

## ROLE OF MAULANA AZAD IN MODERNISING EDUCATION

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### ABSTRACT

*This research seeks to explore how Maulana Azad, (who is considered a bridge between old and new education system of India) glorified modern education of India. He glorified cultures, civilizations, ideologies and philosophies which highly influenced Indian history and Indian education system simultaneously. This research also seeks to explore how he adopted new methods and strategies of education influenced from the west which later became the basis of Indian modern education. Education has an important role to play in promoting unity. This research lays emphasis on how azad supported the idea and stressed the importance of textbooks and reading material specifically in history, civics, geography and literature for promoting nationalism and unity in diversity. The research shows how India continues to work on the educational methods and strategies of Azad introduced /adopted.*

**Keywords:** Education, Maulana Azad, Modern Education.

### Introduction

Maulana Azad was one of the most distinguished leaders of pre and post independent India. He was a renowned scholar and a brilliant orator. He was well versed in many languages as Persian, Arabic, Hindi, English and Urdu. His name was Abulkalam Ghulam Mohiuddin Ahmed. He was appointed as first education minister of independent India. In remembrance of his extraordinary contribution to Indian education system and in honour of his endless efforts to promote quality education in India, his birthday 11th november is celebrated as national education day. Maulana Azad recieved education informally .He was home schooled and self taught. He did not attend any school, colleges or universities. From a young age he showed great literary flare and edited a weekly journal called "Al Misbah" and also brought out a weekly journal called "lisan -un -sidiq". Through personal study he also attained a great knowledge of western philosophy, history and contemporary politics. Maulana always stood for humanism and was a great nationalist .He showed his nationalism as he greatly criticised the british policy of divide and rule, opposed the partition of bengal in 1905 ,and also tried to persuade Muslim representatives to give up the demand of seperate country. He strongly proposed the idea of enriching the principle of secularism in the constitution of india along with religious freedom and equality for all Indians. In this way he is considered as one of the pioneers and architects of modern secular India and occupies a special place in Indian history. To symboles hindu - Muslims unity he once quoted a beautiful metaphor of Sir Syed is that "Hindu and Muslims are two eyes on mother Indias face".(1)

He joined Indian national congress and became one of the followers of Mahatama Gandhi and was counted among the revolutionaries like Sir Aurobindo, Shri Shyam Sunder Chakroborty and Jawahar lal Nehru .In the field of education Maulana left indelible imprints .As he was home schooled and was taught by the best ulemas /scholars of the time .He hailed from the background that was rigidly islamic in nature. Maulana wrote that his father Khairuddin was influential islamic scholar and was implacably opposed to modernity. But Maulana's ever questioning mind, that he was endowed with, refused to follow blindly and went on, in reach of the path to choose, on his own. He said ,"I could not recencile myself with the prevailing customs and belief and my heart was full of new sense of revolt .The ideas i had acquired from my family and early training could no longer satisfy me .I felt that i must find the truth for myself . Almost instinctively i began to move out of my family orbit and seek my own paths."(2)

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Maulana Azad played an important role in modernising the education system. Although he was a muslim scholar he was also a nationalist .He was open to anything of value anywhere. He synthesized the islamic, the indian and the western ideas of value in the single pattern.

Azad was initially influenced by the 14th/15th century Moroccan philosopher, historian and traveller Ibn-e-Khaldoon. From him, Azad got the inspiration to question the traditional ways of teaching and curriculum. He found education to be the sole means of rectifying all the errors that existed in religious and secular learning(3). Maulana Azad was also influenced by Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, who stood for modern education and modern science for muslims. Maulana was critical of the ulemas who urged the community to keep away from anything which has to do with the British. Even though Maulana stood firmly against the tyrant rule of british, he was deeply impressed by the realms of west in their elementary education system and was firmly committed to what was scientific in the western system.

Besides Maulana was deeply impressed by Rosseau as well. He was in agreement with him in the innate goodness of man (4).Azad agreed with Rosseau in his advocacy of the child's necessity and ability to grasp the truth through his own insight(3).

Azad was the most proper choice to be chosen as the education minister of free India, as he was a man of great vision and character and was able to asses the situation correctly and frame and adopt the educational policies which would help in the long run to restore mental sanity and balance to national life and instill the right values in it(5).

