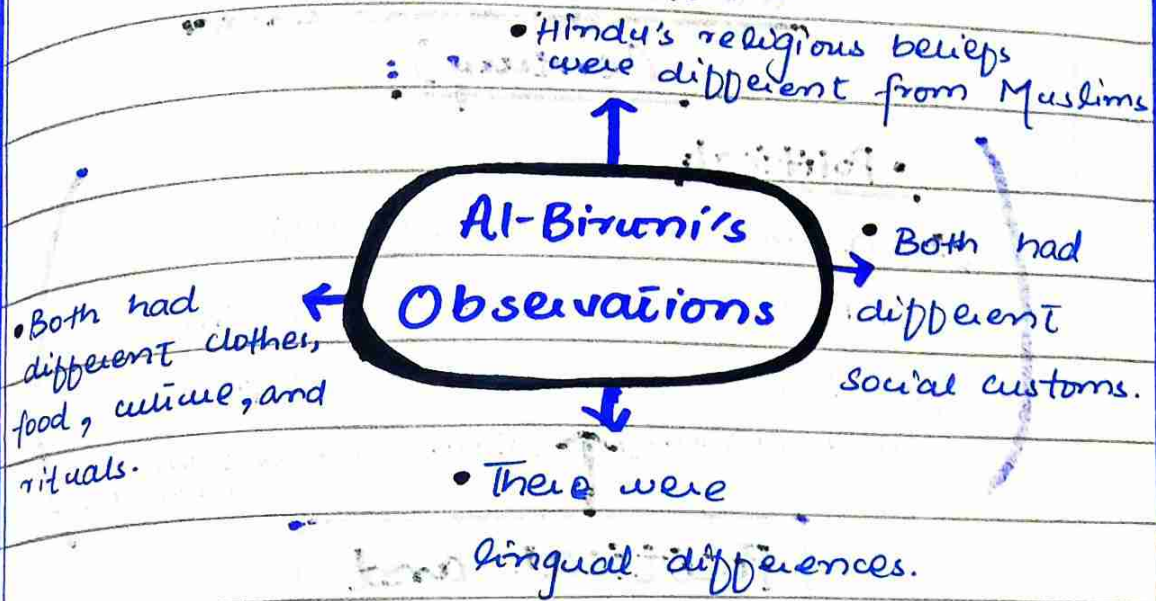


Fig: Observations made by Al-Biruni highlighting Muslims and Hindus had different religious, cultural, and social practices.

→ These distinctions, particularly in the religious realm, laid the groundwork for the growing consciousness of a separate Muslim identity.

(2) Delhi Sultanate and the Growth of a Political Identity (12th to 16th Century):

Political:

⇒ Ghaznids and Slave Dynasties marked the beginning of Muslim political dominance by solidifying their authority. Islamic laws, Persian language.

Political and Cultural Impacts of Delhi Sultanate

Cultural:

⇒ While Delhi Sultanate integrated aspects of Indian culture, Muslim rulers still maintained a distinction between Hindus and Muslims. They consciously cultivated an identity rooted in Islamic values.

Fig: Muslim rulers maintained distinct political and cultural identities.

3) Sheikh Ahmed Sirhindi and Islamic Revivalism (16th to 17th Century):-

→ Sheikh Ahmed Sirhindi was a major Islamic scholar (theologian) born in 1564. He emerged during the reign of Akbar, who had promoted religious pluralism through his Din-e-Iluhi movement, blending elements of religions like Islam and Hinduism. Sirhindi strongly opposed United Nationhood, resulting from Akbar's policies, which he saw diluting the purity of Islam. He stated;

“If Muslims want to live as a nation, ^{then} they have to quit the law of shirk and Bidaat and stay away from Hindus. If the awareness of separate national identity is not awakened in Muslims then it is feared that they would be swept away with the flood of combined nationhood. Islam would be destroyed like Buddhism and Hinduism.”

→ Shahjahan's emphasis on separate Islamic identity of Muslims laid foundation for the future generations of Muslims in India that was later explained through Two Nation Theory.

(3) Shah Waliullah's Reform and Revival (18th century):-

→ Shah Waliullah (1703-1763) was a pivotal figure in Islamic reform in India. He emerged during the decline of Mughal empire and sought to revitalize the Muslim community by emphasizing adherence to Islamic principles. His political, social, religious and economic reforms provided the basis for national cohesion among Muslims. He wrote open letters to various segments of society to save Muslims from their socio-political decline. Holy Quran was translated into Persian and Majlis-e-Mutazima was formed to clear up doubts that led to the rise of sectarianism among Muslims. Moreover, he

gave four basic principles of economics and overhauled the existing education system. All this laid the foundation of comprehensive political, religious, and intellectual movement which later on contributed to the strengthening of Two Nation Theory and Pakistan Movement, giving them a sense of separate identity.

