

Q no 1

Role of Religious Reformers and Muslim Identity in the Subcontinent

(1) Introduction

The **19th century** was a defining period for Indian Muslims, marked by political subjugation, educational decline, and identity confusion following the fall of Mughal Empire (**1857**). Amid this crisis, religious reformers emerged as torchbearers of revival, seeking to reconstruct Islamic thought and restore Muslim dignity. Their movements, rooted in faith but evolving into socio-political reform, paved the way for the Muslim's eventual political consciousness and identity formation. As **Allama Iqbal** later observed,

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"The reconstruction of religious thought is the greatest service a Muslim can render to his community."

(2) Background of the Post-1857 Muslim Decline

After the **War of Independence 1857**, Muslims were perceived as the chief culprits and suffered immense repression under the British rule. Their socio-political and economic conditions deteriorated, traditional education systems collapsed, and political exclusion deepened. In this environment, religious reformers appeared as both spiritual and intellectual guides who linked the Islamic revivalism with socio-political awakening.

(3) Shah Waliullah set the intellectual foundation of Reform which

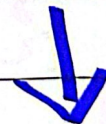
Contributed in the formation
of Muslim Identity in
the Sub-continent

Though preceding the 19th century,
Shah Waliullah's thought profoundly
shaped later reformers. He called for a
return to the **Quran** and **Sunnah**,
condemned sectarianism, and emphasized
socio-economic justice. His ideas inspired
movements like **Deoband** and
Ahl-i-Hadith, which stressed religious
education as a means of identity preservation.

Reoriented Muslim
Intellectual life



Imitation → Revival



Contributed in the Muslim
Identity in Subcontinent

(4) Syed Ahmed Shaheed Bareilvi brought Jihad and political consciousness which later paved way to the Muslim Identity in the Subcontinent

Syed Ahmed Bareilvi transformed Shah Waliullah's philosophy into activism. His **Jihad Movement (1826-1831)**

sought to restore Muslim political authority and moral integrity, particularly in **North-West India.**

Awakened
the idea
of Muslim
Self-Rule

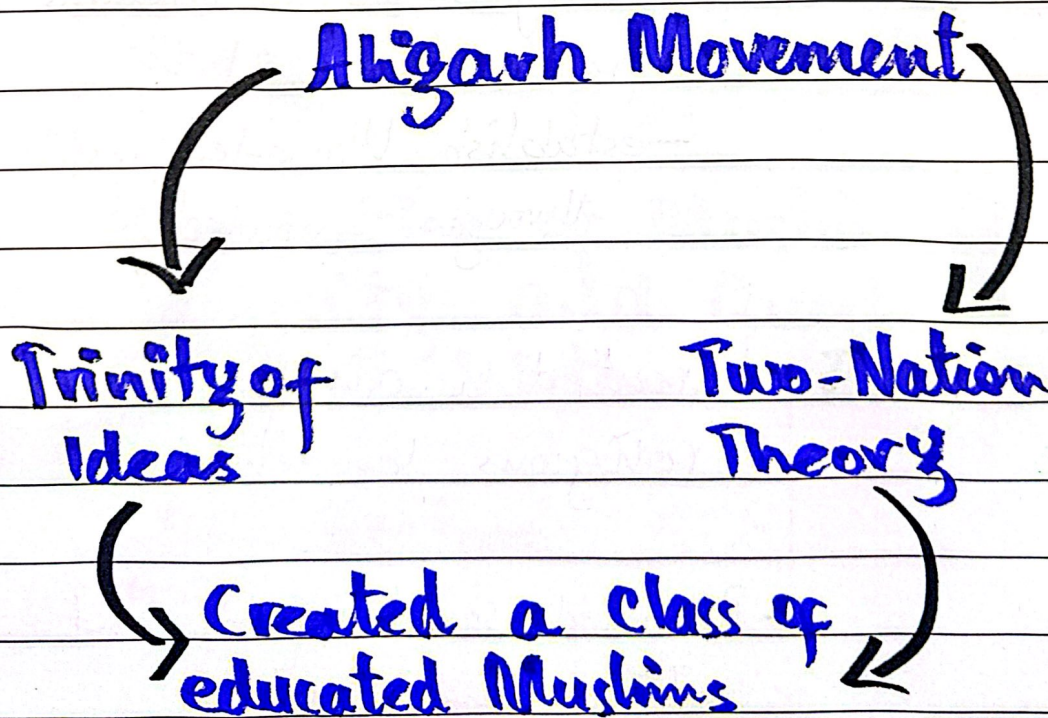
Stressed
moral and
spiritual
purification

