

Educational Services of Colonel Khan Muhammad Khan in Poonch region of Jammu and Kashmir: A Historical Appraisal

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Abstract

The history of Poonch is full of many famous and illustrious people who have served the region. Prominent among them is Khan Muhammad Khan (known as Khan Sahib) without information about his educational services the history of Poonch would certainly remain incomplete. Khan Sahib performed his duties in the fields of politics, society and education with dignity. During the Dogra era, people were living in poverty and no one was willing to step forward to help in the development and rehabilitation of the society. Khan Sahib boldly accepted the challenge of revitalizing the society of Poonch. This article explores the facts of how Khan Sahib used education as a weapon for the uplift and improvement of the society of Poonch. He took necessary steps to promote education among the residents of Poonch and prevent them from following harmful customs and practices. To accomplish his goals, Khan Sahib founded educational institutions in different areas. Primary and secondary sources were used in this article.

Keywords: Khan Sahib, Educational Services, Political and Social Reforms, Society

Introduction

Strategically, Poonch is an important region of the state of Jammu and Kashmir in South Asia. In the past, most regional decisions in Poonch have been social, political and religious, which have been made violently and harshly. Due to which the people here react in a violent way or with a harsh temper. This is one of the reasons that Poonch and its people have an unfair reputation for being tough by nature. The characteristics that made the Sudhan tribe of

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Poonch violent were completely ignored by those who made it notorious. Khan used an educational philosophy as a weapon to normalize the aggressive behavior of Poonchis. It was a very difficult task to introduce non-violent nature in Poonchis. Despite many obstacles, Khan remained steadfast in his struggle due to his determination. He came to the conclusion that there is a great need for education for the betterment of the society in this area. He started an educational program to normalize the aggressive behavior of the residents of Poonch region. (Hussain, 2022)

Khan Sahib was well aware that Poonchi valued education but lacked the basic skills necessary to access it. Keeping these needs in mind, Khan Sahib started the movement for the promotion of education in Poonch. In fact, effective leadership is an important ingredient for the success of any movement. It is the art of motivating a group of individuals to take action towards a common goal, whereas social leadership is giving their time, talents and life to society without expecting anything in return from anyone. (Hussain, 2022) The term "movement leaders" refers to strategic decision-makers who encourage people to join a movement for a common goal. In comparison to members of the rank and file, the leaders are more powerful. It was believed that leaders would incite the people through a mechanism of emotional attachment when referring to collective behaviours such as social and political activities. (David,et. al,2004)

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, numerous leaders helped shape the sociopolitical landscape of their respective areas. To work for the improvement of these areas, they made several organizations. In actuality, it was an expression of contempt for imperialist forces operating throughout the world that seemed to be concerned with the wellbeing of the local populace while also attempting to control the social ills already present in society by eradicating them. (Hussain, 2022) The Indian subcontinent was home to a large number of regional leaders who promoted social advancement in the society through education. Khan Sahib is one of those who showed interest in improving the social climate in the Poonch region of the State of Jammu and Kashmir through his political, social, and educational contributions. The Poonch region was the most western part of the state of Jammu and Kashmir. After the First Anglo-Sikh War, the state of Jammu and Kashmir was created under the leadership of Dogra Ghulab Singh on March 16, 1846, under the Treaty of Amritsar. Jammu and Kashmir was one of the 562 princely states of the Indian subcontinent that the British colonizers indirectly controlled through Dogra Ghulab Singh and his successor during the time of their colonial authority. (Lamb, 1991) Under the auspices of the State of Jammu and Kashmir, Poonch existed as a separate, sporadically independent state until 1936. It was the 1627 square mile, 90% Muslim region of Jammu and Kashmir, which included the hilly and mountainous territory. (Snedden, 2015)

In 1936, Jagatdev Singh, Raja of Poonch, requested to the Viceroy of India through a memorial that the ties between the Poonch state and the state of Jammu and Kashmir be reviewed. The Viceroy of India reacted by stating that all submissions needed to go through the British Resident of Jammu and Kashmir administration because Poonch is a part of the state of Jammu and Kashmir. The Resident said that according to the ruling of 1928 the status of Poonch declared as a "subordinate Jagirdar of Kashmir." Without any additional explanation the allegations of Jagatdev Singh, Raja of Poonch were rejected. (Snedden, 2012) After that the Raj of Poonch was brought under the strict control of Heri Singh, Maharaja of the state of

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Jammu and Kashmir with the help of the British after 1936, when the rank of Poonch was reduced to that of a subordinate Jagir and thirteen gun salute to Raja of Poonch was reduced to nine. After administratively including the district into Jammu province, he executed his own heavy taxes on the people of Poonch in addition to the current taxation scheme of Raja of Poonch. (Hussain, 2022) When Jagatdev Singh passed away in 1940, his son Shiv Ratandev Singh, who was still a minor, took over as the new Raja. To look after the Raja's "property," Maharaja Hari Singh selected a guardian who was also his military secretary. The mother of the Raja was barred from serving in the minority government. A group of Poonch citizens adopted a resolution in July 1940 condemning the Maharaja's declaration and his portrayal of Poonch as a jagir with "profound sorrow, deep indignation, and resentment." (Snedden, 2012) The Maharaja's government in Poonch was quite unpopular by 1945, particularly with the families of military personnel.

