

## PalArch's Journal of Archaeology of Egypt / Egyptology

### SOCIO-POLITICAL CONTRIBUTIONS OF NAWAB MOHSIN-UL-MULUK FOR INDIAN MUSLIMS: A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

*Shaista Gohar<sup>1</sup>, Tasneem Sarwat<sup>2</sup>, Dr. Shehla Gul<sup>3</sup>, Hasnain Sajid<sup>4</sup>, Usman Ullah<sup>5</sup>*

<sup>1</sup>Lecturer, Department of Pakistan Studies, Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan, KP,  
Pakistan.

<sup>2</sup>Visiting Lecturer, Department of Pakistan Studies, Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan,  
KP, Pakistan.

<sup>3</sup>Lecturer, Department of Pakistan Studies, Islamia College, University Peshawar. KP,  
Pakistan

<sup>4</sup>Visiting Lecturer, Department of Pakistan Studies, Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan,  
KP, Pakistan.

<sup>5</sup>M. Phil Scholar, Department of Pakistan Studies, Qurtuba University of Science and  
Information Technology Peshawar, KP, Pakistan,

Email: [shaistagohar@awkum.edu.pk](mailto:shaistagohar@awkum.edu.pk), [tasneemsarwat806@gmail.com](mailto:tasneemsarwat806@gmail.com),

[Shehlagul01@gmail.com](mailto:Shehlagul01@gmail.com), [hussyehd@gmail.com](mailto:hussyehd@gmail.com)

[usmanusafzai6@gmail.com](mailto:usmanusafzai6@gmail.com)

**Shaista Gohar, Tasneem Sarwat, Dr. Shehla Gul, Hasnain Sajid, Usman Ullah. Socio-Political Contributions Of Nawab Mohsin-Ul-Muluk For Indian Muslims: A Historical Overview-- Palarch's Journal Of Archaeology Of Egypt/Egyptology 20(2), 1358-1367. ISSN 1567-214x**

**Key Words: Nawab Mohsin-Ul-Muluk, Syed Ahmad Khan, Aligarh College, Muhammedan Educational Conference, Urdu Defense, Simle Deputation, All India Muslim League, Separate Electorate**

#### ABSTRACT

Even though Mohsin-ul-Mulk was a government servant by profession, he took a keen interest in reviving the Muslims after the events of 1857 whilst working with Sir Syed. He shared Sir Syed's belief that the only path to the salvation of Muslims was through the pursuit of a contemporary education. Aligarh College was created to give these concepts a concrete form, and it later had a significant impact on how Muslims were oriented in the socio-

political spheres. Mohsin-ul-Mulk led the Muslims in politics in addition to overseeing the educational programme. In this brief article an attempt is made to revisit the role and contributions of Nawab Mohsin-ul-Muluk that he rendered for the Indian Muslims as a politician, social worker, and an educationist. The article also highlights the role of Mohsin-ul-Mulk as Syed Ahmad Khan's true successor in the Aligarh Movement.

## INTRODUCTION

After the upheaval of 1857, the Muslims of India were revitalised in large part because to the Aligarh Movement. The only person who contributed more than Sir Syed to the Movement's success was Mohsin-ul-Mulk. Mohsin-ul-Mulk was involved with the Movement from the beginning till the time of his passing. He devoted himself to giving it a solid foundation and spreading its values among Muslims throughout this time (Mahmood & Zafar, 1968). After Sir Syed passed away, his devotion was really put to the test. The Movement's future appeared dismal at this moment. Due to administrative and financial issues, the College and the Muhammedan Educational Conference's continued existence was in peril. Mohsin-ul-Mulk's excellent organizational and management abilities at this crucial time not only saved both of these organizations from collapse but also gave them fresh life (Allana, 1985). Under his direction, the Movement, which had mostly stayed restricted to Northern India throughout Sir Syed's tenure, became a countrywide Movement of Muslims in less than ten years. Mohsin-ul-Mulk gave the Muslims' political agenda a clear shape by urging the rulers and other communities to recognize that Muslims were a distinct entity and that they should be treated as such as a result of the Movement's enhanced public image (Syed, 1986). Along with Sir Syed, Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk played a significant part in creating the groundwork for the Aligarh Movement and expanding the scope of Muslim socio-political thinking, which had long-lasting effects on India's history (Azeem, Awan, & Mushtaq, 2017).

