

Philosophy of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan to Theory and Practice of Education

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Abstract

This work Contribution of Sir Syed Ahmad to Theory and Practice of Education: A Critical Study is an attempt to shed light at the work, life and philosophy of the great son of the soil Sir Syed Ahmed Khan. This research draws upon primary and secondary sources including memoirs, books, lectures, published articles and research papers. Most prior research on Sir Syed Ahmed Khan focuses on his contribution in the field of philosophy and religion. However, there is another facet of his personality, which somehow does not find the mention it deserves. This facet is his contribution in the field of education. This work aims to uncover his Educational philosophy, efforts and accomplishments in the field of education. This work tries to present Sir Syed Ahmed Khans ideas on various facets of education found in his works. He lends his thought on the meaning of education, about the Aims, curriculum and also the methodology of teaching and Medium of Teaching. This work also tries to unfold his views about women education which he practiced and preached through establishment of Mohammadan Anglo Oriental College and Aligarh Muslim University.

Sir Syed Ahmed Khans was one of the loved personalities, educationist of India. He has contributed lot to the field of education .Though he was not famous educationist of India as M.K.Ghandi, Rabindarnath Tagore, Dr. Mohammad Iqbal, Swami Vivekanada and Aurobindo Ghosh. His contribution to educational field has not enjoyed the popularity and fame it deserves. This piece of work aims to uncover Sir Syed Ahmed Khans contribution in the field of education vis-à-vis curriculum reforms, student-centred teaching, teaching methodology, concept of schooling, value education, peace education and spiritual education.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

1. To know the contribution of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan in the field of education.
2. To know the contribution of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan towards Educational Development of Muslims in India.
3. To know the Educational philosophy of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan.
4. To know the social and literary contribution of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan.
5. To study the contribution of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan to Social and Educational field.
6. To study the efforts made by Sir syed Ahmad Khan for the establishment of Mohammadan Anglo Oriental College.
7. To study the contribution of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan for the spread of English and higher education among Muslims and for the community.

METHOD AND PROCEDURE:

The historical and philosophical method of research has been used in this study. For data collection both primary and secondary sources have been put to use.

- **PRIMARY SOURCES:**

They provide first hand information about the past events .Direct observation and reporting or recording of experience can be treated as primary data. The primary sources in this study were the writings and correspondence of Sir Syed Ahmed Khans, autobiographies, original draft of speeches, articles, newspaper accounts, etc.

- **SECONDARY SOURCES:**

It includes second hand data information about past events. For instance, the person who supplies information about the past is neither a participant nor an eye witness of events. Items of this type can be written material, newspapers, articles, interview referred to in the articles, magazines, books, research reports etc. The secondary source in this study were journals and newspaper, books, magazines, editorials and research reports on Sir Syed Ahmed Khans etc.

DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY:

The present study limited to Sir Syed Ahmed khans contributions towards social, literary and educational development of the masses only not extended to religious and spiritual awakening of the masses.

LITERARY CONTRIBUTION OF SIR SYED AHMED KHAN:

Sir Syed Ahmed Khan had written many books, pamphlets, journals and articles for new papers in Urdu as well as in Persian, which are listed below:

Historical Works:

1. A'in-e-Akbari (Edition with Illustration), Delhi.
2. Asrar-us-Sanadid (i) Syed-ul-Akhbar, 1847, (II) Mata-i-Sultani, 1852.
3. Description des monument de Delhi in 1852, D'a Pre Le Texte Hindostani De Saiyid Ahmad Khan (tr. by M. Garcin De Tassy), Paris, 1861.
4. Jam-i-Jum, Akbarabad, 1940.
5. Silsilat-ul-Muluk, Musaraf ul Mataba', Delhi, 1852.
6. Tarikh-i-Firoz Shahi (Edition), Asiatic Society, Calcutta, 1862.
7. Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri (edition Aligarh, 1864).

Political Works:

1. Asbab-i-Baghawat-e-Hind, Urdu 1858 and English edition, Banaras.
2. Lecture Indian National Congress Madras Par, Kanpur, 1887.
3. Lectures on the Act XVI of 1864, delivered on 4 December 1864 for the Scientific Society, Allygurh, 1864.
4. Musalmanon ki qismat ka faisla (taqarir-e-Syed Ahmad Khan wa Syed Mehdi Ali Khan etc.) Agra, 1894.
5. On Hunter's: Our Indian Mussulmans' London, 1872.
6. Present State of Indian Politics (Consisting of lectures and Speeches) Allahabad, 1888 Sarkashi Zilla Binjor, Agra 1858.

