

Pakistan Affairs

Q. 'Sir Syed Ahmed Khan is a saga of individual fighting an intellectual battle against the colonial masters and hindu supremacist mob'.
Analyze this Statement.

Aft. The war of Independence was the final attempt to dislodge British from subcontinent. Hindus got the opportunity to make British belief that Muslims were the main protagonist of the minority and victimized them socially, economically, politically and educationally. Muslims were weak, helpless, minority and distrusted by British and disowned by Hindus. At this crucial time, Sir Syed Ahmed Khan was the first leader to come forward and took steps for the revival and renaissance of Muslim society in India. He started Aligarh movement.

Objectives of Aligarh movement.

- 1- To build confidence b/w muslims and british India
- 2- To persuade muslims to acquire modern education and learn english language.
- 3- To hold back muslims from the politics.

Sir Syed Ahmed Khan services for the Renaissance of the muslims :-

Sir Syed Ahmed Khan is remembered for his immense contribution to the revitalization, advancement and modernisation of the muslims Subcontinent. He devoted his whole life for the uplift of the muslims enabling them to come out from the depth of ignorance and backwardness.

K.K Aziz in his book 'The making of Pakistan' says:-

"Sir Syed's services to his community maybe summarized in three terse phrases loyalty to british, devotion to education and aloofness from politics."

Educational Services of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan:-

Sir Syed Ahmed Khan compelled Muslims to get themselves acquainted with modern western education. His slogan was:

'Devote yourself to education; this is your only salvation'

Sir Syed believed that:-

- The conquered nations must learn sciences in which the conquering race excels'

In his view, good education was the only key to political economic progress.

For this purpose, he took following steps:-

a) School in Muradabad:-

Sir Syed Ahmed Khan established Muradabad School in 1859, where both Persian and English language were taught.

b) School in Ghazipur:-

Sir Syed Ahmed Khan established school in 1863 in Ghazipur.

B) Scientific society :-

Sir Syed Ahmed established Scientific Society in 1864 in Ghazipur. The main aim of the Society was to translate modern works into Urdu and Persian language.

He stressed upon the need for education in English language, so that Muslims could learn Western and modern knowledge as soon as possible.

d) Aligarh Institute Gazette :-

Sir Syed Ahmed Khan published a journal called Aligarh Institute Gazette in 1866.

The journal was published in both English and Urdu language to foster better understanding. The main aim of the journal was to wash away the misconception b/w Muslims and British Government and brought them close to each other.

e) M.A.O College

Sir Syed Ahmed Khan established Muhamadan Anglo oriental school in 1875. Later on in 1877, school was

upgraded to college. The teaching in the college was in English and main curriculum was Western. But at the same time the Arabic Language and religious instructions were compulsory subjects.

f) Muhammadan Educational Conference:

Sir Syed Ahmed Khan established the Muhammadan Educational Conference in 1866 in order to bring awareness among Muslims. The main aim was to inspire the Muslims to work in a field of education. This organization served the Muslim community in all fields (social, educational, political & religious). It was this movement that laid the foundation of All India Muslim League in Dhaka in 1906 in its annual meeting.

Due to educational services rendered by Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, 'The Times of London' called him the 'Prophet of Education'.

Jawaharlal Nehru said:-

"Sir Syed's decision on the point that all efforts be concentrated on Muslims education was correct. Without education, they would

have become the Slaves of the Hindus who were far advanced in education and more stable in financial position

2- Literary services of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan

Sir Syed Ahmed Khan strove for the revival of the muslim society through his literary work. Some of his literary works are as follows:-

1- Khutbat-e-Ahmdia:-

In 1870, Sir Syed Ahmed Khan wrote a book Khutbat-e-Ahmdia in response to William Muir's book called "The life of Muhammad" (PBUH) which contained scurrilous material. It helped remove misconceptions about the holy prophet (PBUH) and Islam among westerners.

2- Tahzib-ul-Kalam

It was a commentary on Bible. The purpose was to show similarities b/w Islam and Christianity.

- Risala-Tahzib ul Ikhlag:-

In 1870, Sir Syed Ahmed Khan published a pamphlet, Risala Tahzib ul Ikhlag, modeled on the pattern of Spectator and Tatler which were famous magazines of England. The main purpose was the moral Refinement of muslim and removing doubts about western education.

4- Asbab-e-Baghawat-e-Hind

In 1858, Sir Syed Ahmed Khan wrote Asbab-e-Baghawat-e-Hind (The Essay on the causes of Indian revolt) in which attributed the mutiny to british Ignorance of the Indian mind and also discussed the policies of the british government which had created underlying tensions.

5. Loyal Muhammedans of India:-

Sir Syed Ahmed Khan wrote the loyal Muhammedans of India. In this book, he defended the Muslims from the British charge that the muslims had been guilty of sedition and disloyalty and named muslims who had been loyal to

the British Government. He wanted to end their discrimination and hostility towards muslim community.

3- Social and Economic Services of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan:-

1. Lost glory:-

Sir Syed Ahmed Khan guided the muslims on every level to regain their lost glory.

2- Risala Asbab-e- Bhagharat hind:-

After the war of Independence in 1857, he wrote Risala Asbab-e- Bagharat-e- hind in which he described the actual reasons behind the war.

3. Loyal Muhammedan of India:-

Sir Syed wrote this book to make british aware of Services of the muslims. Through this book he got sensible behaviour of the British from for the muslims of India.

Government jobs for muslims:-

As a result of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan's Campaign, the muslims of India got remarkable jobs in government sector on large scale.

5. Orphanages:-

He established orphanages for muslim children so that they may not become hindu or christian. It was really a great service of him. In this way he tried to construct bridge b/w the british and muslims.

4. Political services of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan

1- Detachment from politics:-

After the war of Independence 1857, he advised muslims should devote themselves to education and refrain from participating in active politics. Unless the muslims freed themselves of suspicion of dis loyalty and had educate

themselves to the hindu level.

2- Urdu - Hindi Controversy:-

1867, there arose the controversy about the official language Urdu which was written in persian script. The Hindus wanted to replace this with hindi language written in devangiri script and started agitation for this purpose.

This controversy brought a paradigm shift in thinking of many muslim leaders.

4- Behaviour towards Indian national congress

Sir Syed forbade the muslims to join the Indian national congress founded by A.O Hume in 1885. Therefore in order to protect the political fortunes of the muslims, sir Syed formed the Muhammedan defence association (MDA) in 1893.

5- Two - Nation theory:-

Sir Syed Ahmed Khan was the one of the first muslim leaders who spoke of the hindus and muslims as two different people and called muslims 'my nation' in 1867, that

impelled Sir Syed to speak of hindus and muslims as two different nations who would not join whole heartedly in anything. while talking to Mr. Shakespeare, the Commissioner of Benaras, Sir Syed said:-

"I am convinced that Hindus and muslims could never become one nation as their religions and way of life are very different and distinct from each other. At present there is no open hostility b/w two communities, but it will increase immediately in future. He who lives will see".

Critical Analysis

The contribution of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan towards the revival and resurgence of muslim society are immense. pioneered by Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, the movement helped remove backward looking nostalgia among muslims and taught them to look to the future with confidence. This movement helped restore muslim confidence, built bridges with british and laid the foundation of muslim political movement.