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## ROLE OF SIR SAYYED AHMAD KHAN ON MINORITY EDUCATION

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### ABSTRACT

*Sir Sayyed Ahmad Khan was depicted as a prophet of education by Mahatma Gandhiji. He was a great educationist, statesman, visionary and a profound social reformer, whose main purpose was education, which alone can eradicate all the evils of the society. This article emphasizes mainly his life and works, his contribution in the modern education and educational institutions set up by him, highlighting the contemporary social conditions of his era.*

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**Keywords:** *Role, Sir Sayyed Ahmad Khan, Minority Education*

### INTRODUCTION:

Pt. Nehru, the first prime-minister of India said, “Sir Sayyed was an ardent reformer and he wanted to reconcile modern scientific thoughts with religion by rationalistic interpretations and not by attacking basic belief. He was anxious to push new education. He was in no way a communally separatist. Repeated he emphasized that religious differences should have no political and national significance.”

Sir Sayyed Ahmad Khan (1817-1898) was a great philosopher, a keen historian, a farsighted educationist, an outstanding literary personality, a versatile author and a fearless journalist, a pragmatic social-reformer, an advocate of secularism and Hindu-Muslim unity and a distinguished architect of modern India. The greatest event of 19th century was the fall of Mughals and establishment of British rule in India. The Revolt of 1857 completely changed the fate and conditions of the Indian Muslims, as they were held responsible of the revolt by the British. He felt that if such a situation continued Muslims would be completely ruined. He advocated the acceptance of English education, under the policy of conciliation and co-operation, to save Muslims in such adverse circumstances. He also asked Muslims to shun their conservative ideas and accept modernization. His famous quote is that- “a true Muslim is one who must have the holy Quran in one hand and science in the other.”

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Sir Sayyed Ahmad believed that education was a strong and effective means to bring about change and development. He was convinced that the acquisition of modern scientific and Humanistic knowledge, along with the traditional Muslim education, was the only instrument to extricate Muslims from degeneration and decadence. He believed in the supremacy of reason in a matter-spiritual or temporal. Throughout his life he fought against fanaticism, conservatism and traditionalism. A great crusader against ignorance, Sir Sayyed advocated a system of education which laid equal emphasis on training the minds and moral of the pupils. He also pleaded for liberty of conscience and freedom of expression. In the words of Tarachand, "Sir Sayyed Ahmad had inaugurated a revolution in Muslim thoughts. His Endeavour was to reform the Muslims individually and collectively."

After assessing the circumstances and conditions of the Indian Muslims after the Revolt 1857, Sir Sayyed Ahmad Khan realized the urgent need to come up with a plan to modernize as well as to energize Muslim community. Therefore, he made many efforts in form of Aligarh Movement, establishment of Scientific Society and the Muhammadan Educational Conference etc. which affected every aspect of Muslims life namely social, economic, political, cultural and religious. (Khan 2004, p61)

### **LIFE OF SIR SAYAID AHMAD KHAN:**

Sir Sayyed Ahmad Khan was born on October 17, 1817 in Delhi in a very honorable family. His ancestors were basically the natives of Arabia. Prof. K. A. Nizami said, "Sir Sayyed Ahmad Khan's ancestors originally belonged to Herat. They migrated to India during the reign of Akbar (1556-1605) and joined the Mughal services." His father, Sayyed Mohammad Muttaqi was a recluse-a man of deep religious learning. His mother Aziz-un-Nisa Begum played an important role in providing education and training to her son. The Bismillah ceremony of Sir Sayyed was done by Shah Ghulam Ali. After it, a lady teacher of respected family taught Holy Quran to him. Before attending Maktab, he was educated at home by his mother.

