



Samshad Alam

Nawab Muhammad Ahmad Said Khan of Chhatari, his early life and contribution to Modern India

Research Scholar- Department of History, Centre of Advanced Study, A.M.U- Aligarh
(U.P.) India

Received- 25.02.2022, Revised- 01.03.2022, Accepted - 04.03.2022 E-mail: aaryavart2013@gmail.com

Abstract: *The present research is aimed to examine the early life of Nawab Ahmad Said Khan of Chhatari. He grew up in a landed aristocracy and had his formal education after completing his madrasa education from M. A. O. College, where he received an English education. The work examines his role in the formation of the Zamindar party. His contribution to the education, social upliftment of women and his politics of inclusiveness and promoting secular ideals and values. The study also examines his contribution as zamindar for his subjects and role in shaping national politics, his contribution to the Aligarh movement, and his role as the premier of Hyderabad state.*

Key Words: Nawab Ahmad Said Khan of Chhatari, zamindar, national politics, and Aligarh Movement.

Muhammad Ahmad Said Khan, popularly known as the Nawab of Chhatari, was born on January 11, 1889, in Chhatari, district Bulandshahr. His father was Kunwar Haji Mohammad Abdul Ali Khan's, and his grandfather was Nawab Mohammad Mahmud Ali Khan Saheb, Khan Bahadur, Rais of Chhatari.

The family had descended from a Lalkhani Rajput clan that settled in Pahasu (Bulandshahr district) during the twelfth-century reign of Delhi Prithvi Raj Chauhan. The family converted to Islam during the reign of Shahjahan. Ahmad Said Khan ascended to the family estate in 1898, at the age of nine, after the death of his father and grandfather. He was married to Amana, daughter of his uncle, Abdu's-Samad Khan of Talib Nagar, Aligarh. Apart from receiving an early education in Arabic, Persian, and Urdu at his rural madrasa, he successfully memorised the Holy Quran to become a Hafiz-e-Quran. He then moved to Aligarh M. A. O. College, where he received his formal education in English.

Ahmad Said Khan career took off spectacularly. He was appointed Honorary Bench Magistrate in 1910 and Special Magistrate the following year and was given the title of Nawab in 1915. He received the King's Commission in 1918 and was awarded the M.B.E. (Member of the British Empire) in 1919. The title of Nawab was made heirloom in 1919. Two years later, he was granted the title of K.C.I.E. (Knight Commander), K.C.S.I. (Knight Commander of the order of the State of India), and G.B.E. (Most Excellent order of the British Empire) in 1946. However, these titles were renounced by him on the eve of Indian independence in protest of Britain's policy in India. He was elected unopposed to the newly formed Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly in 1920. He was the founder of the Zamindar Party of Agra in 1921.

June 1928, he assumed the governorship of the U.P. He became the second Indian to hold such a position, following Lord Sinha's appointment as Governor of Bihar. From June to August 1928, he held this post. He was also offered a post on the Viceroy's Executive Council, which had fallen vacant following Sir Miduimmad Shafi's death. He was a member of this council for nine weeks in 1932. From April to November 1933; he served as an Acting Governor of the U.P. for the second time. From 1935 to 1941, he served as Chief Scout of the All India Boy Scouts Association, and in 1939 he was awarded the Silver Wolf, Scouting's highest international decoration. In November 1933, Aligarh Muslim University awarded him the Doctor of Laws honorary degree, Honoris Causa. He was fond of wearing well-tailored shairwani, except when required to be in official uniform. Born into an affluent family in a vast Zamindari, he possessed a dignified bearing and an ever-smiling appearance. He was an avid tennis player and a master Shikari. He favoured social justice and advocated for justice to be provided free of cost to the people.

As a home member, he favoured appointing able women to the judicial system to bridge the gender gap in



the judicial services. He had a positive and forward-looking approach, which is reflected in his approach related to the ill-treatment meted out to the prisoner. He noted that the allegations levelled against the jail authorities might be accurate, but it is better to look forward and reform the system instead of lamenting it. This reflects his approach to handling any situation in a positive frame of mind. As a member of the Home, he directed District Magistrates and Jail Superintendents to encourage religious education in prisons by providing facilities to private individuals of good character who are prepared to make such recommendations.

