

## **The Policy of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan for Upliftment of Indian Muslims after Revolt of 1857 during British Raj**

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**ABSTRACT :** *This research is based on the work which has been scheduled by Sir Syed Ahmed Khan for the upliftment of Indian Muslim after the rebellion attitudes of 1857 which was under the influence of Britishers. He was suspicious of Indian independence movement and called upon Muslims to loyally serve the British Raj. He was, however, critical of aspects of British policy and worked to change these. Though after 1850s, he began developing the new innovative policies for the upliftment of Muslim community. While fearful of the loss of Muslim political power owing to the community backwardness, he was also averse to the prospect of democratic self government. Sir Syed Ahmed Khan was an Anglo- Indian Muslim Philosopher, Pragmatist and Social activist of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Muslims, British, Upliftment, Legislature, Century, Economic, Community.*

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### **I. INTRODUCTION**

Sir Syed Ahmad Khan took birth in the era when the community he belonged to, was enduring the state of sheer destitution. The rule of the country was being taken up by the British imperialists, reducing, day by day, the previous rulers to puppets. The British got a great chance to show their ultimate ascendancy by the uprising of the revolt of 1857 in which they held Muslims as the prime targets. They had targeted Muslims in particular because it was the Muslim who were previously ruling the country, and targeting Muslims mainly by the British meant primarily to weaken their confidence and proclaim the full authority on the people of India and make it clearly visible that the Muslim rule was no longer in India. There were various reasons proposed by different people to be causes of 1857 revolt but Sir Syed Ahmad refuted most of them and enumerated some different reasons of the revolt in his book *Asbab e Bagawat e Hind*. Among various reasons the prime one, he asserted that it was the divorce of de jure government from the de facto to be main reason to create the confusion among the people and finally leading them to revolt against the newly ensconced British Raj. Now since Muslims had been the previous rulers, it was only them to be accused as the principal conspirators of the revolt. This feeling among the British led their policies to crush the revolt mainly aimed at weakening the opposition from the Muslim community. As a result of it, the Muslims had to bear the major part of the brunt of the crushing of revolt by the British. And the already beleaguered Muslim community was pushed further to the margins.

Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, seeing the economic and social backwardness of the Muslims, felt the pangs of this helplessness of his community and so took a resolve to uplift the community from this abyss of darkness which he diagnosed to be mainly because of excessive traditionalism, and conservatism beyond the logical limits. Muslims of that time used to think that the learning of scientific knowledge or western education will lead to weakening of their faith in Islamic ideals. And so Muslims used to keep themselves aloof from the modern education. In contrast to this, the Hindu community acquired the western education for the purpose of getting jobs in the British government so as to secure their livelihoods. Remaining away from the western education which could secure them the jobs in the British government led to the economic deprivation of Muslims of the nineteenth century. And remaining stickler only to the traditional beliefs hampered the social advancements in the Muslim community to the largest extent.

Analysing these factors intelligently, Sir Syed advised Muslims of his time to accept the western education and take part in the government activities of the British. Sir Syed advised Muslims to take degrees which are recognised by the educational standards of the British Raj so that it could enable them to secure jobs in the British government services which, in turn, would ensure their economic security. And Sir Syed chooses to give such advice to his community people because he believed that political activism can't be carried out unless the people of the community are economically secure and socially awakened. And keeping the results of 1857 revolt in mind, Sir Syed asked people to remain completely aloof from taking part in any political activities and Sir Syed firmly held the belief that the parochial outlook of the youth was severely harming the Muslim

community which could be cured only by illuminating the community by the light of *ilm*, and he believed it too that it was only education in true sense that could widen the horizons of thinking of the Muslims of 19<sup>th</sup> century and so, it became the most important part of Sir Syed's this dream, to provide with the power of education both haves and have-nots of the Muslim community throughout the length and breadth of the country and imbue the whole community regardless of creed, ethnicity and region for which Sir Syed strove with full might to bring towards education, as maximum as possible, numbers of Muslim youth for this he proceeded instrumentally through a series of different developmental steps like the formulation of scientific society, annual Mohamaden Educational conference, *Tahzibul-Ikhlaq*, etc. and Culminated his struggle into establishment of a college for Muslims based upon the trends of Cambridge of which Sir Syed himself was very impressed and earnestly desired to establish one of its kind in India also, just with the difference that it would compulsorily impart the religious knowledge also, along with the western knowledge. So, we can say that the prime step for the upliftment of the community taken by Sir Syed Ahmad Khan was to impart modern education among the Muslim masses, for which he needed economic support from the British, so that, he could establish an institution which would impart both modern as well as religious education side by side. In order to ensure the support from British, Sir Syed adopted the policy of loyalist and asked Muslims also to be loyal to British raj in order to enable their development in every sphere. Sir Syed adopted this policy because he knew that the upliftment of Muslim community was not possible without the help from the British people and to attain that help they needed to be loyal to British raj. Another thing was that, the Muslim community was backward even when compared with their fellow countrymen. The reason for this was that these communities had already encountered social reform as long as fifty years prior to the Hindu community as the Muslim reform started only in the ninth decade of the nineteenth century. Taking this thing in consideration, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan focussed his social work mainly for Muslim community though himself being purely tolerant and secular in nature.

Sir Syed Ahmad Khan took a position in British legislative assembly to make his way easier to draw monetary help from the British raj and employ it for the welfare of Muslim community. He told Muslims to remain totally loyal to the British and refrain from political activism which could annoy the British and obstruct the path of their development. The British had selectively decimated Muslims and abandoned their properties in the crushing operations of 1857 revolt which had led to their further destitution and were in no way in any position to show any resistance to the imperial forces or take part in politics. Now, Muslims needed a comprehensive aid from the same people in order to bring itself back on the rails of progress. To hasten the cordial relations of British with the Muslims Sir Syed Ahmad Khan encouraged Muslims to take more active part in the British services and acquaint themselves with the western education in order that they would be able to understand the western cultures and civilisations in better way. This policy of Sir Syed got embodied in the manifestation of Mohamaden Anglo oriental college which by further perseverance and untiring efforts of Sir Syed's associates culminated into the magnificent Aligarh Muslim University. Sir Syed considered the development in science and technology to be brought about prior to everything and enlarge the outlook of the community to broader horizons so that they could compete with the rest of the world.

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