"In 1838 (the year in which Sir Sayyed's father died), Sir Sayyed Ahmad was nearly 22 years old.....It was for this reason that Sir Sayyed decided to enter the service of the British Government....." (Hali, 1979). In February, 1839, Sir Robert Hamilton called Sir Sayyed to Agra and appointed him Nayab Munshi. When he was in Agra, he appeared in the examination of Munsif and qualified in the first attempt. "On December 24, 1841, he was appointed as Munsif at Mainpuri, but within two weeks, he was transferred to Fatehpur Sikari on January 10, 1842." (Nizami, p37). He was transferred from Fatehpur Sikari to Delhi in February, 1846. On January, 1855, he was appointed Sadr-us-Sadur (Principal Judge) in Moradabad. Then, he was also transferred to Ghazipur, to Aligarh, to Banaras as a judge. On July 31, 1876, he got premature retirement on his personal request to work for his community whole-heartedly. After the retirement, he permanently settled in Aligarh.

## **HIS VISIT TO ENGLAND:**

After the Revolt of 1857, Sir Sayyed Ahmad found that the Cure of all evils is education. He realized that the future and the well-being of his fellow Muslims depended on two major factors-the western education; and an ability to understand and mix freely with Britishers. He made many passionate efforts to achieve these goals in the past, but at last he concluded that to achieve these objects he should himself visit Britain and to observe keenly the educational pattern of Oxford and Cambridge Universities. One of the main purposes of his journey to Britain had been to see and examine the British system of education. During his stay in London, Sir Sayyed Ahmad published a pamphlet in England in which he pointed out the deficiencies of Indian educational system. No doubt, the accounts written by him was great source for Indians to know the weaknesses of their system of education and to combat these deficiencies. His accounts rendered a source of inspiration for the Indians to go abroad in pursuit of education. Regarding the attainment of English education Sir Sayyed conveyed his message through these words, "I want you to dive deep into European Literature and Science, but at the same time you to be true to your faith." (Ishrat Ali Qureshi, 1998).

Sir Sayyed Ahmad returned to Bombay from London on October 2nd,1870. He studied well and faced many serious obstacles in his plan for education of Muslims. One main of these obstacles was the religious prejudice against modern English education. To remove this very prejudice, he published many articles in the newspaper of the Scientific Society. The second obstacle was to find out the necessary means of providing higher education to Muslims. He held the view that on the one hand, the Government education was inadequate for the Muslims; and on the other hand, Indian System of Education was not suitable.

## **SCHOLARLY WORKS OF SIR SAYYED AHMAD KHAN:**

Sir Sayyed Ahmad Khan was a versatile and prolific writer "who authored nearly four dozen books and innumerable articles on subjects of varied interests."(Sheik Ali, 1999) He tried in his writings about every aspect of life, he wrote on history, politics, education, archeology, journalism, literature, theology, science etc. Some of the important scholarly works of Sir Sayyed Ahmad Khan are as follows-

### **Books:**

**A)***Asar-us-Sanadid*: a book on the description of varios buildings of importance.

**B)***Jam-i-Jum*: a book written by him in 1840 in Persian language about the life and works of forty three kings.

**C)**The Revision of the *Ain-i-Akbari*.

**D)***Asbab-i-Baghawat-i-Hind* (The causes of the Indian Revolt of 1857): written in 1859, to prove that revolt was due to the weaknesses and exploitations of Indians by the British Government.

**E)**The Revision of the *Tarikh-i-FirozShahi* : Sir Sayyed Ahmad revised the work- *Tarikh-i-FirozShahi* (The History of the Regime of Firoz Shah) and it was published by the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1862.

**F)***Tabian-ul-Kalam*: this book was written in 1861 by him. The main aims of writing this book were to explain the discrepancies and contributions between Islam and Judeo-Christian beliefs and to remove the suspicions of the Christians about Islam.

**G)***The Khutabat-i-Ahmadia*: It was published in 1870 and written by him to refute the charges made against Islam and its prophet by Sir William Muir.

**H)***Tafsir-ul-Quran*: The commentary on the Holy Quran: Sir Sayyed started writing Tafsirul Quran about the year 1876, with a new interpretation based on rationalism.

**I)***Tarikh-i-Sakashi-i-Bijnor*:(The History of the Bijnor Revolt): he wrote the detailed accounts of the Revolt which took place between May 1857 and April 1858 and it was published in 1858.