Resulted

Injected the spirit of resistance
and unity against oppression.

(5) Sir Syed Ahmed Khan led modernity and rationality that built the Muslim Identity in the Indian Subcontinent

Sir Syed Ahmed Khan redefined Muslim thought through his educational movement and rationalism. His 'Trinity of Ideas' theory paved way for the Indian Muslim to make their own identity.



(6) Deoband Movement revived the socio-political landscape through orthodoxy and aid in Muslim Identity in the Indian Subcontinent

The Deoband Movement, led by **Mulana Qasim Nanotvi** and **Rashid Ahmad Gangohi**, sought to revive Islamic learning and moral discipline through religious education.

Objectives

- Purify Islam from innovations
- Preserve Islamic identity
- Establish Ulama-led resistance through knowledge

Impacts

- Created a disciplined religious leadership
- Promoted social reforms and unity among Muslims

(7) Evolution of Muslim Socio-Political Consciousness

Fall of Mughal Empire

Religious Reform Movements

Educational Renaissance
(Aligarh)

Moral Revival (Deoband)

Political Awakening
(Muslim League)

Formation of Muslim
Identity and Quest
for Pakistan

(8) Conclusion

The religious reformers of the 19th century were not mere theologians but they were

nation builders in disguise.

By linking faith with education, morality, and self-governance, they laid the intellectual and institutional foundation of Muslim nationalism. The movements transformed despair into direction, shaping a unified Muslim identity that ultimately found political expression in the **Pakistan Movement of 1947**.

As **Allama Iqbal** aptly said,
"It is not the sword but the spirit of religion that makes nations."

Q no 2

Political Behavior of the INC during its Ministries and its impacts on ML Political Strategy

(1) Introduction

The years **1937-1939** were a watershed in **Indo Muslim politics**. The Indian National Congress, after winning provincial elections under the **Government of India Act 1935**, formed ministries in **Seven provinces**, marking the first practical test of its democratic and secular claims. However, its political behavior during this period exposed communal undercurrents and administrative biases that alienated the Muslim minority. The congress' governance became a catalyst for Muslim political consciousness, ultimately

shaping the **All India Muslim League's Strategy** and strengthening the **demand for Pakistan**. As Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah stated, "The Congress rule was the most crushing proof that Hindus and Muslims are two separate Nations."

(2) Background of the 1937 Elections

Under the **Government of India Act 1935**, provincial autonomy was introduced, leading to elections in **eleven provinces** in 1937. The Congress emerged dominant, securing **716 out of 1,585 seats**, while the **Muslim League** managed only **109 out of 482 Muslim Seats**.

Congress formed ministries in UP, Bihar, Bombay, Madras, Central Provinces, Orissa, and NWFP. Initially welcomed as a democratic milestone, Congress governance

soon revealed a deep-rooted bias against Muslims - politically, culturally, and economically

(3) Congress Rule and Its Political Behavior 1937-39

(3.1) Imposition of Hindu Cultural Symbols

Congress ministries promoted Hindu cultural identity under the guise of nationalism.

As **Quaid-e-Azam** said, "Congress raj was in fact Hindu raj."

