

## CONTRIBUTION OF MAULANA ABUL KALAM AZAD IN WOMEN EDUCATION

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### **Abstract:**

*The worth purpose of this study is to identify the broad vision of MaulanaAbulKalam Azad on women's education and his efforts during his minister-ship. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad is a role model of secular and patriotic Indians. He was a great intellectual scholar and philosopher. He was one of the pioneers of the 'right to education' which is effective from 1April 2010. The youngest President of the (INC) Indian National Congress and first Education Minister of India,Maulana Azad, considered "education is the birthright of every citizen in the country." The study will discuss in the first phase, educational ideas of Maulana Azad, his educational philosophy, his educational planning, and his views, which are based on religious education. However, it is modified in the light of his knowledge of modern education and his earlier ideal Sir Syed, which was emphasized on women's education. Maulana Azad considered that the state has obligations to ensure education to all, at least up to the secondary and higher education. Elementary and secondaryeducation is more important than a higher level because the foundation of the entire national education is laid in the earlier stages of every boy and girl. In the second phase, the research paper will discuss Maulana Azad's policy on Women's education in India because Women's education was an essential part of the education policy of M. Azad. He knows that our educational programs depend on women's education because with uneducated 'adhiAbadi,' we can't achieve our national dream, i.e., development. In 1949 (UNESCO) United Nations Educational and Science Cultural Organisation's inaugural address, he said, "Providing education to women without giving them freedom and forcing them to conformity to the veil, will not only be useless but injurious and baneful." In the third phase,the efforts endeavored by Maulana Azad and its implications will also be discussed.Maulana Azad was being the first Education Minister of independent India, wanted to ley strength and democratise our educational system. Lastly, discuss challenges regarding Women education in present educational administration and his vision of how could be helpful.*

*This study will provide valuable information regarding Maulana Azad's ideas on Women's education and may help deal with present challenges. Maulana Azad's vision will guide us to improve the level of education policy.*

**Keywords:** Maulana Azad, Education, Women's Education, Education Administration.

### **Introduction:**

MaulanaAbulKalam Azad is anardent figure of the twentieth century in Indian. He was a great intellectual, scholar, philosopher, and one of the prominent freedom fighters of India. When our country became independent in 1947, there were a lot of responsibilities on the shoulders of Indian leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Patel, and Maulana Azad. Maulana Azad joined the interim

government in January 1947 as Education Minister feeling that in formulating educational policy, he could contribute to the future form of the country. Maulana Azad has a remarkable openness to modern western knowledge, even an opposer of western rule over India. He made a lasting influence to Urdu prose literature with his translation and interpretation of the Quran. During his eleven years Minister of Education, which is continued up until he died in 1958, performed several vital services for the Indian education system. Among all those herculean assignments, the promotion of women's education and its administration was one of the essential tasks.

### **Biographical Sketches of Maulana Azad:**

Maulana Azad was born in Mecca, Saudi Arabia, in 1888 and named Muhiuddin Ahmad. His father, Maulana Khairuddin, who was also a great religious scholar and spiritual guide, went to Mecca at 25, settled there, and gained eminence and fame as a scholar after the publication of the ten-volume work of Egypt. In 1890 Maulana Khairuddin, along with his family, returned to India and settled in Calcutta.<sup>1</sup> Maulana Azad was a Muslim theologian, thinker, and one of the most learned men of the East. He was the best author of the modern commentary on the Quran. In 1923, he was elected as the youngest President of the Indian National Congress (special session)<sup>2</sup>. At the age of thirty-five, he was the youngest man ever to preside over the Congress. This was in itself a signed honor. It is crucial in Azad's life was that it symbolized his identification with a political party. He was a rare example of personality with such multiple qualities. The former Congress President Acharya Kriplani had once articulated his opinions on him in the words below:

"Maulana Azad's personality was great. He was not a historical personality rather a considerable period of history was inherent in his personality."<sup>3</sup>(reference)

### **Azad's Literary Works:**

Maulana Azad's literary life started from 12 years when he began by writing articles which continued till 1916, after small articles he started his literary writings in this period, he impelled his famous journal 'AL-Hilal' and wrote his autobiography and "Tazkira and Tafseer – Quran" between 1916-1936. He wrote an epic book, Ghubar e Khatir, during 1936-45.<sup>4</sup>

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1 Grover, V. 1965, Preface Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. Deep and Deep publication, New Delhi. p-78