**J)** *The Loyal Muhammdans of India*: It was a half-yearly journal started in 1860, but could not be published after its third issue in 1861, written to develop good relations with English and to refute the charges against Muslims.

**K)**Some of his important writings on science are as follows:

**I.***Tahsilfijar-al-Saqil*: The translation of the Persian work- *Mi-yar-ul-Uqal* written by Abu Ali, published in 1844.

**II.***The Fawa'id-ul-AfkarFiA'mal-ul-Farjar*: published in 1846, an Urdu translation of the Persian writings written by KhwajaFarid-ud-Din Ahmad.

**III.***Qual-i-MatindarIbtal-i-Harkat-i-Zamin*: published in 1848.

**L)**Writings on Law:

**I.***Manual of Revenue Regulations*: It was written when he was in Agra in 1839 as NayabMunshi (Deputy Reader) in the office of Commissioner.

**II.***Intihab-ul-Ahwain*: It was published in the form of handbook in 1841. It was useful for the candidates appearing for the competitive exams.

**M)**Writings Urdu Language and Literature:

**I. *Tahzib-ul-Akhlaq*:** Its publication was started on 24th December, 1870. Sir Sayyed Ahmad himself and his associates wrote useful articles to bring about a social change among Muslims.

**II. *Aligarh Institute Gazette*:** A Journal of the Scientific Society was started Friday, 30th March, 1866, by Sir Sayyed Ahmad Khan. It was in both languages Urdu and English. In the beginning it published political articles only.

### **EDUCATIONAL CONTRIBUTION OF SIR SAYYED AHMAD KHAN:**

Sir Sayyed Ahmad Khan expressed his view that education was essential for the all round development of human personality. Stressing on the need and importance of education, he expressed his views "The human soul, without education is like a rough piece of marble, and unless the sculpture works on it, and removes its roughness.....its good qualities remain hidden in it, and its fascinating shades, beautiful veins.....do not appear. The same is the condition of human soul-However, gentle-hearted a man may be, unless he is educated, all sorts of good qualities and graces, that are latent in him cannot emerge without the assistance of education."(Shan, 1969) Thus, he thought that it was only education which can refine and develop the human personality.

He also insisted that education should fulfill the needs of the society and should be capable of developing human nature under their phenomena. On delivering a speech on self-reliance in education, Sir Sayyed Ahmad Khan, once said, "It is regrettable as both the nations (communities), whose ancestors had been so enlightened and educated, defame the ancestors by their ignorance. Education is becoming widely popular these days. We have to think in the realm of education, as to what subjects we should study and what is that the learning of which will not be useful to us."(Shan, 1972) In fact, for him western education was the only way to future prosperity of an individual and the society. As put by Tara Chand, "Sir Sayyed Ahmad Khan considered, 'higher English Education as the panacea for all the social and political ills of India.'"(Tara Chand, 1967)

Graham (1874) stated that Sir Syed's educational aims, found full expression in the ideals of the MAO college, were, "free enquiry, large-hearted tolerance and of pure morality." Tara Chand identified the following aims of Sir Syed's educational scheme-

- “a) The strengthening of faith which required the knowledge of religious truths and the reconciliation of reason and tradition;
- b) The training of character through the establishment of residential institution and promotion of healthy activities;
- c) Teaching of modern science upto the highest level and creating a national outlook among the students."

Sir Sayyed Ahmad Khan was a profound educationist and social reformer of 19th century of India. He believed in the concept of national education. As stated by Rehmani Begum (1985), "Sir Sayyed Ahmad Khan introduced the concept of national education, which he claimed had, hitherto, been unknown to Muslims." Emphasizing the need of national system of education, Sir Sayyed Ahmad said, "Unless the whole nation is educated to a certain extent, particular persons cannot be educated, though they may learn a little more than the ignorant. By learning certain sciences, one cannot become educated, unless there is a wide circle of educated fellow-beings to mix with. One or a few persons can never develop their genius, their words, their inner virtues, their ideals, their energy and courage. There must be similar persons, with whom to move, and to exchange ideas and arguments."(Muhammad)

