

Educational Contribution of District Educational Conference Dera Ghazi Khan 1914-1947 and its Socio-Political impact on Muslims (A Historical Analysis)

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Abstract

This paper is an attempt to highlight the educational efforts Muslim's education in Dera Ghazi Khan District. Sir Syed Ahmad Khan established All India Muslim Educational Conference in 1886 and its Headquarter was Alipur. As a central organization several of its branches were also formed in different regions of India by the local leadership of Muslims. Dera Ghazi Khan was an important district of Punjab due to its important geo-strategic position. District Educational Conference organization was formed in 1914 and All India Muslim educational conference owned it as its branch. This district organization played a vital role in education of the district. This paper explores the historical background of the district and educational condition of the district. Although educational conference was completely committed to the educational issues and it was irrelevant to the political issues of the Muslims of India initially as per its constitution. But later on it left a lasting impact on the political activities of the Muslims as it changed the Political thinking of the Muslims of south Asia. Its various debates a lasting impact on the on educational & cultural matters are the best testimony to prove this hypothesis. Most of the cultural as well educational issues were interconnected with political issues therefore, real segregation became impossible. The overall analysis of the speeches delivered on the conference's forum by the eminent Muslims and the resolution passed after the meetings gave political inspirations and impetus to the Muslims in general. The annual meeting, its arrangements in various cities and the public enthusiasm inspired the Muslim at large. The conference resolutions stimulated the spirit of unity and promoted two nation's theory. On December 31, 1906, All India Muslim League emerged after the end of the Conference session at Dacca. Those who attended Conference' meetings were the same members present in the League's meeting. The study explores the major issues debated at the conference's forum and the resolutions passed in the light of the primary sources. This paper highlights the formation, objectives and achievements of this District Educational Conference.

Keywords: Muslims, Sir Syed, Education, Educational Conference, Dera Ghazi Khan District.

Introduction

The advent of Islam in Arabia was a new message of hope and joy for the humanity. People were indulged in the darkness of ignorance and cruelty. Islam bestowed the people light of knowledge with its first revelation from the cave of Hira. After the migration from Makkah to Madina the Holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH) formed an Islamic state at Madina in 622 A.D. Muslims became victorious in different areas of the world and they formed their government in 712 A.D during the Caliphate of Waleed Bin Abdul Malik, Muhammad Bin Qasim conquered Sindh and established Muslim Government in Sindh. After him, various Muslim's dynasties ruled in India. Muslim rulers brought peace, prosperity, justice and mutual harmony in society¹. They worked for the socio-cultural and economic status of the whole subjects of the state.

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After the death of Aurangzeb Alamgir Muslims faced gradual downfall and even they lost their government and all their glory in 1857.

Their decline was seriously a horrible dream because during colonial rule they were not only tortured badly but also snatched all comfort of life. In this trail Sir Syed appeared as an angel and worked for the social uplift of the Muslims of subcontinent through education. For this purpose he formed various educational institutions for the Muslims. Among these institutions All India Muslim educational Conference was a remarkable effort. This paper highlights the achievements of a local organization of District Educational Conference Dera Ghazi Khan. It was purely an educational organization and worked for the uplift of the Muslims in backward area of District Dera Ghazi Khan.

Sir Syed Ahmed Khan appeared as a thinker and reformer in sub-continent. He galvanized a frustrated mass of people in a nation. The greatest service of sir Syed Ahmed Khan rendered to Muslim community was in the field of education. He was the person who earlier realized the backwardness of Muslims in education because they had not taken the modern education as a developmental tool. He tried to create a change in the Muslim mode of thoughts and to transform their medieval outlook into a modern one. He founded the All India Educational conference at Aligarh in 1886. Soon Aligarh became the center of cultural activities of the Muslims with a view to promoting the educational cause. The educational conference served in earlier as a “nursery of leaders” and later on championed the cause of the Muslims and contributed much to their intellectual and political awareness in the Sub-continent². For the social and cultural uplift of the Muslims education was necessary and then Sir Syed and his close companions Nawab Mohsin Ul Malik, Waqar Ul Malik, Molana Hali, Shibli, Nazir Ahmad, Molvi Charagh Ali, Sami Ullah Khan, Zaka Ullah Khan and many others worked with full zeal and zest to educate the Muslims³.

Dera Ghazi Khan was an important part of India during colonial period. The town was established by Baloch Sardar Nawab Haji Khan Mirani In 1476 A.D. During Sikh rule it was an important part of Derajat. On the annexation of Punjab it was announced as a district in 1849. During colonial period Dera Ghazi Khan had important position. Government also realized its importance during forward policy towards Balochistan. The establishment of the tribal system and later on the formation of Tumandarana system points out the socio-political condition of the district in 19th and 20th century⁴.

