

Role of Maulana Azad in Modernizing Education System in India

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ABSTRACT

This paper will critically examine the role of Azad's contribution towards modernizing the education system in India. This paper would also study how Azad was distinct from other intellectuals to promote the notion of education in India. Azad has a remarkable place in the history of modern India because he challenged the earlier assumptions of political thought of Aligarh school in early twenties. He played a major role in keeping the movement of education alive in the country and insisted the students and all Muslims of India to learn Devangri and Hindi scripts.

He believed that for independent India, proper education policy is more important than the industrial policy. Being the first Education Minister of Independent India, his focus of attention was to reinforce and democratize the educational system. The motive behind democratizing of education was to universalize the achievement vis-à-vis to break the dominating structures of hegemonic hierarchy of caste and class.

He wanted the Muslims to imbibe a reformist attitude. He was opposed to the separatism and sectarian nationalism which was being preached by the Muslim league. He was not only one of the great scholars of the Koran in modern times but due to his command over Arabic and Persian he was held in high esteem as a Koranic interpreter in the countries of the Middle East and Africa. He travelled throughout India to promote Gandhian notion of education. Adding importance to the education, he believed that wealth of a nation is not concentrated in country's banks but in primary schools.

In fact, he was the first person who raised the issue of National System of Education which is today the bed-rock of National Policy on Education (1986). The policy was reviewed in 1992, according to which the children up to a given level, irrespective of caste, creed, location or sex have access to education of a comparable quality. There are two fundamental points on which he makes no compromises.

The first was the unity of India and second one is the education of the people. The major reason for standing united India is that he knows that any kind of development is then possible when the country is politically, economically and socially united. This paper will focus on his vision of modernity in these two perspectives particularly in the area of education.

Keywords: development, economically, education, modern, nation, system, vision

INTRODUCTION

Educational Views and Contribution of Azad and its Relevance: After India's partition and independence in 1947, the violence, security and refugees problems took place and Azad got the responsibility for the safety and security of the Muslims. He became the first Minister of Education in Independent India on 15th August in 1947 and reviewed the educational policies of the British and played an important role in framing the new educational planning and policy with the help of the First Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru.

As the first education minister and chairman of Central Advisory Board of Education, he had tried to focus upon a number of different educational activities and programs such as free and compulsory universal primary education, adult literacy, education for underprivileged section of the society including women, diversification of secondary education and vocational training, quality higher education and research and also effective science and technical education etc.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITRATURE

1. Muzafar Ahmad Dar

In this work they had focused on the problems and challenges regarding the revolutionize the education system in India and discussed about objectives of Azad's modern education policy.

Objectives of Azad's modern education policy are

1. Moral and Cultural Values.
2. Education for Democracy.
3. Education for Development .
4. Education for National Integration.
5. Internationalism.

2. Inam Ul Haq

In this work they had focused on the Azad's views on Science and Technology, Emphasis on Women Education, Azad as Education Minister, Hindu-Muslim unity, and also written about Azad's writings on Religion, Secularism.

3. Nalini Juneja

This article focused on Azad's contribution towards Constitutional Mandate for Free and Compulsory Education. This article discusses some of the presumptive and policy-framing rationalizations about the 'real intentions' of the founding fathers of the Constitution of India in leaving unspecified the lower age limit in respect of the provision of free and compulsory education for 'all children until they complete the age of fourteen years'. It also examines some other plausible explanations for the dissonance in the text of Article 45.

4. Tauseef Ahmad Parry

This article explains in detail about Azad's contribution to Mediating Islam and Modernity.

Statement of the Problem

"The Role Of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad In Modernizing Education System In India"

Objectives of the Study

1. To make an analytical study of the evolution of Maulana Azad thought process on education.
2. To make an assessment and a present of Azad contribution to the theory of Indian education.
3. To study the role of Maulana Azad in promoting Muslim girls education and National education system in India.
4. To identify the areas were Azad's view points on education may be found relevant for Modernizing Education System in India.
5. To make suggestions for the improvement of the modernizing Education System in India.

Methodology of the Study

Defining the objectives of the study and articulation of the assumptions of the study was followed by the description of the nature of the study will be Educational, Philosophical, Historical employed. The nature of the study will be Philosophical and Historical methods will be employed. As such, a combination of the Philosophical and Historical methods of research has been employed. It has a library study in the since the data for the study have will be collected from the sources like Books, Journals, etc., As a theoretical research research, the study will have largely made use of the Educational Philosophical method where in the conceptual positions of various educational ideas of Maulana Azad thoughts which will be analyzed and synthesized. Historical research will be described as the application of scientific method to the description and analysis of past events.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Once the data was connective intensively and extensively and a large number of Index cards, the process of analyzing the material and systematic analysis of the data were done. Hopefully the researcher may come out with nill inside, New interpretation by through some light and the problem among the limitations of the study. One must point out the fact, the study uses the role of Moulana Abul Kalam Azad's Modernizing education system in India. The study will attempt to answer such questions as, What are the early influences and revolutionary activities of Maulana Azad? What are the pre Independence and post-Independence activities? What is the role played by Maulana Azad in Modernizing Education System in India? What are the strategies that Azad have adopted to bring changes in the Education of Muslim girls? How Azad's Educational Philosophy is relevant to Modern world? These crucial questions will be answered and made at appropriate places in the study from this perspectives our academic exercise of analyzing the Role of Azad in Modernizing Education System in India.

