

Sir Sayyid Ahmed khan and Muslim nationalism in South Asia

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Biography

- Syed Ahmed was born on October 1817 in Delhi which was the capital of the dying Mughal dynasty.
- His father, Muhammad Muttaqi, has served the Mughal emperor, Mirza Akbar as his personal advisor.
- When Sir sayyid Ahmed khan was born British already had annexed major regions of South Asia except for Punjab and Sindh. The Mughal authority was limited up to the red fort of Delhi.
- Sayyid Ahmed was raised in a wealthy area of Delhi in a Mughal noble tradition.
- Sayyid Ahmed's elder brother had established the first printing press in Urdu language in Delhi

- In 1838, when Sayyid Ahmed father died he started to work with the East India Company as a clerk. As Sayyid Ahmed had received modern education along with traditional education. He was pursuing the studies of medicine, but the death of his father has brought financial constraints on the family. The Mughal authority was vanishing, and the East India company's authority was ascending due to which Sayyid Ahmed joined services in East India Company.
- Three years later Sayyid Ahmed was promoted to the rank of sub judge in the judicial department. He served at different places.

The beginning of Aligarh movement

- Soon after the war of independence was over the heavy hand of the British fell upon the Muslims. Although the Hindus were also included in the uprising of 1857, but the British punished the Muslims more badly.

- The official language was replaced from Persian to English. The Muslims were not ready to learn English as they conceived it as against their religion.
- He observed that the Muslims are suffering because of their own extremist and conservative attitude. The Muslims had always considered the British as their enemies and avoided social interaction with them.
- Sir Sayyid Ahmed Khan considered that to improve the conditions of the Muslims it was necessary to bring the Muslims closer to the British, because the British rule was established in sub-continent.
- Sir Sayyid Ahmed Khan took practical steps for the educational uplift of the Muslims.

Educational services of Sir Sayyid Ahmed khan

- . In 1859, he set up a school at Muradabad where Persian and English were taught.
- In 1863, he established another school at Ghazipur
- . In 1864, He setup **scientific society** in Ghazipur which translated the modern works from English to Urdu and Persian
- In 1866, a journal was started to publish by scientific society known as Aligarh Institute Gazette.
- In 1869, Sir Sayyid Ahmed Khan went to England where he observed the educational system of Cambridge and Oxford. When he returned to India, he established **Anjuman-i-taraq-i-Musalmanan-i-Hind** in 1870. The purpose was to impart modern education to the Muslims.
- In 1874 Muhammadan **Anglo-oriental high school** was established at Aligarh to impart modern education to the students. In 1877, the school was elevated to the level of college.

- To spread the message of uplifting the educational status of the Muslims Sir Sayyid Ahmed Khan established **Muslim educational conference** in 1886.

Religious Services of Sayyid Ahmed khan

- The Christian missionaries were trying hard to erase Islam as a faith and system of life. A Christian writer, William Muir, had written many objectionable things related to the Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.W) in his book “Life of Muhammad”.
- He wrote a book on the life of Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.W) known as “Essays on the life of Muhammad” or Khutbat-i-Ahmediya. He also wrote the philosophical commentary on Bible known as Tabaeen-i-Kalam. In this work he pointed out the similarities between Islam and Christianity.

- He wrote Ahkam Tu'am Ahl-Kitab, in which he stressed that the Muslims and the Christians could eat together.
- He wrote Causes of Indian Revolt to enumerate the grievances of the Indians to the British. The British then changed the way of administration, They offered the Indian Civil services for the Indians in 1860. They also started to avoid intervention in the local religion, custom and culture.
- **Two nation theory**
- In 1867, Urdu and Hindi controversy emerged in Benares. Some Hindu leaders thought that the use of Urdu as official language must be discontinued and instead the Hindi in Devnagri script must be promoted.
- Many Hindu leaders agitated against the use of Urdu in Persian script. The government accepted their demand and made Hindi the official language.

- The Urdu-Hindi controversy convinced Sir Sayyid Ahmed Khan that the Hindus would never be sincere to the Muslims. The culture, civilization, religion, are different of Hindus comparatively to the Muslims.
- The Hindus wanted the Hindi to become official language because they wanted to dominate the Muslims culturally. Sir Sayyid Ahmed Khan keeping in view all the developments declared that the Hindus and Muslims are two different nations. In 1868, he used the word two-nation for the Hindus and Muslims