

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

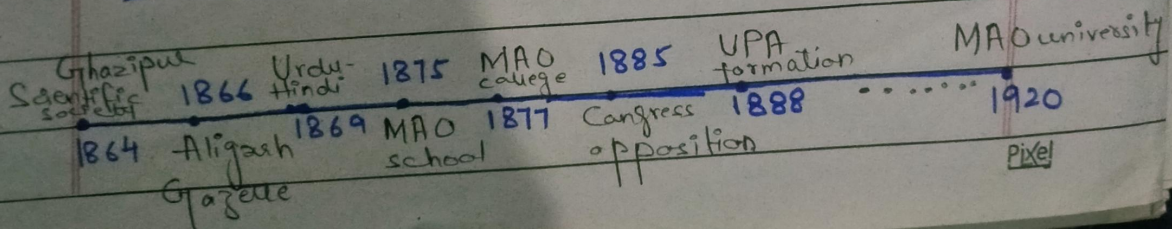
Outline

- 1- Introduction.
- 2- Pre Aligarh socio-political circumstances.
- 3- Sir Syed Ahmad Khan: A visionary reformer.
- 4- Aim of Aligarh Movement.
- 5- Establishment of MAO college.
 - Habermas Public Sphere Theory.
- 6- Establishment of Scientific Society.
- 7- 'Tehzeeb ul Akhlaq': An advanced step.
- 8- Efforts to improve British-Muslim relations.
 - Modern Liberalisation Theory.
- 9- 1969 Urdu-Hindi Controversy: A paradigm shift.
 - Identity Construction Theory.
- 10- Political Guidance for Muslims.
- 11- Formation of United Patriotic Association.
- 12- Comparison of contemporary education Models.
- 13- Criticism: Elitist to Infidel.
- 14- Critical Analysis: From class rooms to politics.
- 15- Conclusion.

Introduction

'Renaissance' is the only word to describe the chronology of the founder of Aligarh Movement, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan. He was the main of vision who initiated Aligarh Movement to save the helpless Muslims, suffering from the after shocks of War of Independence 1857. From Ghazipur Scientific Society 1864 to united Patriotic Association 1888, Aligarh Movement set the pioneer to take Muslims from classroom to state politics. Sir Syed's elitist approach and modernization views set a Habermas public sphere for distressed Muslims in the form of Mahamadan Anglo Oriented College. In short, despite strong criticism, Sir Syed and Aligarh Movement shaped the future of Indian Muslims in terms of education and politics.

Educational to Political shaping of Muslim Timeline



1- Pre Aligarh Social, Educational and Political Suffering of Muslims:

War of Independence, 1857 ended with a century long suffering of Muslims in India. As former rulers and a long history of conflicts i.e. crusades and fall of Ghanata, Muslims were directly subjected to the wrath of British rulers in every domain of life. Asok Mehta describes the condition of Muslims as follows:

"Not only were the Muslims economically crushed, educationally and socially also their position was deliberately depressed by the Government"

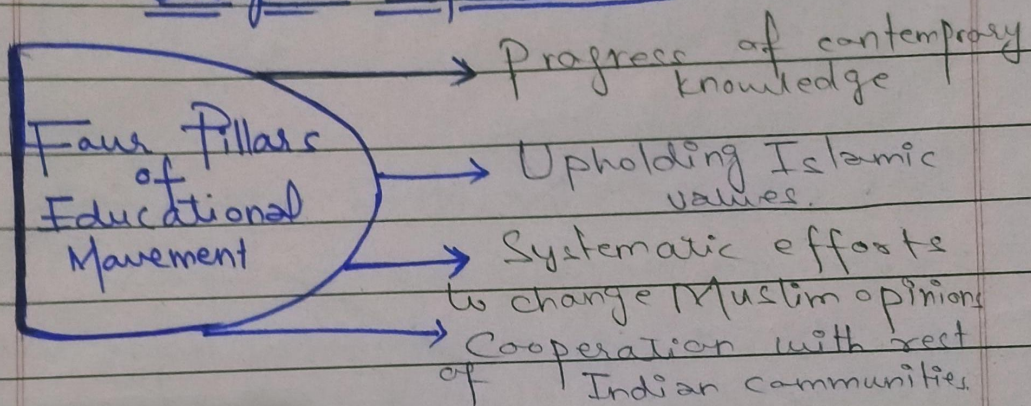
The Communal Triangle

2- Emergence of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan as a visionary reformer:

On 17 October, 1817, Syed Ahmad Khan was born to the nobilities of Delhi. From witnessing end of Muslim rule to their suffering, he covered the journey from a judge to advocate of Islam. With his visionary approach, he used his travel to England, 1869, as an opportunity to study ^{their} educational

models and write concise answers to 'The life of Muhammad' by William Meir. He answered this blasphemy by 'Khutbat-e-Ahmadia'. So, to educate Indian Muslims and preserve the essence of Islam, he founded Aligarh movement.

3. Foundational Aims of the Aligarh Movement



[Ref:] The Aligarh Movement's contributions to Development of Modern Education in KP. **[Ataullah]**

4. Establishment of Mohammadan Anglo-Oriental College: A Habermas Public Sphere for Indian Muslims:

In the view of Habermas public sphere theory, Muslims identity required a platform to fill the gap between masses and powerholders. Mohammadan Anglo-Oriental College, upgraded from MAO

school, provided that public sphere which shaped Muslim community in the ideological, educational and political aspects. The approach of MAO college in words of

Sir Syed is as follows

"Philosophy will be in our right hand and natural science in the left and the crown of Kalma will adorn our head"

5- Establishment of Scientific Society: An Advanced Educational Step

The establishment of Ghazipur Scientific Society in 1864 was an advanced step. A bilingual journal 'Aligarh Institute Gazette' began to publish under this society from 1866. It was an educational advancement to bridge western knowledge with Eastern roots.