Colonel Khan Muhammad Khan:

Khan Muhammad Khan was born in 1882 to a prominent Sudhan family in the village of Chahchan, Tehsil Sudhanoti, Poonch Jagir. He first learned the Quran at home before beginning his primary education at age of 10 in Kahuta (district of Rawalpindi). He joined the British Indian Army in 1902 after completing his primary education. (Rakesh, 2010) The Indian Distinguished Service Medal (IDSM) was awarded to Khan Muhammad Kahn for his participation in World War-I. Raja of Poonch Baldev Singh hired Khan Sahib as the police inspector of Poonch after his retirement from the army. After serving in this position until 1924, Khan got involved in social, political, and educational welfare endeavours. (Yousf, 1977) He committed his life and all of his resources to bettering the lot of Kashmir's Muslims in general and the Muslims of "Poonch" in particular. The predicament of Muslims living under the repressive dual rule of "Raja Poonch" and "Maharaja of Kashmir" was his main political focus. He fought several societal ills that were then pervasive among his people. He encouraged his people to abandon unnecessary and frivolous social customs including dowry, extravagant expenditure on birth, funeral, and marriage rites, naswar, and smoking, and he emphasised the value of education for all. (Azar & Khan, 1986)

Objective of the Study:

The main purpose of the study is to express the educational Services of Khan Sahib for the development of the society of Poonch region of the state of Jammu and Kashmir.

Literature Review

Although it is essential to review all published and unpublished research on the issue and the subject area in question, the literature that is currently available in the form of books, research articles, and other pertinent texts assisted in the writing of this research work. The current study is focused on an evaluation of Colonel Khan Muhammad Khan's educational services provided in the Poonch region of the State of Jammu and Kashmir during the Dogra Raj. In light of the literature that is currently available on the subject, it is necessary to emphasise the case for rewriting history in order to highlight Khan Sahib's contribution to education in the Poonch region of the State of Jammu and Kashmir during the Dogra Raj.

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Survey of Educational Services of Khan Sahib:

The Poonch's educational system was a complete mess. There was just one high school in Poonch, and the literacy rate there was only two percent. As a result, the region's youth had little alternative but to relocate to Punjab, which was just across the border, where they would be forced to work as unskilled labour. Due to their lack of formal education or technical training, they encountered challenges in locating acceptable employment there. Furthermore, they received poor service from the state government. Khan Sahib started working to make things better for the people living in this appalling circumstance. (Hussain, 2022) When Khan Sahib was a young student, he experienced difficulties. Although his family didn't have any financial issues, his neighbourhood lacked any kind of educational facility. His father set him up with a home tutor, Molvi Ali Bahader, who provided him with his early schooling at home. He taught him the essentials of Arabic, Persia, Urdu, and Islamic education. After that, at the age of ten, he was accepted to a primary school in Kahuta, Rawalpindi. He became aware of his region's educational and economic illiteracy as a result of the struggles he endured during that time. It was time to work for the people once I left the service in 1924. He developed educational institutions in response to his people's needs since he was aware of their educational issues. (Azar & Khan, 1986)

Establishment of Sudhan Educational Conference:

Sadhan Educational Conference is one of the oldest philanthropic organizations of the Indian sub-continent. Colonel Khan Muhammad Khan (Father of Poonch Nation) was a visionary man and he established this organization (Sadhan Educational Conference) to raise voice for the people of Poonch in particular and Kashmiris in general to get education. Khan Sahib believed that after the Second World War, the most important need of the youth is education, which they can use as a weapon. His most famous scheme for fundraising was "MUTHI AATA". (A handful of Flour) The concept of this organization first appeared around 1934. This organization, known as Sudhan Education Conference, was established in 1935 as a result of strong dedication of Khan Sahib. (SEC information web) The Sudhan Education Conference is concerned with the formal and moral education of Kashmiris as well as mitigating conflict before it arises in society. It is concentrating on the social ills that are the root of underdevelopment and poverty. Even still, there is still a tone of work to be done, and it will be difficult. This organization believes that we have lost some of our ability to move quickly enough to compete globally as a result of time and development in other parts of the nation and the globe. In order for our kids to gaze into the eyes of the future and recover the lost dignity and honour of Muslims, an effort is now being made to prod the horse and align with the rest of the world. (Azar & Khan, 1986)

Objectives of Sudhan Educational Conference

1. The promotion of education without regard to caste, creed, or colour at the district and village levels.
2. Without discrimination, assist talented and capable students pursuing professional education at the college and university levels.
3. Technical education for young people without jobs and low skill levels.
4. The tribe's advice and support for social and cultural issues.

