

## **Self-Confidence through Self-Reliance: Iqbal's Blueprint for Individual and National Empowerment**

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### **Abstract**

This article explores how Allama Muhammad Iqbal's multidimensional concept of self-reliance (*Khudi*) plays a vital role in empowering individuals and nations. Iqbal, a renowned philosopher, poet, and thought leader, proposes a progression from self-esteem to self-fulfilment, emphasising the significance of cohesive nationhood in navigating the global landscape. Through his extensive knowledge of Eastern and Western philosophies and teachings from Confucius, Laozi, Buddha, Nietzsche, and Kant, Iqbal also integrates ideas from Muslim philosophers like Al-Ghazali, Ibn Arabi, and Ibn Taymiyyah. He emphasised the significance of self-dependence and spiritual commitment in nurturing human dignity and national unity. The primary goal of this study is to investigate how self-reliance empowers people to overcome individual and societal constraints, thereby unlocking their full potential to promote national identity and financial independence. By applying a qualitative approach to textual analysis and thematic exploration of Iqbal's key concepts, the article assesses the relevance of his teachings in addressing contemporary challenges. In conclusion, the study highlights Iqbal's perspective on resilience and self-empowerment, emphasizing the interconnection of independence, self-accountability, and national identity in attaining national sovereignty. The article illustrates how Iqbal's insights remain relevant for overcoming modern obstacles by reaffirming the importance of the journey from self-respect to self-actualization.

**Keywords:** Self-reliance, Iqbal, empowerment, self-accountability, national sovereignty, resilience, cohesive nationhood

## Iqbal: The Visionary of Muslim Renaissance

A prominent personality in Indian philosophy and Urdu literature, Muhammad Iqbal (also known as Allama Iqbal) was born into a middle-class family in Sialkot, British India on November 9, 1877. His mother fostered his enthusiasm for Persian poetry at home (Schimmel, 1963, pp. 3–5). Iqbal was intellectually curious, deeply pious and concerned about Muslim identity restoration. He pursued his intellectual interests by studying Arabic, Persian, and Urdu literature. Iqbal studied philosophy at Government College Lahore for his bachelor's and master's degrees (McDonough, 2020). Western philosophy broadened his horizons and inspired him to reconcile Islamic teachings with modern intellectual thoughts (Iqbal, 1930, p. 2).

Allama Muhammad Iqbal studied law at Trinity College, University of Cambridge, in England. After completing his law degree, he was called to the Bar at Lincoln's Inn in 1906, qualifying him as a barrister (Lincoln's Inn, 2019). Iqbal studied European philosophy and literature while in Europe. He was deeply influenced by the ideas of Goethe, Nietzsche and Bergson, as reflected in his poetry and philosophical writings (Schimmel, 1963, p. 89). Iqbal travelled through Europe while studying philosophy and psychology in Germany. His interactions with German intellectuals gave him vital insights into the social and political context. He earned his doctorate in 1908 with a dissertation on Persian metaphysics, combining Eastern and Western philosophies, at Cambridge and Munich (Iqbal, 1908, p. 1). Sufi scholars such as Rumi inspired him in Islamic philosophy. Iqbal returned to India in 1908; in 1906 he joined the All-India Muslim League, which advocated for a distinct Muslim political identity. He proposed a Muslim state in a 1930 speech, laying the framework for the 1940 Lahore Resolution (Sevea, 2012, p. 14). Education, wisdom, freedom, self-sufficiency and Islamic beliefs were themes that ran throughout Iqbal's life and work (Choudhry, 2011, p. 15).

Iqbal's political activism and academic aspirations were linked. He became a prominent Muslim League spokesman for Indian Muslim rights and interests. The Muslim nationalist movement benefited from Iqbal's idea for Pakistan as a Muslim country. His political thought in poetry and prose inspired many Muslims to self-determine and revive culture (Saeed, 1996, p. 112).

Iqbal's mystical and philosophical poetry conveyed his political and social views. Most famously, he wrote *Shikwa* (Complaint), a powerful indictment of British colonialism and call for Muslim unity. Iqbal's poetry resonated with Muslims worldwide across languages and cultures. Iqbal's legacy endures. His ideas on Muslim identity, cultural renaissance and political self-determination influence Muslim thought today (Schimmel, 1963, pp. 89-95).

## Research Objectives

Finding contemporary applications of Allama Muhammad Iqbal's *Khudi* (self-reliance) for the benefit of people and countries is the fundamental goal of this research. Here are the precise goals of the study:

1. To examine the role of Muhammad Iqbal's concept of *Khudi* or self-reliance in fostering individual empowerment and self-sufficiency.
2. To explore how Iqbal's philosophy offers solutions to the challenges faced by modern societies and individuals, particularly in addressing issues of oppression, dependence and fragmentation.
3. To examine the concept of self-reliance as a foundation for national unity, identity and sovereignty, and its relevance in today's globalized world.

