Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and the National Education System

Edited by

S. Irfan Habib

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATIONAL PLANNING AND ADMINISTRATION

17-B, Sri Aurobindo Marg, New Delhi-110016

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Foreword

The National University of Educational Planning and Administration organised a two day seminar on the occasion of Maulana Azad's birthday, celebrated as National Education Day on November 11-12 2009. The two-day event was organised under the auspices of Maulana Azad Chair, which the Ministry of Human Resource Development instituted at NUEPA in 2009. Professor S Irfan Habib was appointed as the first Maulana Azad Chair at NUEPA. During the two days, an attempt was made to explore the various aspects of Maulana Azad's seminal contributions to the building of modern independent India, particularly in the field of education, science and culture.

We were privileged to have Shri Somnath Chatterjee to inaugurate the seminar and deliver an illuminating inaugural address. We are also grateful to distinguished scholars like Professors Mushirul Hasan, Dipankar Gupta, Harsh Sethi, Syeda Hameed and others, who agreed to participate and enrich the seminar. The present volume includes, besides most of the papers presented in the seminar, a selection of Maulana Azad's speeches delivered during the ten years between 1947 and 1958. This will, we believe, facilitate in comprehending the educational policies and concerns of Maulana Azad during the crucial phase of our nation building.

Let me also take this opportunity to thank the veteran actor Tom Alter and Dr Sayeed Alam for enacting the much acclaimed solo play on Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. The play in the evening truly complemented the day long deliberations on Maulana Azad and presented the subtleties of the era of national struggle,

revealing many shades of Maulana Azad as a national leader, philosopher and educationist.

I will end by expressing my gratitude to the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library (NMML) for their collaboration and cooperation in organising the two-day seminar.

R Govinda
Vice-Chancellor, NUEPA

October 21, 2010

Preface

The National University of Educational Planning and Administration organized a two-day conference on *Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and the National System of Education* in November 2009. The conference was aimed at commemorating Maulana Azad's birthday, which was declared as National Education Day a year before. The present slim volume puts forward some of the papers presented during the two-day deliberations. The papers here attempt to explore the inspirations, influences and ambiguities in Maulana Azad's commitment to modern education. They also try to bring out the shifts in Maulana Azad's intellectual evolution over a period of fifty years. Significant in this process is Azad's early commitment to denominational and sectarian concerns in education and otherwise, and his later passion for a national education system, which still remains elusive.

One important aspect of teaching today is battling with divisive, sectarian and regional sentiments. The world in general and India in particular is faced with an arduous task of combating such tendencies while teaching in schools as well as colleges. The teaching of history, geography and culture is a major challenge confronting NCERT and other institutions engaged in this task. The medium of instruction was another contentious issue which Azad had to settle as the first minister of education in independent India. Even in 1956, Maulana Azad was pained to find that these subjects were being employed for the unhealthy purpose of sowing the seeds of discord among people. Keeping Maulana Azad's views on the matter as a backdrop, the volume touches upon these issues in our contemporary educational context.

Another important aspect in current perspective is Azad's passion for free and compulsory education, which remained on

the sidelines till recently, when a debate was sparked off again with the introduction of Right to Education Bill. The seminar discussed various aspects of the Bill in the contemporary Indian context, keeping Azad's own commitment to free and compulsory education as a backdrop.

The seminar also inspired the participants to ponder about the contributions of educationists like K G Saiyidain and Dr. Zakir Husain, the former being the key player in educational planning during Azad's time. The latter played a seminal part in articulating basic education, with his central role in preparing the Wardha Committee Report on basic education.

Recently, the HRD ministry came forward with a proposal to constitute a Madarsa Board, similar to CBSE, claiming that it will modernize madarsa education and entitle madarsa graduates for Government employment. However, the proposal not only invited criticism from the expected political quarters, it was also visualized as interference in the internal affairs of the community by the Muslim Personal Law Board. Maulana Azad was seriously concerned about the antiquated curriculum of the madarsas and made several attempts to bring about meaningful changes but without success. He directly appealed to the madarsa representatives to be sensitive and responsive to the demands of the age and reorganize their curriculum by including the modern sciences. In today's Islamic context and also with the new initiative of the HRD ministry, the seminar discussed the future of madarsa education and its relevance in the milieu of fast changing socio-economic demands of the Muslim community.