### *His Biography: A Short Glimpse*

Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk's original name was Sayyed Muhammad Mehdi Ali Khan. On December 9, 1837, he was born at Etawah, a city located 73 miles east of Agra on the road to Kanpur. While he was Shi'a by birth, he renounced it in August 1870. His titles from the Nizam (the name of the ruler of Hyderabad State) were Munir Nawaz Jung, Mohsin u'ldaula, and Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk in appreciation of the exceptional services he provided throughout his 20 years in Hyderabad (Syed, 1986). He was related to Sadat-i-Barha through his father, and the renowned abbasid family of Shaikh Pur (Furrukhabad) through his mother. Since they were descended from the Sadat-i-Barha, Sayyid Jaba or Jabba of Muzzafarnagar, who had settled in Etawah under the rule of Mughal emperor Furrukh Siyar (1712–1719), were given land grants. But, when Mughal power declined, the Sadat-i-Barha progressively lost prominence and their economic and political significance, partly because of their "aversion to civic responsibility, entrusted by the East India Company," it would appear. Mohsin-ul-Mulk's father Mir Zamin Ali, showed a keen interest in his schooling (Zubairi, 1934). At home, he was instructed in Arabic, Persian, and a few other fundamental religious books. His father sent him to PhaPhund, a tahsil (sub-division) headquarters located 36

miles from Etawah, to pursue higher education under the guidance of renowned scholar Maulvi Inayat Hussain of Dewa (Barabanki), who was in charge of a madrasa at PhaPhund, because of his son's interest in his studies (Syed, 1986). The father of Mohsin-ul-Mulk wished that his son would someday excel as a Maulvi (religious scholar). When family issues forced Mohsin-ul-Mulk to stop his studies and look for work, he had already fully lived up to the trust that had been placed in him. He had also pursued his studies with great dedication and had come very close to reaching the goal that his father had set for him. Mohsin ul-Mulk started working for the East India Company as a muharrir (clerk) in the Collector's office in Etawah for a salary of Rs. 10 per month because only the Company offered respectable employment options for educated Indians. Mohsin-ul-Mulk showed great enthusiasm for his work almost once, and the Collector, Allan Octivan Hume (who would later create the Congress), took notice and promoted him to the rank of ahalmad (Assistant) in 1857. As the 1857 rebellion began in India and swiftly extended to Etawah, he had barely had time to adjust to his new position. The warriors that drove Hume from the city on May 22, 1857, also took control of Etawah. Afterwards the Nawab of Furrukhabad ruled over Etawah. Nonetheless, Mohsin-ul-Mulk experienced quick promotion in the years following 1857 (Zubairi, 1934). In 1861, he was named tahsildar of Etawah after being initially elevated to the position of saristadar, which is the chief ministerial office of a court. He participated in the civil service examination in 1863 and "most of his European uncovenanted fellow competitors" were defeated by him. After passing this examination, Mohsin-ul-Mulk was granted the joint responsibilities of tahsildar and deputy collector of Etawah, a position he maintained until 1867 (Allana, 1985). Mohsin-ul-Mulk had the chance to fully understand financial management as a result of this. In 1867, he was appointed deputy collector of Mirza Pur and assigned the responsibilities of Raj Barhaal's Court of Wards Manager and Dudhi's Superintendent of the Government Estate. During his time at Mirza Pur, Mohsin-ul-Mulk also distinguished himself by organizing aid during the 1869 famine that tore through the Mirza Pur tehsil. On the advice of the Commissioner of Allahabad, the provincial government presented him with a robe of honor in appreciation for the assistance he provided to the famine-stricken people (Syed, 1986).

The largest Muslim state in India, Hyderabad had a medieval-inspired administrative framework. The British Indian administrative structure was going to be implemented, according to Sir Salar Jung, Nawab Muhammad Turab Ali Khan, who served as the state's diwan (prime minister), in 1864. It was necessary to have experienced individuals for the new system to succeed. Sir Salar Jung sought Sir Syed to provide suitable names for him in order to do this (Syed, 1986). Mohsin-ul-Mulk was suggested by Sir Syed because he knew him personally and because he was well-known for his skill and effectiveness in government circles. An Inspector General of Revenue position was made available to Mohsin-ul-Mulk. But in 1874, he abandoned his position as deputy Collector MirzaPur and moved to Hyderabad to begin a famous but intricate career. He began by holding the position of Inspector General of Revenue before being elevated to Revenue Secretary (Zubairi, 1934).