## **Research Questions**

The research questions guiding this study are:

1. How does Allama Iqbal's concept of self-reliance contribute to the empowerment and self-sufficiency of individuals?
2. In what ways does Iqbal's philosophy address the challenges faced by modern societies and individuals, particularly in overcoming oppression, dependency, and fragmentation?
3. How does the philosophy of self-reliance serve as a foundation for national unity, identity, and sovereignty, and what is its relevance in today's globalized world?

## **Research Methodology**

This study employs a qualitative research technique to thoroughly explore the significant philosophical concepts articulated by Dr Muhammad Iqbal. The intellectual underpinnings, concepts and themes of Iqbal's works are rigorously examined using qualitative methods. This paper aims to examine Iqbal's utilization of *Khudi* to elucidate its many implications and significance. The study also seeks to ascertain the applicability of Iqbal's views in addressing modern social and global issues.

## **Research Methods**

The study employs the following methods:

1. **Textual Analysis:** In-depth analysis of Iqbal's principal works, encompassing *Bang-e-Dra* (The Call of the Marching Bell), *Asrar-e-Khudi* (The Secrets of the Self), *Payam-e-Mashriq* (The Message of the East), together with his correspondence and orations. The focal points will be the fundamental concepts of *Khudi*, independence, self-determination and national sovereignty.
2. **Comparative Analysis:** Merging Islamic spiritual traditions with modern existential concerns, Iqbal's concept of *Khudi* deeply corresponds with Nietzsche's views of self-empowerment and Kant's emphasis on autonomy and moral reasoning. Though all three explore human freedom, responsibility and self-realization, Nietzsche's study of self-empowerment and Kant's concepts of moral autonomy provide insightful analogies to Iqbal's philosophy. Furthermore, Kant and Nietzsche together offer a strong foundation for assessing how Iqbal especially combines Islamic concepts with

several Western intellectual traditions. Combining Iqbal's viewpoints on khudi with those of these scholars helps one to better understand his philosophical contribution to self-empowerment, independence, morality and cultural revival.

3. **Literature Review:** This section reviewed the literature on Iqbal's philosophy, focusing on analyses that explore the relevance of his ideas to contemporary political and social issues, as well as inquiries into individual and national identity and economic development.

### **Iqbal's Khudi: A Blueprint for Self-Reliance and National Empowerment**

#### **Muslim Identity and Political Awakening: Iqbal's Response to Colonialism in the Indian Subcontinent**

Considerable change and upheaval characterised the Indian subcontinent's sociopolitical and cultural landscape in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, especially during the life of Allama Muhammad Iqbal (1877–1938). British colonial control had enforced policies that marginalised traditional power structures and resulted in extensive exclusion among different communities, most notably Muslims, since 1858. This period was marked by economic exploitation, which intensified social inequality and severe poverty (Metcalf & Metcalf, 2012, p. 160). With the Indian National Congress gaining prominence, Indian nationalism was on the rise by the early 20th century. But Muslims felt more and more cut off from this movement, believing it to be exclusively for Hindus in nature. The feeling of marginalisation prompted the establishment of the All-India Muslim League in 1906, which sought to express Muslim political rights (Jalal, 1994, p. 24).

In reaction to the increasing prominence of Hindu nationalism, Muslim leaders commenced the consolidation of their community's stance. Sir Syed Ahmad Khan became a leading proponent of educational and social reform, emphasising the necessity of modern education and logical reasoning to promote mutual understanding between Muslims and Hindus (Lelyveld, 1978, p. 135). In 1906, Indian Muslims formed the Muslim League as a strategic move to protect the political and cultural interests of Muslims in a unified India. As ethnic tensions escalated, the League transformed into an advocate for Muslim self-determination (Hardy, 1972, p. 187). Iqbal was a pivotal figure in the intellectual renaissance of Muslims during this era, promoting self-awareness and cultural identity. He advocated for a rejuvenation of Islamic philosophy that harmonised modernity with traditional values. His poetry, which advocated for spiritual and political enlightenment, appealed with the young and educated demographics (Schimmel, 1963, p. 89). The socio-political upheaval resulted in an identity crisis among Muslims, exacerbated by the deterioration of the Mughal Empire and cultural dislocation induced by colonialism. Iqbal's poetry confronted these problems, urging Muslims to reclaim their communal identity and legacy in the face of modernity and colonial subjugation (Schimmel, 1963, p. 102).

Political marginalisation was a significant concern, intensified by the Government of India Act 1919, which, although broadening political engagement, solidified communal divisions through a British "divide and rule" approach. This finally led to increased tensions between Hindus and Muslims, resulting in communal riots between the 1920s and 1930s

(Metcalf & Metcalf, 2012, p. 161). Muslims encountered significant economic disadvantages, as restricted educational possibilities confined many to low-wage employment and traditional trades, worsening poverty within the group. Iqbal acknowledged that socio-economic advancement was crucial for political empowerment and frequently highlighted education as an indispensable instrument for attaining this (Lelyveld, 1978, p. 142).