Social and Political Life- At the start of his public career, his leanings were toward forming a Zamindar party, primarily to rescue the system from impending collapse. He was able to organise the Zamindars both inside and outside the legislature.

When the first election to the reformed legislature was held in 1920, he faced the wrath of his Muslim League colleagues, who organised a boycott of the elections. He was elected unopposed.

He was in favour of more representation of landlords in the council, as he had brought a resolution in 1925 to increase the seats of landlords in the assembly. Nevertheless, he did some remarkable things for ordinary people, such as opening Arabic and vernacular high schools at Chhatari.

He laid the foundation of the Muslim Rajput School at Kalanoor in 1910. He also worked in the expansion of the irrigation network, establishing dispensaries, and, above all, pioneering the innovative practice of establishing marketing arrangements for agricultural produce of Bulandshahar, which quickly became the other District Boards' model to emulate. He was a trailblazer in proposing policies to support agro-industries and institutional financing for agriculture.

He worked as Minister of Industries from 1923 to 1925 in the United Provinces. As a minister of industries, his primary focus was on the development of the villages in every aspect, so he urged the Council that the Ministers and the Government try their level best to develop the rural area in every respect.

In 1923, he was elected President of the Muslim Rajput Conference at Kalanoor. He attended the first and second London Round Table Conference to find a solution to India's political issues and to draught a constitutional framework to meet the country's changing political reality.

He was appointed a temporary member of the Viceroy's Executive Council in 1932. He was the first Indian to be nominated as the Chief Commissioner of India in 1935. Under his chairmanship as the Chief Commissioner of India, the first triennial conference was held on November 16 and 17, 1937. He was appointed Head of the All-India Boy Scouts' Association in 1935.

The National Agriculturists' Party of Agra NAP was established on 5 August 1934. It was organised by a group of Taluqdars, Zamindars and persons who had vested interests to fight out the elections and capture the political power in the Provinces. This was a major achievement of the landlords of the Zamindar Party of Agra. The Nawab of Chhattari was the elected first president of NAP.

In the 1937 provincial election, no party had gotten a clear majority to form a government. The Congress party won the maximum number of seats in the election, but it refused to form a government. After the refusal of the Congress party, the governor invited the Nawab of Chhattari to form the government. He accepted the governor's proposal and formed a coalition government in the United Provinces. He was the first elected Chief Minister of the United Provinces in April 1937. He served as Chief Minister of the United Provinces from April 3, 1937, to July 16, 1937.

He had emphasised during an interview the fact that while it is necessary to give complete satisfaction to the minorities about their special religious and communal needs, the formation of mixed parties should be encouraged, If the parliamentary system of Government is to succeed In this country.

He was appointed Sadr-i-Azam of the Hyderabad Dominions in 1941 where he served for five years.



During his premiership period, he did several reforms. He had come to Hyderabad after serving as an expert in British India's fields of politics, education, and administration. His public service and administrative abilities were recognised. He never took an extremist position in politics, even when he was a member of the Muslim League for some years but did not play any active role in its activities or when the political tide shifted. Throughout his career, his moderate stance had remained unpopular with opportunist and communal political parties and politicians. This disqualified him from becoming a leader of either the Muslim League or the Liberal Party. His tenure as leader of the Zamindar Party ended with the abolition of Zamindari. After the implementation of the Government of India Act in 1935, he stepped down from active politics, which established a quasi-federal polity, but his advice was still available on Government Committees. In 1941, he was named Prime Minister of Hyderabad State, a post he held until 1943 and was reappointed in 1947, at severe turbulence in the country. However, he made genuine attempts to bring Hyderabad into the Indian Union peacefully.

