

**SOCIAL REVIVAL &
EDUCATIONAL AWARENESS
IN INDIA BY SIR SYED
AHMED KHAN**

Sir Syed Ahmed Khan (1817-1898)

Key Question: How important was the work of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan to the development of the Pakistan Movement during the 19th Century? **[14]**

<p><u>Focus points:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What was his contribution to education, politics and religion?• How important was his 'Two Nation' Theory?• What was the Hindi-Urdu Controversy?• How successful was the Aligarh Movement?	<p><u>Specified content:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• His contribution to the education of Muslims and the revitalization of their national consciousness: an overview of his main educational works and their importance• An understanding of his social and political theory, and of its origins• The impact of his work on Muslims and the western world• His relations with the British and the Ulemas• The reasons for the foundation of Aligarh College• His role in the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League• The meaning and origin of his 'Two-Nation' Theory and the Hindi-Urdu controversy
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CAIE Exam Questions

- 1) Was the attempt to achieve a better understanding with the British the most important contribution that Sir Syed Ahmed Khan made to the Muslim cause during the nineteenth century? Explain your answer. [14]
- 2) Why did Sir Syed Ahmed Khan try to improve relations between the Muslims and the British? [7]
- 3) Why did Sir Syed Ahmed Khan develop the Two Nation Theory? [7]
- 4) Which of the following was the most important contribution of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan in restoring the position of Muslims in the Sub-Continent:
 - Attempts to achieve a better understanding between the British and the Muslims
 - Education
 - PoliticsExplain your answer with reference to all three of the above [14]
- 5) Why did Sir Syed Ahmed Khan wish to develop a better understanding between the Muslims and the British? [7]
- 6) Was the development of Western education system the most important contribution of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan in developing the cause of Muslims during the 19th century? Explain your answer. [14]
- 7) Were the educational developments the most important contribution of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan in his attempts to improve relations between the Muslims and the British? Explain your answer. [14]
- 8) Political beliefs of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan were more important than his other beliefs. Do you agree? Explain your answer. [14]

Introduction

- He belonged to a wealthy Muslim family.
- He was skilled in Arabic, Persian, Mathematics and Medicine – He was a prominent writer and scholar.
- Worked as a judge in Delhi.
- Wrote a book on archeology '**Aathar-ul Sanadeed**'.
- During the 1857 revolt, he saved the lives of British women and children in Bijnaur. He refused to accept the gift (estate and money) from the British.
- Appointed as Chief Justice at Muradabad, Ghazipur and then Aligarh.
- He was knighted in **1888**.
- Retired in 1876 and died in 1898.

Conditions of Muslims after War of Independence 1857

Economic - low income, worked as peasants, exploited by Hindu tax collectors, not qualified for government jobs due to illiteracy, manual workers like peons, labors etc.

Social - low social status due to lack of money, racial discrimination.

Political - lost political power after the end of Mughal Empire, blamed solely for instigating the WOI, hardly any participation in government jobs, no political say in the government.

Educational hatred towards British education, focused on either religious education or learning

Sir Syed Ahmed Khan's Efforts

Aligarh Movement

Aligarh Movement is considered as 'Muslim Renaissance' that means an improvement in economic, social political position of Muslims through spread of western education. It also aimed at improving British Muslims relations to get benefits from the British. As a result the Muslims benefitted.

1.Improving British Muslim Relations	2.Encouraging Western Education
3.Political Services/Increasing political awareness	4.Social and Literary Services

1. Improving British Muslim Relations

Reasons:

- i. Muslims were blamed for the War of Independence 1857 and the British carried out harsh treatment towards Muslims. Hindus were considered as loyal and started assisting the British. This opened up opportunities for them in the administration. Muslims, on the other hand, lagged behind in all the fields. Sir Syed wanted to correct this false view so that British should not take revenge from Muslims. Moreover, to gain political favors from British, Muslim-British relations required improvement.
- ii. Muslims hated British due to the western culture and religion; they believed that British would turn them to Christian. Christianity and western ideas were not in line with Islam. Sir Syed wanted to correct this belief that was creating problems in the progress of Muslim population. Due to this belief, Muslims closed all sources of western education to them that affected negatively on their economic conditions too. By creating better relations with British, Sir Syed Ahmed Khan wanted to improve economic conditions of Muslims
- iii. Sir Syed was aware of the fact that British rule was a reality and Muslims should accept it. Improving British Muslim relations could open up opportunities in employment and education for Muslim population. And he was right because in later years British funded Muslim educational institutions and granted many political favors to Muslims in Simla Deputation 1906 and Partition of Bengal 1905.

A. Convincing British.

- Writing a book '**Loyal Mohammadans of India**' that gave a detailed account Muslim services for the British.
- Wrote a pamphlet '**Causes of Indian Revolt**' that blamed a British policy for the uprising such as lack of participation of Indians in civil service, poor management of Indian army and forcible conversion of Muslims to Christianity. This pamphlet was well circulated and copies were sent to members of British parliament in England.
- Explained the word '**Nadarath**' to British that means 'a helper' and not an enemy.

B. Convincing Muslims

- Corrected errors on a book written on life of Prophet by a British, proved his credibility in the eyes of Muslims.
- Wrote a book '**Tabayin-ul-Kalam**' pointed out the similarities between Islam and Christianity.
- Convinced Muslims that western culture may not be against Islam.
- Established '**British Indian Association**' to improve British Muslim communication.

