

# RELEVANCE OF ALIGARH MOVEMENT IN PRESENT TIMES

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**Abstract:** When the condition of Indian Muslims was grim towards the close of 18<sup>th</sup> century, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan came up with the idea of western education and brought social reform among them. For this he faced a lot of hurdles from fanatic Muslims. He founded the MAO (Mohammadan Anglo Oriental) college on the model of Oxford and Cambridge Universities and infused in it the Islamic spirit. MAO College later became Aligarh Muslim University in 1920. The movement started by him is commonly known as Aligarh Movement. No movement of 19<sup>th</sup> century was so constructive as Aligarh movement, leaving a lasting impact on every phase of life. During the present times, again the condition of Indian Muslims is deteriorating socially, economically and educationally. Most of the poor Muslim children study in unaided madrasas as the aided madrasas are very few in number. They choose madrasa education as they feel that it protects their culture and language. But the curriculum of unaided madrasas is not at par with the mainstream education. It is therefore, necessary that efforts must be made to improve the condition of Indian Muslims and to modernize the unaided madrasas also. At present there is a need of a constructive movement like that of Aligarh movement.

**Index Terms:** Educational backwardness, Aligarh movement, modernization of madrasas, Social reform

## 1. INTRODUCTION:

Sir Syed Ahmad Khan was born on 17<sup>th</sup> October 1817 in New Delhi. His father was Mir Muttaqi and mother Aziz-un-Nissa. Sir Syed was gifted with a rare vision and was far ahead of his times. He was a great intellectual, a radical thinker, a keen historian and an enlightened educationist. The movement started by him is commonly known as Aligarh Movement.

## II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

- (1) To study about Aligarh Movement
- (2) To examine its relevance in the present circumstances of Indian Muslims

## III. ALIGARH MOVEMENT:

The objective of Aligarh movement was to bring educational progress and social reform among Muslims. The foundation of Aligarh movement was laid towards the close of 18<sup>th</sup> century when the Muslim society presented a sad spectacle of inertia and degeneration in an atmosphere of despair and frustration. Fanatic Muslims accused him of heresy, while narrow minded historians have characterized his mission as communal and separatist. Throughout his life he cemented the bonds of unity between the major communities of India. After the unsuccessful revolt of 1857, Sir Syed had realized that, what the Indian Muslims needed most was a new awakening which could be achieved only through Western education. As per the census of 1921, the number of Indian literates was 19,800,000 males and 2,800,000 females, total 22,600,000. Female education was quite low, it was said that purdah is the main obstacle to female education in India, but this is only partly true. The difficulty is the complete absence of effective demand (George, A,O 1925). According to Ahmad, I (1981) the educational backwardness of Indian Muslims can be attributed not to any 'religious fanaticism' or 'minority complex' but to the small size of the social strata whose members can be expected to seek educational opportunities.

Sir Syed founded Madrasatul-Uloom in 1857 which later in 1877 grew into Mohammadan Anglo Oriental College. He founded the MAO college on the model of Oxford and Cambridge Universities and infused in it the Islamic spirit. MAO College later became Aligarh Muslim University in 1920. The raising of the Muslim college in Aligarh to the University rank, contributed much to the uplift of the Muslim community. Sir Syed's Aligarh movement engulfed a large variety of subjects such as science, medicine, commerce, culture, architecture, philosophy, ethics and education etc. Sir Syed said "Philosophy will be in our right hand and natural science in the left and the crown of Kalma (There is no God but Allah) will

adore our head. This will ensure a synthesis of modern knowledge with Islamic theology. Only then the community will be able to regain its lost privilege in the world of scholarship and be able to perform the basic duty enjoined on it by the Holy Quran. The duty to guide the humanity on the right path. Sir Syed laid the foundation of scientific society and brought out 'Tehzibul Akhlaq' and Aligarh Institute Gazette. In 1864 he established the Scientific Society, translating European scientific works into Urdu and arranging public lectures on scientific subjects. He wanted a system of education that would fulfill the needs of the entire community. Today again, when Muslims have become backward socially, economically and educationally (Sachar Committee Report, 2006). According to the report, condition of Indian Muslims was below that of SC's and ST's. We again need a movement just like Aligarh movement for the upliftment of Muslim community in India. Impact of Aligarh movement was gigantic. Sir Syed dominated Muslims politically, socially and educationally. He stressed upon women education and believed that Islam has given a better status to women than any other religion but the Muslims did not fulfill the religious obligation in this regard. Aligarh has so far played its part fairly well in the grand understanding of building up a new India. At present AMU offers 300 degrees and is organized around 12 faculties, offering courses in a range of technical and vocational subjects as well as interdisciplinary subjects. It has 28,000 students and 1500 teaching staff. These students and teachers are not only Muslims but a large number of them are from other religions also. This is a great achievement but it is insufficient as the number of Muslims is too large in India. The objectives of Aligarh movement have been fulfilled. Because of his efforts Sir Syed is also known as 'Profit of Education.' In present times another movement like Aligarh movement is required in India to raise the standard of Muslims socially and educationally.

#### IV. CONCLUSION:

The picture presented by the Sachar committee regarding the education of Indian Muslims is grim. Indian Muslims again need a movement like that of Aligarh movement for their educational and social upliftment. A large population of poor Muslim children study in madrasas which are unaided. Therefore, unaided madrasas should be modernized like that of aided madrasas so that the curriculum followed there is useful for them in future for earning their livelihood. What is again needed today is creating interest in modern subjects among Madrasa students. Madrasa students do study the modern subjects along with study of Quran, Hadees, Hindi, English, Urdu and Arabic. But the curriculum in Science and Mathematics is not much advanced. Because of this they are unable to pursue higher studies in science, medicine and engineering if they wish so in future. Many of them have found to perform brilliantly in Humanities and Social sciences at later stages of education and even were able to acquire jobs in civil services, teaching at all levels of education and in private sector jobs. Therefore, to propagate the importance of sciences and other modern subjects among Muslims from weaker economic backgrounds, once again there is a need of a movement like Aligarh movement of the nineteenth century.

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