When Famine first came in Hyderabad in 1876, Mohsin-ul-Mulk was chosen to serve as the committee's secretary because of his prior experience managing famines. Sir Salar Jung established a Famine Committee to address the issue. Richard Temple, a representative of the Indian government who visited areas affected by the famine, made a point of praising Mohsin-ul-Mulk for his work at that time. The implementation of revenue reforms in Hyderabad is the accomplishment that gave Mohsin-ul-Mulk his lasting fame (Syed, 1986).

Mohsin-ul-Mulk distinguished himself in the management of the State's financial and political affairs throughout his tenure in Hyderabad by doing his duties with a strong sense of loyalty and dedication. He in particular made a profound influence on the state's revenue administration, which secured a permanent place in the State's developments in the future (Zubairi, 1934). Without a doubt, Mohsin-ul-Mulk's initiatives were what enabled the State to emerge from poverty and rise to the status of India's provinces. He was a gifted administrator and statesman. He left Hyderabad for Aligarh on July 12, 1893, to resume his active participation. Hence, after relocating to Aligarh, he was successful in leaving his mark on the fields of politics and education. He had diabetes for a long time and died at the age of 70 in Simla (India) on October 16, 1907 (Allana, 1985).

### ***Mohsin-ul-Mulk and Sir Syed Ahmad Khan: Real Companions***

In 1893, Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk left Hyderabad after retiring from the civil service. In those days, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan required a dependable partner as well as a leader of integrity and commitment to aid and unwavering commitment to spread the fruit of the Aligarh Movement throughout India in order to improve the deplorable conditions of Muslims (Muhammad, 1986). With his seething enthusiasm and devoted nature, Mohsin-ul-Mulk made the decision to live in Aligarh permanently at that point in order to advance Muslims' socio-economic and educational standing. Though Sir Syed Ahmad Khan and Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk initially had differing viewpoints and opinions on political, religious, social, and educational matters pertaining to Muslims, with time, due to the dismal and dreadful conditions of Muslims, his thoughts changed (Mohamed, 2015). Mohsin-ul-Mulk first believed that Sir Syed Ahmad Khan's views were nationalistic in outlook and impracticable in execution. Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk, however, quickly came to believe that Aligarh's platform may serve as a turning point for the Muslims' socio-political concerns. With these things in mind, Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk decided to offer his hands to Sir Syed Ahmad Khan for the benefit of Muslims and later shown that he was a worthy successor, bringing knowledge and awareness to Muslims, a project that Sir Syed Ahmad Khan had started (Azeem, Awan, & Mushtaq, 2017).

## *Socio-economic and Educational Contributions: An Overview*

### *Efforts for Aligarh College Elevation:*

Sir Syed Ahmad Khan founded the Muhammadan Anglo Oriental (M.A.O.) School in Aligarh in 1875, and in 1877, he promoted it to the status of a college. For nearly three quarters of a century in India, the College at Aligarh's platform served as a key alma mater of learning, providing services to develop Muslims in the political, cultural, and intellectual spheres. In other words, the College evolved into the hub of Muslim political ideas, consciousness, and socio-economic advancement. Once Sir Syed Ahmad Khan left this temporary world, the College's financial situation deteriorated and there was extensive expenditures mismanagement (Mohamed, 2015). As a result, the College was in severe debt and financial trouble, and there was little money available to finish under-construction buildings on the College's property. Even though Sir Syed Ahmad Khan started building these structures during his lifetime, most of them were still under construction or incomplete (Mahmood & Zafar, 1968). This was due to a lack of funding and resources. In addition, for several months, labourers, clerks, and other college staff members did not receive their salaries and other compensation. During same time, Syed Mahmood, the son of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, who had been named the college's secretary following Sir Syed Ahmad Khan's death, also exacerbated the school's financial and administrative issues, and he quarreled with nearly every student, including Theodore Beck (Mohamed, 2015). On February 1, 1899, Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk assumed responsibility as Aligarh College's secretary in this murky situation and, in doing so, saved the college from financial collapse and administrative incompetence, turning its dimming light towards excellence in management and education while instilling modern educational concepts in the minds of Muslim youth. As the College's Secretary, Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk increased enrollment, increasing it from 343 pupils in 1898 (the year Sir Syed died) to over 800 at the time of his death in 1907. Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk as a result completed all unfinished projects, handled the financial and administrative issues with skill, and turned this college into a true national institution for Muslims (Muhammad, 1986). The College's outstanding and magnificent services as a learning center were persuaded to accept even conservative Muslim professors. Upon the passing of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk restored some optimism to the College management's waning spirit. Both Amir Habibullah of Afghanistan and the Prince of Wales, afterwards known as King George-V, visited the college (1872-1919). Amir Habib Ullah refuted the false claims and allegations of the detractors regarding the lack of Islamic knowledge and education at Aligarh College after visiting the College and observing the students' realistic level of understanding regarding the Qur'an and Islam there. In order to break the intellectual deadlock caused by Muslims in India, Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk transformed the College into a capable, contemporary, religious, and political institution of higher study (Azeem, Awan, & Mushtaq, 2017).