Maulana Azad, as India's first Education Minister, modernized the education system by promoting secular, scientific, and inclusive education. He championed universal, free, and compulsory primary education, aiming to democratize

learning and uplift marginalized communities. His vision also emphasized quality higher education and vocational training, leading to the establishment of institutions like the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) and the University Grants Commission (UGC). He also focused on decolonizing history and culture, fostering moral and character building, and promoting communal harmony.

Curriculum

In 1923, the Azad School was affiliated with Jamia Millia, Delhi. Therefore, after matriculation students were successfully enrolled in the Jamia Millia to continue their studies. Similarly the Jamia Millia curriculum was adopted with some additional subjects such as Pukhtu language and literature. Mathematics was also taught in English because of the non-availability of Pukhtu textbooks. The curriculum of the school which was prepared under the guidance of Ghaffar Khan was designed in such a way to fulfill the requirements of students, as both religious and modern education was imparted at Azad School, Utmanzai.

Following were the main curricula of the School:

Theology Segment

This section included the study of the Holy Quran, Saying of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) Hadith, Islamic Jurisprudence fiqh, Islamic history. Ghaffar Khan is reported to have said that apart from Pukhtu, Arabic language would also be taught at primary classes (Rehman, 1996: 138). Theology was one of the core subjects of the school to familiarize students with the basic knowledge of Quran and Sunnah. Maulana Muhammad Israel and Maulavi Shah Rasul were notable teachers and in-charge of this section.

Vocational Segment

Agriculture was one of the most popular professions of the Pukhtun. There were no business opportunities or commerce training available for the Pukhtuns in the area. Pukhtunkhwah is till date famous for production of raw material. Hindus and Sikhs were the most dominated communities of trade and commerce.

Therefore, some vocational subjects and skills were included in curriculum i.e. kulahs (a special Pukhtuns hat), tailoring, carpentry and weaving.

For the vocational training, several handlooms (khaddis) were brought from down country for manufacturing of cotton fabrics. This particular handmade cloth known as khaddar was equally popular among rich and poor classes of the society. The promotion of khaddar was to create a sense of love for the indigenous product and hatred for foreign products (Rauf, 2006:44).

Propaganda Segment

This section was for students training to persuade people for freedom struggle. Rauf (2006:44) highlights; Students were trained (two days a week) outside the school in visiting different villages and addressing the people in mosques and hujras (community centres). On many occasions they were successful in persuading the people to give up non-essential expenditure on death and marriage ceremonies. They urged the people (who were reluctant to send their children for modern education to British schools) to send their children to the Azad schools for education.

The school had a very well-harmonized occupational policy with other core subjects; Mathematics, Geography and General Knowledge etc. Thursdays afternoons were reserved for students to the co-curricular activities; public speaking and Mushaira (poems writing and reciting) etc.

The independence schools offered a nine-year course which was equivalent to Matriculation from the Punjab University. Each academic year included a Quarter, Mid-year and Final year examinations. The teachers were responsible for the supervision of these schools and they regularly reported on their performance (Rauf, 2006:44).

Finances

The school was started on the basis of self-help and the financial needs of the school were fulfilled with the help of the local community. Also the local Khans (landlords) and wealthy people were asked to contribute in the school by giving financial support and scholarships to the students, which was unfortunately not very encouraging; still the School managed to function and with the efforts of Ghaffar Khan and other devoted men the School income reached to Rs.18,000 (CID, 1935). Ghaffar Khan also managed to get grants sanctioned from the government of Rs.1,115 (Zamindar, 1935).

Medium of Instructions

Azad School adopted Pukhtu as medium of instructions. However, Urdu and English languages were also taught. Students were encouraged for Urdu and English speeches in their annual function to present their viewpoints to non-Pukhtun audience. Moreover, students used to sing famous Urdu patriotic and freedom loving poems. According to Abdul Ghaffar

Khan, a nation is known and recognized by its language and without a language of its own a nation cannot really be called a nation. A nation that forgets its language will eventually disappear from the map of the world altogether and mother tongue is the best medium of instructions (Easwaran, 1985:72).