Contribution to the Aligarh Movement- He remained involved with the affairs of the MAO College and the University throughout his life from 1911 when he was first elected a Trustee of the College. He was the founder member of the Court of the University and remained associated with that body either as a member or late Pro-Chancellor and later still as Chancellor. His association with the Government of UP stood the University in a good position as he was instrumental in providing finances for the establishment of the Ahmedi School for the Blind (Now Ahemdi school for Visually Challenge) and in sanctioning grants for the Abdullah Girls School and Intermediate College run by Shaikh Mohammed Abdullah till the institutions became part of the University in 1941. In later years through his association with the University was in very formal and titular positions as Pro-Chancellor and Chancellor, he was a symbol of continuity and a link of the past with a fast-changing scenario such linkages have their own importance in maintaining continuity and stability in institutions.

REFERENCES

1. Sen.SP, Dictionary of National Biography, V.I, (A-D), Institute of Historical Studies, Calcutta. 1972, p.308
2. The Lalkhani are a North Indian Muslim Rajput community. They are a Rajput sub-clan of the Bargujar clan. The community is concentrated in Uttar Pradesh's Aligarh and Bulandshahr districts see Crooke, William, The tribes and castes of the North-western Provinces and Oudh, (1848-1923), superintendent of government printing, Calcutta .1906.p.380 & also Singh, Kuar Lachman, Historical And Statistical Memoir Of Zila Bulandshahr. North-Western Provinces 'Government Press', Allahabad, 1874.pp.156-57.
3. Nevill, H. R, Bulandshahr: A Gazetteer, Volume.V, District Gazetteers of The United Provinces of Agra And Oudh, The Government Branch Press, Lucknow, 1922.p.278.& See also Robinson, Francis, Separatism among Indian Muslims : the politics of the United Provinces' Muslims, (1860-1923) , Cambridge University Press, Cambridge University Press, London .1975,p.440
4. Thos, Peters, Who's Who in India, Burma and Ceylon, The Sun Publishing House, East Street, Poona. 1936. p.126.
5. Staley, Reed, The Indian Year Book Volume. XXXIII, Bennett Coleman Amp Co. Ltd, Calcutta, 1947, p.1069.
6. Wood, J B. The Gazette of India extraordinary. Shimla Authority, 1915.p.9
7. Nevil, HR, District Gazetteers of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh Supplementary Notes and Statistics, Volume .I, Dehra Dun Superintendent Government press, Allahabad, 1924, p.14
8. Ed.IBC Research Wing, Dictionary of Indian biography, Indian Bibliographic Centre, Varanasi, 2000, p.8.



9. Hasan, Mushirul, Nationalism and Communal Politics in India (1916-1928), Ramesh Jain, Dehi, 1979, p.222.
10. Chatterjee, Ramananda, The Modern Review, Vol.XLIII, Calcutta, the Modern Review Office, 1928, p.116.
11. Op.cit, Thos, Peters, Who's Who in India, Burma and Ceylon, p.126
12. Bombay Chronicle, 9-01-1932
13. Ed.Gupta, Amit Kumar, and Dev, Arjun, ,Towards Freedom, Part.1, Indian Council Of Historical Research, Oxford University press, New Delhi, 1941 ,p.846.
14. Mitra, Nripendra Nath. The Indian Annual Register. Vol. 1. Calcutta The Annual register Office. 1931.p.207.
15. Proceedings of The Legislative Council of The United Provinces Official Report Volume. XXXVI, From December 17 to 23, 1927, p.40.
16. Robinson, Francis, Separatism among Indian Muslims: the politics of the United Provinces' Muslims, (1860-1923), Cambridge University Press, Cambridge University Press, London .1975, p.342.
17. Ahmad, Aijaz, Aligarh Muslim University: An Educational and Political History, Lata Sahitya Sadan, Gaziabad (1920-47),
18. Proceeding of The Legislative Council Of The United Provinces, vol. XXIII, Government Press Allahabad, 1925, p.322.
19. Seth, K D. India's Services in The War.Vol. III, Naval Kishore Press. Lucknow,1922,p.109.
20. J, Shiv Kumar. "Eminent Personalities And Their Contribution To Hyderabad State." International Journal Of Multidisciplinary Educational Research 9 (8), 2020,pp. 78-79.
21. Baghel, Amar Singh ,Gazetteer Of India Uttar Pradesh , District Bulandshahr, Published by the Government of Uttar Pradesh the Government Press, Aishbagh, Lucknow ,1980,p.68-114.