### ***Role in Muhammadan Educational Conference:***

All India Muhammadan Education Conference was established in 1886 by Sir Syed Ahmad Khan in an effort to increase Muslim intellectual awareness and instill in them a love of modern learning and information. Muslim intellectual elites had a unique opportunity to consider, discuss, and decide on the best strategies for ensuring the welfare and development of Muslims in India at the All India Muhammadan Education Conference (Mohamed, 2015). On the platform of the Muhammadan Educational Conference at the time, Mohsin-ul-Mulk, Shibli Naumani, Maulvi Nazir Ahmad, and Maulana Altaf Hussain Hali (1837–1914) all expressed their diverse viewpoints on learning, contemporary education, and critical thinking in Indian Muslims. Once Sir Syed Ahmad Khan passed away, Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk took over as secretary of the Muhammadan Educational Conference. He expanded the organization's reach to encompass inaccessible areas of India and made it a genuinely dynamic force (Mahmood & Zafar, 1968). Due to Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk's efforts, people recognized and appreciated the conference's significance for simultaneously improving Muslim learning and education in all main cities of the Sub-continent. As a result, the Conference convened a number of sessions over the following few years in different Indian provinces. To emphasize Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk's unique contribution to this Conference, it is important to note that through the use of knowledge, reason, and education, he was able to dispel the people's deepest misconceptions and narrow-minded perspectives on learning and transform them into pluralistic individuals. Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk bravely responded to infidelity fatwas and sped up all efforts to the locations that were impeding his purpose (Azeem, Awan, & Mushtaq, 2017).

### ***Defense of Urdu Language:***

The United Provinces government formally recognized Hindi as an official language on April 18, 1900, eliminating Urdu's previously unchallenged status. In his response, Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk used a practical plan and carried out his duty to safeguard Urdu. On May 2, 1900, Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk fervently and joyfully established the Urdu Defense Organization and staged a number of protest events in favour of Urdu (Syed, 1986). At the Lucknow conference, Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk also attracted a huge crowd and led a demonstration to express the feelings of Muslims against the biased treatment in Urdu. His Excellency Lieutenant Governor raised significant concerns to the management of Aligarh College about the loss of financial help and other government favours if Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk and Muslims continued their protests in this circumstance of a Hindu-Muslim schism and threatened the Muslim leadership (Muhammad, 1986).. Moreover, His Excellency charged Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk with launching an uprising against government decisions. Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk left his position as college secretary in this difficult situation but continued to be an ardent supporter and defender of the Urdu language. Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk was shown to be Sir Syed Ahmad Khan's genuine successor by his dedication to the cause of Muslims and the preservation of their language, as well as by his ability to guide Muslims in times of need and safeguard their cultural identity

from the Aligarh platform (Azeem, Awan, & Mushtaq, 2017). The Muhammadan Educational Conference's Anjuman Tarrag-i-Urdu was founded in 1903 by Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk, who is also credited with maintaining his love for Urdu. Under the sponsorship of Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk, this organization made a substantial contribution to the enrichment, splendor, and literary growth of the Urdu language throughout India. In this way, Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk actively participated in and made a tangible contribution from the Aligarh platform to the advantages and advancement of the Urdu language in trying and challenging conditions (Syed, 1986).