Co-curricular Activities

The students of Azad School Utmanzai were also provided the opportunities of co-curricular activities. Physical exercises and other sports activities also formed part of the curriculum. Different tournaments were arranged on the local level at Utmanzai Azad School. Abdul Wali Khan the sports Secretary of the School took great interest in arranging tournaments. The school arranged a tournament of volleyball on 1st February 1922, which was the maiden activity at the school. After the end of the tournament a silver trophy worth Rs. 20 and silver medals were awarded to the winning team. A team, which paid Rs.5 to the organizing committee, was eligible to participate in the tournament (CID, 1936a).

A part from sport, the School authorities started arranging dialogues, debates and staging dramas right from its establishment. The first drama was staged on the first anniversary of the school on 27th April 1922. A large number of people i.e. about 800 hundred were present on the occasion (CID, 1936b). Teachers and students of the school were active participating of the co-curricular activities.

Key Contributions to Modernizing India's Education

Universal & Compulsory Education:

Azad advocated for free and compulsory primary education for all, laying the groundwork for policies like the Right to Education (RTE) Act.

Secular & Inclusive Education:

He stressed the importance of secular education, aiming to foster communal harmony and break down social barriers of caste and class.

Emphasis on Science & Technology:

He pushed for quality higher education and research, especially in science and technical fields, to foster independent national development.

Institutional Development:

Under his leadership, key institutions were established, including:

The Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) in 1951.

The University Grants Commission (UGC) in 1953.

Decolonization of Education:

Azad urged historians to rewrite India's history from a decolonized perspective, focusing on cooperation, culture, and humanity rather than just wars and kings.

Adult Literacy & Women's Education:

He also focused on adult literacy programs and the education of underprivileged sections of society, including women.

Vocational Training:

He supported the diversification of secondary education to include vocational training to prepare students for employment.

His Vision for Education

Nation-Building:

Azad viewed education as a powerful tool for individual empowerment and nation-building.

Moral & Social Values:

He emphasized moral and social education for character building and instilling values of secularism and global understanding.

Access for All:

He believed that education should provide equal opportunities for everyone, ensuring access to knowledge for personal and societal upliftment. His visionary policies and efforts established a robust framework for modern education in India, ensuring its focus on progress, inclusivity, and national identity.

Azad's basic philosophy of life and his educational ideas reflected on his educational steps and policy for the required changes in the development of the education for the nation. He has a faith in democracy for which he focused on the Universalization of education and „achievement orientation’. He approached three languages such as regional

languages and Hindi as medium of instruction and English to be given an important language for higher education and global communication. 6 Today we are following the three language formula as adopted in NPE 1986. Azad is of the opinion that „every individual has a right to an education and the state has to perform its duty’.

This is similar to Right to Education (RTE) Act 2009. Now we are providing the opportunity to implement the right for all individuals in the country. He wanted to universalize the free and compulsory elementary education up to the age of fourteen years. It reflected the social demand approach of educational planning. The planning and program of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) in 2010 had been launched for the same purpose. The protest against child labour by Child Labour Act has made the program successful in removing wastage and stagnation in primary education. To meet the demand a number of institutions have been created by the Indians only. He wanted to diversify the secondary education in order to introduce vocational training. Recently the secondary education has been given the scope of Vocationalization to ensure the job opportunity.

As a part of social justice approach of educational planning, he came forward for the development of the women, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, handicapped and adult. According to him, women should be educated as the citizens of free India and their contribution is needed for family and national development. To remove the 85% illiterate population, he extended 1% allocation of funds to 10% for the purpose of educational expenditure. The National Literacy Drive program and the women empowerment in today’s government policy are the reflections of Azad’s educational views and dreams. Azad opined that “Science is neutral. Its discoveries can be used equally to heal and to kill.”

CONCLUSION

Azad was not exclusively an Islamic minded or even an oriental minded. He wanted to make a bridge between the western science and Indian science. 8 He also supported English as medium of instruction in higher education as followed by Egypt, Turkey, China, Japan etc. We cannot deny the progress and development of the western science and education. He opined that Indian languages needed to be improved. He encouraged for rural development including the establishment of educational institution in rural areas. He wanted to introduce quality higher education including science and technology for which he has taken a few steps to establish different organizations and institutions. He setup the Central Institute of Education in Delhi in 1947, regarded now as the department of education to the University of Delhi for acting as a research centre to overcome new educational problems in the country.

He emphasized on the need and significance of the training of the teachers for providing quality education. As the first education minister, he took great step to establish the first Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur in 1951 for the development of science and technology. It has been serving the purpose since its establishment. Today a number of such institutes in Mumbai, Chennai, Kanpur, and Delhi have been established and serving the purpose in the higher education and technical field. The University Grants Commission has been setup in 1953 under his leadership. The higher education in the country has been under its control and regulations.⁹ He took great effort in the establishment of Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore. He took active role in framing the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research and Indian Council for Social Science Research and Central Bureau of Textbook Research for educational development at all stages.

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