آ بتاؤں تجھ کو رمز آئیہ انِ انلوک  
سلطنت اقوام غالب کی ہے اک جاؤگری  
خواب سے بیدار ہوتا ہے ذرا مکوم اگر  
پھر سُلا دیتی ہے اُس کو حکمران کی ساحری  
(Iqbal, 1994, p. 753)

*Translation:*

Let me tell you the secret of the verse (Qura'an 3:26),  
The supremacy of triumphant nations is a manifestation of trickery.  
When the oppressed awakens from his slumber,  
The ruler's magic puts him back to sleep (Iqbal, 2013, p. 142)

This stanza analyses the dynamics between rulers and the governed, highlighting the potential for the misuse of authority. Iqbal asserts that although rulers may possess political authority, genuine sovereignty is divinely sanctioned, and the temporal governance of nations can sometimes be a deceptive fabrication. The lyric underscores the significance of self-awareness and enlightenment, both for people and civilisations, calling the oppressed to awaken and regain their sovereignty. Iqbal acknowledges the difficulties inherent in this process, as those in authority frequently employ cunning strategies to obstruct this awakening.

### **The Concept of Self-Reliance in Iqbal's Philosophy**

Allama Muhammad Iqbal presented an elaborate vision of *Khudi* in his philosophical writings, which includes the ideas of self-reliance, self-awareness, self-actualization, self-sufficiency and self-sovereignty. Iqbal's philosophy highlights how crucial self-reliance is, exhibiting his dedication to empowering individuals and building a robust Muslim identity, especially during colonial times. Muhammad Iqbal's notion of self-reliance transcends mere independence; it includes self-empowerment and self-actualization, fostering profound confidence in one's capabilities. Iqbal claimed that self-dependence is essential for shaping one's identity, enabling them to overcome societal or colonial limitations (Iqbal, 1930, p. 123). This idea is closely connected to his belief that embracing freedom encourages the growth of an imaginative and lively character. Iqbal believes that those who are self-reliant not only understand their abilities but also work diligently and resolutely to achieve their goals. Self-sufficiency holds a varied role in Iqbal's beliefs. It acts as a spark for self-improvement, allowing people to control their own futures. Additionally, independence promotes responsibility, motivating people to make beneficial impacts on society. Iqbal

suggests that the ultimate goal of humans is to align with the Divine Will in order to reach a higher state of being. This point of view sees self-reliance as essential for the revitalisation of the Muslim community, rather than just a personal pursuit (Iqbal, 1936, p. 98). Iqbal skillfully incorporates Islamic teachings into his literary works, grounding his philosophy of self-reliance. The importance of personal responsibility and the search for knowledge is highlighted in the Quran. In *Surah Al-Infal* (The Quran, n.d., 8:53), it is stated that Allah will not alter a people's condition until they themselves make a change. This verse emphasizes the importance of individual change for societal progress, supporting Iqbal's promotion of self-reliance (Abdul Majid, 2004, p. 150).

Moreover, Iqbal employs the Hadith to substantiate his viewpoints. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) remarked, "The strong believer is more esteemed and beloved by Allah than the weak believer, though both possess merit" (Sahih Muslim, n.d., Hadith No. 2664). This Hadith underscores the importance of strength, which Iqbal views as a representation of self-reliance that empowers individuals to face problems and assert their individuality (Iqbal, 1930, p. 123). Iqbal articulates a vision of self-reliance that is profoundly anchored in spirituality and simultaneously pragmatic through the invocation of these Islamic values.

Iqbal's notion of self-reliance exhibits a marked similarity with the "Code of Conduct" present in diverse ethical frameworks. The Stoic philosophy, advocated by Seneca and Marcus Aurelius, underscores personal accountability and the need of inner fortitude in surmounting external challenges (Long, 2002, p. 105). Stoicism promotes self-sufficiency, encouraging individuals to develop an internal locus of control, similar to Iqbal's appeal for self-reliance. Furthermore, the Enlightenment period presented concepts of individualism and self-determination, notably in the writings of philosophers such as Kant, who asserted that individuals ought to behave based on principles drawn from reason (Kant, 1785/2002, p. 27). This focus on logical self-governance aligns with Iqbal's conviction in the self's capacity to surpass constraints and attain excellence through self-sufficiency.

### Flight of the Shaheen: Iqbal and Noor ud Din on the Pursuit of Greatness

Many influences inspired Allama Muhammad Iqbal's examination of selfhood and uniqueness, notably *Khudi*. The Kashmiri mystic and poet Noor ud Din, whose works echo Iqbal's philosophy, influenced him. Noor ud Din's thoughts on life, self-awareness, and a greater purpose shaped Iqbal's philosophy, especially his search for a new Muslim identity. Iqbal explained *Khudi*, which represents self-reliance, uniqueness and identity. He believed that authentic selfhood requires conscious connection with one's inner and outer selves (Iqbal, 1936, p. 98). Asceticism and limited life in mystical traditions contradict with Iqbal's thinking. Iqbal and Noor ud Din argued for a self-understanding beyond the five senses and societal restrictions (Rahman, 1986, p. 64).