### ***Political Contributions: A Promo from History***

#### ***Efforts for Drafting the Demands of Simla Deputation:***

When the Liberal Government in England first took office at the turn of the 20th century, it was evident that the Indian Legislative Council would soon adopt an election-based system. Significant pressure was placed on the British government by notable Indian politicians like R.C. Dutt (1838-1923) and Gopal Krishna Gokhale (1866-1915), among others. The increase of the representative element in the Legislative Council was mentioned by John Morley (1838-1923), who presented the Indian budget to the House of Commons. Viceroy Lord Minto made references to upcoming political and constitutional changes in India in his speech (Syed, 1986). Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk asked the Muslim leadership to cooperate so that reasonable recommendations may be put up for the advantage and welfare of the Muslim people in India while considering the changing circumstances. In letters to Nawab Waqar-ul-Mulk between August 10 and August 18, 1906, Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk expressed his wish to assemble the most important Muslim leaders in order to accomplish this. Also, he wrote to Viceroy William A.J. Archbold (1865–1929) to request permission to send a delegation to deliver a Muslim memorial. In response to Mohsin-ul-Mulk's query, Mr. A.J. Archbold contacted the Viceroy's Private Secretary and informed him that the prospective delegation would be permitted to meet with the Viceroy to discuss Muslim issues as long as it remained loyal to the British Government. Drawing required a lot of focus and took a long time for the Simla Delegation. Muslim figures including Syed Ali Imam (1869-1922) of Patna, Mian Shah Din (1868-1918) of Lahore, and Nawab Imad-ul-Mulk offered their assistance, but Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk took on the entire task of creating the memorial by himself. Accepting the invitation, Nawab Imad-ul-Mulk set out for Bombay, where Mohsin-ul-Mulk was already residing. To formulate the deputation's demands, it took thorough and sensible work (Mahmood & Zafar, 1968). Hence, Nawab Mohsin-ul-political Mulk's astuteness, restraint, and wisdom were demonstrated, and the plan was ultimately approved at a gathering of major Muslim leaders at Lucknow on September 16 under the chairmanship of Sir Abdul Rahim (1867-1952). The selection of the deputation's staff came after the memorial's writing and was a tremendous undertaking. With great judgment, Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk completed the work in order to advocate for Muslims before the Viceroy (Azeem, Awan, & Mushtaq, 2017). On October 1, 1906, the Simla Deputation met with the Viceroy and presented him with its requests. The main demands of the

deputation were for Muslim representatives to be elected through separate electoral colleges, for a sufficient number of Muslims to be employed in government jobs, and for Muslims to be appointed to the Chief Court and High Courts. Therefore, Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk served as the catalyst for the organization, drafting, and presentation of demands. It reinforced the value of Muslim political organization and solidarity in presenting future demands to defend their political, social, and constitutional rights under the British government (Allana, 1985).

### ***Role in Establishing of All India Muslim League:***

Mohsin ul-Mulk centred his efforts on carrying out the choice to establish an independent political organisation for Indian Muslims that was made at the Lucknow summit on September 16 when the delegation headed for Simla. It was determined that the annual meeting of the Mohammedan Educational Conference, which was scheduled to take place in Dacca from December 27 to December 29, 1916, would be followed by a special meeting in order to "take advantage of the annual gathering of the Muslim representatives, who would assemble there to participate in the meeting from all parts of India," at the same meeting in order to give it a concrete shape. On December 30, 1906, at Dacca, the anticipated assembly took place (Mahmood & Zafar, 1968). In his introductory remarks, Mohsin-ul-Mulk thanked Nawab Salim ullah for his excellent hospitality for the delegates of the Educational Conference. He also expressed his appreciation with the fervour and passion shown by the Muslims in Assam and Eastern Bengal. Everyone agreed to Waqar-ul-Mulk's request for a chair following his address from Nawab Sallmullah. The "All India Muslim Confederacy" and the creation of the Committee were two recommendations that were debated at the meeting. After much deliberation, the participants chose to create "The All India Muslim League" (Ullah, Al Kausar, & Ahsan, 2014). The Muslim League's establishment marked the end of the period of "masterly inactivity," providing Muslims fresh motivation and optimism. Since the Hindi resolution was introduced in the United Provinces, Mohsin-ul-Mulk has worked tirelessly to make it a genuine success. He did so because he realized that without their own political organization, Muslims would find it challenging to present their demands to the government in an organized manner (Azeem, Awan, & Mushtaq, 2017).

