



**MUSLIMSOCIO-RELIGIOUS REFORM MOVEMENTSAND THEIR ROLE IN THE
POLITICAL MOBILIZATION IN JAMMU AND KASHMIR.**

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Abstract: *By the Treaty of Amritsar* signed on 16 March 1846, Kashmir was sold to Maharaja Gulab Singh by the British Indian government for a sum of seventy five Lakh Nanakshahee rupees. The Dogra's (the dynasty to which Gulab Singh belonged) therefore, claimed Kashmir as their Zarkhareed (purchased property) and did every possible means to exploit Kashmir and its people. The Dogra rule followed discriminatory policies against their Muslim subjects. These discriminations were clearly reflected in the fields of State services**, social spheres, education, justice, etc. By the beginning of 20th Century, various socio-religious organizations helped to develop a collective thinking within the Kashmiri community. Being non-political, these movements were directed towards social and religious reform. But the awakening these movements brought about had an impact not only on the social outlook of the people but had also tremendous political consequences. These movements roused the people to a sense of self-reassertion for a status of equality in the society, economy and political spheres. This paper will help us to understand how the associations formed during Dogra rule helped in generating the consciousness of their rights among the people of Jammu and Kashmir against the repressive policies of their ruler.*

Key Words: *Kashmir, Treaty Of Amritsar, Mirwaiz Gh. Rasool Shah, Anjuman-Nusrat-ul-Islam, Young Men's Muslim Association.*

Introduction: The beginning of the twentieth century brought the Muslim subjects of Jammu and Kashmir into the arena of socio-religious and political activities. The fundamental aim of the early Muslim socio-religious reform movements was to acquaint the Muslim masses with the causes of their stagnant conditions which had kept them in a state of backwardness for decades together under the rule of autocracies and despotism. The credit for creating the atmosphere of socio-religious reform among the Muslim goes to Mirwaiz dynasty. It produced a dynamic personality namely Ghulam Rasool Shah.⁽¹⁾

**notoriously called “the Sale Deed of Kashmir”*

***By A.D 1872 out of 327700 Muslim populace not a single was holding even the post of a clerk; on the other-hand out of 75000 Hindus 55572 were working as clerks.*

The following Socio-Religious organizations played an active role in the political mobilization in the state of Jammu and Kashmir.

1. Anjuman-i-Nusrat-ul-Islam: The *Anjuman-i-Nusrat-ul-Islam* was founded in 1905 at Srinagar by Moulvi Rasool Shah, the Mirwaiz of Kashmir. The main aims and objects of the Anjuman were to facilitate education for the most backward children of the Muslim community and help them in their educational efforts as much as possible, to infuse the true spirit of Islam, among the Muslim masses and to inculcate in them good manners, a sense of mutual cooperation and unity.⁽²⁾

The role which the Anjuman played in the Muslim awakening in Kashmir had begun with its missionary zeal and devotion. The first task before the Anjuman was to persuade the Muslims to take to education. It urged upon the Muslim parents to send their children to the school which the founder of the Anjuman (Maulvi Rasool Shah) had already started for the purpose. The school (established in 1889) was brought under the direct control and management of the Anjuman which upgraded it to a high school within a couple of years. Many branch schools of *Islamia High School* were established in Srinagar and other towns of the Kashmir province. It was because of his keen interest in advancing the cause of Muslim education that Moulvi Rasool Shah came to be known as Sir Syed of Kashmir.

The Anjuman published its official journal called *Halat-i-Rou-Dad*. This journal was published every year and it contained very useful information about the yearly activities of the Anjuman.⁽³⁾

The educational role of the Anjuman, in the beginning, was limited to the imparting of religious education. But soon the need for introducing the courses of study on wider basis and modern secular lines was felt necessary by its members. In their efforts to make educational facilities available to Muslims, the leaders of the Anjuman left no stone unturned to acquainting the Kashmiri Muslims with the benefits of education. The Muslim leaders had realized that “no nation can progress.....and..... no nation can claim to be civilized until it reaches the zenith of its educational career”. The leaders of the Anjuman were also aware of the fact that the Muslims of Kashmir had been suffering from many disabilities, social, cultural, commercial and educational. The state of backwardness of their co-religionists and their lack of education had lowered them in the eyes of the people outside Kashmir. ⁽⁴⁾

Therefore, the most important need of the time was to rouse the Muslim community from their deep slumber of ignorance and their dependent position. They had to be taught the lessons of self-help and self confidence which alone could save them from their degrading conditions of backwardness. The role was aptly performed by the leaders of the Anjuman. Like the Congress leaders of the extremist wing, the leaders of the Anjuman exploited the examples of foreign countries such as Japan, Germany and Switzerland for infusing a spirit of self-reliance among the Muslims of Kashmir. ⁽⁵⁾