آنھیں دیکھتی ہیں اک جز، دل پہچانتا ہے کُل

*Translation:*

"The eyes see but a fraction, yet the heart comprehends the infinite."  
(Noor ud Din as cited in Rahman, 1986, p. 64)

Iqbal's criticism of shallow spiritual pursuits, which he called "monkeys in the woods" and "rats in confined holes," shows his opinion that true enlightenment comes from self-realisation (Iqbal, 1936, p. 98). He encouraged his followers to transcend social boundaries and understand themselves. This view matches Noor ud Din's emphasis on moral and ethical behaviour for spiritual and intellectual advancement.

Noor ud Din's assertion on self-examination and inner power resonates with Iqbal's philosophy. Self-awareness, according to Noor ud Din, helps people transcend their baser tendencies and reach a higher condition of being. This transforming process helps one realise oneself and the interconnection of all beings (Khan, 2005, p. 110). Iqbal's poetry uses the *Shaheen* (eagle) to symbolise the exalted self; strong, free, and ambitious. The *Shaheen*, lofty above life's ordinary worries, embodies Iqbal and Noor ud Din's values of purpose and magnificence. The two thinkers share a worldview of human potential and transcendence (Majeed, 2007, p. 105).

وہ دنائے سُل، ختم الرُّسُل، مولائے کل جس نے  
غُبار راہ کو بخشنا فروغ وادی سینا  
نگاہِ عشق و مسی میں وہی اول، وہی آخر  
وہی قرآن، وہی فرقان، وہی یسیں، وہی طا

(Iqbal, 1935, p. 120)

*Translation:*

He is the Guide of Paths, the Seal of the Prophets, the Master of All, who animated the dust of the path with the brilliance of the Sinai valley.

In the realm of affection and ecstasy, He embodies the First and the Last; He is the Qur'an, the Furqan, Yasin, and Taha (Iqbal, 1935, p. 120).

This couplet profoundly expresses admiration for Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), encapsulating essential elements of his spiritual and metaphysical importance. This passage reflects the Prophet's universal importance and his pivotal role in providing spiritual and moral direction to humanity. It underscores his distinctive status as an eternal person, whose impact extends from the inception to the conclusion of time, and whose doctrines are the basis of both the Qur'an and the virtuous path. The use of his names further emphasises the complexity and profound character of his spiritual essence.

### **The Essence of Self-Reliance (*Khudi*): Iqbal's Islamic Vision in Global Philosophical Discourse**

Allama Muhammad Iqbal underscored the need of self-reliance as crucial for personal growth and societal advancement. His concepts, grounded in an Islamic context, echo elements present in several philosophical traditions, including Stoicism, Confucianism and Existentialism. Stoicism emphasises virtue, acceptance of destiny, and the development of inner strength, underscoring the need of autonomy and tranquility that resonate with Iqbal's

emphasis on resilience and bravery amid adversity (Iqbal, 1930, p. 123). Confucianism also emphasises personal virtue and societal peace, especially the development of *ren* (humaneness) and *yi* (righteousness) (Li, 2010, p. 320). Confucianism emphasises social ethics, but Iqbal enhances this concept by highlighting sovereignty and moral responsibility, promoting alignment with community welfare (Iqbal, 1936, p. 98).

Existentialism, which emerged in the twentieth century, emphasises human freedom and the quest for meaning, reflecting Iqbal's conviction in the individual's capacity to determine their destiny. Both ideologies advocate for accountability about one's behaviour (Iqbal, 1938 p. 110). Iqbal's Islamic worldview is more expansive, emphasising community responsibility and societal improvement, hence presenting a larger vision for society progress than other intellectual paradigms (Shaukat, 2012, p. 76). His ideology surpasses individuality, emphasising the significance of community and social well-being.

خودی کا سر نہیں لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ  
 خودی ہے تُخْ فَسَان لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ  
 یہ دُور اپنے براہم کی ملاش میں ہے  
 صنم کدہ ہے جہاں، لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ

(Iqbal, 2013, p. 148)

*Translation:*

The essence of the self is encapsulated in the phrase “There is no god but Allah.”  
 The self is a sharp sword, “There is no god but Allah.”  
 This era is in search of its Ibrahim (Abraham),  
 The world is a sanctuary of idols (false gods), “There is no god but Allah.” (Iqbal, 2013, p. 148)

This stanza by Allama Muhammad Iqbal conveys deep spiritual insights and critiques of the modern world, articulated via elaborate metaphors and allusions to Islamic history. In academic terms, Iqbal's verse highlights a call for spiritual revival, advocating for a return to the monotheistic core of Islam. The search for an "Ibrahim" represents a longing for a spiritual leader who can break the chains of idol worship and guide humanity back to the truth. The world as a "temple of idols" serves as a critique of the societal and material distractions that obscure the divine reality. Iqbal emphasises the need for an intellectual and spiritual awakening that acknowledges Allah as the only true deity, and through this realization, individuals and societies can regain their true selfhood and moral clarity.

