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KHILAFAT MOVEMENT: AS A CATALYST FOR GREATER UNITY AMONG MUSLIMS

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ABSTRACT

The Khilafat Movement, a significant socio-political movement in the early 20th century, had a profound impact on the identity and community dynamics of Muslims. This paper explores the multifaceted consequences of the movement on the Muslim community, analyzing how it shaped their collective identity and influenced their perception of political agency. The Khilafat Movement not only sought to preserve the Ottoman Caliphate but also served as a catalyst for greater unity among Muslims, transcending geographical boundaries. This paper delves into the transformative effects on Muslim identity, examining how the movement fostered a sense of solidarity and political awareness. Additionally, it investigates the long-term implications on the Muslim community's engagement with political processes and the shaping of their identity in the aftermath of the Khilafat Movement.

Keywords: *Khilafat Movement, Muslim Community, Political Identity*

INTRODUCTION

The concept of Caliphate is an aspect of Islamic political thought and is widely discussed in the Islamic community. Most Islamic scholars refer to divine sources (Qur'an), hadith and many other relevant sources to prove the fundamental necessity of Caliphate in the Ummah (Adam, 2001).

The Khilafat movement was a significant political and religious movement in the Indian subcontinent during the early 20th century. It emerged in response to the disintegration of the Ottoman Caliphate after World War I, particularly the loss of the caliphate's temporal powers. The movement sought to protect the Ottoman Caliphate and uphold the religious and political rights of Muslims (Graham, 1970).

From a historical perspective, it's crucial to note that the Khilafat movement was closely linked with the Non-Cooperation Movement led by Mahatma Gandhi. Muslims, along with Hindus, participated in large numbers, showcasing a united front against British colonial rule.

The Khilafat movement was a political demonstration that was pan-Islamic and was headed by Muslims in the Indo-Pakistani subcontinent opposing the British authorities and defending the Ottoman Empire.

The Khilafat Movement began in 1919, right after World War I. It was a fight to preserve the Ottoman caliphate, a symbol of Muslim unity. Gandhi first supported it with his *Ahimsa* (non-violence) and *Satyagra* (non-cooperation) movements, but he withdrew his backing following the Chora Chori incident, February 1922, in which 22 police officers were burned alive. Gandhi disassociated himself from the Khilafat Movement on the grounds that it encouraged violence.

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This paper explores the multifaceted consequences of the movement on the Muslim community, analyzing how it shaped their collective identity and influenced their perception of political agency.

This was India's first significant political movement that the average person was involved (Metcalf, 2006). Muslims made countless sacrifices to support and revive the Khilafat Movement, which for various reasons was unsuccessful. Nevertheless, this Movement cleared the path for the Pakistan Movement, which resulted in the creation of Pakistan. Because the Khilafat Movement was the first to involve common people—that is, common Muslims—and common people in the streets, politics at that time became a matter of the common people (Chaudhari, 2005). As a result of the Khilafat Movement's support from both Muslims and Hindus, close ties between its leaders and common people emerged as the movement spread throughout India. These intimate ties served as the solid foundation for the Pakistan Movement, which brought Pakistan's dream to fruition.

The Khilafat Movement gave Indian Muslims a toolkit of future politics in dealing with the British Empire and the ways to pressurize her to get maximum rights for the Muslims, even though it did not succeed in its stated goal of protecting the institution of Khilafat and the Ottoman Empire from dismemberment. In order to preserve their unity, the Movement also sparked a historical discussion that allowed them to stay abreast of the prevailing patterns of the past. Finally, but just as importantly, Muslims in India had established a distinct identity for themselves through the Khilafat Movement. Their affinity for the Caliph in Istanbul served as their spiritual guide, and they had devised unique means of balancing their lives with the British rulers. They gained knowledge about striking a balance between universalism and territorial nationalism in this way (Alvi, 2015,). They used this as justification to demand their own country, which they were granted in August 1947 and where they felt safe expressing who they were.

The Khilafat Movement brought together Muslims in India to support Turkey's Khilafat. Educated Muslims promoted the idea of Pan-Islamism and urged unity against British rule. Initially, Hindus and Muslims joined forces to demand that Britain stop its plans against Turkey. Protests showed Indian solidarity with the Ottomans. The movement aimed to protect the spiritual leader, viewing it as a concern for the entire Muslim community. This fostered a global Muslim identity. Later, Indian Muslims applied similar unity to create their own separate nation in 1947.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES:

To examine the role of the Khilafat Movement in shaping Muslim identity.

