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Question #01

Explain the contributions of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan for the protection of Muslim interests after War of Independence 1857 and how they paved the way for the creation of Pakistan.

Answer:

1- INTRODUCTION:

After the War of Independence 1857, Indian Muslims faced political defeat, social humiliation, and educational backwardness. In this dark hour, Sir Syed Ahmed Khan emerged as the "Architect of Muslim Revival", who rebuilt Muslim confidence and laid the intellectual foundations that later grew into the Pakistan Movement. His educational, political and social reforms transformed a crushed community into a rising nation. His legacy inspired generations to strive for political autonomy and educational excellence.

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2. CONTRIBUTIONS OF SIR SYED FOR THE PROTECTION OF MUSLIM INTERESTS:

a. Political Contributions:

Following are the political contributions of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan for the protection of Muslim interests.

i. Rapprochement between British and Muslims:

After the disastrous events of 1857, Sir Syed realized that direct conflict with the British would further destroy Muslims. He adopted the policy of reconciliation to protect Muslim lives and future. His famous book "Asbab-e-Baghawat-e-Hind" (Causes of the Indian Revolt) explained that war occurred due to British misgovernance and not merely Muslim conspiracy. Through this he reduced British hostility towards Muslims.

ii. Prevention of Muslim Identity:

The Hindi-Urdu controversy of 1867 proved to be a turning point ^{in his} political thinking when Hindu leaders demanded the replacement of Urdu with Hindi. On this occasion, Sir Syed declared, "Now I am certain

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that Hindus and Muslims are two separate nations." He also advised the Muslims to stay away from the Indian National Congress because it represented Hindu political dominance. Thus, he protected Muslim political identity at a very critical stage.

b. Educational Contributions:

Following are the educational contributions of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan.

i. Patronizing Muslims towards Modern Education:

Sir Syed firmly believed that modern education was essential for the survival and progress of Muslims. He once said, "A nation that does not educate itself is doomed to destruction." To achieve this goal, he established the Scientific Society in 1863 to translate Western books into Urdu so that Muslim could benefit from modern knowledge.

ii. Foundation of Educational Institutions:

Sir Syed Ahmed Khan opened a number of institutions for purpose of imparting education to the Muslim population of Indian subcontinent. His greatest achievement was the establishment of the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental (MAO)

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College at Aligarh in 1875, which later became Aligarh Muslim University. This institution provided a combination of Islamic and modern education in science, law, politics and philosophy. The educational contributions of Sir Syed also transformed the educational condition of Muslims and created a new class of enlightened Muslim leadership.

c. Social Contributions:

Sir Syed worked tirelessly to reform Muslim society, which had fallen into despair and backward customs after 1857. He opposed superstitions, blind limitation and outdated customs that weakened Muslim society. He also promoted discipline, rational thinking, cleanliness and social responsibility among Muslims. He advised Muslims to adopt modern ways of life while preserving their Islamic values. "Social reform is the ladder through which nations climb the heights of progress." (Sir Syed Ahmed Khan).

d. Religious Contributions:

Sir Syed was a devout Muslim. He tried to bring Muslim unity

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through religious unity and harmony. He wrote famous book "Khutbat-e-Ahmadiya" in rebuttal to the allegations of William Muir's book "The Life of Muhammad". Sir Syed's another religious service was that he attempted to synthesize religion and science. He believed that there was no contradiction between the 'Word of God' and 'Work of God'. By 'Word of God' he mean 'Quran' and by 'Work of God' he pointed the application of 'Quranic laws' in the universe.

3. HOW SIR SYED'S EFFORTS PAVED THE WAY FOR THE CREATION OF PAKISTAN:

a. Foundation of the Two-Nation Theory:

The political experiences of Sir Syed convinced him that Muslims were a separate nation with their own religion, language, culture and historical traditions. His famous statement that Hindus and Muslims belong to two different nations became the earliest expression of the Two-Nation Theory. This concept later became the ideological foundation of Pakistan movement and guided Muslim political struggle towards the demand of separate homeland.

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b. Creation of Muslim Political Awareness:

Sir Syed taught Muslims that they must safeguard their political rights separately instead of Hindu leadership. By opposing the Congress, he awakened Muslims to the importance of separate political identity, which led to the establishment of "All India Muslim League" in 1906, the party that eventually led the struggle of Pakistan.

c. Formation of Muslim Leadership:

The Aligarh Movement produced a generation of educated, confident and politically aware Muslim leaders. Prominent leaders of the Pakistan movement such as Liaquat Ali Khan, Khwaja Nazimuddin and the Ali Brothers were inspired directly or indirectly by Aligarh. This leadership provided direction, organization and political strength to the freedom movement.

"The Aligarh Movement supplied the brainpower for the creation of Pakistan"
(Quaid-e-Azam)

d. Protection of Muslim Cultural Identity:

Sir Syed strongly defended Urdu language, Islamic traditions and

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the distinct civilization of Muslims. He opposed all the attempts to merge the Muslim identity into the Hindu majority culture. Through education, literature and political awareness, he revived Muslim cultural consciousness. This cultural protection strengthened the idea that Muslims were a separate nation, which later became the basis for the demand for Pakistan.

e. Economic and Intellectual Empowerment of Muslims:

Through modern education at Aligarh, Muslims gained access to government jobs, legal knowledge and professional careers. This economic and intellectual uplift freed Muslims from complete dependence on Hindus and the British. An economically ^{independent} and educated Muslim community was later able to organize itself politically and successfully struggle for freedom. Thus, intellectual empowerment became a practical force behind the Pakistan Movement.