### **Empowerment Across Cultures: Comparing Iqbal's *Khudi* with Eastern Philosophies and Modern Self-Help**

In Eastern philosophies, especially Buddhism, self-reliance is conceptualised via self-awareness and the comprehension of suffering. The Buddhist concept of *anatta*, or non-self, posits that attachment to the self may result in suffering, prompting individuals to develop mindfulness and inner tranquillity (Rahula, 1974, p. 45). This viewpoint does not diminish

self-reliance; instead, it underscores another form of empowerment—one that entails transcending the ego and acknowledging one's connectivity with all entities.

In Taoism, the principle of *wu wei* (effortless action) advocates for self-reliance, urging individuals to harmonise with the natural flow of existence instead of imposing their will (Lao Tzu, 1997, p. 43). Iqbal emphasises the active engagement with individual potential and societal obligations, whilst Buddhist and Taoist perspectives highlight harmony and balance, demonstrating varied approaches to self-reliance.

Modern self-help movements reflect elements found in Iqbal's concept of self-reliance. In *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, Stephen Covey emphasises ideas including proactive action and personal responsibility (Covey, 1989, p. 47). Covey's methodology for self-enhancement and empowerment embodies Iqbal's promotion of individual agency and deliberate decision-making. In addition, Martin Seligman, a researcher in positive psychology, supports building resilience and strengths, which is in line with Iqbal's idea of self-actualization (Seligman, 2011, p. 92). Achieving satisfaction, according to Iqbal and modern self-help advocates, is all about being conscious of oneself and taking action.

نَاضِدٌ مَسْتَبْدَدٌ هُنْدَهُ عَمَلٌ مَسْتَ  
بَاقِيٌّ هُنْدَهُ فَقْطَ نَفْسٌ دَرَازِيٌّ  
هَمْتَهُ وَأَنْتَ تُدْخُونَهُ وَهُنْ فَقْرٌ  
جَسِّ فَقْرٌ كَيْ أَصْلٌ هُنْ جَازِيٌّ

(Iqbal, 2013, p. 160)

*Translation:*

The true man of action is lost; only vanity remains. If you have the courage, seek that poverty whose root lies in the Hijaz (the Arabian Peninsula, symbolising the spirit of the Prophet's life) (Iqbal, 2013, p. 160)

This stanza aligns with Iqbal's overarching concept of self-realization, while further underscoring the need of renouncing worldly aspirations in favour of spiritual and moral development. According to Iqbal, authentic greatness is not defined by the accumulation of riches or power; instead, it involves overcoming the ego and embodying a life of service, humility, and spiritual abundance. The mention of Hijaz conjures the idea of the Prophet's lifestyle, when spiritual purity and dedication to a transcendent purpose were fundamental to life. Iqbal advocates for individuals to pursue this elevated spiritual destitution, which, ironically, results in enhanced inner fortitude and satisfaction.

### **The Contemporary Relevance of Iqbal's *Khudi*: The Interplay of Individuality and Society**

Muhammad Iqbal's philosophy of self-reliance centred on selfhood, offers profound insights into the relationship between individuality and societal development, making it

highly relevant in contemporary contexts. Iqbal argues that individuals may shape their lives and destiny via self-awareness, personal agency, and spiritual development. He advocates for both individual and communal accountability, asking individuals to recognise their potential and actively participate in the world. In *Tulu-e-Islam*, he compares a deficiency in self-awareness to "a ship without a compass" (Iqbal, 1936, p. 84), underscoring the need of self-discovery. Iqbal asserts that the pursuit of self-awareness is essential for personal empowerment, aiming not just to perceive but to "be something" (Iqbal, 1941, p. 110), ultimately culminating in self-actualisation.

Iqbal's concept of self-reliance enables individuals to assume control over their life, fostering resilience, self-confidence, and autonomy. This philosophy, grounded on the Islamic notion of humanity being God's vicegerents on Earth (*Khalifah fil Ardh*), emphasises the power for personal choice and accountability (Iqbal, 1930, p. 56). Iqbal's focus on the inherent divinity of people motivates the quest for greatness and the surmounting of obstacles. He asserts that the cultivation of one's inner self is not merely a personal journey but also serves as the cornerstone for societal progress—illustrating how individual empowerment ultimately strengthens the community (Iqbal, 1941, p. 112).

افراد کے ہاتھوں میں ہے اقوام کی تقدیر  
ہر فرد ہے ملت کے مقدر کا ستارا  
(Iqbal, 2013, p. 170)

*Translation:*

The fate of nations lies in the hands of individuals, each person is the star of the nation's destiny (Iqbal, 2013, p. 170).

This couplet embodies Iqbal's fundamental idea that individual empowerment results in the empowerment of the entire nation. Iqbal's philosophy of selfhood is important to his perspective on societal transformation. He asserted that a nation can only thrive when its citizens comprehend and nurture their intrinsic power. The statement reflects his conviction on the significance of personal accountability of each individual, by realising their optimal potential, contributes to the collective future of the community.