The struggle for securing the Muslims of Kashmir their rights and civil liberties formed an important part of the mission of the Anjuman-i-Nusrat-ul-Islam. By the beginning of the twenties of the twentieth century, the Anjuman had successfully widened its wings over a considerable area in the field of Muslims education. It had turned out a good number of educated Muslims who were expected to play their role for the community’s welfare. From the end of World War I up to 1931 the Anjuman engaged itself in taking up with the Government issues related to educational facilities for the Kashmiri Muslims, the Muslim representation in government services, dispute over religious place, the share of Muslims in law-making body of the State, etc. In sorting out these issues with the Government the role of the leaders of the Anjuman was always methodical, constitutional and moderate. The methods which the leaders employed for the realisation of their demands included deputations, passing of resolutions, convening public meetings and preaching in mosques and other religious places. ⁽⁶⁾

2. Anjuman-i-Hamdard-i-Islam: The Anjuman-i-Hamdard Islam, Srinagar was founded by a few Punjabi Muslims just after the First World War had broken out. The dynamic force behind this Anjuman was one *Babu Mohammad Ibrahim*. The aim of this Anjuman was to ameliorate the conditions of the Muslims of Kashmir whose state of existence was extremely pitiable. The Anjuman had its own orphanage for free board and lodge for all those parentless children who were admitted to it. It also made arrangements for providing them free education including vocational training.⁽⁷⁾

The Anjuman played a vital role in Muslim renaissance and re-awakening. It brought about a radical change in the thinking and outlook of Kashmiri Muslims. It infused Muslim subjects with the spirit of co-operation and unity. The Anjuman taught and preached its co-religionists the benefits of living in peace and harmony with the people belonging to other religions. Hence, the Anjuman was not a communal organization. Politically, the Anjuman fought for the rights of the Muslim subjects and for the just treatment of the labourers and the workers in the state. Its political activities came to light on the occasion of the labour-rising which took place in the *Government Silk Factory Srinagar in 1924*. The workers of the Anjuman participated in the procession, protest meetings and demonstrations of the Silk Factory Workers. As a result of these activities, the president of the Anjuman, Babu Ibrahim, was forced by the Government to leave the State territories whereupon he left for Rawalpindi, Pakistan. After 1924 the Anjuman began to grow weak and by the beginning of 1931 it was almost extinct.⁽⁸⁾

3. Anjuman-i-Islamia: The *Anjuman-i-Islamia*, Jammu, was the oldest of all associations in Jammu. It was founded by *Major General Samander Khan, Raja Farman Ali Khan, Mistry Yaqub Ali* and *Syed Assad'ullah Shah*. *Chaudhary Gulam Abass* joined it at a later stage. The Anjuman was a semi-political body. Its mission was to protect the rights of the Muslim subjects, to work for their educational advancement and to pursue the Muslim subjects to give up evil social customs. It organized public meetings at which speeches were made by men of influence and rank. The resolutions passed at its meetings from time to time were sent to the Government for consideration. The leaders of the Anjuman believed in constitutional methods and it always pursued the policy of moderation.⁽⁹⁾

4. Youngmen's Muslim Association: The *Youngmen's Muslim Association* was another such organization founded in Jammu in 1920 by intellectuals, namely *Sheikh Hamidullah*

(advocate), Allah RakhaSagar, ChawdharyGulamAbass, Gouhar Abdul Rehman, editor Mohammad Gouriand Hakim Sahib and others. It was an important organization from political and social reform points of view. The Association was formed basically with the following aims:-

(I) to reform the Muslim community and foster a spirit of co-operation among them;

(II) To help the poor Muslim students in their educational career;

(III) To construct, *Jinazah-Gah and Sabil-Gah***;

(IV) Render social service to people of all shades of opinion, faith, creed, colour, race and religion;

(V) To work for the maintainance of the Awqaf and to construct mosques;

(VI) To make arrangements for the burial of unclaimed or heirless dead bodies of Muslims.

**Jinazah-gahis a place where prayers are offered to dead before the corpse is buried, and*

***Sabil-gahis a shed or place where water is given to the travelers free of cost. It is a pious duty.*

Its political character became evident in 1931, when it took an active and leading part in the struggle for freedom. After that it became more of a political forum than a social reform organization. It also provided the movement with bright and promising leadership. ⁽¹⁰⁾

Conclusion:

Thus, the, study of the forgoing pages have revealed that,how the socio-religious reform associations helped to generate feeling of self consciousness and political awakening among the people of Jammu and Kashmir. The Dogra rule had brought innumerable miseries upon the Muslim masses of the State. Once the masses became awakened, united, concious of their self, their role and responsibilities, the other tasks for the emanicipation from the life of bondage would be easy to be performed. The awakening was bound to lead to political liberation which clearly became evident in 1931 when the Muslims of the State rose against the autocratic rule and shackled its very foundations.

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