To assess the impact of the Khilafat Movement on the Muslim community's socio-political dynamics.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

How did the Khilafat Movement contribute to the development and reinforcement of Muslim identity?

In what ways did the Khilafat Movement influence the political and social landscape of the Muslim community?

SIGNIFICANCE OF RESEARCH:

The Khilafat Movement was a significant socio-political movement in South Asia during the early 20th century. It emerged as a response to the disintegration of the Ottoman Caliphate and aimed to protect the caliphate, perceived as a symbol of Muslim unity and identity. The movement had a profound impact on the Muslim community, influencing their sense of identity and political consciousness.

Researching the impact of the Khilafat Movement on Muslim identity and community can provide insights into how historical events shape collective identity. It's not just about understanding the past, but also about unraveling the intricate connections between political movements and the development of a community's self-perception.

The significance of this research lies in its potential to shed light on the interplay between religion, politics, and identity formation. It can help us comprehend the motivations behind mass movements, the role of religious symbols in shaping political discourse, and the enduring effects on a community's collective memory.

Exploring this topic may also offer valuable lessons for contemporary times, as it allows us to analyze how historical events continue to reverberate in the present. Understanding the Khilafat Movement's impact can contribute to a more nuanced

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understanding of the complexities surrounding the intersection of religion and politics in Muslim societies

LITERATURE REVIEW:

One aspect of the impact of the Khilafat movement on Muslim identity is its role in fostering a sense of pan-Islamic unity. The movement galvanized Muslims across India, transcending regional and cultural differences. The shared concern for the Caliphate became a unifying force, shaping a collective Muslim identity that went beyond local affiliations. This sentiment of unity had implications not only during the movement but also in subsequent years, influencing the way Muslims perceived themselves within the broader context of Indian society (Ahmad 2010).

The Khilafat Movement was a failed attempt by Indian Muslims to thwart the imperialist projects of the British and their allies. Though the movement managed to raise Indian consciousness to resist the brutality of the British Indian authorities, its results were devastating in terms of Hindu-Muslim unity (Quresh,i 1965).

The Khilafat Movement gained him immense popularity among the Muslim religious leaders of Deoband. Jinnah initially attended the meetings of the Khilafat Committee, but after he could not accept the idea of non-cooperation and resigned from the Congress in 1920 of 36th Session, the Muslim League was no longer in active politics. After the failure of the Khilafat Movement, Jinnah submitted proposals for Indian Muslims in Delhi and demands for the Nehru Report, but these were not considered by the Congress (Jalal, 2014).

The Khilafat Movement was an attempt to raise awareness among Indian Muslims about the higher goal of Pan-Islamism. Unfortunately, it failed, but it paved the way for the fight against the British (Shamshad & Rehman 2021).

Furthermore, the Khilafat movement had a lasting impact on the political consciousness of Muslims in British India. The movement acted as a catalyst for political mobilization among Muslims, laying the groundwork for future political activism. The experience of participating in a movement with a religious underpinning influenced the political behavior of Muslims, contributing to the emergence of Muslim political leadership in the pre-independence era (Hasan 2005).

In addition to political ramifications, the Khilafat movement had a profound effect on religious identity. The movement revitalized Islamic symbols and rituals, fostering a renewed commitment to religious practices among the Muslim community. The reassertion of Islamic identity during the Khilafat movement contributed to a broader religious revival, influencing the way Muslims expressed and practiced their faith (Hussain, 2018).