### **Fostering Cohesion: Self-Reliance as a Foundation for National Identity**

Allama Muhammad Iqbal's concept of self-reliance underscores that self-reliance is essential for the cultivation of national identity and unity. Iqbal's ideology advocates for self-determination, community responsibility, and a common social objective, hence establishing a cohesive national identity that surpasses cultural and geographical distinctions. Iqbal (1941 p. 110) contends that the primary objective of the ego transcends mere perception; it is to "be something," emphasising the significance of individual self-realization in enhancing contributions to the community identity. Self-reliance fosters national identity in several ways. As people choose freedom and engage in community life, collective power arises. Iqbal (1941 p. 112) asserts, "A nation is constructed upon the strength of its individuals," implying that personal development augments national vigour. Secondly, independence fosters cultural

pride and a link to history, a theme frequently examined by Iqbal in his poetry, which unifies individuals via common historical and future ambitions (Schimmel, 1963, p. 102). Third, self-reliance promotes unity amidst variety, motivating individuals to appreciate unique contributions while striving for shared objectives.

Self-reliance fosters civic involvement and leadership since empowered people are more inclined to assume common obligations. Iqbal's exhortation to "Arise and be aware" (Iqbal, 1936) embodies this concept. Iqbal's philosophy is relevant in a globally interconnected society, providing a framework for reinforcing national identity in the context of globalisation (Smith, 2010, p. 50). Consequently, Iqbal's focus on self-reliance is crucial in cultivating national unity and identity.

فرد قائم ربط ملت سے ہے، تھا کچھ نہیں  
موج ہے دریا میں اور بیرون دریا کچھ نہیں

(Iqbal, 2013, p. 175)

*Translation:*

An individual's strength is interconnected with the community; in isolation, they are insignificant. As there exists a wave in the ocean, yet beyond the ocean, there is nothing (Iqbal, 2013, p. 175)

The political and social ramifications of Iqbal's focus on unity and collectivism are especially pertinent to the post-colonial challenges encountered by several Muslim nations during his day. He contended that only through solidarity and reciprocal assistance could nations surmount tyranny and attain genuine independence. The couplet functions as a cry for solidarity, prompting individuals to acknowledge that their fates are interconnected with the collective fate of their communities and nations.

### **The Strategic Importance of Self-reliance in Navigating Challenges**

Muhammad Iqbal's philosophy of self-reliance, rooted in the concept of *Khudi* (selfhood), forms the foundation for both individual empowerment and national renewal. Iqbal contends that the ultimate aim of the ego is not merely to perceive but to "be something" (Iqbal, 1941, p. 110). By asserting that "a nation is constructed upon the strength of its individuals" (Iqbal, 1941, p. 112), he underscores that personal self-realization directly fuels national vitality. His call to "Arise and be aware" (Iqbal, 1936, p. 92) challenges people to actively manage their fates, therefore promoting political autonomy as well as economic resiliency.

Economically, self-reliance drives invention, entrepreneurial energy, and steady progress. While Seligman (2011, p. 92) stresses the need of resilience in using personal strengths for economic growth, Covey contends that obtaining autonomy depends on proactive action and personal responsibility (Covey, 1989, p. 47). Moreover, strong social networks improve community development and democratic involvement; investment in human capital is vital for productivity and growth (Becker, 1993, p. 50).

Politically, Iqbal's vision spans the creation of an independent nation in which political freedom is anchored on economic independence. He cautions that even countries with plenty of resources remain open to outside exploitation without the empowerment of their people (Piketty, 2014, p. 100). As shown by South Korea's development, deliberate economic diversification, that is, the capacity of a country to make autonomous policy decisions, reaffirms this. Essential for the fight against cultural imperialism, cultural resilience strengthens national identity and political clout (Nandy, 2011, p. 67). While worldwide studies demonstrate that robust social capital supports democratic governance (UNCTAD, 2021, p. 12), better digital connection is essential for commercial and economic integration in the globalised environment of today (worldwide Telecommunication Union, 2021, p. 15). Furthermore, studies of national economic policies show that self-sufficient, entrepreneurial cultures are more suited to negotiate favourable international terms and resist outside pressure (Hernández, 2018, p. 78; World Bank, 2020, p. 33).

اپنی ملت پر قیاس اقوام مغرب سے نہ کر  
خاص ہے ترکیب میں قوم رسول ہاشمی

(Iqbal, 2013, p. 180)

*Translation:*

What makes the country of the Prophet of the Hashemites special is its composition, thus you shouldn't compare it to Western nations (Iqbal, 2013, p. 180).

Messages of independence and pride in Islamic history are conveyed by Iqbal in this poetry, which has political and social implications. He said Muslims should be strong by looking inside and honouring their own traditions and principles. Keeping one's cultural, spiritual, and intellectual identity separate from others is crucial, since the “unique composition” of the Muslim country is emphasised. Iqbal argues that Muslims should not be intimidated by the West but rather work to restore their own grandeur by re-establishing their values.