### **SIR SAYYED AHMAD KHAN'S VIEWS ON TOLERANCE AND SECULARISM:**

"India is like a bride, which has got two beautiful and lustrous eyes - Hindus and Musalmans."(Shan,1972) stated by Sir Sayyed Ahmad Khan, the founder of M.A.O. College. He, not only, firmly believed in the philosophy of tolerance, but he lived and practiced it, also, with full dedication and sincerity. From the very beginning the M.A.O. College was secular in its character. In its spirit, the college was a monument of communal harmony. Highlighting the aim of establishing the college, Sir Sayyed asserted: "Though the college was named as the Mohammadan Anglo-Oriental College and was intended, primarily, to cater the needs of Muslims, he saw to it that its doors were open to all Indians. He envisaged a community institution and not communal one."(Nizami, 1980)

In 1875, when he established Madrasat-ul-Uloom, he put its door open to all the people, irrespective of their caste and creed. Sir Sayyed Ahmad Khan, in his report for the year 1877, added, "..... It was never the intention of the founders of this institution that other races should be shut out from reaping any benefit from the high and liberal education, which the college professed to impart."(Shan, 1999) It was because of his large-heartedness, broad-mindedness, tolerant behavior and love for humanity that the other non-Muslim segments of Indian citizens co-operated with him in building up M.A.O. College, and he got both moral and financial help from all the sections of the Indians society.

Prof. K.A. Nizami, also, expressed the Secular attitude of the college in the words, "There can be no greater complement to the catholicity of his movement than the fact that the first graduate of the M.A.O. College was a Hindu, Ishwari Prasad". The first post-graduate student of the M.A.O. College was also a non-muslim, Amba Prasad."Sir William Hunter, the president of the Education Commission (1882), was impressed to see the secular spirit of the M.A.O. College, when he visited it, he stated about the secular atmosphere of the college: "The Mohammadan founders of this strictly Mohammadan institution have thrown open their doors to the youths of all races and creeds. Among the 259 students, I find 57 Hindus, or nearly a fourth of the whole. Christian and Parsi lads have, also, received a liberal education within its wall. This liberality of mind pervades, not only, its rules and

its teaching, but the whole life of the place."(Qureshi, Ishrat)After independence, India adopted secularism in practice under Article 23 of the Constitution.

### **THE EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS SET UP BY SIR SAYYED AHMAD KHAN:**

Sir Sayyed was the eyewitness of the Revolt of 1857 and the deteriorating and pathetic conditions of the Indians, especially the Muslims. After brooding over the prevailing conditions of his time, he concluded that only the education can cure all evils prevailing in the contemporary Muslim society. Addressing a public meeting at Amritsar, on January 29, 1884 he stated, "If the government has not given some of our rights to us as yet for which we may have a grudge, higher education is a thing, which, wily-hilly would oblige them to give (those rights) to us". 89 His struggle for education started soon after the Munity of 1857. He contributed a lot through his various movements and institutions founded by him with the need of time, which are as follows –

#### **1. MADARSA AT MORADABAD OR PERSIAN MADARSA:**

The first effort of Sir Sayyed Ahmad Khan towards the educational advancement started with the foundation of a Madarsa on 5th November, 1859, at Moradabad. It was also known as Persian Madrasa. In Moradabad, he wrote small pamphlet in English and Urdu emphasizing the need, value and importance of education and also criticized the traditional educational system run by the government and declared that it was inadequate to serve the basic needs of the society. He advised the Government to provide instruction in English language, so that the Indians might derive real advantage from it. "It was at Moradabad that his interest in education was excited. He expressed his views on the medium of instruction, which he thought should be both in English and Urdu. He strongly criticized the government vernacular schools and advised them to educate the Indians in English as well."(B. Sheikh Ali, 1999)

#### **2. THE VICTORIA SCHOOL AT GHAZIPUR:**

He proceeded in his journey of education "In 1864, two months after the establishment of Scientific Society, Syed Ahmad established a school at Ghazipur."(Nizami) The foundation stone of this school was laid by Raja DevNarain Singh and Maulana Muhammad Fasih-a-Faqt, which shows his Hindu-Muslim collaboration in his educational programmes. Later on, Raja DevNarain Singh was elected as the patron and visitor of the school. Sir Sayyed Ahmad Khan delivered a long and vigorous speech on this occasion, explaining about the new venture as a means, "Of spreading the light of learning amongst our countrymen and removing the clouds of darkness and ignorance, which were enveloping us and this great country. This noble work will, not only, be profitable to ourselves and our contemporaries but to the coming generations, our sons and sons' sons.