Religious works:

1. Ahkam Tu'am Ahl-Kitab, Kanpur, 1868.
2. Al-Du'a Wa'l Istajaba, Agra, 1892.
3. Al-Nazar Fi Ba'z Masa'il Imam Al-Ghazzali, Agra.
4. Izalat ul-Chain as Zi'al Qarnain, Agra, 1889.

5. Zila al-Qulub ba Zikr al-Mahbub, Delhi, 1843.
6. Khulq al-Insan ala ma fi al-Quran, Agra, 1892.
7. Kimiya-i-Sa'dat, 2 fasl, 1883.
8. Mazumm ba nisbat tanazzul ulum-i-diniya wa Arabiya wa falsafa-i-Yunaniya, Agra,
9. Tafsir al-Jinn Wa'l Jan ala ma fi al-Qur'an, Rahmani Press, Lahore, 1893, Agra, 1891.
10. Tafsir-a-Samawat, Agra.
11. Tahrir fi Usul al-Tafsir, Agra, 1892.
12. Tarjama fawa'id al-afkar fi amal al-farjar, Delhi 1846.
13. Tarqim fi qisa ashab al-kahf wal-Raqim, Agra, 1889.
14. Tasfiyad al'Aquid (Being the correspondence between Syed Ahmad Khan and Maulana Muhammad Qasim of Deobund).
15. Asbab-e-Baghawat-e-Hind (Reasons for the Indian Revolt of 1857) 1875.

Biographical Works:

1. Al-Khutbat al-Ahmadiya fi'l Arab wa'I Sirat al-Muhammadiya : Aligarh, 1900, English translation, London, 1869–70.
2. Sirat-i-Faridiya, Agra, 1896.
3. Tuhfa-i-Hasan, Aligarh, 1883.

Legal works:

1. Act No. 10 (Stamp Act) 1862.
2. Act No. 14 (Limitation) Act 1859–1864.
3. Act No. 16 (Regarding registration documents) – Allyson, 1864.
4. Act No. 18 (Regarding women's rights) 1866.

Lectures:

1. Iltimas be Khidmat Sakinan-i-Hindustan dar bad tarraqi ta' lim ahl-i.Hind, Ghazipore, 1863.
2. Lecture dar bab targhib wa tahrir talim itfal-i-Musalmanan, in 1895, Agra 1896.
3. Lecture Madrasat ul-Ulum Aligarh Key Tarikhi halat aur jadid Waqi'at Par, Agra. 1889.
4. Ik Nadan Khuda Parast aur Dana dunyadar Ki Kahani, Badaon, 1910.
5. Kalamat-ul-Haqq, Aligarh

Journals, Reports, and Proceedings:

1. Tehzeeb-ul-Ikhlaq.
2. Aligarh Institute Gazette.
3. Proceedings of the Muhammadens Educational Conference.
4. An Account of the Loyal Muhammadans of India, Parts I, II, III, Moufussel Press, Meerut, 1860.
5. Proceedings of the Scientific Society.
6. By-Laws of the Scientific Society.
7. Addresses and speeches relating to the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College in Aligarh (1875–1898) ed. Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk, Aligarh, 1898.

EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY OF SIR SYED AHMED KHAN

Sir Syed and Aims of Education

Sir Syed held the view that education was a means of fostering and cultivating the inherent potentialities of the child. He said that through education mankind

individually and collectively, marched towards progressive development. Formulating the aim of education Sir Syed said, “the greatest aim of education and training is to engender piety, morality and humanness in human beings”. He opposed the theoretical knowledge. He opined that education should aim at the harmonious cultivation of the physical, moral, intellectual and aesthetic sides of human nature.

Sir Syed’s Proposed Curriculum:

After considering the various needs and requirements of Muslim community, Sir Syed presented the details of his curriculum which can be categorized into two types –

- General Education Curriculum
- Special Education Curriculum

The general education curriculum was to meet the needs of Muslims – secular as well as spiritual. The special education curriculum as to enable the Muslims to benefit by the education system adopted by the government.