Events Contributing To Separate M.I.:-

(5) British Colonial Rule and the Search for Muslim Identity (19th Century):-

(i) Post Mughal Decline and British Rule:

→ The decline of Mughal Empire and the rise of British colonial rule marked a turning point for Muslims in subcontinent. The loss of political power left the Muslim elite feeling marginalized and insecure.

→ The British Empire's introduction of Western education and modernization further alienated Muslims, who saw themselves as

politically and culturally distinct from Hindus. Therefore, British rule resulted in a disaster for Muslims, whereas, Hindus were treated much better as compared to Muslims.

(ii) Sir Syed Ahmed Khan and Aligarh Movement:- (1817 - 1898)

→ Sir Syed Ahmed Khan emerged as a crucial figure in modernization of Muslim society. After the War of 1857, he realized that Muslims were falling behind Hindus in education and political representation.

→ He founded Aligarh Movement, which promoted Modern education for Muslims while preserving Islamic values. Moreover, he also advocated for a cooperative relationship with the British, hoping that this would improve Muslim political and social standing. He made efforts to protect Urdu language and reinterpreted Islamic teachings in a way that aligned with Modern sciences and philosophy.

→ Therefore, Sir Syed's efforts such as establishing educational institutions, writing books and magazines, providing Muslims a political consciousness through Western and political education, contributed to the Muslim sense of identity. His efforts modernized Muslim political identity. It contributed to the emergence of Muslim political leadership (Tohar Brothers, Mohsin-ul-Mulk, Nawab Wajid ul Mulk, Nazimuddin) which later influenced the development of Two Nation Theory and Pakistan Movement.

(b) Formation of Muslim League And Two Nation Theory (Early 20th Century):-

As Allama Iqbal rightly stated in his following poetic verses:

اپنی ملت پر قیاس اقوام مغرب سے نہ کر
خاص ہے ترکیب میں قوم لاسول یا شعی ^{میں}
انکی جمعیت کا ملک و کسب پر انحصار
قوت مذہب سے مستحکم ہے جمعیت تیری

→ The realization that Muslims of South Asia are a nation in the modern sense of the word. The basis of their nationhood is neither territorial nor ethnic, racial or linguistic, rather they are a nation because they belong to same faith, Islam. On these basis, they considered it their fundamental right to be entitled to self determination. Therefore, they formed a separate political platform All India Muslim League in 1906 to represent Muslim political interests. After facing a lot of struggle, they demanded that areas where they were in majority should be constituted into a sovereign state, where they would live their individual and collective lives freely, in accordance to Quran and Sunnah.

• Role of Hindi-Urdu Controversy:

→ It was a crucial episode of the evolution of Muslim separatism in colonial India. It helped define the boundaries of identity and played a key role in shaping the political consciousness of both communities and contributed to the eventual partition of subcontinent.

Fig: How the Muslims' sense of separate identity laid political and ideological basis for a separate state:

① Muslim Political Awakening:

⇒ Led to the formation of All India Muslim League in 1906 to protect Muslim Political interests.

**Realization of
Separate Muslim
Identity**

② Allama Iqbal's vision:

⇒ Articulated the concept of Muslims as a distinct nation. In 1930, Allahabad Address, Iqbal called for a creation of autonomous Muslim state in North Western regions of India.

③ Jinnah and the Two Nation theory:

⇒ Argued that Muslims and Hindus were fundamentally distinct in terms of religion, culture and social practices, therefore, they could not coexist. This idea formed the basis of Two Nation Theory.

CONCLUSION:-

→ Therefore,
↑ The evolution of Muslim Separatist identity in the Subcontinent was a multifaceted process that unfolded over several centuries. From Al-Biruni's early observations of cultural differences to the intellectual efforts of reformers like Sirhindi and Shah Waliullah, Muslims increasingly saw themselves as distinct from Hindu Majority. British colonial policies further reinforced this sense of separatism. Ultimately, efforts of Modern leaders like Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, Muhammad Iqbal and Muhammad Ali Jinnah culminated in the articulation of the Two Nation Theory and the creation of Pakistan.

This journey reflects dynamic interplay of religious, political, and social factors that shaped the Muslim identity in South Asia (Subcontinent).