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5. Assist tribal members with their unique issues. (SEC information web)

Religious Education:

Khan Sahib had a strong interest in damaging, non-Islamic practises that were bad for society. His main objective was to alter these practises by nonviolent means and the advancement of education. He employed the development of religious instruction as a means of eradicating such hardships. He fully committed himself to social changes and public welfare, which he began with socio-religious activities. (Hussain, 2022) He established following religious centres in Poonch region.

a. Establishment of Madarassain ChhyChhan:

In Chhy Chhan, the place of Khan Sahib's birth, a Madrassa was established. To hasten the Madrassa's construction, he inspired the populace to join him in this admirable goal. After the completion of the Madrassa, Shah named Maulana Ghulam Haider of Phalyan as the administrator. (Azar & Khan, 1986) The growth of religious instruction in the region was made possible by the selfless efforts of Maulana Ghulam Haider, who was devoted to his work. To provide the populace a foundational understanding of Islam, Khan Sahib and Maulana Ghulam Haider travelled to practically every significant village. (Hussain, 2022)

b. Dars Gah of Poonch:

He founded a religious organisation (Dars-gah) while residing in Poonch, in the Aalpir. Many local religious scholars were employed there because to his efforts. One of those who, at Khan Sahib's request, returned from Wazir Abad to Poonch and worked in the facility was Maulana Abdul Aziz Tatvi. (Azar & Khan, 1986) He served as the first "Mufti-e-Azam of Azad Jammu and Kashmir government" upon the establishment of that government in 1947. The advancement of Poonch's religious instruction was greatly aided by this school. (Hussain, 2022)

c. Construction of Jamia Masjid Palandri:

Being a devout Muslim, Khan Sahib recognised the significance of the Masjid to the Muslim Community. A mosque previously existed in Palandri, but it did not satisfy the needs of the local populace. (Azar & Khan, 1986) Khan Sahib offered to help with the Masjid's building and persuaded others to do the same. He used a novel approach when building the Masjid. He asked the populace to participate in the building of the Masjid by lending their talents rather than soliciting money. He asked everyone to come to Palandri in groups and support the good cause. His prudent policy resulted in the Masjid being finished fast. (Khan, 2012)

d. Foundation of Jamia Taleem-ul-Quran:

A significant Islamic educational facility is Jamia Taleem-ul-Quran Palandri, which is located in the state of Azad Jammu and Kashmir. With the help of Sardar Feroz Ali Khan Bagla, Khan Sahib founded the Jamia. Religious Scholars such as Moulana Ameer Alam Khan and Moulana Muhammad Yousif Khan served as the head of the Institution. The Jamia's current head is Maulana Saeed Yousif. This Jamia played an Important role in the advancement of Islamic Education, particularly in Poonch and Azad Kashmir in general. (Azar & Khan, 1986)

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Modern Education:

Throughout his time in the British Indian Army, Khan Sahib travelled to a variety of developed nations. There, he saw how modern education had helped these nations progress socially, economically, and politically. He was inspired by the circumstance, and he made the decision to work to advance contemporary education in Poonch. (Hussain, 2022)

a. Primary School Palandri:

He had three injuries while serving in the British Army. He was urged by his officers to demand something for him as a token of appreciation for his bravery. Taking advantage of the chance, he asked the officer to start a primary school in his village. The Raja of Poonch was approached by the officials right away, and his request was instantly granted. (Masood Khan, 2022) In Palandri, the first primary school was founded.

b. Primary School Chhy Chhan:

In the primary school of his hometown of Chhy Chhan, he began his work on contemporary education. In order to serve as an example for others, he personally took part in building the school. First instructor at the school was Sardar Jalal Khan, who received a meagre 10 rupees in compensation from the society. (Azar & Khan, 1986)

c. Primary School PotolaTain:

In the course of this campaign, a number of independent schools were formed around the Poonch region, where teachers volunteered their time. Sardar Shah Wali Khan founded a private school at Patola (Tain), a rural area on the north-western portion of Poonch Jagir, in 1935. (Azar & Khan, 1986) He allegedly taught there as a volunteer until the State Government took custody of the school in 1945.