The volume begins with the inaugural address of Shri Somnath Chatterjee who calls Maulana Azad as "one of the front ranking leaders of both pre and post independent India". As a Muslim scholar and a prominent Muslim leader he stood for the cause of Hindu-Muslim unity and opposed the partition of India. Shri Somnath Chatterjee emphasized the fact that Maulana Azad "was greatly instrumental in persuading the Muslim representatives in the Assembly to give up the demand for communal electorate and strongly advocated that the principle of

Secularism should be enshrined in the Constitution along with religious freedom and equality for all Indians." As the Minister of Education Maulana considered basic education for the future welfare of the people as of prime importance and he emphasized on the importance of the speedy progress of adult education. Education of women was of prime concern for him, according to Shri Chatterjee. Maulana observed that without an educated electorate, democracy cannot perform the functions expected of it. As the Minister of Education of free India, Maulana created a nation-wide system of basic education for all children of school going age, and created facilities for the highest type of education in the technical field including the establishment of four institutions of the standard of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. In Chatterjee's view, Maulana Azad re-emphasized the fivefold programme for the expansion of education in the country: These were (a) Universal compulsory basic education for all children of school age, (b) Social education for our adult illiterates, (c) Measures for improvement in the quality of and expansion of facilities for secondary and higher education, (d) Technical and scientific education on a scale adequate to the nation's needs, and (e) Measures for the enrichment of the cultural life of the community by encouraging the arts and providing facilities for recreation and other amenities. However, according to Shri Chatterjee, we are unfortunately still to reach the goal and to fulfill what Maulana Azad laid down as the objectives of the country's educational policy towards the general progress of the country.

S. Irfan Habib's paper titled "Maulana Abul Kalam Azad on education and culture in post independent India" refers to the early influences on Maulana Azad's thinking and the evolution of Azad as an educationist and an intellectual leader. Surprisingly the influences were not merely Islamic, as assumed, but had a great share from Europe, particularly the French philosopher Rousseau. The paper also touches upon Maulana Azad's commitment to free and compulsory education which has been formalized by the government recently in its Right to Education Act. Vinod Raina in his presentation took a look at Maulana

Azad's commitment to free and compulsory education and examined the Right to Education Bill 2009 in the context of present day challenges and context which are in stark contrast with the early years of post independent India.

Syeda Hameed in her paper reflects upon the educational philosophy of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Khwaja Ghulamus Saiyidain. Both of them were close associates and colleagues in the education ministry headed by the former. Saiyidain had a significant role in shaping the education system of independent India along with other experts in the education ministry such as Humayun Kabir, Tara Chand and Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar. Saiyidain understood that Azad's educational ideas were grounded in his understanding of Islam. For him Azad was not an exclusive "Islamic mind" or even an "oriental" mind, but drawing from different sources which cut across the East-West Barriers. According to the speaker, both Azad and Saiyidain felt that for a country emerging from 150 years of political bondage and therefore it was important to train the nation not merely in skills but train their ideas and emotions in new ways to take up new challenges before the free India. In both educationists, there was a passionate advocacy of tolerance as one of the basic values of life and the main concern of education for both of them was training for becoming a good human being, she pointed out.

Rizwan Qaiser's paper on Maulana Azad's Experimentation with Madarsa Education focuses on the creation of Madarsa Islamia in Ranchi by him. The paper describes the historical context of the establishment of the institution and Maulana Azad's personal engagement in it. The paper also highlights the sorry state of the institution today and the gross negligence of the Madarsa by the authorities. The paper by Mukul Priyadarshini discusses implications of the choice of medium of instruction and emphasizes the importance of multilingual classroom context as a resource rather than a pedagogical barrier. She points out that as far as our education system is concerned, language continues to remain on the periphery and hence, neglected. Since language plays the most significant role in a child's concept formation, it

becomes extremely crucial as to which language is available to a child to be used as a tool. Therefore the issue of medium of instruction needs to be problematized. This involves exploring the issue in terms of politics involved in the choice of medium of instruction, implications of the choice and classroom specific linguistic repertoire.