Dera Ghazi Khan District was worst in education during colonial period and it was considered to be the most backward district of India. Literacy ratio was very low and only old traditional educational system was adopted like *Maktab* and *Madarsa*. People rejected modern and western sciences as against their religion. District Educational Conference Dera Ghazi Khan was purely an educational organization and worked for the social uplift of Muslims in this backward area of District Dera Ghazi Khan a small region of Sub-continent. District Educational Conference facilitated the Muslim children and motivated them to receive education. It played an important educational role in tribal area. After the establishment this educational organization played a pivotal role in the political awareness of the Muslims. Due to the utmost and untiring efforts of this organization the literacy ratio of the Muslims progressed in the district⁵.

Review of Literature

This work is only related to the small region of Dera Ghazi Khan and there are only few sources which indicate its formation. The Gazetteer was thought the only official document of the historiography of D. G. Khan. Abdul Qadir Leghari⁶, Changwani⁷, "Roodad"⁸ All India Muslim Educational Conference, Local News Papers, Official and Non-official educational reports are also the main documentary sources of this work. With this the annual proceedings of education conference, Resolutions records, student's records and the local people are also important sources of this historical work.

Methodology

Historical method has been adopted to complete this work with deductive approach and qualitative and quantitative methods have been applied. The work is studied and analyzed under the perspective of Dera Ghazi Khan.

Discussion

Colonial Government absolutely damaged the social system of the Muslims with their political decline. Government decided to crush the Muslims in all disciplines of life in when they captured Bengal in 1757 A.D and they became completely dominant in 1857 after the war of independence. Government thought Muslims as its bitter enemy in India as compared to Hindus⁹. Government introduced new educational system in India with new policies. Charter Act 1813, Mecholy Report 1834 and Wood Dispatch recommendations 1855 were the new strategies for the British educational system which were totally opposite to the Muslim Education because it was destructive for their socio-cultural and religious approach because Muslims did not accept western education at once. English language and western education were imposed on them. Oriental sciences and Muslim system of education declared meaningless and useless. Mecholy report called as a chain of slavery for the Muslims in sub-continent. English education became compulsory for official jobs. This policy pushed the Muslims in financial crises and their economy had destroyed. In politics Muslim nation was also pushed in the darkness of ignorance. War of Independence 1857 proved a fatal sentiment for the existence of Muslims in Sub-continent. Their educational activities were badly affected all over the Sub-continent¹⁰.

After the freedom war of 1857, the Muslims of Sub-continent were in worst condition. They completely lost their Social, political and educational glory. They had no goal to step forward, not any goal and no leader. In all respects, their condition was pitiable. The time was waiting for a person who could bless a new spirit in the veins of suffering community. Such a person was expected who could flash the light of arrogance in the hearts of the Muslims of the age. Sir Syed Ahmed Khan was born in 17th October 1817 during the time of Muslims decline in Sub-continent. After the failure of independence war 1857, he realized that the survival of the Muslims is only possible through education. In order to this national cause he established Moradabad school in 1859 and Ghazipur in 1862. He also established M.A.O high school and college in 1875 and 1877 respectively. Sir Syed introduced modern education for the Muslims to compete with the other nations of the Sub-continent¹¹. On the other side the Mulla were trying to convince the common Muslims this type of education is against the faith. They were preaching that Muslims should gain religious education. Molana Ashraf Ali Thanvi strongly

recommended that women should only get basic religious education¹².

Sir Syed practically worked for the Muslims and his services had become familiar in the last quarter of 19th century. But some critics did not appreciate him and tried to find faults in his work as Molana Manglory objected that Sir Syed did not work for the female education. He was of the view that his work was only for male education and it was only confined to the elite' class¹³. Sir Syed positively continued his work and focused the Muslim's education according to the new phenomena. He said that Muslims could keep pace with other nations through education and it is the matter of their survival. Therefore, with oriental education, the knowledge of modern and western sciences is also the requirement of time¹⁴.

Sir Syed Continued his struggle and he formed Scientific Society in 1863 which helped to publish and translate the various important books on Indian history. But the formation of All India Muslim Educational Conference was a splendid work on his part. Muslim Educational Conference Played important role in the socio-political awareness of the Muslims in subcontinent. Muslim Educational Conference organized seminars all over India for sixty Millions Muslims to motivate them for education¹⁵.

