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Anjuman Himayat-e-Islam: Bridging Faith and Modernity in Colonial Punjab

Abstract:

This paper examines the role of Anjuman Himayat-e-Islam Lahore in reshaping Islamic education for Muslims in colonial Punjab from the late 19th to the mid-20th century. Founded in 1884, the Anjuman sought to balance British colonial modernity with the preservation of Islamic identity. By endorsing a dual curriculum that integrated Western scientific education with Quranic and theological studies, the Anjuman aimed to empower Muslims both socioeconomically and culturally, enabling them to resist religious and cultural marginalization. The study explores Anjuman's approach to Islamizing modern education, its engagement with contemporary reformist movements, and its role in fostering a robust hybrid Muslim identity in Punjab. Utilizing qualitative and historical research methodologies, the study examines Anjuman's establishment, expansion, educational initiatives, and contributions to Punjab through an analysis of primary documents, including general council meeting minutes, subcommittee annual performance reports, reports of annual sessions, and the monthly journal Mahwari Risalas. These sources cover the period from 1884 to 1947. This study argues that Anjuman Himayat-e-Islam Lahore successfully integrated Islamic and Western education in a manner that preserved Muslim identity while accommodating colonial modernity, thereby producing a competitive Muslim self. The Anjuman's innovative educational reforms went beyond elementary efforts in the field, offering valuable insights into the complex interplay of resistance, modernity, and religion within the intellectual history of Islamic South Asia.

Keywords: Colonial Punjab, Anjuman Himayat-e-Islam, Modern Education, Religious Reform, Educational Institutions.

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Introduction

Muslim Reform movements in British India were a key factor in the recovery of Muslim identity and the search for colonial legitimacy for Muslims. Their rise was a direct result of increasing political awareness and organized campaigns for improving their socio-economic conditions. These Anjumans, led mainly by Sir Syed Ahmad Khan and the Aligarh Movement, were moderate, and multi-faceted in their approach, and adopted pragmatic methods like the setting up of educational and welfare institutions, the hiring of religious preachers, the launch of newspapers and magazines, and the setting up of printing presses. Their aims ranged from building an integrated society and educating Muslim boys and girls equally. One good example is that of the Anjuman Himayat-e-Islam Lahore (AHIL), a case of a practical, moderate, and multi-faceted Muslim organization committed to the betterment of Muslims in British Punjab.

Anjuman Himayat-e-Islam Lahore was founded on 24th September 1884,¹ by illustrious personalities like Haji Mir Shamsuddin, Chiragh Din, Munshi Muhammad Kazim, Shamsul Ulema, and Shamsuddin Shaiq.² It was chaired by Munshi Chiragh Din, Munshi Abdul Rahim Khan Dehlavi, Chief Adviser Maulvi Ghulamullah Kasuri, and President Qazi Khalifa Muhammad Hamid-ud-Din, who were unanimously elected. The administrative setup of the association soon began its operations and goals in a building hired; for Rs 2.5, named Haveli [Urdu: Building] Col. Sikandar Khan at Dabbi Bazaar.

Syed Ahmad Ali Shah Dehlavi, a renowned Maulvi, was given a meager allowance to serve as a Mubaleg (preacher in Urdu) to counter Christian missionaries. By the end of December 1884, the AHIL grew from two hundred and fifteen members on September 24, 1884, to five hundred. In four years since its founding, the Anjuman Himayat-e-Islam was a prestigious organization, having a significant membership of over 800 members.³ Through donations from prominent aristocratic families, honorary magistrates, legal experts, businessmen, and government officials, AHIL was the largest Muslim association in the Punjab province. Besides, the Anjuman represented Muslims beyond the Punjab province. Therefore, Anjuman had a proclivity towards loyalists and moderation in politics. Anjuman Himayat-e-Islam's sole motive was to educate and institute socio-religious reforms in Muslims. Due to their dedicated hard work, prominent Muslim individuals of colonial Punjab joined AHIL as a member and later acted as its president and general secretary. The Anjuman operated under a democratic framework established by its constitution, which included a general council, an executive committee, and periodically elected honorary office-bearers. In 1884, a five-member organizing committee was formed to manage the Anjuman's affairs.⁴ Anjuman Himayat-e-Islam's main objectives were: (1) To spread the teachings of Islam in a manner that answered respectfully written and oral criticisms of Islam by Christian missionaries and Arya Samaj Hindu believers. (2) To establish channels of access to Muslims for modern English education as well as conventional religious instruction to shield them from missionary influence. (3) To bring in cultural and social refinement. (4) To uphold Islamic traditions. Two other goals were included in 1888: to start orphanages for Muslim boys, to initiate educational work, and to teach Muslims the significance of being thankful and obedient to the ruling authority.⁵