d. Various Educational Institutions:

Khan Sahib was deeply interested about the educational growth of his people. When he went to the military college at Jhelum, he was impressed with the college's structured educational programme. In addition to his own nephew Muhammad Ashraf Khan, he sent several other pupils to Poonch for their enrolment. (Hussain, 2022) When he was in England, he wrote Subedar Major Muhammad Ayyube of Nandi Chhanni, Poonch and inquired about the academic programme at Oxford University. On the advice of Sheikh Abdullah, Khan Sahib visited Aligrah University in 1928 and met Dr. Zia-ud-Din and Dr.K. L. Haider there. Additionally, he went to a school for blind children there, and he was quite moved by the efforts the school was making to help these unique people. (Azar & Khan, 1986)

Women Education:

In the fourth annual session of the Sudhen Educational Conference, Khan Sahib, who was very aware of the importance of women's education, stated that women's education was more important than men's because, just as a woman's education affected her family's future generations, so did a man's education have an impact on his personality. (Hussain, 2022) He explained to the crowd the role played by women in the social, economic, and political advancement of their countries in the modern world, where they participate in almost every

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field. The right to vote was extended to women in India, and some of them even held government ministerial positions. When the women of Poonch are granted the right to vote, we should therefore get ready for it by preparing our women. (Azar & Khan, 1986)

a. Girls School Palandri:

His own daughter was hired as a teacher at the girl's elementary school he established on November 17, 1939, in his hometown of Chhy Chhan. He promoted the school where he went while also allowing nineteen local girls to enrol there. (Hussain, 2022) He scheduled a meeting with local ladies on April 18, 1939, according to his diary, and gave them advice on the value of women's education. On May 8, 1939, a second meeting with the women was scheduled at Dhar Dharch (Palandri). There, he emphasised women's education once more and obtained a commitment from the local women to take part in the "MuthiBhar Atta fund Scheme". (Azar & Khan, 1986)

b. Girls School ChhyChhan:

In order to advance the education of women, Khan Sahib received the approval of a girl's school in Palandri. He advised everyone to enrol their daughters in the school. It quickly establishes itself as a crucial hub for the education of the local ladies. Numerous girls who went on to receive further education stayed as students at the institution. (Azar & Khan, 1986)

Adults Education:

The elderly and young people were advised by Khan Sahib to educate themselves. He explained to them that the idea that mature individuals cannot pursue an education is untrue. Events, their results, and experiences from daily life are all that education consists of. He informed them that seniors had more life experience and maturity than the youth. (Hussain, 2022) He gave them motivation by telling them they had more information than they lacked just in writing, making it simpler for them to solve the issue and improve society. (Baloch, 2012) While speaking to the audience in April 1939, he made a point of emphasising adult education and named Sardar Mehdi Khan to work for the cause. (Azar & Khan, 1986)

Awards of Khan Sahib:

On June 11, 1942, the Viceroy and Governor-General of India presented him with the title of Khan Sahib in appreciation of his dedication and selfless devotion to the people of Poonch the state of Jammu and Kashmir. He was given the honorary titles of Baba-e-Poonch and Gazi-e-Kashmir by the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Government. The Degree College Pallandri and Poly Technic Institute Rawalakot are named in commemoration of Khan Sahib, and his native village of Chechan in Sudhanoti has been renamed Khan Abad. Khan House is another residence honoring him in the Cadet College Palandri. (Azar & Khan, 1986)

Conclusion:

Khan Sahib was a native of Palandri Tehsil in Poonch who was born in a reputable Sudhen family in 1882. He served in the British Indian Army from 1902 until 1918 as a professional soldier. He then worked in the Raja of Poonch's administration for a while. After leaving the

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Army, he dedicated all of his attention to the welfare and advancement of the people in the Poonch region, specifically in the tehsils of Sudhnoti and Bagh. He closely examined the needs of the populace and used his socio religious movement to spread awareness. He was a devout Muslim who believed that the genuine teachings of Islam must be put into practise in order to improve society. He founded educational institutes with a focus on both modern and religious instruction for this reason. During the Dogra Raj, he established the Sudhn Educational Conference to advance education in the Poonch district. By raising people's consciousness, Khan Sahib revolutionised the area with his socio-educational movements. Although it was difficult for people to obtain work, there was also highly educated leadership available. Following the awareness campaign, the public concentrated on pressing the government for their rights in industry, the civil service, and the military. As of right now, everyone was aware of their rights and prepared to participate actively in politics.

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