2 Douglas, Abul Kalam Azad (An Intellectual and Religious Biography) Oxford University Press 1988, p-192

3 V. N. Datta, Maulana Azad, Manohar, Delhi, 1990 p.6

4 Ibid p-98

As a journalist, Maulana Azad continued to associate with a large number of reputed journals/newspapers like Vakil, Zamidar, Muslim Gazette, Paisa Akhbar, Mashriq, Al-Huque, Humdard, and Comrade (English journal). All these journals were painted with "Pan Islamic" colours.<sup>5</sup>

### **Maulana Azad's Philosophy On Education:**

Maulana Azad's philosophy is based on religious temperament. He was a spiritualist and a scholar of Islamic religion and philosophy. Dr. K.G.Saiyadain pointed out in his article<sup>6</sup> he says that Azad's educational ideas are grounded in his understanding of Islam. He was equally conversant with all other aspects of his cultural heritage, the Indian heritage, and modern heritage, which cuts across the east-west barriers. In Azad's philosophy, there are five universal values, which one must try to achieve in order to claim to be a full-fledged man. These are – Ma'aruf (Good), Haq (Truth), Jamal, (Beauty) Love, and Adl (Justice).<sup>7</sup>

### **Maulana Azad and Education:**

The core of his educational thinking is Islamic, but it is modified in the light of his knowledge of modern educational thought in the West and in India. The impact of the West on his thinking is seen significantly at his work and in his attempt to model a new system of child education in India. As a member of the constituent assembly and Minister of education, he played an important role in the enactment of 'Right to Education'. He expressed his thought, "Every individual has the right to an education that will enable him to develop his faculties and live a fully human life. Such education is the birthright of all citizen. A State cannot claim that it has fulfilled its obligations until it enable itself to provide for every single individual the prolific ways to the acquisition of knowledge and self-betterment."<sup>8</sup>

Moulana Azad stressed the importance of primary education for the future welfare of the people. He emphasized on the speedy progress of adult education and observed that without education, electorate democracy could not perform the functions expected of it. Therefore he wanted the scope of adult education should also include provision for Social education.<sup>9</sup>

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5 Mainstream Weekly (ISSN:0542:1462) Educational Leadership of Maulana Azad.

6 Saiyadain, K.G. Maulana Azad's Philosophy of education, Maharaja Sayajirao University, Baroda 1961.

7 Journal Indian Education Vol-xxxix, November 2013, NCERT. P- 168

8 Azad, M. Future of Education, Broad cast from AIR, New Delhi, 30 sep 1953. Published by Ministry of Information and broadcasting Govt. of India.

9 Azad, M. Social Education, Press Conference, May 31, 1948 Published by Deep and Deep publications, New Delhi.

Maulana Azad suggested three stages of secondary education – elementary, middle, and higher. Of these, elementary and middle are more critical because the foundation of the real advice of National education is laid in these two early stages. If the foundation is a weak or wrongly laid, the rest of the structure is insecure or faulty.<sup>10</sup> Azad gave more stress on the pattern of primary education because he thinks it provides a base for National Education policy and reforming the entire structure. He thought that "A good school is a national asset of the highest value at any place or at any time. Schools are the laboratories which produce the future citizen of a state. The quality of the state, therefore, depends upon the quality of such laboratories. In the context of modern India the importance of good schools is even greater. On the one hand, we have vast illiteracy and on the other almost unbounded opportunities."<sup>11</sup> Maulana Azad emphasized two tasks, first, the creation of a Nation-wide system of primary education for all children of schools going agenda. The second is the provision of facilities of the highest type of education in the technical field.

### **Education Policy Of Maulana Azad:**

In the meeting of "Central Advisory Board of Education,"<sup>12</sup> Azad presented his education policy as an Education Minister for the expansion of education in the country. The conspicuous points of his education policy are as follows:

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

### **Maulana Azad on Women Education:**

Women's education is an essential part of Maulana Azad's education policy. He knew that our education programs depend upon women's education because with uneducated "Adhi Abadi," we cannot

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10 Speeches of the M. Azad (1947-1955) Publications Division Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Govt. of India.