This article explains how the educational model of AHIL developed as a response to state-sponsored and missionary educational initiatives and turned into a local response. It foregrounds AHIL's initiative for the education of Muslim boys and girls, ritualizing religious observance, establishing gender norms, and campaigning for gender equality. In addition, AHIL was established to counter anti-Islamic propaganda, impart proper education to the Muslim community, bring relief to orphans, and raise the social and intellectual standing of the Muslim community. The organization employed various methods, such as the establishment of educational institutions, the employment of preachers and ambassadors, the establishment of newspapers, and the establishment of Islamic libraries. This association was instrumental in the awakening of Muslims in British India Punjab.

Aims of the Research

1. To explore how Anjuman Himayat-e-Islam Lahore mediated colonial modernity and Islamic traditions in trying to redefine the landscape of education in Punjab.
2. To analyze the institutional approaches used by the Anjuman in trying to harmonize Western-type education and religious education in the British colonial state.
3. To examine Anjuman as a voluntary association in the context of the pluralist model, walking a tightrope of autonomy and colonial state control.

Research Questions:

1. In what ways and how did Anjuman Himayat-e-Islam Lahore combine colonial models of education like English-medium education schemes with Islamic education to develop a hybrid model of education?
2. Which institutional processes (e.g., budget, curriculum planning, and outreach to the community) enabled the absorption of modern ideals by the Anjuman with religious faith in its schooling schemes?
3. Why did the popular backing for Anjuman's voluntary initiatives (e.g., community-sponsored schools) succeed where colonial state-enforced education policies frequently broke down?

Research Methodology

In the present study, the researcher has applied qualitative research with historical analysis aspects. The study employs extensive archival research to obtain primary source material on Anjuman Himayat-e-Islam, such as its constitution and minutes of General Council meetings, to explore its establishment and growth. The author assesses AHIL's education work, how it helped bring about development to Muslim societies of Punjab, and its work via significant papers of AHIL such as minutes of the General Council, annual performance report of the sub-committees, annual reports on sessions, and the monthly organ "Mahwari Risalas." They are all located at the head office of the organization in

Lahore and contain crucial information of activities of the organization. The selected documents cover the years 1884 to 1947.

Literature Review

Before undertaking this study, one must undertake the available literature on the colonial era and the work of Anjuman Himayat-e-Islam in developing Islamic education in Punjab. Even though there are some studies on education in various ways before partition, most of them are historical rather than on the development of education. This review of literature recognizes significant scholarly studies as well as research gaps, particularly in the field of the concrete activities of the Anjuman towards the propagation of modern, religious, and contemporary education.

Kenneth W. Jones,⁶ in his book *Socio-Religious Reform Movements in British India*, has done a deep study of the nineteenth-century social and religious movements in different communities like Christians, Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, and Zoroastrians. Jones has referred to the British Indian reform movements as transitional movements, which arose from local socio-religious movements before the advent of colonization, and acculturative movements, which came into existence in the colonial context due to cross-cultural interaction. Jones believes that Anjuman-e-Islamia and Anjuman Himayat-e-Islam were two of the most prominent Muslim associations engaged in mass social welfare and literacy programs designed to raise their society through massive social and educational schemes.

