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Relevant content

Pakistan Affairs

Question #02

Services of Sheikh Ahmed Sirhindi and Shah Wali Ullah and their Impact on History of Sub-Continent

Missed impacts

1. Introduction to Sheikh Ahmed Sirhindi and Shah Wali Ullah's Services:

Sheikh Ahmed Sirhindi (1587-1624) and Shah Wali Ullah (1703-1762) are considered as most influential Islamic reformers in the history of sub-continent. Both of these scholars were concerned about rise of Hindus in Mughal empire and tried to contain that by adopting various reformative steps. The state of Muslim in the time of both scholars was influenced by

Hindu traditions and weakened Islamic unity in society. Sheikh Ahmed Sirhindi tried to resist the heretic policies of the great Mughal Akbar by reviving the orthodox Islamic doctrine. Shah Wali Ullah, however, tried to emphasize on the need of Muslim Unity at the time of decline in Mughal control over sub-continent.

2. A Brief Biographical Overview of the life of both scholars:

Sheikh Ahmed Sirhindi (1624-1624) (1564-1624) was a Hanafi jurist and a hard-line Alim. He joined Naqashbandi Sufi Order when he was 36 and propagated the legacy of great Indian sufi Baqir Shah Billa. He was also imprisoned for two years by Jehangir for his views.

Shah Wali Ullah (1703-1762) was also a Hanafi Alim and Naqashbandi Sufi, but he was a more modern socialist thinker than Sirhindi.

Shah Wali Ullah had studied from Mecca and he tried to provide a link between medieval and modern intellectual trends in sub-continent some what like Dante did in Europe.

~~3. Notable Contri~~

3. Political, Social and Religious Landscape of Sub-continent at Sheikh Ahmad's Time:

During the age of Sheikh Ahmed Sirhindi, the Mughal Empire did not face economic issues, but the religious conditions of Muslims were weakening and Hindus were becoming stronger.

3.1: Religious Policies of Akbar:

Due to multiple Hindu wives in palace and a large number of Hindus in courts, Akbar had great influence of Hindu tradition on him.

Akbar's idea of Sulh-e-Kul, tolerance for all religions, led him to propogate Din-i-ilahi, abolish pilgrimage

tax, abolish jizya, patronage of Hindu temples and fine arts, and ban on cow slaughter. These religious policies had made Hindus strong and better positioned in sub-continent.

3.2: Sufi Stance of Monism:

The influence of Ibn Arabi's idea of Wahdat-ul-Wajood had spread in Muslim sufis and the essence of Shariah was ignored due to such doctrines.

4. Notable Contributions of Sheikh Ahmed Sirhindi:

Sheikh Ahmed Sirhindi had taken the responsibility of reviving Islamic Shariah in the sub-continent. For that he took many steps. Some of them are:

4.1: Denouncing Wahdat-ul-Wajood with the idea of Wahdat-ul-Shahood:

Sirhindi counter the ideology of monism or pantheism by presenting the idea of Wahdat-ul-Shahood. He claimed that all creations are not unified with God, rather they just present themselves as creations.

All creations are a witness to the existence of their creator (i.e. Wahdat-ul-Shuhood) but ~~are~~ ^{do} not ^{possess} unified soul with creator (i.e. Wahdat-ul-Wajrod).

4.2: Accepted Qiyas and Ijtihad:

Sheikh Sirhindi accepted Ijtihad and Qiyas in Islamic jurisprudence.

4.3: Opposed the practice of Sajda to Ruler:

He opposed the practice of sajda or prostration towards ruler and declared it a bidat (innovation)

4.4: Prohibited the idea of Hindu Muslim Integration

He was against the intermingling of Hindus and Muslims. He opposed inter-dining, inter marriages among Hindus and Muslims. He emphasized on distinct character of Hindus and Muslims.

5. Sub-Continent at Shah Wali Ullah's Time:

The Mughal rule in India had started to decline. Muslims had adopted Hindu traditions. Muslims were indulged in ~~un~~ un-Islamic practices. Marathas had gained power and had their eyes on throne of Delhi.

6. Notable Contributions of Shah Wali Ullah:

Shah Wali Ullah observed the intense sectarian divide in Muslims (i.e. between Shias and Sunnis, two strands of Sufism). Shah Wali Ullah's contributions are following:

6.1: Translation of Quran:

For the better understanding of Islam by a layman, Shah Wali Ullah translated Quran in Persian. In this way, Muslim community had direct access to the source of Islam.

6.2: Reconciliation between two Sufi Strands, Shias and Sunnis:

Shah Wali Ullah declared that both ideologies, Wahdat-ul-Wajood and Wahdat-ul-Shahood, are correct. Similarly, he wrote books to bring Shias and Sunnis closer.

