

Ali Garh Movement

As we know that, after the war of independence the condition of the Muslims of India were very miserable as the British fell more on the Muslims than on Hindus. They considered that Muslims were responsible for all the wrongs and the war held just because of their harsh and rude behavior. After 1857, the Muslims emerged as a backward nation; they were illiterate and hopelessly ignorant in every walk of life. They were deprived of their basic rights and were neglected in every sphere of life. Nevertheless, they were economically, politically, socially and to be more exact religiously made the subject of ruthless punishment. They were helpless before the British and their combine lobby with Hindus; so, in these conditions they neither trusted Hindus nor British, who spared no effort to tortured Muslims.

In such conditions, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan came forward and tried to help the Muslims come out from such deplorable and miserable conditions. He guided the Muslims towards the right path and attempted to draw out the Muslims from such helpless condition. He started a movement in order to give respectable position to Muslims in society as they had in past, this movement is known as Aligarh Movement. The main focus of the Aligarh movement was:

- Loyalty to British Government.
- Modern western education for the Muslims to compete with Hindus.
- To keep away the Muslims from politics.

Sir Syed realized that this miserable and deplorable condition of Muslims was due to the lack of modern education. He believed that the cure of every problem of Muslims was the modern education. Therefore, he commenced an educational program in order to uplift the deprived and disappointed Muslims, who had lost their past glory. He took concrete steps for his education plan. Thus, in 1859, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan set up a school for Muslims in Muradabad where English, Persian, Islamiat, Arabic, Urdu were compulsory subjects. In 1862, Sir Syed was transferred from Muradabad to Ghazipur where he established another school for Muslims, which was known as Madrass Ghazipur. Here, also the English, Arabic, Persian, Urdu and Islamiyat were compulsory subjects.

In 1864, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan laid the foundation of a scientific society at Ghazipur. The purpose of this society was to translate the English books into Urdu language. But, later on, in 1866, after his transfer to Aligarh, the main office of the scientific society was also transferred to Aligarh. In 1866, the scientific society issued a journal named as Aligarh Institute Gazette. This

journal was published both in Urdu and English languages. The aim of this journal was to wash away the misconception between Muslims and British government and brought them close to each other.

In order to closely watch the educational system of England, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan accompanied his son Syed Mehmud, visited England in 1869 and stayed there for seventeen months studying English educational institutions like Oxford and Cambridge University. Later, after his return to India, he set up a committee known as “Committee Striving for Educational Progress of Muslims”. Under this committee another committee was established named as “Fund Committee for the establishment of a Muslim College” and Sir Syed was selected the secretary of the both committees. For this purpose, Sir Syed toured across the country and collected funds for the establishment of college. The committee decided first for the forming of school as a model to the people and later to found the college. Hence, in 1875, Sir Syed established Mohammedan Anglo Oriental School at Aligarh. In 1877, the school was upgraded to the level of college which was inaugurated by Lord Lytton. The main characteristic of this college was that it offered both Western and Eastern educations. Later on, this college was raised to the level of university, after the death of Sir Syed in 1920.

In 1886, Sir Syed set up an organization which is known as Mohammedan Educational Conference, which presented a twelve point programme in western and religious education in English and other languages. Its aim was to convey the message of education to the Muslim masses. The Conference held its sessions at different towns of the country to know about the educational problems and then tried to solve them. The conference in its meeting discussed the modern techniques for the development and improvement of the standard of the education.

In 1866, Sir Syed established British India Association at Aligarh. The main purpose of this organization was to express the grievances and point of view of Indians to the British parliament. He also wrote “Loyal Muhammadans of India” in which he recorded a detailed account of the loyal services of the Muslims which they rendered to the British rulers. In 1870, Sir Syed, after his return from England, setup an organization known as “Anjuman-i-Taraqi-i-Muslamanan-i-Hind” in order to impart modern education to the Muslims of India.

Sir Syed wrote the philosophical commentary on Bible named as “Tabaeen-al-Kalam.” In this commentary Sir Syed draw out the similarities found between Islam and Christianity. He also wrote “Essay on the life of Muhammad” on the response to “Life of Muhammad”, written by

William Muir, in which he had criticized the Holy Prophet. Sir Syed also wrote “Anjuman-i-Tariki-i-Urdu” for the protection of Urdu. Sir Syed published another influential magazine named as “Tahzib-ul-Akhlaaq” in which he discussed the Muslim society by criticizing the conservative way of living and emphasized on the new modern way of life.

Sir Syed, although, was the first Muslim member of Central Legislative Council, but he advised the Muslims to remain apart from politics unless and until they would get education. He believed that the cure of Muslim problems is only education and unless and until Muslims get education, they will remain backward in every sphere of life. Thus, Sir Syed did his best, through the Aligarh movement, for the Muslim cause, and took the support of British by showing loyalty to them and also aloof the Muslims from the Indian National Congress.