Ali Usman Qasmi,⁷ a South Asian Muslim reformist movement historian, analyzes the British Punjab-based Ahl al-Quran movements and their thinkers as well as leaders, including Sir Syed Ahmad Khan. The movements, for him, existed beyond their theological significance as a socio-political response to Muslim misfortunes under colonial power. Through the encouragement of a critical and autonomous reading of the Quran, these movements attempted to subvert dominant religious hierarchies and facilitate modernist interpretations of Islamic ideology.

Gail Minault⁸ in her work on the Aligarh Movement details Sir Syed Ahmad Khan's work of developing vernacular education among the North Indian Muslims' elite in the later half of the nineteenth century. She cites the very close relation between the movement and the Urdu language as well as promoting English education for the Muslim elite. Minault contends that the ultimate objective of the Aligarh Movement was to generate a class of educated Muslims that would spearhead social reform, participate in political debate, and be integrated into modern administrative institutions, all without losing their cultural identity.

In *Islamic Revival in British India: Deoband, 1860-1900*, Barbara Metcalf⁹ investigates Islamic intellectual reaction to colonial British domination and Muslim political reversals. She accentuates Deoband's significance in the education of religious scholars, Islamic expression, and Indian nationalism. She also considers other North Indian religious reform movements and offers thoughtful observations on how Muslim institutions coped with colonial pressure while maintaining piety toward classic religious ideals.

Muhammad Qasim Zaman¹⁰ traces the roots of Anjuman-e-Islamia Lahore, founded in 1869 as the first prominent Muslim society in Punjab during the British colonial era. He charts the formation of similar societies in other towns between 1880 and 1899, as evidence of systematic resistance of marginalized Muslims, their emphasis on education, and demands for equal representation. Zaman contends that the founding of Anjuman-e-Islamia societies was part of a larger Muslim movement toward educational and political empowerment in colonial Punjab.

In her work critiquing Islamic modernism in colonial Punjab, Maria-Magdalena Fuchs¹¹ offers a critical analysis of the Anjuman Himayat-e-Islam's contribution to the evolution of Islamic modernist ideology. She argues that the Anjuman was an important arena where Muslims of varying backgrounds were able to participate in intellectual discussions, share modernist Muslim ideology, and create a new Muslim elite. Fuchs explains how the Anjuman managed the tensions between classical Islamic values and the needs of the colonial period to achieve major educational and social reform. She contends that the negotiation between tradition and modernity helped in the creation of Muslim nationalism and the establishment of subsequent political movements within the region. Her work, though, is concerned mainly with the foundation of Islamia College for Boys, and not with the Anjuman's overall educational activities and with the development of modern, religious, and contemporary education beyond the primary level.

Although these academic studies offer rich insights into socio-religious reform movements, colonial education policy, and Islamic modernism, comparatively little is known about the operationalities of Anjuman Himayat-e-Islam's educational activities. In particular, more research is required to determine how the Anjuman organized its curriculum, expanded educational access for various social classes, and introduced reforms to syncretize religious education with new subjects. Exploring these gaps will yield a fuller understanding of AHIL's role in Islamic education in the overall historical context of colonial Punjab.

Major Contributions of Himayat-e-Islam to the Education Sector

Anjuman Himayat-e-Islam was established to counter-propaganda against Islam, provide proper education to Muslims, take care of orphans, and promote the intellectual and social status of the Muslim community. The association implemented various measures, including the opening of education centers, the hiring of preachers and ambassadors, the launching of newspapers, and the establishment of Islamic libraries. Anjuman Himayat-e-Islam has been a significant contributor to the education field. It also created orphanages and held public meetings. Islam was compulsorily taught to every student and every orphan, and non-Islamic entertainment programs were prohibited in every department. Some educational institutions like Islamia High School for boys at Shyranwala Gate and Islamia College for women Cooper Road were created by Anjuman to provide Muslim boys and girls with modern education. The section narrates the process of institution formation and contributions in detail through which Anjuman Himayat-e-Islam became a strong association in the subcontinent, especially in Punjab.