What gives me greater happiness and occasion to congratulate you is the fact that this school has been brought into being by you without outside help."(Nizami)

In this Madarsa, beside English, Urdu and Persian subjects, the Sanskrit was also taught to all the students. All this reflects the deep vision of Sir Sayyed Ahmad regarding Hindu-Muslim Unity, mutual understanding and brotherhood, which he estimated as the base for the educational advancement of the country. "The first requisite for the progress of a nation is the brotherhood and unity among sections of the society."(Nizami) Later on, this madarsah or school was raised to a High School known as 'Victoria High School' of Ghazipur.

### **3. THE ALIGARH INSTITUTE GAZETTE:**

"On Friday, March 30, 1866, Sir Syed started a journal entitled 'The Aligarh Institute Gazette' of the Scientific Society."(Hali,1979) It was weekly in the beginning, but subsequently it was published twice a week. He took upon himself the entire responsibility for editing it and supervising its printing. Barring a few, he wrote all its editorials. On his transfer to Benaras on August, 1867, he left the work of the society under the charge of Raja Jay Kishan Das, then the Deputing Collector at Aligarh. The first volume of this Gazette could be described as a collection of his political works. The main purpose of this Gazette was to make the British Government familiar with the emerging thinking and conditions of Indians, and on the other side to keep the Indians informed about ways and techniques of British rule, so that being aware, they might participate in political process of their country.

After the death of Sir Sayyed Ahmad, this Gazette was incorporated in college Magazine in April, 1898 and now its full name was 'M.A.O. College Magazine and Aligarh Institute Gazette with Progress'. When this College became Aligarh Muslim University, from the issue of 5th January, 1921, it was named again, as 'Muslim University Gazette'. But from the issue of May, 2004 (Vol. 41, November 5), it was again renamed by the Vice Chancellor, Mr. Naseem Ahmad as 'Aligarh Muslim University Gazette).

### **4. THE TAHZIB-UL-AKHLAQ:**

The greatest obstacle to the spread of Western education in India seemed to be religious superstition amongst the Muslims and their hatred for English education. To remove their prejudices Sir Sayyed Ahmad Khan started a journal called 'Tahzib-ul-Akhlaq', which aimed at persuading the Muslim community to come out its narrow-mindedness and to take up the challenges of the time. He started the publication of the journal "Tahzib-ul-Akhlaq on December 24, 1870."(Nizami) It largely aimed at reforming Muslim's religious thinkings and putting them back on the road of progress. Sir Sayyed was its editor for about 6 years. Through the help of this journal he made Muslims acquainted with the basic elements upon which, the European civilization was founded and the reasons behind its progress and success.



After demise of Sir Sayyed Ahmad, it was again published under the editorship of Mohsin-ul-Mulk till 1907. After Mohsin-ul-Mulk, Vahid-ud-Din Saleem continued it under his editorship till January 1909, but then its publication was stopped. In February, 1982, Syed Hamid, the Vice chancellor of Aligarh Muslim University, restarted its publication, after about 73 years.

## **5. THE MADARSAT-UL-ULOOM-**

In February, 1873, in a meeting of the Central Committee in Benaras, Syed Mahmud, son of Sir Sayyed Ahmad Khan, put a proposal that a school should be established under the patronage of the proposed Madrasat-ul-Uloom as quickly as possible. The foundation stone of Madrasat-ul-Uloom was laid down on 24th May, 1875, by MoulviSamiullah Khan, the subordinate judge of Aligarh. "The inauguration ceremony was presided over by Moulvi Mohammad Karim, Deputy Collector of Aligarh and the president of the management committee."(Shan) The Classes were started on 1st June, 1875. Four students were enrolled till May 24, 1875. "The audiences, which witnessed a colorful admission ceremony was introduced to the four students, One by one by Sir Syed himself."(Bhatnagar) The number of students increased with the passage of time, which rose from 71 in 1876 to 123 in 1877.