Development
of logical
and scientific
conduct
among Muslims

key Purposes
of Society

Translation of
literary, scientific
and important
western books
from English
to Urdu.

Ref: A critical Survey of Sir Syed
Ahmad Khan, Aligarh Movement, its Consequence
and objectives

6- Tehzib ul Akhlaq: An effective use of Print Media

Among numerous valuable literary works of Sir Syed, 'Tehzib ul Akhlaq' shines out. In the era of print media, this journal was a source of discussion on world-wide topics on the style of 'The Spectator' and 'The Taylor'. It helped in raising political and educational acumen of Muslims.

"Aim of Tahzeeb ul Akhlaq was to convince Muslims to come out of mediaeval groove and receive new education."

Ref: Dr. Kamika Dubey.

7- Efforts to improve British-Muslim relation: A Modern Liberalist Approach

In the view of modern liberalisation theory, Sir Syed recognized the need of improvement in British-Muslim relations to promote

reforms, not rebellion. His book, Asbab-e-Baghawat-i-Hind, clarified the misconceptions of British regarding Muslims as sole responsible of War of Independence. Alongside, he wanted to equip Muslims with modern education to gain social mobility and

Political empowerment.

"Sir Syed thought that the British rule over India will not endly shortly.

Therefore, Muslims should get closer to counter Hindu propaganda"

Ref: Synthesis and Characterization of Coordination Complexes of Transitional Elements, Aligarh Muslim University (Abdul Rehman Yahya)

8- Urdu-Hindi Controversy: A paradigm Shift in Political mindset

"Hindus and Muslims are two eyes of the bride and damage to one eye would make the bride ugly" (Sir Syed).

The above statement reveals the mindset of a person who strongly advocates Hindu-Muslim unity. But in 1869, the demands of Banaras Hindus to publish Aligarh Gazette in Hindi and make Hindi and Devanagiri script official, caused a paradigm shift in Sir Syed's political mindshift. He recognized and advocated the separate Muslim identity after 1867.

9- Political Shaping of Indian Muslims

Despite being an educational venture, Sir Syed used Aligarh Movement to shape the political accumen of Indian Muslims. After the establishment of Congress in 1885, he provided the political guidance for Muslims in following ways:

**Sir Syed's
advice**

→ Muslims should stay out of politics

→ focus on education

Ref: Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, 1887.
(The Aligarh Miracle: Hina Khan)

10- Formation of United Patriotic Association

In 1888, he established United Patriotic association for a political representation of Muslims. While keeping common Muslims away from politics, this platform was established to get the rights of Muslims from British rules.

Stop Muslims
from involvement
in politics

**Purpose of
UPA**

→ opposition
of Congress

Advocate Muslim rights (Dr. Karnika Duley)

11- Comparison with the contemporary educational Models

Deoband educational Model

- Muslims should only get religious education
- No need of modern education
- Anti-British approach.

Muslims must get modern education
new interpretation of religion should be done
Inclination towards British

Aligarh Movement

Dar-ul-Nadwah model

- up bring such individuals equip with both religion and modern sciences.
- Balanced approach towards British.

All three models worked uniquely to end Muslim sufferings, but it was Aligarh movement whose platforms and graduates shaped Indian politics and played key role in Creation of Pakistan.

12- Criticism on Sir Syed: Elitist to Infidel

Despite his revolutionary work, Sir Syed faced severe criticism. Ironically, most of the criticism was done by Muslim themselves. There were two critiques on Sir Syed presented as follows

12-1- Eliticism

As per Dr. Saleh Shahriyar in 'Sir Syed Ahmed Khan and Muslim Renaissance':

"His (Sir Syed) critique argue that his loyalty to British government, communal outlook and his elitist approach to education contributed to a fractured Muslim community."

The accusation of eliticism is true to the extent that education standards of Aligarh college needs funds, which can't be fulfilled otherwise. But, the other side shows that permanent revolution requires top-down approach. Without regulating class, is the change even possible?

12-2 Controversial Religious values and views

"It is clear that Sir Syed's beliefs and ideology were the root cause of the present century's irreligion, religious disharmony, and disaffection"
Ref: Shah Jangawi.

Sir Syed had tried his best to bridge the gap between science and religion.

Date: _____

Modern thinking and ijtihad is appreciated in Islam. But, his work like commentaries on Bible was not appreciated by conservative ulema. But, the major controversy arose when he tried to reinterpret the 'core beliefs' of Islam in the light of science such as the concept of Angels and Jinn, Jannat and Jahannam. It led him to the fatawa of 'kufr' by ulema.

14. Critical Analysis: From class rooms to state politics

Despite his controversial religious views his effort to take Muslims from class rooms to political platforms cannot be denied. His accurate approach equipped Muslims with modern education by Aligarh Movement, mobilized socially by providing platforms like colleges and societies and shaped politically through its graduates like Liaqat Ali Khan, who actively served the cause of Pakistan.

"The Aligarh Movement started by Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, was the catalyst for national awakening."

Ref: Ataulkar, Pixel

Conclusion:

To conclude with, Aligarh Movement was a pure educational venture which began with the Ghazipur Scientific Society in 1864 and reached at its peak with MAO college in 1875. This Habermas public sphere brought up Muslims ideologically by platforms, education and thoughtful journals. But this movement's impact expanded to politics by united Patriotic Association and Sir Syed's ^{political} guidance. The movement marked its success by preparing educated graduates who shaped Indian politics and fought for the cause and creation of Pakistan. So it can be claimed that "Aligarh movement was a pure educational venture but it had deep impacts on Indian politics."