Modern Education

Anjuman Himayat-e-Islam founded many Modern formal Secular Educational institutions in Punjab. In 1886, the first school named “Madrissa-tul-Muslimeen” was established in a rented building by the AHIL, later a network of primary schools was established throughout the city. In 1900, the number of such schools had risen to 15. In 1914, considering the large number of applications for opening schools from various places in the Punjab, many primary schools were established in Lahore and its suburbs. An Elementary Education Committee was formed to oversee these schools. The committee also opened some primary madrassas in Chunian and Kasur tehsils. The number of these schools grew to 63 over time until 1926.¹² Meanwhile, the government had declared free primary education as a result of which the association instructed madrassas to the Municipal Committee Lahore District Board on some conditions. The initial condition was that 60% of the students must be Muslim, and books of the association should be included in the curriculum. This allowed the society to have sufficient finances and sufficient numbers of Muslim teachers to join the government service. Madrisa-tul- Muslimeen developed into a high school in 1888. Islamia High School Shyranwala Gate, or Madrasat-e-Muslimeen, as it came to be called previously, was initially established at the president's office. Later, it was transferred to Tawila Shah Nawaz, eventually a house at the Shyranwala Gate, was acquired by AHIL, where it has remained ever since.¹³ The fact that many children had to be shifted from this school to others in 1912, 1915, and 1922 due to the overwhelming enrollment was evidence of its popularity.¹⁴ Watan Islamia High School was founded in 1915 to serve the growing number of students in this school, and to fulfill the need for practical training for JAV classes related to Islamia College.¹⁵ It started with primary and middle classes, however, in the second decade of the twentieth century playgroups to five classes, were separated, and six to eight classes were continued. In 1934 it was promoted to a high level and moved to the Heli Hostel building from Islamia College.¹⁶

Owing to its extended residence at the Watan Building, the school was officially enrolled under the new name Watan Islamia High School. In 1922, students were employed for the fourth school, Islamia Middle School Multan Road. Anjuman purchased a building for a boys' orphanage at Nawankot on Multan Road in 1922 and relocated the orphanage. A middle school was opened there for orphans and boys from local villages. In 1923, it was raised to a high school and continued until 1927, when the District Board took over primary education. Islamia College Lahore was founded in 1888 and became recognized in 1892 by Punjab University after efforts made by Sir Muhammad Shafi. Mir Shamsuddin was granted the position of fellow of Punjab University and the Court of Aligarh Muslim University.¹⁷ The college was the first step toward making Pakistan in Punjab. It began in two rooms of Islamia High School and initially provided higher Western education to sons of impoverished Muslim parents. It was restricted to intermediate classes until 1900. When B.A. classes were introduced, it was relocated in 1904 to a privately owned building on Railway Road. In 1905 M.A. Arabic classes were initiated.¹⁸ AHIL provided all potential services to the students. The fees of many students were paid by the Anjuman, and needy pupils were supplied even books and meals without any cost. There was a great difference between the income and expenses of the institution. While the expenses was three thousand and eighty Rs, the student fee only brought in six

hundred and forty Rs. 640/- only. The deficit was, met by the AHIL.¹⁹ The foundation for the college building was laid by the late Sardar Habibullah Khan King of Afghanistan in 1907. It was around ten acres in size. The Majestic Habibia Hall was in the middle, with classrooms, the science building, and the labs on either side.²⁰