"This school was opened in Bunglow No. 3 of Mr. C.J. Colin, where at present the old guest house of the Aligarh Muslim University is situated."(Iftekharam) In the beginning, there were seven masters including head master, Mr. Henry George Impey Siddons, a graduate of the Oxford University. Mr. Baijnath Prasad (B.A.) was the first deputy head master of the school. "The school founded in 1875, was affiliated the Calcutta University for the Matriculation Examination and its first batch of four students, MahboobAlam, HarNath Singh, IshratHussain and Abdul Majid appeared in 1877, and all of them were declared passed, MahboobAlam stood first among them."(Shan, 1969)

## **6. THE SCIENTIFIC SOCIETY:**

The main object of this society would be to acquaint Urdu knowing persons with modern scientific knowledge of West through translation. As a result the Scientific Society was established on July 9th, 1864, at Ghazipur, because at that time Sir Sayyed Ahmad Khan was serving at Ghazipur. Sir Sayyed and Colonel G.F.I. Graham were appointed life time honorary secretaries of the society. About the establishment of Society Graham said, "The Translation society, now known as Scientific Society of Aligarh, was started by Syed Ahmad at Ghazipur on the 9th January, 1864." Graham, further, praising the works and efforts of Sir Sayyed Ahmad Khan, said, "For the first time in the annals of Hindostan, has a Mohamaddan gentleman alone and unaided, thought over and commenced a society, in order to, bring the knowledge and literature of the nations of the Western world within reach of the immense means of the people of the Eastern." K.A. Nizami wrote about the spirit behind the foundation of the society that, "It was an honest attempt on the part of Sir

Syed to bring Hindus andMohammandens on one common non-controversial platform. The Duke of Argyle, then, the Secretary of State for India, accepted its patron ship, while the Lt. Governors of Punjab (Mr. Mac Leod) and the North-Western Provinces (Mr. Drummond) became its vice-patrons. Sir Sayyid Ahmad was elected its secretary. Both the Hindus<sup>110</sup> and the Muslims joined it.”

**The objectives of the Scientific Society** were also spelt out and they were -

“1. To search for and publish rare and valuable oriental works. No religious work will come under the notice of society.

2. To publish, whenever, the society thinks it desirable any newspapers, Gazette, Journal, Periodical and Magazine, which may be calculated to improve the mind of the natives.

3. To have delivered in their meetings from time to time, Lectures on scientific or other useful subjects illustrated when possible by scientific instruments.”(IftekharAlam)

Due to efforts of Sir Sayyed Ahmad Khan, many important and valuable English works were translated into Urdu. More than forty books on Agriculture, Algebra, Electricity, Mechanics, Geography, Geometry, Hydrology, History, Philosophy, Political Economy, Political Sciences, and Pneumatics etc. were translated into Urdu under the aegis of the society. In 1866, the number of journals and papers subscribed by the society, including complimentary had reached 44. Out of these, 18 newspapers and magazines were in English and the rest were in Urdu, Persian and Sanskrit.

## **7. THE MOHAMMADAN ANGLO ORIENTAL (M.A.O.) COLLEGE:**

The far-sighted Sir Sayyed Ahmad Khan was on the peak of his educational movement, when he established the Mohammadan Anglo-Oriental College (M.A.O. College) on 24th May, 1875. This college, later on, in 1920, raised to the level of a university- 'The Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh'. "The foundation-stone of the Mohammadan Anglo-Oriental College was laid by Lord Edward Robert Lytton, the Viceroy and Governor General of India, on January 8, 1877."(Nizami, 1980) The regular instruction in the college started from 1st June, 1875, According to Mr. Gibbs, it was, "The first 'modernist' organization in Islam."(Nizami) Sir Sayyed Ahmad Khan dedicated all his time, money and energy to M.A.O. College, after taking voluntary retirement from government service in 1876.

