

## Deoband Movement

Apart from the Aligarh Movement, there were many other forces working in the Sub-continent that contributed to national consolidation. These were in the form of institutions that grew up within the country. These institutions occasionally held views in opposition to the Aligarh leadership, but they all worked towards a common goal; national awakening and integrity.

Most important of these institutions was the seminary at Deoband. The original idea of establishing a madrasa for teaching religious subjects was that of a practicing sufi and a reputed saint, Haji Muhammad Abid of Deoband. He became the honorary patron and manager of the seminary, and when ample funds became available, Maulana Muhammad Yaqub, a leading educationist, was appointed as the headmaster. On April 14, 1866, the madrasa started functioning in a small mosque.

The madrasa at Deoband followed the Madrasa-i-Rahimiyah in its emphasis on Hadith, but it also incorporated many features of the new educational institutions established by the British, e.g., division of students in regular classes, attendance registers and written examinations. By 1931, 900 students were enrolled in the madrasa, including 43 foreign students.

Maulana Muhammad Qasim Nanotvi, who joined the madrasa few years after its establishment, was very active during the war of 1857, and for a period of time even established his own government in the area. On the suppression of the revolt by the British, Maulana Rashid Ahmad Gangohi, one of the Maulana's companions, had to spend several months in jail, while their spiritual teacher Haji Imdad Ullah had to seek refuge in Mecca.

Maulana Mahmud-ul-Hasan, who remained head of the institution for 23 years, encouraged contacts between Aligarh and Deoband. In 1920, the Maulana established the Jami'ah Milliyah for students who had discontinued studies at Aligarh during the Non-Cooperation Movement. The Jami'ah incorporated many features of Deoband.

Another personality associated with Deoband was Maulana Ubaid Ullah Sindhi. He figured in the “Raishmi Roomal Tehrik” launched by Maulana Mahmud-ul-Hasan and left India for Afghanistan during the World War I to organize actions against the British. He was appointed as Home Minister in the provisional government of India formed at Kabul. However, after the failure of the scheme, he proceeded to Moscow and then from Turkey to Mecca.

Deoband has invariably remained as the central institution catering to requirements of religious education of the Muslim community all over Sub-continent. To a certain extent, it also played the role of a unifying force for them, since apart from the opposition of the Deobandi teachers and students, so many ulema from the same institution supported Quaid-i-Azam, and took active part in the Pakistan Movement under the guidance of Maulana Shabbir Ahmad Usmani.