11 Grover, V. Abul Kalam Azad (Speech at the Diamond jubilee celebration of Sindhiya School, Gawaliar, 26th Feb 1949), Deep and Deep publication, New Delhi. P-78

12 Inaugural Address of Somnath Chatterjee (former Lok Sabha speaker) in NUEPA conference on Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and the National system of Education 2010.

achieve our national dream, i.e., development. In 1949 UNESCO's inaugural address, he said, "Providing education to women without giving them freedom and forcing them to conformity to the veil, not only be useless but injurious and baneful."<sup>13</sup>

Maulana Azad gave particular stress on the teaching of modern science and also on the education of women. In 1949, in the Central Assembly, he emphasized on the importance of imparting instruction in modern sciences and knowledge and also observed that "no programme of national education can be appropriate if it does not give full consideration to the education and advancement of one-half of the society- that is the women."<sup>14</sup> Maulana Azad thus emphasised the universalization of education of the highest standard. More, he wanted that India as a whole should become literate, and there should be not only village schools but also schools which will impart the best form of education and that proper emphasis should be given to the women education. It is essential to realize that education alone can bring about democratic consolidation, social cohesiveness, and sustained growth. We have to take our whole society along on the path of education and development and should not allow any section to lag. Of special importance is women's education as they constitute nearly fifty percent of our population. We must full fill this gap for the betterment of the literacy rate of our country. In the field of modern science and women education, Maulana Azad was highly influenced by Sir Syed Ahmad Khan. He admitted in his writing like *Azad ki Kahani* that Sir Syed's writing brought about an intense revolution in his thought, both his religious as well intellectual life.<sup>15</sup>

Maulana Azad raised issues of women education in the Constituent Assembly in 1949, asking for multiplying the educational opportunity for women. Azad strongly felt that our objective could not be realized unless we got out of narrow-mindedness, which has been our greatest hindrance. In this new era of freedom, we should keep ourselves free from this disease as there is no other disease as dangerous for the healthy growth of national life. Azad felt that education of women is doubly purposeful: first that they need to be educated as a citizen of free India, and second that their education facilitates the task of educating the younger generation.

### **Efforts and Contribution of Maulana Azad:**

Through education, Azad wanted to revolutionize the way people thought. However, he realized that it was a double-edged sword capable of both construction and destruction. Therefore the right education is

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13 Speech at the inaugural of the National Commission of UNESCO, New Delhi, April 9, 1949.

14 Address at Central Assembly 1949.

15 Douglas, (Abdul Kalam Azad An Intellectual and Religious Biography) New Delhi, 1988, P-51.

one which brings about positive changes in the beliefs, actions and habits of those who gain it. With this belief, Azad revolutionized the Indian education system during his tenure as the Education Minister of the country. He laid the foundation of several essential educational institutes and organization:-

1. **University Commission:** This Commission was created in 1948. The government accepted most of the advices and recommendations of this Commission. Teaching in several new disciplines was started in the universities due to the effort of Maulana Azad.
2. **All India Council for Secondary Education:** This Council was recognized with a view to developing mutual relations amongst states.
3. **Secondary Education Commission:** The pioneer, Maulana Azad felt that the old syllabi of the secondary education should be changed to bring another more effective. For this prodigious purpose, he established the secondary Education Commission in September 1952, of which Dr. A.L.Mudaliar was selected as the Chairperson. On the recommendation of this Commission, the structure of Secondary Education was changed.
4. **All India Council for Technical Education:** After the All India Council for Technical Education was established, on its recommendations, a large number of Technical schools and Collages were opened.
5. **Adult education:** the Board of at Adult Education established intending to facilitate education amongst educated adults.
6. **Rural Higher Education:** The Board of Rural Education was established with a view to extend higher education in the village.
7. Central Social Development Board.
8. Central Education Board.
9. Education and Vocational Guidance Bureau.
10. National Organization for Basic Education.
11. Council for Scientific and Technical Research.

He also endeavored to establish the following liberal Arts Academies:-

1. Sahitya Academy
2. Sangeet Natak Academy
3. Lalit Kala Academy

## Conclusion:

Efforts of Maulana Azad are mile stones of Indian Education administration. Dr.SyedaHameed says, "It is ironic that the country neither recognizes Maulana Azad's contribution to the nation nor is it willing to work on the values the great leader had stood for."?(reference)Maulana Azad wanted to create harmony between East and West through education. His views on women education is clear, oppressing women is a sign of ignorance. There is no co-existence between knowledge and ignorance. One women where remain oppressed and become educated at the same time. Until the day women are emancipated, education can never be fruitful or widespread." Because of his efforts and his contribution, in 2008 Indian government declared National Education Day on 11 November, the day of his birthday. He has been retrospectively awarded India's highest civilian honor, Bharat Ratna, in 1992. He increased the Annual Educational Budget of India from two crore rupees to 35 crore rupees in his Ministership This eminent and first education Minister of Independent India died in 1958.

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