During Aligarh movement, when Sir Syed was working on Muslim education in India the so-called religious scholars (Mullas) were bitterly against the modern education and they urged and motivated the people to give up education in Government schools. They propagated that the modern education was against their faith. It is an effort to make people Christians and Jews. In this regard their activities against education were a contradiction and based on conflict about the teachings of Islam¹⁶. Although the Holy Quran clearly mentions the difference of a scholars and ignorant as Quran says; "O" Prophet announce it among the people that the educated and uneducated are not equal¹⁷. The first revelation of Allah was as; "Read in the name of Lord who created you, "Created man from a clot of blood, Read your Lord is the most bounteous who taught by the pen and he taught the man which he knew not.

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Islam stressed upon the importance of education and advised the followers to gain knowledge, as in Hadeith it is also explained about the importance of education, The Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) said, "To get education is a religious obligation for all Muslims¹⁹".

Unlike the teachings of Islam the so-called Mulas were playing a negative role. They only propagated the traditional education which was now fruitless. "*Parho Farsi Becho Teel*" as it was said if you learn Persian it is non-beneficial²⁰.

All India Muslim Educational Conference presented its report that the literacy rate of Muslims were below 10 percent in 1860 .The report was prepared from the official education report related to the Muslim majority province Punjab. The conference shows that in 1881 Muslims were 41 out of 327 students of college classes. This ratio was 12.6% in 1881, 16.2% in 1888, 16.7% in 1889, 17.9% in 1890, 19.8% in 1891 and 19, 9% in 1892²¹.

In 1849 British Government also occupied Dera Ghazi Khan and exercised the same policy in the district. In the end of 19th century and early 20th century District Dera Ghazi Khan was most backward District of the Sub-continent. The major reason of this backwardness was lack of educational facilities. Common people were deprived of educational facilities. District Gazetteer clearly mentioned that in District the literacy ratio was only one percent in the district before the end of the 19th century.²².

After the formation of All India Muslim Educational Conference, Sir Syed's vision of education

spread all over the Sub-continent. His message was accepted among the Muslims of Dera Ghazi Khan and the local leadership formed a branch of educational conference in Dera Ghazi Khan. This District Educational Conference was established on first June 1913²³.

The earlier body of this conference was as, ⁽²⁴⁾

Sardar Aziz Muhammad Khan	President
Dost Muhammad Khan	Secretary
Noor Ahmed Khan	Finance secretary
Srdar Akram Khan Leghari	Member
Allah Bakash Fofalzai	Member
Sheikh kareem Bakhsh Farooqi	Member
Ghulam Rasool Korai	Member
Gull Muhammad Khan Buzdar	member
Haji Ghulam Hassan Khan Sakhani	Member
Sardar Ahmed Khan Pitafi	Member
Munshi Wali Muhammad	Auditor
Molvi Shamas-u-din	Auditor

This above mentioned body of this district educational conference was responsible to work for the educational uplift of the Muslims in district Dera Ghazi Khan. The main objectives of this educational conference were same to the central educational conference Aligarh.

Objectives:

- 1- To work for the uplift of Muslim's education in the district and get the attention and support of the Government.
- 2- To create interest among the Muslims towards modern education in the district.
- 3- To promote unity, mutual cooperation and harmony among the Muslims.
- 4 To establish a boarding house for the proper education and training of the Muslim's children.
- 5- To provide the opportunity of education for the poor and needy children.
- 6- To provide scholarships and financial aids for education of brilliant students.
- 7- To established a library and study center for moral and educational grooming of students.
- 8- Educational conference decided to establish an Orphanage for the orphans. ⁽²⁵⁾

These objectives show that this educational conference was seriously concerned about educating the Muslims. Conference did not only work for education but also worked for the social and moral uplift of the Muslims. First of all Sardar Ahmed Khan Pitafi provided the initial expenses of the conference. Due to his sincere efforts the performance of the conference was increased rapidly and the people of the district helped and supported this educational organization according to their status. All concerned persons, farmers,

businessmen and landlords participated and granted a share for this noble cause of education. Dost Muhammad Khan Hajana, who was school teacher was appointed as an honorary secretary of this educational conference. On the complaint of Hindu Headmaster, he was transferred to a far away school from his town .After this transfer no one accepted to serve as secretary of this educational conference. It was a tough duty to manage all the records of educational conference. At last, for the sake of national cause and Muslim's interest, Dost Muhammad Khan Hajana once again accepted this duty. But he set an ideal and extra-ordinary example of resign at that time from his government service. It was a sacrifice of personal interest which will be remembered by the nation ever and ever. At that time District Dera Ghazi Khan was a vast District by area and Jampur town was the central place of the district in 1913. Therefore, the head quarter of this educational conference was moved at Jampur. The first session of this educational conference was held at Jampur on 3rd to 5th April 1914. To make session successful the members participated and worked actively. They collected funds from the whole district in this session of the conference. The audience and organizers passed some important resolutions. The resolutions show the maturity and consciousness of the people of the district in 1914, which is even thought backward in 21st century. In this session some important resolutions were as,