### ***Efforts for Securing Separate Electorate:***

After the Muslim League was established, Mohsin ul-Mulk worked tirelessly to put pressure on the government to secure separate electorates and representation, which became necessary once the Arundel Committee's deliberations concluded. The Committee acknowledged the underrepresentation of Muslims in elected institutions in its recommendations, which included recommending that Muslims be given four seats in the Central Legislative Council out of a total of 46, with two of those seats to be filled by Viceroy Nomination and two by election from the provinces. The Committee recommended that Muslim university fellows, Muslim non-official provincial councillors, and Muslims who pay income tax or land revenue above a specific threshold make up the Muslim electorate (Syed, 1986). Although the



Committee recognized Muslims' right to participate in the Central Legislative Council, it did not specify how Muslims should be represented at the provincial, municipal, or local levels. Moreover, it made no mention of the establishment of Muslim-only electorates at these levels. Before officially endorsing the Committee's recommendations, the Government of India sought counsel from the regional governments. Mohsin-ul-Mulk acted right away in response to this. He called attention to the report's shortcomings in terms of distinct representation on municipal and district boards in his answer to Waqar-ul-Mulk, as well as its failure to make a conclusive statement regarding the establishment of different electorates. It would be preferable for the Muslims to approach their regional governments and exert pressure, he advised Waqar-ul-Mulk, because the central government had asked the provincial governments for their opinions on the matter (Zubairi, 1934). Due to the need to "coordinate the activities through a central organization," he asked Waqar-ul-Mulk to begin serving as the Muslim League's secretary. Mohsin-ul-Mulk once more requested that Waqar ul-Mulk move the project further in his letter of August 15, 1907. He explicitly said in the same letter that he was unable to perform any work due to his deteriorating health. Mohsin-ul-Mulk still travelled to Simla and met Minto there on September 29, 1907, despite his ill health, after becoming aware of the seriousness of the situation. He stressed the significance of separate electorates for the Muslims while discussing potential constitutional reforms in India with Minto, specifically with regard to the Muslim population (Syed, 1986). Mohsin-ul-Mulk visited a number of different government representatives when he was in Simla and advocated for the Muslim cause in front of them. The fact that Mohsin ul-Mulk was still working to inspire his fellow Muslims to rise to the occasion and launch a vigorous campaign to secure adequate representation under the proposed reforms fifteen days before he passed away provides a clear indication of his worry and concern for the future of Muslims (Allana, 1985). He warned that "if the opportunity was lost, Muslims would suffer irreparable loss" if the proposed reforms weren't implemented. In the same letter, he advised Muslims to contact the Viceroy via various organizations to convey their claims and express gratitude for the Viceroy's attention to their requests. He claimed that this "would not only arouse sympathy of the viceroy but would also reassure him that the Muslims were really interested in their cause" (Mahmood & Zafar, 1968). On October 16, 1907, at Simla, Mohsin-ul-Mulk passed away before he could see the results of his efforts. But his work was continued by Muslims in India, and in the end, their fight for distinct representation and electorates was successful. As a result, they were officially recognized as a people separate from Hindus, were given a voice in Indian politics, and eventually began to fight for their own country in the 1940s (Syed, 1986).

## CONCLUSION

Conclusively, we can say that Mohsin-ul-Mulk had struggled hard throughout his life for the cause of Indian Muslims. He began his career as a menial clerk but, through sheer effort and devotion to duty, became known as a capable civil officer in the Government of the North Western Provinces and the State of Hyderabad. In addition, after becoming acquainted with Sir Syed, he developed an interest in Muslim concerns and committed himself to assisting

Muslims in both the political and scholastic spheres. He was a devoted leader who put a lot of effort into enhancing the reputation, standing, and glory of Aligarh College and the Aligarh Movement. He gave the Muslims a new spirit, helped them become politically mature, and organised them as a nation. His contributions to the Muhammadan Education Conference, which spread its message throughout India, and his efforts to resolve Aligarh College's administrative issue helped to maintain the Muslim community's commitment to learning. From the Aligarh platform, Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk brought about significant political, social, and educational improvements for the welfare of the Muslim population. His efforts to improve the lot of Indian Muslims will live on forever via his contributions, services, and dedication. When the Urdu-Hindi controversy first arose just before Sir Syed Ahmad Khan's passing, he was a true successor and partner who assumed responsibility and aided the cause of Muslims to protect Urdu. Mohsin-ul-Mulk also gave the Muslims political direction. He helped Indian Muslims develop their own distinct political thought. The Muslim League and the Simla Deputation, which laid the groundwork for Muslim separatism in India, were essentially the creations of Mohsin-ul-Mulk.

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