METHODOLOGY:

This study adopts a qualitative research design to investigate Impact of Khilafat movement on Muslim identity and community. Qualitative research is particularly appropriate in this context, as it allows for an in-depth exploration of the complex dynamics and nuances of the subject. The research design has employed multiple qualitative methods to collect and analyze data, aiming to provide a comprehensive understanding of the topic. Research is a means of making substantial use of suggested study methods by employing particular steps or methods to pinpoint offered questions, select a strategy, and research facts regarding a topic., In a similar vein, historical research examines historical events, evaluating the outcomes and consequences for the currently. The secondary data in the historical research is sporadically covered by literary works. While the proposed study's source is secondary data techniques. Additionally, it's a practical and approachable way to apply techniques. In a comparable setting, the analysis evaluates strategy by looking at different approaches. Regular research indicates a long-lasting method of evaluation and reckoning trustworthy data references. Its process depends on the evaluation of data and its criticism in an enduring manner

DOCUMENT ANALYSIS:

Analysis of the documents has been used to gather a large amount of the data. In order to give a historical context and evaluate the impact of the Khilafat movement on Muslim identity and community, pertinent texts including research articles, historical debates, and historical documents are examined.

Secondary data collection forms the basis of the study. This paper employs both descriptive and

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analytical methodology. Secondary sources were consulted for information for this paper, and relevant articles, books, and newspapers were found. The impact of the Khilafat movement on Muslim identity and community as well as movements in British India were also studied

IMPACT OF KHILAFAT MOVEMENT ON MUSLIM IDENTITY AND COMMUNITY:

The Khilafat Movement, emerging in the aftermath of World War I, was a significant chapter in the history of British India, with far-reaching political, religious, and social implications. This movement, driven by the concern for the disintegration of the Ottoman Caliphate, evolved into a Pan-Islamic political demonstration with deep-rooted connections to Indian nationalism. As we reflect on the extensive background information, literature review, and examination of the movement's impact, several key conclusions emerge.

KHILAFAT MOVEMENT AS UNIFYING FORCE

One of the defining features of the Khilafat Movement was its ability to unite Muslims across India, transcending regional and cultural differences. The movement brought together diverse groups, including religious leaders, educated Muslims, and even collaboration with Hindu leaders, most notably Mahatma Gandhi. This unity, albeit temporary, showcased the potential for joint resistance against British colonial rule and served as a precursor to the broader Indian independence movement.

The Khilafat Movement played a crucial role in shaping a collective Muslim identity. The movement transformed religious sentiment into a political force, fostering a sense of solidarity among Muslims across India. The slogan "Islam is in danger" resonated deeply, compelling diverse sects to unite against a common threat (Jaffrelot, 2002)

The Khilafat Movement aimed to preserve and strengthen the Khilafat as a rallying point against the challenges faced by Muslims in India. Since the early days of Islam, the Khilafat institution evolved, emphasizing unity among Muslims. The British-led dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire in 1924 marked its abolition. The Khilafat Movement in India was seen as a shade of Pan-Islamism, fostering a sense of Muslim identity against British imperialism. The institution of Khilafat symbolized political, extra-territorial, and spiritual unity among Muslims, aligning with the teachings of Prophet Muhammad. Indian Muslim rulers sought investiture from the Ottoman Caliph to legitimize their rule. The Khilafat Movement played a crucial role in imparting historical and political lessons, strengthening Muslim identity, and paving the way for the future struggle against British imperialism (Gopal, 1968).

POLITICAL MOBLIZATION AND IDENTITY FORMATION

The Khilafat Movement played a pivotal role in political mobilization among Indian Muslims. It acted as a catalyst for Muslims to express solidarity and engage politically, laying the groundwork for future activism. The movement not only addressed immediate concerns about the fate of the Ottoman Caliphate but also contributed to the formation and consolidation of Muslim identity in British India. This identity was rooted in religious symbols and rituals, fostering a renewed commitment to Islamic practices.

The Khilafat Movement fostered a sense of communal identity that transcended regional and sectarian differences. According to historian A. A. Z. Ahmed (2011), the movement encouraged the establishment of various organizations that served to strengthen Muslim ties and foster a sense of belonging (Ahmed, 2011). The resulting networks became instrumental in organizing further political and social activities.

The Khilafat Movement not only reinforced religious identity but also contributed to the rise of Muslim nationalism. This duality, however, led to tensions within the broader Indian nationalist movement, especially concerning the Indian National Congress's secular agenda (Rizvi, 2013).