4. CONCLUSION:

Sir Syed Ahmed Khan was the greatest benefactor of the Muslims of the Subcontinent after

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1857. At a time when Muslims were facing political ruin, social decay, and educational backwardness, he revived their confidence and guided them towards progress. His political foresight introduced the idea of "a separate Muslim identity, his educational movement created leadership, his social reforms modernized Muslim society and his religious services defended Islam in the modern age.

In reality, Sir Syed laid the first brick of the ideological structure of Pakistan, as therefore it is rightly said;

"Sir Syed Ahmed Khan was the pioneer of Muslim nationalism in South Asia."

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Question # 02

Critically evaluate the existing NFC award and present workable suggestions for its improvements.

Answer:1. INTRODUCTION:

The National Finance Commission (NFC)^{award} is a constitutional mechanism under Article 160 for the distribution of financial resources between the federation and the provinces. The 7th NFC Award (2010), still operational in practice, increased the provincial sharing of the ^{federal} divisible pool to 57.5%. While it strengthened provincial autonomy after the 18th Amendment, serious fiscal and structural weaknesses persist. These include population dominance, vertical imbalance, weak provincial taxation, neglect of local governments, delay in new awards and federal financial stress. Hence, meaningful reforms like economic reforms, sharing federal expenditure with provinces and changing the vertical resource distribution are urgently required.

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CRITICAL 2. EVALUATION OF THE PRESENT NEC AWARD SYSTEM:

i. Dominance of Population as Distribution Criterion:

Population remains the most heavily weighted factor in horizontal distribution, giving Punjab about 51.7% of the provincial share, while Balochistan receives only about 9%. Although indicators like poverty and inverse population density were added, their weight is too small to ensure real equity. This limits redistribution and deepens regional disparities.

“Development must expand human choices, not merely population size.”

∴ (Mahbub ul Haq) - World-renowned Pakistani economist.

ii. Vertical Fiscal Imbalance Remains High:

Despite provinces receiving 57.5% of the divisible pool, the federal government controls major taxes like income tax, customs tax etc. Meanwhile, provinces bear heavy post-18th Amendment expenditures in health, education and

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policing. This mismatch sustains vertical fiscal imbalance and forces provinces to rely on federal transfers. The IMF (2025) also notes that fiscal pressures remain despite a primary surplus.

iii- Weak Provincial Revenue Efforts:

Provincial governments have not sufficiently broadened their tax base despite higher transfers. Agriculture income tax, property tax and services tax remain underutilised due to the political resistance and weak administration. As a result, provincial own-source revenue remains limited compared to federal collections. This undermines true fiscal autonomy and keeps provinces financially dependent on the centre.

iv- Neglect of Local Governments:

The NFC improves provincial finances but does not directly protect local governments. Provincial governments often delay or restrict transfers to local bodies, weakening grassroots service delivery. This financial neglect undermines democratic decentralisation and local development. In practice, provinces have replaced the centre as the dominant fiscal authority.

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V. Delay in New NFC Awards:

Although the constitution requires regular NFC formation, Pakistan is still operating under the 7th NFC framework introduced in 2010. Political disagreements between the federation and provinces have delayed a new award. As a result, a formula designed for 2010 conditions governs a radically changed economy in 2025. This delay weakens fiscal efficiency and intergovernmental trust.

vi. Federal Financial Stress:

Pakistan's federal finances are under severe strain due to rising public debt and debt servicing. By March 2025, total public debt exceeded approximately Rs 76 Trillion, while interest payments became the largest budgetary item. This limits development spending and constrains the federation capacity to meet national obligations. The fixed NFC ratio further tightens the federal fiscal space during crises.

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3. WORKABLE SUGGESTIONS FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF NFC AWARD:

i. Economic Reforms Are the Need of the Hour:

Broad-based economic reforms are essential to expand the size of the divisible pool. Tax base broadening, digitalisation, documentation of the economy and energy sector reforms can enhance revenue at both federal and provincial levels. Without growth in national income, redistribution alone cannot resolve fiscal disputes.

ii. Sharing the Federal Expenditure with Provinces:

Certain national social sector programmes should be co-financed by the federation and provinces through matching grants. This will reduce the fiscal burden on the centre and encourage provincial ownership of national development goals. It will also improve coordination and accountability.

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iii. Changing the Vertical Resource Distribution:

The vertical resource distribution ratio should be reviewed periodically instead of being fixed permanently. A flexible band-based formula can balance provincial autonomy with federal needs related to defence, debt servicing and national development. This will reduce fiscal rigidity during economic crises.

iv. Amending the Horizontal Resource Distribution:

The weight of population should be reduced and greater emphasis given to poverty, backwardness, human development, area size and disaster vulnerability. This will make distribution more equitable and supportive of underdeveloped regions such as Balochistan and merged districts of KP. It will also strengthen national cohesion.

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v. Learning from India's Example:

India increased the states' share to 42% and strengthened coordination through institutions like the GST Council.

Pakistan can learn from this by pairing higher devolution with stronger intergovernmental coordination and compensation mechanisms. However, reforms must suit Pakistan's constitutional and economic realities.

vi. Linking Transfers with Performance:

A portion of NFC transfers should be linked with performance in areas such as tax effort, transparency and service delivery. This will promote fiscal discipline and efficient use of public resources. At a same time a guaranteed unconditional share should be maintained.

4. CONCLUSION:

The NFC award is a central to Pakistan's federal structure, but its current framework suffers from population dominance,

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vertical imbalance, weak provincial taxation, neglect of local governments, delayed revision and severe federal fiscal stress. Without reforms, these problems will intensify fiscal conflict and economic inefficiency. By revising distribution formulas, strengthening revenue efforts, protecting local governments and linking transfers with performance, the NFC system can become more equitable, efficient and sustainable in the future.