The last section of the book deals with some of issues in higher education. The first paper by Dhruv Raina is on Dr Zakir Husain's notion of a modern university for India. The paper historically situates the evolution of the modern university in global context and focuses on the historical discourses which influenced the university ideal in modern India, with special reference to Dr Zakir Husain's contribution to the notion of modern university.

The next paper by Sudhanshu Bhushan presents the dynamics of policy processes in higher education and he engages with the crises before policy makers in contemporary post-liberalized scenario. With growing fiscal constraints, the privatization and liberalization of higher education is becoming a widespread phenomenon. The process of policy change to cope up with the changing environment in the absence of the climate of nation building becomes all the more difficult, as the state is subject to various pulls and pressures of vested interests. In the phase of globalization when state exerts change in response to external events, institutions' own inertia may not always keep pace with the state driven change agenda. The process of policy making, the relation between state, institutions and individuals and finally transmission of the policy signals and its reception by an individual in the context of higher education in India, according to him, needs more attention.

The final paper in the volume by Dinesh Abrol is on the proposed constitution of a Higher Education Council (HEC) and its replacement of the University Grant Commission. The paper is critical of the move and presents a fresh perspective on the recent policy changes and shifts in academic and political viewpoints in higher education.

The volume ends with an appendix, where we have included seven speeches of Maulana Azad, dealing with the important aspects of our educational and cultural development. The choice is purely arbitrary and is limited by the constraints of space. However, I feel they will complement the papers included in the volume and also help in comprehending the vision of Maulana Azad.

I am grateful to the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library for their collaboration and cooperation in organizing the two-day seminar. I also thank other participants of the seminar, who unfortunately could not contribute to this volume, which includes scholars like Professors Mushirul Hasan, Salil Mishra, Akhtar Siddiqui, Geetanjali Surendran and Sanaya Nariman. I am also grateful to Professor Dipankar Gupta, Professor Arjun Dev, Professor Mridula Mukherjee, Professor Deepak Kumar and Mr. Harsh Sethi for agreeing to chair different sessions during the two days.

In the end, I wish to acknowledge the help and cooperation of my colleagues and students at NUEPA. In particular Dr. Shiju Sam Varughese deserves special thanks for his sincere support and competence in organizing the seminar. The Publication Unit at NUEPA was amazingly quick in putting together this volume. However, I am alone responsible for most of the lapses in the production of the book.

S. Irfan Habib
Maulana Azad Chair, NUEPA

October 21, 2010

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CHAPTER ONE

Inaugural Address of Shri Somnath Chatterjee*

Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor, distinguished members of the faculties, friends and dear students:

I am extremely thankful to Prof. R. Govinda, the distinguished Vice-Chancellor of National University of Educational Planning and Administration and to Prof. S. Irfan Habib for their kind invitation to me to inaugurate the National Seminar on Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, which has been organized in association with the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library. It is indeed an honour for me to be present here and to inaugurate this National Seminar, named after one of the most distinguished leaders of our freedom movement and of independent India. At the outset, I pay my most respectful homage to his illustrious memory.

Maulana Azad was one of the front ranking leaders of both pre and post independent India. As a Muslim scholar and a prominent Muslim leader he espoused with great commitment, the cause of Hindu-Muslim unity and opposed the partition of India brought about on communal lines. Though informally educated, he acquired proficiency in several languages, including Urdu, Arabic, Persian and Hindi and was also trained in the subjects of Hanafi fiqh, shariat, mathematics, philosophy, world history and science

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* Former Speaker, Lok Sabha, Government of India

by reputed tutors hired by his family. From a very young age, he showed great literary flare and edited a weekly called *Al-Misbah* and also brought out a monthly journal called *Lissan-us-sidq*. He learned English through intensive personal study and became well versed in Western Philosophy, History and contemporary politics.

Maulana Azad was a true nationalist and was a fierce critic of the British policy of divide and rule. He rejected the separatist politics of All India Muslim League and even as a young man, he vehemently opposed the partition of Bengal in 1905, took part in revolutionary activities and became close to prominent revolutionaries like Sri Aurobindo and Shri Shyam Sunder Chakraborty. His weekly newspaper *Al-Hilal* espoused the ideals of Indian nationalism and encouraged young Muslims to join the fight for India's Independence and Hindu-Muslim unity. He was a strong opponent of communal electorate.

