

ASSESSMENT OF THE CONTRIBUTION OF SHEIKH ABDULLAH (1847-1965) AND NEW DIRECTIONS FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

Aligarh
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1. Sheikh Abdullah's contribution needs not only propagation – but also as part of **reassessment of such pioneer reformers** : (a) for their understanding of the **role of education, and educational institutions** vis-à-vis social change, economic dynamics and political regeneration – i.e. the totality of their views about Indian society, and its future; and (b) **the human and social development aspects of women's education within that totality.**

2. Assessments of the multiple trends within the National churning from the mid 19th Century to Independence and beyond. Over-influenced by false categories and consciousness – fragmented analysis. Over-influenced by the colonial administration's views e.g. Social Reform vs. Political change; Moderates vs. Extremists; Orthodox vs. Modernisers; Religious vs. Scientific etc. Hangoor continued beyond independence – neglect of critical and contextualised historical assessment of their real contribution. Further affected by the Politics of Memory. Challenge facing Indian Education in 21st century – to cope with challenges of globalisation without becoming a victim of the Politics of Memory – in common parlance - don't lose your head when you come across new things – keep your feet firmly rooted – possibly this practical wisdom more familiar to Indian women – with or without education. But for us – the beneficiaries of the struggles of far-sighted pioneers like Sheikh Saheb – it is a responsibility – to combat **the Politics of Memory** because women's access to education – traditional or modern – has had to struggle against major historical forces through most **recorded history.**

3. A few suggestions (A) : Comparative research on all such pioneers from different **regions/communities** and periods – from a gender-sensitive as well as a value-sensitive (as opposed to the instrumentalists view of education) perspective – (B) Case studies on older institutions; (C) Reopening the debate on the social vs. educational responsibilities of the **national educational system**, vis-a-v-s Gender Justice and Women's Empowerment a la the NPE 1986