As education minister he began his task by enquiring the limitations of existing educational system. He appointed university education commission (1948), kher committee of elementary education (1948) and secondary education commission (1952-53).He also framed many policies and established institutions which formed the ground for the development of education system in future. Education was given due place in five year plans and repeatedly in his speeches said , "The central purpose of our five year plans is not the production of material wealth and resources but the creation for which right education is more important then the development of agriculture ,industrial trade etc".(1)

While addressing the meeting of the central advisory board of education on 15<sup>th</sup> march 1952,Maulana Azad re-emphasized the fine fold programme for the expansion of education in the country as follows:

- Universal compulsory basic education for all children of school age .
- Social education for one adult illiterates.
- Measures for improvement in the quality and expansion of facilities for secondary and higher education.
- Technical and scientific education on a scale adequate to the nation's needs .
- Measures for the enrichment of the cultural life of the community by encouraging the arts and providing facilities for recreation and other amenities.

The government of India formulate the policies under the guidance of Maulana Azad and also took steps to implement them. Maulana's main emphasis was on social education by which he meant educating the minds of their rights and duties. This was to include understanding of social conditions of the country and laid stress on cultural education of people for economics empowerment of country which included music, drama, crafts etc. Maulana Azad believed that education should help in character building of a man also it should enable our nation to defend newly freed country, which was to be done through social education. He enhanced the role of education in national development and encouraged the growth of science and technology. He took necessary measures to provide facilities for education in science and technology at all levels, addressing a meeting of central advisory board on 9 november 1953 he said , "It appears to me that increasing emphasis will have to be placed on providing higher education in the field of agriculture, medicine, engineering ,science and technology "(1).

Azad reorganised the All India Council for technical education and saw the establishment of a host of institutions of education and cultural significance including:

- The Indian council of cultural relations.
- University grants commission.
- The national institute of basic education.
- The hindi shiksha samiti.
- Lalit kala academy.

- The board of scientific terminology for hindi.
- All India council of scientific and industrial research.
- Delhi polytechnic etc.

According to Azad the most important objective of education should be national integration and secularism. India continues to work on this vision of Maulana Azad .Kothari commission (1964-66) also stressed this aim of education .He stressed that education should play a role in promoting world unity and global citizenship.

Azad emphasized four major programmes to modernise education and break the domination structure of hierarchical Indian society:

- Removal of illiteracy through universalisation of elementary education upto secondary standard and a drive for adult education including education for women.
- Equalising educational opportunities in indian society where exploitations on the basis of class and caste division were rampant.
- Three language formula where the state languages and hindi would be medium of instruction but english would remain as an important second language.
- Sound primary education through out the country.

Azad also worked on content and curriculum for different levels of education. He believed at energy level it should be distinctively different. All elementary level there should be learning by doing ,at secondary level it should meant for training skills, at university stage it needs to be raised and enriched .He also proposed that women's education , agricultural education, crafts , physical education, recreation should receive special attention. He stressed that suitable textbooks and teaching learning material should be prepared for specially abled children or people. He also brought reforms in examination system to save learners from stress and strain.

Teacher in the vision of Maulana Azad occupies the central position in the whole education system. He firmly believed that no reforms in education can be effective without empowering them and no policies can be implemented successfully without taking them fully on board .According to him teachers should be efficient and devoted for which their wages and social status needs to be raised. He thus stressed the need and significance the training of teachers for improving the quality of education. Besides in Azad was also hidden an ideal teacher. He practised what he preached.

Azad educational policies covered both towns and village's alike. He emphasized again and again the need of developing an international perspective and rise above all petty considerations of languages and creed. Maulana gave his attention to every important problems whether it concerned medium of instruction, linguistics, tensions, adult illiteracy, sports and festivals etc

### **Conclusion**

When the colonial rule was rooted out from India, Maulana Azad supported retaining english as a medium of education along with regional languages. Azad's contribution as first education minister of independent India was commendable as he brought revolution in the field of education. Azad occupies a key position in the educational, cultural, and scientific development of modern India. At the crucial time he institutionalised the sectors like education and culture and laid the foundation of a future network of scientific and technological institutions. India even after 70 years of independence still has the largest number of illiterates in the world, even after number of achievements in various field like science, technology and other fields. Still here is a wide gap between the opportunities available to rich, educated and urban centered people and the poor, illiterate or semi illiterate rural and other disadvantageously placed, and between men and women. Here is not only an unacceptable large proportion of illiterate population, but a major unfulfilled demand for quality public education at every level of learning and research. Socio – economic development is by passing a main section of our population today, as they do not have access to quality education relevant to their requirements. In the present context scenario, it is also necessary to take urgent measures to ensure gender – parity in education by educating communities and families regarding the benefits of girl education by imparting incentives to enroll and retain the girls in schools. What we need is a national commitment to achieve what Azad as our first education minister of independent India had started towards glide completion; we must make all efforts to reach that goal.

Further more extensive research is needed to do justice with the multifaceted contribution of Maulana Azad and his role in the growth of robust and pluralist independent India.

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