

Q Critically analyze the role of religious reformers in the socio-political awakening of Indian Muslims in the 19th Century. How did their efforts contribute to the formation of Muslim identity in the subcontinent?

2. INTRODUCTION:

The 19th century plunged Muslim India into a profound crisis, marked by imperial collapse and societal stagnation. Yet, from this turmoil emerged powerful reformers who played a pivotal role in the socio-political awakening of India Muslims. Among these were, Syed Ahmad Barelvi, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, Shah Abdul Aziz and Samiullah Khan who used every ounce of their influence to elevate the status of Muslims in ^{the} subcontinent. Their efforts for the revival of Islamic values, emphasis on education and intellectual renewal bore the fruit in the form of a unified Muslim identity in the subcontinent.

2: SOCIO-POLITICAL CONDITIONS OF INDIAN MUSLIMS IN THE 19TH CENTURY:

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In the [↑] 19th century, Muslim India experienced a period of profound upheaval and decline, marked by the collapse of the Mughal Empire, and the rise of British colonial power. This era not only witnessed political fragmentation but also a perceived religious and social stagnation. In response, a series of reformers emerged, aiming to revitalize Muslim society within.

3: THE ROLE OF RELIGIOUS REFORMERS IN THE SOCIO-POLITICAL AWAKENING OF INDIAN MUSLIMS:

- (a) By initiating Jihad Movement Syed Ahmad Barailly acted as a galvanizing force for Muslims:

Syed Ahmad Barailly initiated Jihad Movement in 1826 and travelled across India to motivate

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Muslims for Jihad. It was the first and foremost Jihad movement to liberate Muslims. He emphasized that Muslims must sacrifice everything to ensure religious and spiritual freedom. During the time, when Muslim force was split, he became a galvanizing force for Muslims. He imposed the shariah and later became the Imam - Amir al Momineen. This movement became an inspiration and set a precedent for later generations.

(b) Aligarh Movement. Led by Sir Syed Ahmad Khan uplifted the educational, political and social status of Indian Muslims:

The most influential reformer, Sir Syed founded the Aligarh Movement to spearhead the socio-political awakening of Muslims in India.

(i) Education: He advocated for Western-style scientific education, establishing the Scientific Society (1864) and the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College (1875) to prepare Muslims for government jobs and modernity.

"Devote yourself to education;
this is your only solvation."
(Sir Syed Ahmad)

(iii) Political Stance: He promoted a strategy of cooperation with the British, believing it was the best path for Muslim upliftment after the devastating consequences of 1857 Rebellion.

"Sir Syed's services to his community may be summarized in three terse phrases: loyalty to the British, devotion to the education and aloofness from politics."

(K.K. Aziz, The Making of Pakistan)

(c) Samiullah Khan as a strong supporter of Sir Syed's vision:

A co-founder of the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College, Samiullah Khan supported Sir Syed's vision. He agreed that western education was essential for the Muslim community's survival and upliftment. As the first secretary of the College's management committee, he was

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instrumental in the establishment and early success of the institution.

(d) Shah Abdul Aziz revitalized Islamic thoughts through continuing the Waliullah Movement:

Led by Shah Waliullah and continued by his son Abdul Aziz, the Waliullah Movement set the groundwork for much of the later socio-political reform in the 19th century. Shah Abdul Aziz issued a significant fatwa declaring that India was no longer a Dar-ul-Islam, a major moment in shaping Muslim attitudes toward British rule.

(e) Haji Shariatullah, through Faraizi Movement, created a sense of self-awareness among Muslims:

Faraizi movement, primarily in Bengal, was founded by Haji Shariatullah. It focused on purifying Islam and removing Hindu influences on Muslim practices which helped in creating a sense of self-awareness among Muslims.

DATE: _____

in the eastern part of India.

4: THE FORMATION OF MUSLIM IDENTITY IN THE SUBCONTINENT THROUGH THE EFFORTS OF RELIGIOUS REFORMERS:

(a) Revival of Islamic Values and Practices:

Reformers like Syed Ahmad Barelvi, Shah Abdul Aziz and Haji Shariatullah emphasized the importance of returning to the Quran, and Hadith, promoting a more purified and unified form of Islam. This helped create a sense of shared values and practices among Muslims, forming a separate Muslim identity in the subcontinent.

(b) Emphasis on Education and Intellectual Renewal:

Reformers like Sir Syed Ahmad and Samiullah promoted modern education, which helped Muslims to adapt to changing circumstances and engage with Western ideas. This led to the emergence

of a modern, educated Muslim middle class.

(c) Response to Colonialism and Westernization:

Reformers responded to British colonialism and Western cultural influences, encouraging Muslims to maintain their distinct identity and a separate nation. Therefore, they should resist assimilation.

(d) Influence on the Pakistan Movement:

The reformers' emphasis on Muslim identity and unity contributed to the intellectual foundations of the Pakistan Movement. Particularly, the Jihad Movement proved to be a fore-runner of Pakistan Movement, which ultimately led to the creation of Pakistan in 1947.

5: Critical Analysis:

All of these reformers and the movements worked for the awakening

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and protection of Muslim identity. However, some did not achieve their goals in the short run and some faced challenges such as sectarianism. Despite that, in the long run, the efforts were successful and Muslim got a separate identity as a nation and fought for the cause of their own homeland.

6: CONCLUSION:

In conclusion, the religious reformers played a significant role in the socio-political awakening of Indian Muslims. However, their efforts were not without limitations, and their legacy remains complex. Nevertheless, they remained determined for the cause of distinct Muslim identity in the subcontinent. They promoted Islamic values, education, unity and political consciousness, ultimately contributing to the creation of Pakistan.