- 1-This organization requested to All India Educational conference to accept it as a district Organization of All India Muslim Educational Conference.
- 2- All India Muslim Educational Conference establish relationship and guide this organization.
- 3- This district organization requested to all landlords of the district to support this educational conference and they must participate practically to uplift Muslim's education.
- 4-With modern education, religious education is also necessary. In this connection, it is also requested to " Sajada Nasheen" Taunsa Sharief that he must arrange a religious teacher in school for children after class time to recite The Holy Quran.
- 5- Three schools were proposed in Taunsa, Dera Ghazi Khan and Rajanpur.²⁶

The region of Dera Ghazi Khan has also representation in central educational conference. The meetings of this educational conference and proceedings expressed that Sardar Kaure Khan Jatoi, first class honorary magistrate was a member of All India Educational Conference .The session 7th report also told that Sardar Bairam Khan, the honorary Magistrate was selected as a correspondent member of educational conference from District Dera Ghazi Khan. His responsibility was to provide regular information about the district Educational conference which was also a branch of the network of Muslim's educational institute²⁷.

The first session of this conference was presided by Nawab Jamal Khan Leghari. Second session was presided over by Muhammad Aslam Khan Nutkani. Ex. editor All-Moeen and then Nawab Jamal Khan presided the third session to 8th session of this conference. The first school of Jampur was started by this educational conference. This school played a vital role not only in the education of the Muslim's children but also for Hindus. This school got fame as a "Little Aligarh" in Jampur. In the opening year 16 students were enrolled and Educational conference helped them through books and resident to acquire education. Till 1947, Thousands of students received education from this school²⁸. The name of students in the opening year were as following.

Sr.No.	Name	Father's Name	Resident
1	Abdul Khaliq	Allah Bakhsh	Jampur
2	Abdullah Babbar	Nabi Bakhsh	Haji pur
3	Mewa	Allah Dewaya	Dajal
4	Sobha Jam	Allah Nawaz	Jampur
5	Khair Din	Kaura	Choti
6	Faqir Bakhsh	Jan Muhammad Hajana	Jampur
7	Firasat Ali	Ghulam Rasol Korai	Dera Ghazi Khan
8	Atta Muhammad	Allah Dad	Rajanpur
9	M. Iqbal	Musa Jamoani	Dalana
10	Haibat Ali	Murad	Dajal
11	Ameer Hussain	Mitho Bhuta	Fazil Pur
12	Rabnawaz	Kalu	Taunsa
13	Ghulam Mustafa	Qadir Bakhsh	Shadan Loand
14	Fazal Din	Imam Bakhsh	Kala
15	Kaleem Ahmad	Noor Ahmad	Taunsa
16	Ghulam Haider	Manzoor Ahmad	Batil

District Educational Conference organized Schools in Dera Ghazi Khan, Jampur, Taunsa and Rojhan. Hundreds and thousands of students received their education with the help of this organization. District educational conference granted books and fee to all the deserving students. The above mentioned debate clearly highlights that District Educational Conference proved as a blessing and a torch bearer for the poor Muslims of that deprived region on a massive scale.

Conclusion

The down fall of Muslim government in India, the colonial regime pushed back the Muslims into poverty and illiteracy. They have lost all their glorious past. In this miserable condition District educational conference Dera Ghazi Khan proved as a torch bearer in this situation for the education in district. The services of this education organization are not denied. When we will discuss about the educational history of Dera Ghazi Khan, it would be incomplete without considering the work of district educational conference. Owing to the backwardness of Dera Ghazi Khan there was a shortage of educational facilities but the sincere efforts of this Educational Conference paved the way for the Muslims to get them educated in accordance with the growing needs of the time in the District. The educational outcome of the conference was splendid one. The services of the members of this conference were in true letter and spirits without any personal gain on their part. The Educational Conference also conveyed the sense of selflessness to humanity without any social, religious or political discrimination in District Dera Ghazi Khan at large because the work of the educational conference was based on the love for promulgation of knowledge for the well-being of humanity. The members also played vital role during freedom moment as the members and Muslims students started the election campaign in the district and it was the untiring effort of this organization that Muslim League defeated the strong candidates of Unionist Party in the

district during election 1945-46.

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