The Khilafat Movement began in Gujarat with Maulana Mohammad Ali and Shaukat Ali, who raised awareness about threats to Khilafat through religious appeals. Gandhi joined, linking Khilafat with India's freedom struggle, using non-cooperation. The movement expanded with the Khilafat Committee's organization and nonviolent tactics, attracting widespread support. It united Hindus and Muslims temporarily, bringing Muslims into Congress and showcasing Hindu-Muslim unity. However, it led to the Moplah rebellion in Kerala

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(1921) and increased communal tensions. The movement's failure strained Hindu-Muslim relations, weakened Indian nationalism, and radicalized some Muslim youth. It also altered political dynamics, reducing the influence of secular Muslim leaders and ending Gandhi's connection with the Muslim League. Ultimately, the movement left a complex legacy, highlighting both unity and division in India's struggle for independence. (Britannica. 2023).

LEGACY AND IMPACT ON MUSLIM IDENTITY

Despite the Khilafat Movement's ultimate failure in achieving its stated goals, its legacy endured. The movement left an indelible mark on the collective memory of Indian Muslims, shaping their perception of political agency, religious identity, and the role of Islam in public life. It provided a toolkit for future political engagement, influencing the dynamics of Muslim politics in the pre-independence era.

Women participated actively in protests and gatherings, challenging traditional gender roles and contributing to a redefined Muslim community identity. This involvement highlighted the intersection of gender and religion, with women asserting their place within the broader struggle for Muslim rights (Pandey, 2005).

In simpler terms, Muslim leaders felt the need for a political organization due to certain circumstances. The then British Secretary of State and the Viceroy (Lord Chelmsford and Montague had vague plans, and Muslim leaders wanted to exert influence on shaping these plans. Reforms were expected to increase the importance of elections, so an organization was needed to manage them. Additionally, Hindu revivalism made Muslims seek organization to protect their rights. In 1900, when Urdu lost its privileged position in Uttar Pradesh, Mohsin-ul-Mulk established the Urdu Defense Association, which wasn't just about language and culture but also held political significance. (Ali, 1935).

CONCLUSION:

The Caliphate movement rallied Muslims in India to defend the Caliphate of Turkey. Educated Muslims propagated the notion of pan-Islamism, and the Muslim Brotherhood encouraged the community to stand with Turkey against British imperialism. In the early days, the movement experimented with Hindu-Muslim unity to ask the British authorities to withdraw from their strategies of dismembering Turkey. Anti-government demonstrations were organized to show that the Indians were on the side of the Ottomans. In short, the movement focused the attention of Muslims on the security of their spiritual leader without considering this a Turkish problem, but rather a real cause of the Muslim Ummah. This thinking fostered a sense of global community among Muslims in general and in India in particular. Later, Indian Muslims followed the same pattern of Islamic brotherhood and unity by establishing their own territory in 1947.

DISCUSSION:

This was the first major political movement in India involving the common people. The Muslims made innumerable sacrifices for the protection and restoration of the Khilafat movement, but it could not succeed for many reasons. However, this movement paved the way for the Pakistan Movement, which eventually resulted in the creation of Pakistan. Since the Khilafat movement was the first movement in which the common people, or the common Muslims, were involved, the people in the streets were involved and thus politics at that time fell to the common masses. The Khilafat movement was supported not only by Muslims but also by Hindus. Therefore, when this movement flourished throughout India, close contacts were established between the rulers and the common people. These close contacts became the solid foundation of the Pakistani movement, which made the dream of Pakistan a reality. In other words, the Khilafat movement paved the way for the creation of Pakistan.

The Khilafat Movement significantly impacted the formation of Muslim identity and community in India, intertwining religious, political, and social dimensions. While it fostered a sense of unity and collective identity among Muslims, it also revealed and sometimes intensified underlying sectarian tensions. This complex legacy continues to influence contemporary Muslim identity politics in South Asia. Despite the fall of the Caliphate, the movement of the Caliphate was an important historical movement towards Muslim political development. Muslims learned the importance of leadership and political

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organization. The movement has done a great job in unification Muslims of India against Britain in support of the Caliph of Turkey. It woke up the feelings of Indian Muslims about their brothers in the world. The Muslims had the idea and the desire for a separate homeland for them. The Muslims realized that they could no longer trust the Hindus and British. Both repeatedly betrayed Muslims. The Congress abruptly abandoned the movement when it went up. If Muslims are to survive, they must do it themselves. There is no dependence on other entity as past experiences witnessed such as abandon of Congress in mid-way of movement.

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