6.3: Invited Ahmad Shah Abdali:

He wrote letters to Ahmad Shah Abdali to attack Marathas. His efforts were partly fruitful as Ahmed Shah Abdali defeated Marathas

in the third Battle of Panipat in 1761. However, to Shah Wali Ullah's disappointment, he did not establish a dynasty in sub-continent and returned to Afghanistan.

7. Conclusion:

Aqbal declared Sheikh Sirhindi as the Guardian of Muslim wherewithal in sub-continent in his verse. Shah Wali Ullah has also been declared as a worker for the founding of an Ideal Muslim homeland by Arfan M. Habib. Both of these scholars had contributed in the Muslim revival and reform in the sub-continent in the 16th and 17th century. Their ideologies later on influenced Sir Syed Ahmed Khan and other Muslim leaders. Overall, it can be stated that their contribution has made them eternal in the history of Muslims of sub-continent.

Question #07

Instable and Violence Filled
Future of Region in the
Absence of Regional
Consensus-based Approach
between Afghanistan
and Pakistan

1. Introduction to lack of Consensus Based Approach between Pakistan and Afghanistan:

Since the US withdrawal from Afghanistan in 2021, the Taliban government in Afghanistan has disappointed Pakistan's expectations of a friendly neighbour in its west. The surge in terrorism in Pakistan is a consequence of provision of safe havens and sanctuaries for TTP in Afghanistan.

The strained relationship between Pakistan and Afghanistan is not just an issue for both countries, rather it a security threat for the whole region.

2. Historical Context of Pak-Afghan Relations:

The relationship between Pakistan and Afghanistan ~~are~~ is historically based on conflict and animosity. Afghanistan's claim on Durand Line and other conflicting issues like Pakistan's role in War on Terrorism have contributed in rise of hostilities across borders. However, Pakistan's support for Afghan Taliban gave a positive prospect for a friendly Afghan government after US withdrawal from Afghanistan. But the recent cross-border terrorism has deteriorated the relations.

3. Reasons for absence of consensus based approach between Pakistan and Afghanistan:

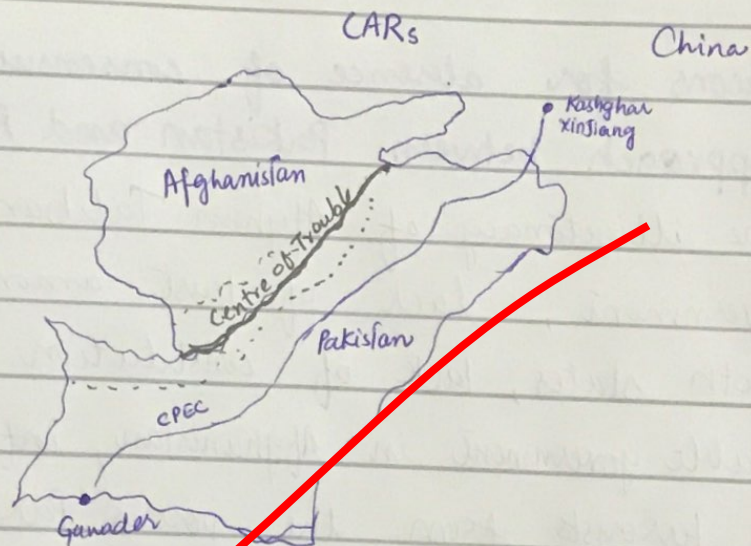
The illegitimacy of Afghan Taliban government, lack of trust among both states, lack of constitution and stable government in Afghanistan, infiltration of terrorists from the porous Pak-Afghan border, Pakistan's repatriation of Afghan refugees and continuous attacks from Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan ~~are~~ are the

main reasons behind the absence of a consensus based approach between Pakistan and Afghanistan.

4. Future Implications of Pak-Afghan Strained relations on the region:

The increasing hostility between two neighbours will pose severe threats to regional stability and peace.

The peace in Pakistan and Afghanistan is pre-requisite for the success of CPEC in particular and BRI in general.



The porous Pak-Afghan border is currently proving to be a centre of cross border

terrorism which is a threat to regional stability. Another major implications of strained Pak-Afghan relations is the economic decline for both countries to due to impact on bilateral trade. Afghanistan is land bolted country which needs Pakistan's ports for its transit trade with other countries that determines its ~~border~~ economy.

Due to worsened peace situation, increase in drug trafficking will also impact the region adversely. Similarly, the ^{easy} access of local Pakistanis to CARs via Afghanistan will also be affected.

5. Conclusion:

In a nutshell, it can be stated that peace in Afghanistan and Pakistan is crucial for stability in the region. However, instability in these states will lead to terrorism and violence filled future of region.