Maulana Azad was imprisoned several times in course of the freedom movement. He became one of the most important followers of Mahatma Gandhi and joined the Indian National Congress. Under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, he participated in the Non-Cooperation Movement and also became the President of the All India Khilafat Committee. Under the influence of Mahatma Gandhi, Maulana became deeply committed to non-violence and also came very close to front ranking leaders like Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Chittaranjan Das, Subhash Chandra Bose and others. Maulana Azad became the President of the Congress Party and when we achieved our freedom, he displayed highest form of statesmanship.

On 15 April, 1946 he said that and I quote: 'I have considered from every possible point of view the scheme of

Pakistan as formulated by the Muslim league. As an Indian, I have examined its implications for the future of India as a whole. As a Muslim, I have examined its likely effects upon the fortunes of Muslims of India.

"Considering the scheme in all its aspects, I have come to the conclusion that it is harmful not only for India as a whole but for Muslims in particular. And in fact it creates more problems than it solves.

"I must confess that the very term Pakistan goes against my grain. It suggests that some portions of the world are pure while others are impure. Such a division of territories into pure and impure is un-Islamic and is more in keeping with orthodox Brahmanism which divides men and countries into holy and unholy – a division which is a repudiation of the very spirit of Islam. Islam recognizes no such division and the prophet says, 'God has made the whole world a mosque for me' (unquote).

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad was appointed India's first Minister for Education and was one of the most distinguished Members of the Constituent Assembly. He was greatly instrumental in persuading the Muslim representatives in the Assembly to give up the demand for communal electorate and strongly advocated that the principle of Secularism should be enshrined in the Constitution along with religious freedom and equality for all Indians.

Maulana Azad played an important role in framing our national policies after we achieved our independence. As a Member of the Lok Sabha, where he was elected in 1952 and 1957, he not only considerably helped in formulating India's Economic and Industrial Policies but also strongly advocated for according social rights and economic

opportunities for women and under-privileged Indians. In 1956, he served as the President of the UNESCO General Conference held in Delhi and his book '*India Wins Freedom*' is indeed a saga of India's struggle for freedom.

As a Minister of Education, Maulana Azad made unique contribution and stressed on the necessity of laying down policies and programmes for the speedy and all round, as well as inclusive development of the educational facilities in the country. When he addressed the meeting of the Central Advisory Board of Education in January, 1949 he spoke of the approach of the National Government towards education. He stated that "the first and foremost task of the National Government is the provision of free and compulsory basic education for all" and he envisaged that universal compulsory basic education could be introduced within a period of 16 years by two five-year and one six-year plans.

As the Minister of Education, he particularly stressed on the importance of basic education for the future welfare of the people. He emphasized on the importance of the speedy progress of adult education and observed that without an educated electorate, democracy cannot perform the functions expected of it. Therefore he wanted that the scope of adult education should also include provision for social education.

Maulana Azad had also stressed on the necessity of setting up village schools which would not only be places of instruction for the village children, but also centres of community life in the villages. His proposal was that in the village schools, practical training would be given in some craft in order to improve the economic status of the villagers and to organize sports and other forms of recreation for

increasing their social and community sense. He gave the greatest stress to the spread of education and observed that, and I quote, "we in India also will not allow considerations of financial stringency to hold up for a day longer than is absolutely necessary, the programme of universal, compulsory and free basic education, which is essential for building up the free and democratic India of our dreams."

As a great believer in secular politics and treating our Constitutional set up as wholly secular, he observed, while delivering the Convocation Address at Aligarh Muslim University in February 1949 that, and I quote: "I think you will agree that the educational set-up for a secular and democratic State must be secular. It should provide for all citizens of the State the same type of education without any distinction. It should have its own intellectual flavour and its own national character. It should have as its aim the ideal of human progress and prosperity. The Indian Union has set before itself such a scheme of common education for all without distinction or discrimination in favour of any community or group".