Cultural Assimilation

↓
Bande Matram song made compulsory in schools and official functions

↓
Hindi and Devanagiri Script encouraged over Urdu

↓
Alienated Muslims

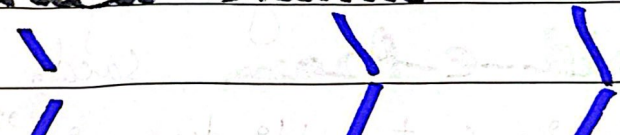
(3.2) Discrimination in Administration and Education

Muslim bureaucrats and teachers faced marginalization, while Congress workers were favored in appointments.

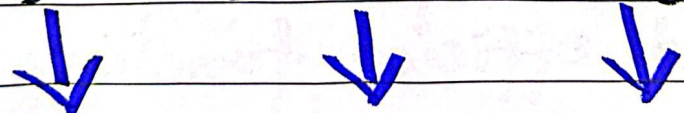
Wardha Scheme of Education



Excluded Islamic Teachings



Pressurized to join Vidyanthi Mandal instead of Muslim student union



Reflected a systematic attempt to reshape Muslim identity along Hindu-Majoritarian Lines.

(3.3) Suppression of Muslim Political Organizations

During the Congress ministries (1937-39), the political space for Muslim narrowed considerably. The government often banned Muslim League meetings under the **Public Safety Act**, censored Muslim newspapers, and financially pressured publishers critical of Congress policies. This systematic suppression of opposition voices deepened Muslim distrust and reinforced the belief that meaningful political coexistence under a Hindu-majority Congress was impossible.

(3.4) Economic and Social Neglect

Muslim majority areas were largely neglected under the Congress ministries (1937-39), receiving minimal development funding. In provinces like **Bihar** and **Uttar**

Pradesh, Muslim artisans and weavers faced economic marginalization while the promotion of cow protection movements and the imposition of Hindi over Urdu further deepened communal divisions. This discrimination revealed the Congress's inability to represent all communities fairly, reinforcing Muslim fears of political and cultural subjugation under a Hindu-majority rule.

(4) Impact on Muslim League's Political Strategy

(4.1) Revival and Reorganization under Jinnah

The Congress ministries (1937-39) marked a decisive phase in Muslim Political reorientation. Capitalizing on Muslim grievances under Congress rule, Muhammad Ali Jinnah reorganized and revitalized

the All India Muslim League transforming it into a mass movement. At the **Lucknow Session 1937**, the League adopted a clear agenda for Muslim political autonomy. Its membership expanded dramatically, as mentioned in the book **The Struggle for Pakistan** by **I. H. Qureshi**. This resurgence solidified the League's role as the sole representative of Indian Muslims and laid the foundation for the eventual demand for Pakistan.

(4.2) The Panipat Report and Sharif Report

The Muslim League commissioned fact-finding missions to document Congress misrule. The Panipat Report and Sharif Report 1938 and 1939 respectively detailed anti-Muslim discrimination, forced singing of Bande-Mataram and

bias in employment. These reports became political ammunition, proving that Muslim could not trust Congress claims of secularism.

(4.3) Strengthening of the Two Nation Theory

The Congress's failure to accommodate Muslim interests validated Jinnah's ideological stance.

"Hindus and Muslims belong to two different religious philosophies, social customs, and literatures."

— Presidential Address, Lahore, 1940

The political behavior thus transformed the League's ideology from Constitutionalism to separatism.

(4.4) Demand for Separate land - Pakistan

By 1939, the Muslim League had evolved from a minority-interest group into the representative body of Indian Muslims.

Congress ministries
resigned in 1939



League observed Day
of Deliverance 1939



Lahore Resolution
1940



Ideological Consolidation
of the Muslim Community
around the demand for
Pakistan

(5) Conclusion

The Congress ministries (1937-39) marked a turning point in Hindu-Muslim relations, revealing the imbalance of political power under Congress rule. Instead of promoting inclusivity, Congress's cultural dominance and administrative bias alienated Muslims, deepening communal divisions. As historian **Stanley Wolpert** notes, "Congress rule convinced Muslims that their future lay not in partnership but in separation." This disillusionment transformed the Muslim League under Jinnah's leadership and set the stage for the Pakistan Resolution of 1940 which turned the political frustration into a clear demand for a separate homeland.