### **Transformation Through Education: Iqbal's Vision of Pakistan and the Muslim World**

*Khudi*, as envisioned by Iqbal, captures the spirit of uniqueness and self-determination and calls on people to acknowledge their value and potential. Iqbal argued that a profound feeling of *Khudi* might spur both individual and collective change by drawing attention to the value of introspection and agency (Iqbal, 1936, p. 94). Particularly in a post-colonial setting, this concept propels political awareness and socioeconomic progress. The idea of a Muslim nation on the Indian subcontinent was first proposed by Iqbal in his vision of *Khudi*, which had a significant role in developing Pakistan's ideology. The Muslim community was inspired by his poetry and intellectual works, which gave them a feeling of purpose and helped them form Pakistan in 1947 (Rahman, 2005, p. 123). A cultural renaissance among Muslims was encouraged by Iqbal's emphasis on self-reliance; this, in turn, led to the reclaiming of Islamic traditions and values, which in turn impacted modern cultural and educational policies in Pakistan (Naseem, 2018, p. 86).

Iqbal's philosophy has significantly influenced educational reforms, championing a system that fosters critical thinking, creativity and self-reliance in place of rote memorisation. He held the conviction that education ought to enable individuals to make significant contributions to society (Iqbal, 1936, p. 94). This perspective has influenced educational policies in Pakistan, integrating contemporary education with Islamic principles (Siddiqui, 2014, p. 112). Furthermore, Iqbal's principles encompass gender equality, emphasising the significance of women's empowerment as essential for the advancement of the nation. He contended that the education and involvement of women are essential for the advancement of society, a viewpoint reflected in numerous movements championing women's rights in Pakistan and the wider Muslim world (Bari, 2015, p. 78).

Iqbal's philosophy has significantly influenced political movements that champion self-determination throughout the Muslim world, aligning with modern Islamic movements striving to restore political rights and cultural identities. For example, the concept of self-empowerment has been prominently displayed in the Arab Spring movements (Hassan, 2014, p. 150). Moreover, his concepts have significantly shaped Islamic revivalist movements that prioritise self-sufficiency and social equity, aiming to empower both individuals and communities in accordance with Iqbal's vision of a socially accountable citizenry (Esposito, 2010, p. 98). Nonetheless, obstacles remain in the complete actualisation of his vision of self-sufficiency, encompassing economic volatility, political malfeasance, and social disparity within Pakistan and the wider Muslim community. In light of these challenges, Iqbal's principles provide a foundational approach to tackling these concerns, highlighting the importance of self-awareness and accountability as essential tenets for socio-economic and political transformation (Mujahid, 2019, p. 105).

شکایت ہے مجھے یا رب خداوندان مکتب سے  
سبق شاہین بچوں کو دے رہے ہیں خاک بازی کا

(Iqbal, 2013, p. 145)

*Translation:*

I express my grievances to You, O Lord, regarding the masters of the school; They are instructing the eagle children the lesson of playing in the dust (Iqbal, 2013, p. 145).

In this stanza, Iqbal articulates his apprehension and discontent with the methodology of education delivery. He admonishes the “Gods of the school” (educators or educational system) for imparting lessons to youngsters that fail to foster growth, dignity, or empowerment. The school system is fostering complacency in youngsters, reducing them to individuals satisfied with trivial pursuits, rather than cultivating aspiration and greatness, as represented by the “lesson of the eagle.”

## ***Khudi, Unity and Global Empowerment: Iqbal's Vision for a Self-Reliant and Inclusive Future***

While modern educational institutions have the potential to cultivate intellectual growth, Iqbal warns that they often fail to nurture true self-reliance or *Khudi*, which he regards as essential for individual and collective empowerment (Iqbal, 1936, p. 94). The emergence of these institutions may breed a superficial pride that distracts from the essence of self-awareness and self-actualisation, leading to moral and intellectual decline (Nasr, 2002, p. 85). The availability of scientific advancements and modern amenities does not equate to genuine progress. While prior ages saw countless conflicts, they were not marked by the same animosity against mankind that exists now. Muhammad Iqbal's notion emphasises the individual's potential for self-realization and empowerment (Khan, 2005, p. 73). This notion acts as a crucial catalyst for both personal and communal development and collective transformation in a fragmented world. Iqbal posits that genuine self-reliance encompasses not merely individual empowerment but also the fostering of national unity. He argues that the primary objective of the ego extends beyond mere perception to encompass the aspiration "to be something" (Iqbal, 1941, p. 110), and he claims that "a nation is constructed upon the strength of its individuals" (Iqbal, 1941, p. 112). This vision is further supported by his call to "Arise and be aware" (Iqbal, 1936, p. 92), encouraging individuals to pursue self-discovery and dismiss the superficial aspects of contemporary scholarship.

Nasr (2002, p. 85) and Al-Attas (1990, p. 45) have observed that although modern educational institutions have increased access to knowledge, they frequently overlook the deeper, transformative aim of education, specifically the development of *Khudi*. Iqbal cautions that the absence of genuine self-reliance may lead to a deterioration of moral and spiritual values, despite intellectual accomplishments. The danger is exacerbated by the fragmentation of religious and cultural identities, as noted by Esposito (2001, p. 76), who contends that sectarian divides can weaken the unity necessary for a thriving society.