Method of Teaching:

Sir Syed accepted that any method of teaching that makes the learner creative and constructive should be followed. He was not in favour of traditional method of teaching as it encouraged memorization and failed to prepare the child for the real life. According to Sir Syed learning by doing, observation, playing and freedom of expression play an important role in methods of teaching. Sir Syed also recommended scientific and experimental method. He said “in old times, theories could be propounded and rebutted sitting in the sequestered places, now it is the experimental age. To prove or disprove anything you have to be in the laboratories”.

Administration of Education:

Sir Syed emphasized that for smooth functioning of education institutions, sympathetic, imaginative and democratic system of administration is essential. He held the view that Indians, especially, Muslims themselves should establish and administer their institutions of education in accordance with their needs and requirements without the interference of the government. Emphasizing his point of view, in a speech delivered at Gurdaspur in Punjab on January 27, 1884, Sir Syed said: “Friends, I am of the opinion that no government can take the responsibilities of the education of the whole nation, and I firmly believe that it is not possible for the government to meet out fully the educational requirements of its subjects. Indian will progress only when they themselves, without the interference of the government and its officers, arrange for the education of their young boys out of their voluntary contribution, and themselves administer and control it”.

Medium of Instruction:

He believed that it would be easier for Indians to study different disciplines of studies through vernacular medium. There is more or less consensus that medium of teaching should be mother tongue or the regional language. It will facilitate better learning. However, in this case, English should be studied as a link and library language. Since India is a multi-language country, the three language formula was developed and implemented to promote mother tongue and vernaculars.

To achieve the objectives of teaching through vernacular medium, Sir Syed established scientific society at Ghazipur in 1864 to provide Urdu translations of standard works and treatises on different subjects in the English language. The other objectives of the society, in the words of Sir Syed were "... all nations which once were civilized knew their sciences in their own language, and whichever nation tried to progress and civilize itself did so by translating all sciences into its own language. Therefore, the easiest and the most effective method for Indians to progress, and to progress is the result of the experiences of many various countries and of thousands of years, is that it should also try, by all possible means, to transfer into its own language all those sciences and arts which are now in the possession of foreign nations".

In establishing the scientific society, Sir Syed had in fact, renewed the tradition of love for knowledge of the early Muslims who, by the middle of 9th century, had translated the major work in Greek philosophy, mathematics, medicines etc. as well as Iranian and Indian thought into Arabic.

Sir Syed Ahmed Khan's Vision of Scientific Education:

Sir Syed's vision of a modern scientific education has the potential to trigger progress for the Indians, in general, and the Indian Muslims, in particular. His vision is all the more significant in the post-colonial context as Indian Muslims continue to languish in all social indicators of development. Education could be a major catalyst in turning around the fate of the community and Sir Syed's vision and the schools inspired by it continue to be necessary for the progress of the Muslim community. These schools, along with the AMU, are embodiments of his philosophy of education in action. Forging this scientific education from the lower level of schooling itself would produce durable results

According to Sir Syed, the traditional system of knowledge was an obstacle in the path of human progress. He wanted an educational system free from superstitions that would operate for the betterment of Islam. The rejuvenation of socio-cultural potential in the Muslims was used to propagate his view that Islam is not inconsistent with modernity. To that end, in 1859, he had founded a modern madrasa in Moradabad. This was one of the first religious schools to impart and promote scientific education in India. It was founded on the hope that Muslims can reach the pinnacle of progress by reforming themselves and initiating a journey toward modernity.

CONCLUSION:

Sir Syed Ahmed Khan had played the role of The Gandhi of 1857. If the Muslims of India had accepted Sir Syed Ahmed Khan as their leader, today, there might be many more Muslim universities in India. Today there is very much need of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan's Educational movement which he started after the Mutiny of 1857 to overcome all the educational problems and backwardness of Indian Muslims. Unnecessary wastage of money on the wedding ceremonies in Muslim families should be stopped and the same amount should be utilised to solve the educational problems of Indian Muslims. This research work attempted to raise and discuss some of the key issues and problems confronted by Indian Muslims, particularly in the domain of education.

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