2. Encouraging Western Education

Reasons:

- Hindus started learning English language and western education much before Muslims; they projected themselves as loyal to British and gained favors from them.
- No entry into government jobs without learning English language.
- Muslim education system revolved around religious knowledge, Persian, literature etc. No modern subject like sciences technology and social sciences were taught. Hence, they could not complete with changing world.
- Western education would have helped improve economic status of Muslims and they might regain their lost respect

Educational Services

- Convincing religious Ulemas that learning western education was not against Islam.
- Set up Urdu journal called '**Tehzib-ul-Akhlaq**' to develop a new approach towards education.
- In 1863, a Scientific Society at Ghazipur was founded that translated scientific work into Urdu, Persian or Arabic. It helped to spread modern education.
- In 1866, he issued a journal '**Aligarh Institute Gazette**'.
- In 1869, he opened a school at Muradabad.
- In 1869, he travelled to England and visited Oxford and Cambridge Universities. He started with setting up a school at Aligarh that was a blend of western and religious education.
- In 1875, **Mohammadan Anglo-Oriental School** was set up. In 1876 it was raised to the status of **Mohammadan Anglo-Oriental College** and in **1920** to **Aligarh University**.
- In 1886, he set up **Mohammadan Educational Conference** to raise educational standards of Muslims. It held conference across the country which attracted famous orators and writers.

Impact of educational services

- a. Produced a number of educated Muslims such as Liaquat Ali Khan, Ayub Khan who played an important role in later Pakistan Movement.
- b. Many Muslims qualified for government jobs and had a say in political decision-making.
- c. Present day education system of Pakistan is based on Sir Syed's ideas, a blend of religious and western education. Also, Muslim renaissance in India was achieved.

3. Political Services/Increasing political awareness

Reasons

- To gain a respectable status for Muslims in society.
- Muslim should be able to understand the intentions of Hindus and British.
- To gain political representation for Muslims.

Political Services

- In order to increase political awareness, efforts were made to Improve British Muslim Relations.
- Writing a book '**Loyal Mohammadans of India**' that gave a detailed account Muslim services for the British.
- Wrote a pamphlet '**Causes of Indian Revolt**' blamed British policy for the uprising such as lack of participation of Indians in civil service, poor management of Indian army and forcible conversion of Muslims to Christianity.
- Asked Muslims not to join Indian National Congress formed in 1885 as it turned out to be a Hindu dominated body to protect the rights and interests of Hindus only.
- Opposed political representation on the basis of Western Democracy; that meant rule of majority or rule of Hindus.
- Criticized Competitive Examination System which selected candidates for government jobs on merit. Muslims were far behind than Hindus in the field of education. In order to apply this system, equal education opportunities should have been provided to all.

TWO-NATION THEORY

Reasons for introducing

- a. Pro-Hindu Policies of Indian National Congress harming the interests of Muslims. He wanted Muslims to have their separate political ideology for the protection of their rights. He refused to attend its meeting and organized an alternative body, **United Patriotic Alliance** that became **Mohammadan Defence Alliance** in **1893**.
- b. Hindus and Muslims were two different nations on the basis of their culture, religion, language, way of life etc.
- c. Attitude of extremist Hindus was very offending for Muslims.
- d. **Hindi Urdu Controversy in 1867** that showed the enmity of Hindus towards Muslims.

During the last days of the Muslim rule, Urdu emerged as the most common language of the northwestern provinces of India. It was declared the official language in 1825. In 1867,

some prominent Hindus started a movement in Banaras in which they demanded the replacement of Urdu with Hindi and the Persian script with the Deva Nagri script as the court language in the northwestern provinces. The movement grew quickly and within a few months spread throughout the Hindu population of the north western provinces of India.

This situation provoked the Muslims to come out in order to protect the importance of the Urdu language. The opposition by the Hindus towards the Urdu language made it clear among the Muslims of the region that Hindus were not ready to tolerate the culture and traditions of the Muslims.

The Hindi-Urdu Controversy had a great effect on the life of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan. Before this event he had been a great advocate of Hindu-Muslim unity and was of the opinion that the **“Two Nations are like two eyes of the beautiful bride, India”**, but this movement completely altered his point of view. He put forward the Two-Nation Theory, predicting that the differences between the two groups would increase with the passage of time and the two communities would not join together in anything wholeheartedly.

Social and Literary Services

- Writing of magazine **‘Tehzib-ul-Akhlaq’** to raise moral standards of Muslims.
- Bringing a revolution in Urdu literature by writing with a purpose of reforming Muslim society.
- He wrote **Asar-us-Sanadid** in **1847**. This book contained classic archaeological account of the monuments and environs of the pre-colonial city of Delhi.
- He wrote a book **Tabyin-ul-Kalam** to point out the similarities between Islam and Christianity.

Evaluation, Analysis and Judgment related to Sir Syed Ahmed Khan' Efforts for the uplift of Muslim society

In my opinion, Sir Syed Ahmed Khan contributed to a great deal in restoring the position of Muslims in the sub-continent after the WOI. His efforts consisted of:

- Improving British-Muslim relations.
- Focusing on western education for by launching the Aligarh Movement.
- Providing guidance to Muslims regarding politics after the formation of INC in 1885. He advised Muslims them not to join INC because it only protected the interests of Hindu population. It also demanded western democracy that means Hindu majority would dominate Muslim minority in India. Moreover, competitive examinations for government jobs which again ensured the benefit for the Hindu population who were more advanced in education than Muslims.

All these efforts were equally valuable in restoring economic and political status of Muslims. However, focusing on western education helped Muslims a great deal in improving their relations with the British. Learning English language bridged the communication gap between British and Muslims. Learning western education also helped to raise social and economic status of Muslims. It opened up job opportunities for the Muslim population and revived separate political identity of Muslims. As a matter of fact, Muslim community moved towards modernization and scientific progress due to the efforts of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan.