



Social Enlightenment Of Muslims In Jammu And Kashmir During The British Colonial Rule In India

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ABSTRACT

This scholarly contribution tries to derive the impact of Muslim reform movements in Kashmir, which was actually a Muslim dominant during the reign of India's British rule. The article studies the Muslim religious reform movements' role in eradicating society's social evils, besides throwing light on how modern education's impact illuminated the young Kashmiri Muslims' minds. More than this, the article explores these religious reform movements' role in transforming the political structure by dint of imparting modern or latest forms of education. The role of these reform movements is also examined in transforming and uplifting the women subjects who were mainly deprived and were the powerhouses of social evils, discrimination and domestic atrocities among the Muslim subjects. The paper also throws light on how these social movements helped the women subjects to raise their social standards through the adoption of contemporary advancement, which was there due to the massive spread of education.

KEYWORDS Ahmadiyya, british, colonial, education, kashmir, social movements, women

Introduction

Muslim Reform Movements as powerhouses of enlightenment

The emergence of the reform movements among the Hindu community in Jammu and Kashmir was mainly inspired by the reform movements, which were at that time being active and prevalent in other parts of the country (Ganaie, 2015a). Reform movements of Muslim subjects in the state were launched and based on the reform movements that were growing in high numbers in the state. The Hindu community primarily administered that. Muslim reform movements in Jammu and Kashmir came up after seeing a massive rise in the Hindu community's reform movements emergence. The emergence and growth of the Muslim reform movements came up, particularly for the Muslim communities' welfare and upliftment, besides removing the worst social evils from their community (Bazaz, 1959; Ganaie, 2015b). The importance and significance of the Muslim reform movements hold a distant and valuable position in the history of Kashmir, and they worked day and night a lot for the welfare and upliftment of the Muslim community (Ganaie, 2015c). The Muslim community's reform movements were primarily inspired by the impact of modern education and social transformation among the other community members in the state (Kaur, 1996). During the British colonial and the Dogra oppressive regimes in the state, the condition of the Muslims in the valley was very worst (Khan,

2009; Prasad, 2014), and they were living their lives in miserable conditions (Jones, 1990). In an interview with Ibrahim Hassan Shah (name changed), he admitted that:

‘Condition of Kashmiri Muslims during the Hindu or Dogra rule was the worst in the ever history of the Kashmiri Muslim period, and they were left with less land, and Hindu fellows were big landlords. Maharaja committed atrocities on Muslim subjects and retained their properties, and Hindu rulers levied heavy taxes only on Muslim subjects. We were left with little sources. We went to earn our bread either from neighbouring states like Punjab or Pakistan. We were coming back after six, nine or twelve months, depending on the earning positions of each individual. Muslims at that time were suffering from massive social evils and were less religious.’¹

Influential and prominent Muslim figures and the top religious leaders were totally dissatisfied with their Muslim subjects’ condition in the state, and there was a serious worry among them regarding their upliftment. They were deprived of social and economic equality; besides this, they lacked modern education, and backwardness was common among them. Finally, during the last period of the 19th century, the Muslims of the State were heavily influenced by modern British education. The emergence and the rise of the reform movements among Muslims against the social evils that had made them as downtrodden besides misrepresenting them compared with other sections of society (Rai, 2020). The dominance of the socio-religious reform movements among the Muslims was based on religious movements, and they considered religious puritanism, besides believing in educational advancement with a broader and more significant role in affairs of the State management (Ganaie, 2018c; Kaur, 1996, p. 62). The prominent and top leading reform movements among the Muslims of the State are figured out as:

The emergence of Anjuman-I-Nusrat-ul-Islam, Srinagar, as a trusted social reformer

The emergence and rise of the Anjuman-I-Nusrat-ul-Islam hold an essential space in the history of Kashmir, and it holds the position of being one of the oldest and most prominent reform movements in the arena of the Muslim community. Being one of the most popular movements, its foundation was laid down by one of the influential and most prominent Moulvi (Religious Leader), Rasool Shah, during the year 1905, along with the collaboration of other influential and prominent religious leaders like Hasan Shah Naqshbandhi, Aziz-Ud-Din Kawsoo and Abdul Samad Qaqr.² From 1889-1904, the prominent founders of this association, in assistance with other party colleagues, were directly or indirectly involved in some socio-religious transformation activities.³ Moulvi⁴ Rasool Shah was considered the most highly significant and influential religious leader of that time, who dominated most of the state’s population, and he was considered one of the most influential leaders. They did a lot for the community and party before finally expiring in 1909. His brother Moulvi Ahmadullah Shah succeeded him, who in turn was succeeded by his nephew Moulvi Mohammad Yousuf Shah.⁵

Along with its current members, the party and all of its activists favoured Muslims' modernisation in the state besides eradicating all forms of social evils. They considered the backwardness of the Muslims due to the scarcity of modern education (Ibid, p. 63). For the speedy implementation of modern education among their community members, they established a primary school during 1899 in Srinagar city (Ganaie, 2015). As per the association, the eligibility for joining the party's primary membership was totally open to all, but basic membership was to be availed by paying a sum of four Annas. In the association, the President, the General Secretary, the Secretary of Scholarships, the Accountant, and other members (Ibid). The founder of this reform movement Moulvi Rasool Shah had some social implications in Kashmir, which are as:⁶

'The first and immediate implication was the creation of social cleavages and conflict between the votaries of the new trend and the upholders of the conservative tradition. The latter called themselves 'Ahle-Aitqad'; the believers in the 'six shrines' were led by the chief priest of the shrine of Khanqah-i-Maula at Srinagar. They came to be known as 'Khankashis' and 'Cheka' as well; the followers of the Mirwaiz came to be known as 'Kota'.'

'The second implication was the creation of a single centre of great mass following and influence under the Mirwaiz, under-cutting the influence of many smaller and scattered pirzads and making their position redundant. The latter were faced, as a result, with dire consequences as to their social position and economic prosperity.'

'The third was to cast away the traditions that were a result of the past 'Contamination' with Kufur, idolatry' and

'The fourth was deepening of Muslim communal consciousness in the segment of the population that followed Mirwaiz.'

The scope and the role of this reform movement were absolutely dynamic, with its presence in all walks and sectors of life, and the limitlessness of this reform movement was not confined to any particular section or religious activities only. This reform movement started to inculcate in Muslims the best, and good manners of life, Improved ways of living; it utilised lots of efforts in building in Muslims a sense of mutual cooperation.⁷ The growth of this reform was primarily responsible for Muslim upliftment. It helped a lot in spreading modern education among the members of the Muslim community (Prakash, 2001), and its stress on modern education can be justified from the example that soon after its inception, it upgraded the primary level school in Srinagar city up to High school level, and these schools operated under the administration of this reform movement were directly managed by this association.⁸ Besides organising its annual meetings and enormous stress, the celebration of its annual functions was being given on the spread of contemporary education for Muslim fellows whom these facilities deprived. The association focused on empowerment and their equal representation in government and administrative affairs of the State (Kaur, 1996, p. 64).

Growth of Anjuman-I-Taraqqi Talim-Wa-Ittihad as an educational imparting agency

With the passage of the 19th century, the educational reforms and the political reforms were at their peak periods, and there was an abundant rise in them. The societies were now different from previous times, and the enlightenment spread through modern education had reformed the youth of the society notably. With the occurrence of reforms that had spread in the society through western education and primarily by dint of the launch of the other reform movements in the community, another group of talented Muslim youth had launched a new reform movement in the form of Anjuman-I-Taraqqi-Wa-Ittihad in the year 1918. There was an ideological difference with the previous reform movements, and the occurrence of these new reform movements came mainly for Muslim reforms and upliftment. The forefront founders belonging to this reform movement favoured advanced contemporary education along with the aims and objectives of mutual cooperation besides understanding among the various residents in the society.⁹ The association's activists had approached the government authorities by sending a deputation to the home ministry officials for getting the organisation's registration done. However, it was at that time came under severe circumstances due to the launch of the massive student agitations, and permission for the same was not granted at that time.¹⁰ However, later, when the delegation of this separate association meets the state's home ministry officials, they issued an advisory to it to join the Anjuman-I-Nusrat-ul-Islam.¹¹ The merger of these two organisations to work jointly for the social reforms and cooperate on other issues did not work out successfully, first of their ideological differences and secondly by a complete denial of Moulvi Mirwaiz because these two reform movements could not work jointly.¹² With the passage of time, this reform movement started working on initiating new reforms in the society separately, and whose majority of the members were non-governmental Muslims. The party did a lot in reforming society and in the transformation of the educational sector. Its separate works were appreciated both at the government and at public levels, which finally got its governmental recognition in the form of a separate reform movement and for the same, the association came up with the raising of scholarships for the deserving poor students belonging to the Muslim community who were studying in different schools and colleges of the city.

The emergence of Anjuman-I-Hamdard Islam, Srinagar, as a social reforming powerhouse

The emergence, growth and development of the Anjuman-I-Hamdard Islam hold the most distinct slot among all the launched reform movements, and this reform movement was the first of its kind that was not only established by the Kashmiri local Muslims but its launch was also a contribution of some Punjabi Muslims (Kaur, 1996, p. 66). The emergence of this reform movement came during the year 1914 under the able and prominent leadership of Babu Mohammad Ibrahim and other party activists. The party came up with specific aims and objectives, which are as:¹³

‘To pursue the Muslims of Kashmir to take to education, to develop the habit of self-help among the Muslims by urging them to make liberal donations for the purpose of

spreading education among Muslims, to stress the learning of technical and commercial education, to bear all the expenses for burial of the Muslim villagers thrown into the mortuary after these were declared heirless or unclaimed by the doctors in the government hospitals, to grant scholarships worth four rupees per month to those Muslim students who had passed the middle standard but could not continue further studies owing to poverty, to help parentless Muslim children in their education and vocation by admitting them to the orphanage established and maintained by the Anjuman.’¹⁴

From its inception, this reform movement was non-political in nature and focused on inculcating Muslim members of the state a sense of unity and cooperation besides mutual understanding. The party was always trying to contribute through annual gatherings, meetings, and the conduct of processions meant to educate more people in the community. The usage of religious quotes and the singing of patriotic and religious songs targeted at bonding the sense of unity, brotherhood, patriotism, and self-sacrifice. Islamic supremacy and religious knowledge were the two main focuses of the party so that the fellow residing in the state would understand how-to live-in peace, harmony and cooperation.

The genesis of the Ahmadiyya Movement and its role in eradicating the British colonial rule

Ahmadiyya Muslim Community¹⁵ or the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat, a religious movement founded in Punjab, India, near the final stage of the 19th century^{16, 17, 18} & (Morgan, 2009). The Islamic Reform movement within Islam originated with the life and teachings of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (1835-1908), who claimed to have appeared for the accomplishment of the prophecies concerning the world reformer during the end times or eschaton and who was supposed to bring out by the peaceful means, the final achievement of Islam and herald the eschaton¹⁹ as was predicted and mentioned in the Islamic scriptures. He claimed to be divinely selected as the renewer (Mujjaddid) of Islam in the form of Messiah (anointed one) and Mahdi (Guided One), who was the much-awaited one by the Muslims.^{20, 21, 22} The advocates of the Ahmadiyya movement are referred to as Ahmadi Muslims or Ahmadis. Ahmadi Muslims, or Ahmadi Muslim ideology, believe that Islam is an ultimate dispensation for humankind as was revealed to Muhammad (saw) and an essential requirement of re-establishing its true spirit and unspoiled form had been lost through the different eras of time.²³

Mirza Ghulam Ahmad laid the foundation of the Jamaat Ahmadiyya on 23rd March 1889. The number of Khalifas has led the Ahmadiyya Community, and the roots of the Islamic movements are expanded in 209 countries of the world. The Ahmadiyya movement has an influential missionary and holds a distinct feature of being the topmost earlier ones who had spread Islam in Britain²⁴ and other western countries.²⁵

Ahmadi Muslims are not following any new Islam, nor are they teaching any new ideology, but they are residing and worshipping like other Muslim Fellows. They believe

in six articles of faith which are the Unity of Allah, Angels, Books, Prophets, Day of Judgment and Divine Decree. In addition to this, they strongly also believe in the Five Pillars of Islam, which are as Creed (Shahadah), Daily Prayers (Salat), Fasting, almsgiving (Zakat) and Pilgrimage to Mecca (Hajj).

Ahmadiyya Muslim Movement has played a significant role in the political awakening and Muslim Modernisation in the deprived state of Jammu and Kashmir, and it has, in the past, raised enormous funds and contributions for the betterment of Kashmiri Muslims. Hazrat Mirza Bashir-Ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad, the head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim community, watched the Kashmir situation very thoroughly and was under his supervision; he decided that the All India Kashmir Committee be set up for the cause of Kashmir (Khan, 2009; Rai, 2020). After the committee's formation, Mohammad Iqbal, an eminent Kashmiri, had proposed that Hazrat Mirza Bashir-Ud-Din Ahmad be elected its president. The offer was denied by this divine leader, who was reluctant to join the politics. In order to raise funds for the Kashmiris, Hazrat Sahab had enforced cess on the members of his community. Enormous funds were made available, and the Ahmadiyya Jamaat was having enough resources and voluntary work in addition to the Muslim missionary.²⁶

The state of Jammu and Kashmir is a conflict-ridden one and is distributed between India, Pakistan and China (Ganaie, 2018a, 2018b, 2018c; Ganguly et al., 2019; Tavares, 2008). India and Pakistan control almost half of its territory, and a small portion is controlled by China also, with both countries claiming jurisdiction over the whole (Behera, 2006, p. 29). The Kashmiri Muslims had got support from the Indian Muslims. Kashmiri Muslim leaders were receiving an encouraging response from Punjabi Muslims, The Ahrars and, more significantly, the Ahmadiyyas of Qadian²⁷ (Ibid) were always there for the cause of freedom of Kashmir from British colonial rule (Ganguly & Swami, 2011; Pye & Bose, 2003).

Anjuman-I-Islamia, Jammu, as an educational and social reformer organisation

Raja Farman Ali Khan laid the foundation of the Anjuman-I-Islamia alongside the support and help of Major General Samandar Khan, Syed Asad Ullah Shah, Chowdhary Ghulam Abbas and Mistri Yaqaub Ali. This reform movement maintains a distinct position among the Muslim reform movements as being one of the oldest ones in the state's history. Arrangement of successful public meetings and gatherings from the very beginning was one of this association's real motives; besides this, the sending of its annual finding resolutions that become passed and adopted in its annual meetings were despatched to the government for swift consideration.²⁸ Besides raising the Muslims' moral and social status residing in the state, improved education and a sound economy were some of the main targets before this reform movement. Besides the extreme rise in other reform movements, modern education's impact was one of the reasons that had become vital indicators for the coming of this reform movement.²⁹ The association came up with the proposal to create a special committee of ladies that will monitor and run the girl schools that are being operated in Srinagar city. The same proposal had come under severe concern due to the fact that there was a total absence of educated females ones in the

state who were supposed to take up the proposed work.³⁰ This threat in the form of female illiteracy threatened both internally and externally, and it became one of the massive social imbalances in society.

For the disposal of the same concerns, particularly the Muslim backwardness and economic imbalance, Anjuman-I-Islamia, Punjab, Lahore had requested the Maharaj of the State to eliminate and eradicate all the challenges or obstacles that have become the sources of hurdles in reforming and transforming the Muslim subjects of the state. For the redressal and disposal of the same concerns, it was during the year 1913 the grave concerns were thoroughly discussed under the leadership of Sahibzada Aftab Khan and for the same, the solution was found.³¹ It was during the year 1926, through its general meeting, the association came up with a plan that was unanimously adopted and passed by the reform movement, which meant the creation of reservation of certain stipends that were totally aimed at the welfare and education of the students belonging to the Muslim community in each and every part of the state. The resolution that was passed and adopted by this reform movement for the upliftment of the Muslim community reads as:³²

‘The Darbar awarded scholarships to the state’s students to prosecute their further studies in medicine, engineering and forestry every year. However, the Muslim students were not benefitted from this opportunity in order to carry on their studies outside the state.’

‘Muslims were lagging in university education because of their poverty, but in secondary education, which was the only education criterion for the selection of the candidates for admission to Sub-assistant surgeons, rangers, sub-overseers and overseers classes, they were up to mark, and the Anjuman was prepared to produce a number of matriculates for such appointments’ and

‘Out of thirty-sub-assistant surgeons in the civil medical department, only one was Muslim, who as well as a foreigner. Similarly, there was only one sub-assistant surgeon in the military department out of eighteen sub-assistant surgeons on its cadre.’

Some of the most disgusting factors that were mainly responsible for Muslim backwardness were misrepresentation and illiteracy, besides social and economic imbalances. The association had declared these obstacles only due to the absence of modern education. For the removal of the same concern, the association had requested from time to time to the ‘Maharaja that a definite number of stipends should be set apart exclusively for Muslims in every department and that these selections should take place absolutely and exclusively from amongst the Muslim members so that claims of Muslim candidates would receive proper consideration at the time of selection.’³³

Anjuman-I-Tahafuz-I-Namaz-Wa-Satar-Masturat as a women’s empowerment organisation

With the emergence of the various reform movements within society, the influential and the first recipients of modern education in the state were worried about the concerns that

had swept the female community. Illiteracy and women's backwardness were some of the grave issues that needed to be tackled within a short span of time. Taking into consideration women's empowerment and their equal share in terms of social or economic, the emergence of reform movements that were primarily targeted at women reform was formed in the form of 'Anjuman-I-Tahafuz-I-Namaz-Wa-Satar' during the year 1923 under the able leadership of Azad Quaraishi, Hakim Mohammad Qureshi and Ghulam Mohammad Alvi.³⁴ This reform movement was disassociated with the state's political spectrum, and its ideology was based entirely on religious ideas with total support for women's reforms.³⁵ The essential purposes and objectives of this reform movement which was religious in nature with ultimately favouring women's empowerment and upliftment, are listed as:³⁶

'The Muslim women should observe prayers, and Muslim women should wear clothes properly, the Muslim should get religious and secular education either through preaching or through schools opened for this purpose; all traffic in women should be stopped, and the marriage contracts should be duly registered in a court of law, and The Muslims of Kashmir should remain loyal to the Maharaja.'³⁷

The emergence of this reform movement came at the right time for the welfare of the most deprived women subjects belonging to the Muslim communities, and this association did a lot in removing some of the social evils that had swept the Muslim women community of the state.

Anjuman-I-Hanfia as an educational and religious reformation movement

The growth and the speed of the reform movements in the state were going on at fast speed, and Muslim community members of the state were now significant beneficiaries of these reform movements that were launched within their religious bounds for their empowerment. They had now become more successful in imparting modern and improvised education. For the educational transformation of the society, a school in the form of Islamia Hanfia School came up in March 1922. The main motives behind these schools' formation were to impart religious and secular education to the children belonging to the Muslim community. The Moulvi Ghulam Mohi-Ud-Din and Mirwaiz directly managed the functioning of the school. It was finally in the year that the Maharaja of the State issued its formal clearance for establishing the committee in the form of Anjuman-I-Hanfia.³⁸ The association came up with the below-stated objectives:³⁹

'To manage the school and devise ways and means to create literary taste among the people, to impart religious education and to promote the teaching of old culture and to be faithful and obedient to the Maharaja and the British Government.'⁴⁰

Conclusion

The emergence and growth of the social reform movements, which were religious primarily in nature, actually impacted western education. It actually came from the modernisation of society, which had happened during the colonial rule in India primarily

due to society's highly influential character that was possessed by various prominent leaders, whether they were political, religious or recipients of modern western education. The emergence of multiple reform movements among the Muslim community in Kashmir came up due to this modernisation. However, there was a considerable presence of various reformative groups; that aimed to transform the social sector from an evil-free to a welfare society.

Removal of social evils, education for all, equality, and human activities mostly influential on women were primarily checked; women empowerment, dowry, child marriage, social discrimination, generation of scholarship schemes for downtrodden ones and participation in political or non-political activities came up in the colonial society mainly due to these reform movements.

Hence, although this colonial rule saw the emergence of various reform movements among the Muslim subjects who were mainly deprived, the sole aim of these reform movements was to change their fellows from darkness to light, in which finally, they got succeeded by the utilisation of various efforts and techniques through the adoption of several channels. Compared to its previous colonial version, the new society was transformed and free from various social evils and was compatible as compared to other societies.

Notes

1. Personal interview with Ibrahim Hassan Shah (name changed), born in 1930, who was a resident of Srinagar city. His colleagues frequently visited Pakistan before 1947 for trade purposes, and he was a single bread earner in his family. The interview was taken on 26th June 2017, Time: 10:25 AM, in Srinagar.
2. Jammu and Kashmir Archives File No. J-88 of the year 1924.
3. Jammu and Kashmir Archives File No. 169/N-189 C of the year 1910.
4. Muslim religious scholar or leader who is highly qualified in Islamic Knowledge.
5. Jammu and Kashmir archives, File No. J-88 of the year 1924.
6. Kaur, R. (1996). Political Awakening in Kashmir, p. 64.
7. National Archives of India, Home Department, Political, December 1914, File No. 31.
8. Jammu and Kashmir archives, File No. J/88 of the year 1924.
9. Minister for Education to Chief Minister, 16/08/1918, J&K Archives Department, File No. 240/P-136 of the year 1918.
10. Student agitation was launched when Mahatma Gandhi started the non-cooperation movement and the Satyagraha movements under the congress regime in 1921.
11. Minister of Education to chief Minister, 16/08/1918, J&K Archives, File No. 240/P-136 of the year 1918.
12. Jammu and Kashmir archives, file No. J-88 of the year 1924.
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25. Kraemer, H. (2002). World Cultures and World Religions: The Coming Dialogue. James Clarke & Co., p. 267. 'The spirit of their tenets and the militant vigour of their founder have made the Ahmadiyya naturally a group with strong missionary and reforming zeal, both inside the lands of Islam where they are represented and outside. They constitute almost exclusively the 'Muslim Missions' in Western countries and elsewhere...They devote themselves with sincere enthusiasm to the task of proclaiming Islam to the world in a rationalist, often combative way, and try in Muslim lands to purify and reform the dominant type of popular Islam.'
26. 'How Ahmadis Helped Kashmiris and Battle for Kashmir.' The Prosecution. (www.thepersecution.org). Retrieved on 3rd February 2017.
27. Punjabi Muslims led by the Allama Iqbal had formed the organisation in the name of the Kashmir Committee, which had celebrated 14th August 1931 as Kashmir Day in different parts of the country such as Calcutta, Delhi, Deoband, Ferozepur, Gorakhpur, Gurdaspur, Hoshiarpur, Jhelum, Mussori, Lahore, Patiala and Panipat. The Arhars were the militants belonging to the Arhar Militant group who were sending armed volunteers to Kashmir. The Ahmadiyyas of the Qadian were providing financial support.
28. Jammu and Kashmir archives, proceedings of the Jammu and Kashmir state council held on 1st September 1926.

29. Ibid
30. Jammu and Kashmir's archives file No. 99/P-104 of the year 1915.
31. Honorary general secretary, Anjuman-i-Islamia's private secretary to Maharaja, Dated: 27/10/1923, J&K archives department, file No. 28/H-E-15 of the year 1923.
32. General Secretary of Anjuman-i-Islamia to the senior member of the council, dated 11/05/1925, J&K archives Department, proceedings of the meeting of J&K state council that was held on 01/09/1926.
33. Ibid. Correspondences between Anjuman-I-Islamia, Jammu and the Secretary of Military.
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