This College played a pioneering role in the education of Muslims in Punjab. All modern courses were taught, from FA to BA in arts. MA courses in Arabic, Persian, History, Philosophy, Economics, Political Science, and Mathematics excluding FSC (Medical and Non-Medical) B.Sc. were also taught along with it. Arabic was the sole MA subject taught in 1902. However, since 1916, it has also taught the other as mentioned above. The JAV class ran for 22 years but was closed down in 1927 since Punjab University did not cover the JAV curriculum. The college spent Rs. 460,000 on construction until 1941. Islamia College, the famous one, has been serving with renowned principals and teachers like Henry Martin, Allama Abdullah Yusuf Ali, P.E. Richards, M.A.Ghanni, Syed Abdul Qadir, Hameed Ahmed Khan, and Professor K. M. Aslam. The college's glory lies not in its architecture or the status of its teachers, but in its contribution to the national intellectual and moral heritage, culture, and sporting excellence.²¹

The Islamia College distinguishes itself from other universities in the provinces due to their contributions. Its graduates, such as Shuja, Imtiaz, Fazal Mahmood, Mr. Kardar, and many more, have represented Pakistan internationally, showcasing the nation's athletic ability and sportsmanship. AHIL educational institutions prioritized religious education and training for students. Each class had a designated time for theology education, daily Qur'an translations, and weekly sermons. Theology classes included the Seerah of the Prophet ﷺ and the Seerah of the Righteous Caliphs, and students were taught ethical issues. Anjuman Himayat-i-Islam prioritized religious instruction, moral training, communal prayer recitation, Ramzan fasting, Islamic studies, Tajwid-ul-Quran recitation, and free education for students. This approach increased students' religious knowledge and morals.²²

Religious Education for the Muslims of Punjab

The Anjuman aimed to protect the Muslim Nation's identity by integrating Islamic instruction into Western academics. For the teaching of Tafsir-ul-Quran, Ilm-ul-Hadeeth, and Ilm-e-Fiqh, a Madrasa named Ta'leem-ul-Quran was founded in 1886. It was incorporated into the Shaahi Mosque Madrasa in 1911. In response to concerns about apostasy and subversion, a college was established for religious education under the name Āshā'it-i-Islam College in 1930.²³ This institution admitted young people with an education in English, with the aim of training pastors who would promote Islamic teaching both in India and outside of India. This institution was established to inculcate religious consciousness and propagation of Islam among non-Muslims and Punjabi Muslims. It was established in response to Christians and Arya Smaajes' missionary writings and initially began with two teachers.²⁴ They had further students and teachers subsequently. The majority of teachers were trained at Darul aloom Deoband, Maulvi Fazil, and Islamia High School and College. Students were provided with an equal stipend. The Āshā'it-i-t-i-Islam College sent scholars to other institutions for preaching purposes, such as Borstal Jail and Central Jail Lahore. The college also taught new Muslims at its own expense, and most completed their studies from Muslim High School. Āshā'it-i-t-i-Islam College admits students who have at least matriculation and familiarity with Urdu and Islamiyat.²⁵ There are no fees, but a stipend on merit is given. The course was developed in consultation with Allama Dr. Sir Muhammad Iqbal, the president of Anjuman, to enable students to study and promote Islam without having to spend money. The two-year study program of the college was formulated in a way that would provide complete information to students.²⁶ The course comprised the translation of the Holy Quran, an explanation of the significant points, Tajdeed Al-Bukhari, Ahsan al masaail, history of Islam, *سیرت النبی*, Surf & Nahv (Arabic Grammar), general knowledge, English, Islamic beliefs, and studies of other religions.²⁷

Āshā'it-i-t-i-Islam College offered a balanced education, including textbooks, Islamic lectures, news of the day, and social reform. Students practiced speech and debate twice a week, and its graduates were mastered this art. The college has hosted students from all its colleges since 1934 to give lectures on Islamic topics. Students who spoke to the Anjuman annual conference were given the Shamsuddin Inam Ali Fund. Students were also required to submit a guarantee at admission from Lahore so that they could be provided with a stipend if they were unable to continue their education. This tradition was intended to open the vision of the students and equip them for future achievements.²⁸

Conclusion:

This article argues that Anjuman Himayat-e-Islam blended modern educational methods with traditional Islamic instruction to counter British colonial rule, producing a new class of religiously grounded scholars and professionals. It was a forerunning colonial Punjab institution that sought to find equilibrium between modern and Islamic learning. It tried to restore Muslim autonomy from the British colonial as well as the evangelical missionary nexus. In equilibrium between Western scientific learning and Quranic as well as theological learning, the organization sought to develop a healthy hybrid Muslim self which could travel the course of colonial modernity without diluting religious or cultural

fidelity. This double curriculum served as adaptation and resistance, preparing Muslims for socio-economic competition while protecting community values from colonial endeavors and moral declension. The organization promoted the potential of religious institutions to step in and recreate modernity as coextensive and subservient to religiously grounded matrices. The Anjuman's educational reforms skirted colonial representations of Muslims as "backward" by proving that modernity and religion cannot be mutually opposed. They countered cultural erosion by introducing modern subjects within an Islamic moral framework, countering missionary proselytism and Hindu reformist trends eroding Muslim sociocultural solidarity in Punjab. The institution took a middle path between reformist extremes in promoting a reconciliation of Deobandi religious conservatism with the Aligarh movement's focus on Western-style secular education. Schools were institutions of soft resistance, promulgating Pan-Islamic identity and anticolonial awareness but in no way countering the British Raj directly. The Anjuman's compromise was the backdrop for postcolonial discourses on Muslim identity in Pakistan that emphasized how "progress" did not need to mean Westernization.

Religious instruction and education were also given in workable provisions such as daily interpretation of the Quran and weekly sermons. Physical exercise was also highly sought with a drilling scheme in which the students could join in a set of games and sports. Libraries and separate reading rooms were brought forward to ensure wider public access. The Anjuman contributed substantially to the evolution of Muslim society, social reform, and educational advancement in Colonial Punjab during the latter half of the 19th century. It sparked nationalism and Pan-Islamism among Muslims by rescuing them from sectarianism by the success of education schemes. Anjuman Himayat-e-Islam promoted religious education and prevented anti-Islam sermons. The Anjuman educated men and women both, providing a mix of Islamic and modern education in colonial Punjab. The work of the Anjuman was to disseminate religious education and prevent anti-Islam sermons. This research gives the successful work of Anjuman Himayat-e-Islam in liberating Muslims and helping to play a great role in unifying and supporting the colonial subjects of the subcontinent.

Notes & References

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² According to Kenneth W Jones the Anjuman Himayat-e-Islam was founded in 1866 by Muhammad Shafi and Shah Din, but it is incorrect. The New Cambridge History of India, 95

³ The Constitution of Anjuman Himayat-e-Islam Lahore
4ibid

⁵ Khawaja Muhammad Hayat, Mukhtsar Twarykh Anjuman Himayat-i-Islam, (Lahore:Anjuman Himayat-i-Islam, 1941),22

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¹¹ Maria-Magdalena Fuchs, “Islamic Modernism in colonial Punjab: The Anjuman Himayat-e-Islam, 1884- 1923,” PhD diss., (Princeton: Princeton University, 2019).

¹² *ibid*

¹³ Hayat, Mukhtsar Twarykh Anjuman Himayat-i-Islam

¹⁴ Annual performance report of Islamia High School Shyranwala Gate,(1922),14.

¹⁵ *ibid*

¹⁶ Hayat, Mukhtsar Twarykh Anjuman Himayat-i-Islam

¹⁷ Punjab University Calendar, (1896-97).

¹⁸ *ibid*

¹⁹ Hayat, Mukhtsar Twarykh Anjuman Himayat-i-Islam

²⁰ *ibid*

²¹ *ibid*

²² Annual progress Report of Anjuman Himayat-i-Islam for 1928 29, 14

²³ Annual progress Report of Anjuman Himayat-i-Islam for 1929 30, 14.

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²⁵ Annual performance report, Sub Committee Āshāit-i-t-i-Islam , (1931),1

²⁶ *ibid*

²⁷ *ibid*

²⁸ Hayat,Mukhtsar Twarykh Anjuman Himayat-i-Islam,