Sir Sayyed Ahmad Khan wished that M. A. O. College should act as a bridge between the traditional and the modern, the West and the East and should also serve constantly the whole nation, as well as, the whole of mankind. Through this college, he not only completely stressed the need and the urgency of imparting instruction in western learning, but he also emphasized the importance of Oriental learning. Besides modern western learning, he revitalized and revived the teaching of Persian and Arabic. The

teaching of Sanskrit was also arranged and Pandit Kedar Nath was appointed for the purpose. He emphasized on the instruction in the English language and literature after 'the models of the English Universities of the Oxford and the Cambridge Universities'.

The establishment of M.A.O. College was founded on the three basic principles of his educational policy: first, in spite of the support of the British Government for his educational programs, the college management should be free from the Government Control. Secondly, being it an ideal institution on the model of the Cambridge and Oxford Universities, he emphasized the role and value of residential life in the all-round development of student's personality. Thirdly, and the important one, that though the College was named as the Mohammadan Anglo Oriental College, was dedicated primarily to cater the needs of the Muslims, yet he observed that its doors should be open to all Indians. He envisaged it as a community institution and not a communal one. "It is remarkable, how on one hand the college was thrown open to Hindus, and on the other hand, was helped by the money donated by the rulers of India states like the Maharajas of Patiala and Vijaynagaram. There was not a tinge of communalism in the institution." (Sherwani, 1971)

Jawahar Lal Nehru, the 1st prime-minister of India, has also remarked in his autobiography that, "The Aligarh College did fine work, produced a large number of competent men and changed the whole tone of Muslim intelligentsia." (Ahmad Ali, 2006) Delivering a speech in the convocation on 20th Feb, 1949, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad remarked, "Sir Syed Ahmad established in Aligarh, not only, a College, but an intellectual and cultural centre in tune with the progressive times." It produced a number of great scholars and authors of modern age.

## **8. THE MOHAMMADAN EDUCATIONAL CONFERENCE:**

In 1886, Sir Sayyed Ahmad Khan inaugurated the Mohammadan Educational Conference, which later termed as the All India Muslim Educational Conference (AIMEC), as he realized that just a single educational institution could not fulfill the educational requirements of the entire Muslim population scattered all over India. To create an educational environment among the Muslim Community, it was necessary that the people of the different areas and states could meet and discuss with each other their ideas on national education and development. "Aligarh was choose, the permanent headquarter of the conference because of Sir Sayyed Ahmad Khan and the M.A.O. College, which pioneered its activities. Its annual meetings were to be held at different places in the last week of December, when the offices closed for Christmas occasions." (Shan, 2003)

The Conference was established by Sir Sayyed Ahmad Khan and its first session was held at the M.A.O. College, Aligarh on 27th December, 1886. According to Altaf Hussain Hali (1979), in the beginning, the Conference was set up with the following aims:-

- “1. Make attempts to provide the Muslims with the highest western education.
2. To make an enquiry into the state of religious instructions in the English schools, which the Muslims had established for their own education and to ensure that every possible attempt was made to perfect such education.
3. To give encouragement to instruction in oriental learning and theology, and making suitable plans for continuing and maintaining such studies.
4. To carry out an enquiry into the traditional methods of education, employed in maktabas and to work out plans for raising and improving standards of such institutions .....
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It covered the education from primary level to higher education. "Sir Syed was unanimously elected as the secretary of the conference, and it was also decided that the Honorary Secretary of the Mohammadan Anglo oriental College would be the secretary of the august body. On December 27, 1886, MoulviSamiullah Khan was elected as the first president of All India Muslim Educational Conference."(Shan, 2003)

Thus, after studying the contribution of Sir Sayyed Ahmad Khan in education, in nutshell, it can be concluded by the researcher that the away from the politics, his main emphasis was the socio-economic, educational and cultural advancement of the Indian Society, especially the Muslims, who were the most backward at the time, due to their prejudices against the modern English Western education.

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