In a globalised context characterised by economic disparity and political instability, Iqbal's advocacy for self-reliance is increasingly relevant. Friedman (2020, p. 55) notes that political autonomy is fundamentally connected to economic independence. Deliberate policies that promote entrepreneurship and economic diversification, as illustrated by Khan's analysis (2020, p. 132), can assist nations in reclaiming their sovereignty. Rahman (1986, p. 70) and Al-Faruqi (1986, p. 101) emphasise that cultural resilience and a collective commitment to justice are essential for resisting external pressures and maintaining national identity.

Current challenges, including the erosion of cultural foundations and pervasive corruption, necessitate a renewed focus on *Khudi*. Grassroots initiatives, as noted by Jamil (2020, p. 104) and Naseem (2018, p. 86), illustrate that individual responsibility for personal development leads to benefits for the entire community. Iqbal's vision presents a framework for an inclusive future, wherein empowered individuals, grounded in self-awareness and unified by a shared purpose, can effectively address the challenges of globalisation and promote a just and resilient society.

## Results and Discussion

### Individual Empowerment

Iqbal's self-reliance (*Khudi*) offers a foundation for autonomy as an individual by stressing the value of self-respect, self-knowledge, and self-actualization. According to Iqbal, recognising one's intrinsic value and aiming towards individual brilliance is the first step in developing *Khudi*. This self-empowerment is not merely a declaration of ego; it is rooted in a profound spiritual realisation and a dedication to one's inner potential. In his writings, Iqbal urges his readers to rise beyond the constraints of economic dependence, social status, and colonial subjugation. A person's creative capacity and self-assurance can be enhanced via the practice of *Khudi*.

### National Identity and Sovereignty

According to Iqbal, *Khudi* is about more than just one person: it's about the whole country. Iqbal argues that a nation's strength and independence may be achieved via nurturing its people's collective *Khudi*. Resisting external influences, asserting its identity, and achieving sovereignty are all possible for a nation whose foundation is the self-reliance and self-awareness of its population. With Iqbal's teachings sparking a drive towards national sovereignty and unity in post-colonial cultures, this notion takes on further significance. By centring his work on *Khudi*, Iqbal promotes the idea of a self-sufficient society in which people work towards intellectual, spiritual, and moral autonomy.

### Relevance to Contemporary Challenges

Societies in the present day with problems like economic dependence, cultural fragmentation, and political instability can greatly benefit from Iqbal's ideology of self-reliance. Many countries in today's interconnected globe, particularly those in the South, are still dealing with the effects of colonialism and the demands of other political and economic systems. Iqbal presents a captivating vision for conquering these obstacles by stressing the need of cultivating inner strength, perseverance, and national togetherness. At a time when people are struggling with their own identities and feeling socially isolated, Iqbal's teachings provide hope for a better future in which everyone may feel valued and respected while still being able to make their own unique contributions to society.

### Conclusion

The study shows that Allama Muhammad Iqbal's idea of self-reliance (*Khudi*) may be used to empower people and bring the nations together even now. Iqbal's philosophy, which guides individuals from self-respect to self-actualization, provides a path for overcoming modern challenges. It also sheds light on the Muslim renaissance by exploring the relationship between individuality, resilience, accountability and independence. Iqbal addressed the political awakening of Muslims, emphasising the necessity for a strong national identity rooted in Islamic principles by expressing a vision in response to the colonial challenges in the Indian subcontinent.

Iqbal's concept of self-reliance is deeply rooted in the teachings of the Qur'an and Hadith. It also intersects with the ideas from both Western and Eastern philosophies. This synthesis establishes a profound framework that helps individuals transcend their constraints and engage more meaningfully and productively with society. This vision rises above individual advancement; it serves as an appeal for communal development, wherein self-sufficiency forms the bedrock of national identity and autonomy.

In a global landscape characterised by both challenges and opportunities, Iqbal's concept of *Khudi* continues to hold significance, championing the ideals of economic independence and political sovereignty. As societies grapple with these intricacies, the significance of education as a catalyst for transformation becomes evident, resonating with Iqbal's vision for Pakistan and the wider Muslim community.

Ultimately, Iqbal's legacy calls on individuals to cultivate inner strength and self-assurance. This empowerment enables them to contribute meaningfully to their communities and forge a more promising future. Addressing the intricacies of today's sociopolitical and economic environments requires his profound insights regarding independence, perseverance and national sovereignty. A more equitable, self-sufficient, united and harmonious global society may be achieved via the application of Iqbal's teachings, which encourage a profound feeling of personal value and communal duty, allowing people and countries to realise their maximum potential. By adopting his philosophy, individuals and nations can transcend their limitations, harness their strengths and work toward societal improvement, reflecting Iqbal's lasting vision of empowerment and self-sufficiency in today's context.

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