While concluding his Convocation Address he exhorted the students thus, and I quote, "You are the citizens of free India – a State which is determined to develop its political and social life on secular and democratic lines. The essence of a secular and democratic State is freedom of opportunity for the individual without regard to race, religion, caste or community. As members of such a State, you have therefore the right – provided you have the necessary qualities of character and attainment – to expect all doors to open to you, whether in the field of politics, trade, industry service or the professions. There is no gain saying the fact that in the past many of the alumni of this Institution looked to nothing but employment under the Government. Freedom

must bring in a widening of the mind and an enlargement of your ambitions. You must therefore look forward in a free India to the utilization of your talents in the manner best suited to the needs of the Nation.

"I have no doubt in my mind that if you can imbibe this spirit of progressive nationalism, which is the motto of our secular democratic State, there will be no position in any field of life that will be beyond your reach. I would therefore urge upon you to develop and strengthen your character and acquire knowledge that will fit you to play your rightful part for the future progress and prosperity of the country."

On the question of Medium of Instruction in educational institutions, which has always been and is still of great importance, he enunciated the Government's proposal as early as in August 1948 that "a child should be instructed, in the early stage of his education, through the medium of the mother tongue as has been accepted by the Government as its policy". According to him any departure from this principle was bound to be harmful to the child. He further observed that "if within a State there are people speaking in different languages, any attempt to adopt one language as the medium of instruction will lead to discontent and bitterness and "will affect inter-provincial relations and set up vicious circles of retaliation," and thereby provincialism will grow and Indian nationalism will suffer." How prophetic he was!

As the Minister of Education of free India, he felt that two tasks were of paramount urgency. The first was the creation of nation-wide system of Basic Education for all children of school going age, and the second, the provision of facilities of the highest type of education in the technical

field. One of the first decisions that he took as Minister of Education was that the Government must improve the facilities for higher technical education in the country, so that we could ourselves meet most of our needs. He gave urgent importance to the establishment of four institutions of the standard of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. At the Opening Session of the Indian Institute of Technology at Kharagpur on 18 August, 1951, he observed that the Institute must provide instruction of the highest standard, under the supervision of recognized authorities in their respective fields and that only men of the highest quality should be in charge of the different departments. Maulana Azad further stressed on the importance of providing facilities for research at the different institutions established and to be established in the country.

While addressing the meeting of the Central Advisory Board of Education, on 15 March 1952, Maulana Azad, as the then Hon'ble Minister of Education re-emphasised the five-fold programme for the expansion of education in the country as follows:

a. Universal compulsory basic education for all children of school age,

b. Social education for our adult illiterates,

c. Measures for improvement in the quality of and expansion of facilities for secondary and higher education,

d. Technical and scientific education on a scale adequate to the nation's needs, and

e. 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 not only formulated its policies under the guidance of Maulana Azad but took steps to implement the proposals and policies as effectively as possible. He greatly welcomed the setting up of the National Planning Commission to ensure that our material and human resources were put to the best use in the development of our country. He observed that "We want in India of future, men and women of vision, courage and honesty of purpose, who will be able to play their part worthily in every field of national activity".

He also lauded the efforts of the Planning Commission which had recommended, in consultation with the Ministry of Education, the adoption of selective approach through the organization of community projects, which aimed at the development of improved methods and techniques in the fields of primary, basic, secondary and teachers' education.

Maulana Azad believed and said 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 citizens 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".

To quote him, "If there is any one feature which distinguishes modern India, it is the growth of the spirit of democracy which seeks to give equality of opportunity to all its citizens. All past barriers based on birth, privilege, caste or wealth are breaking down. As a secular democratic State,

we are pledged to the widening of opportunities and equality of chances for all".

Maulana Azad gave special stress on the teaching of modern sciences 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".

Maulana Azad thus gave emphasis to universalization of education of highest standard and he wanted that India as a whole should become literate and there should be not only village schools but also schools which will impart best form of education and that proper emphasis should be given to the education of women. He laid utmost emphasis on importance of secular education and the importance of education in moulding the character of our young citizens.

Today, we appreciate that great leaders of our country like Maulana Azad not only dreamt of a fully literate India but also of competent citizenry and laid the foundation for the progress of the country on the appropriate direction. We are unfortunately still to reach the goal and to fulfill what he laid down as the objectives of the country's educational policy for the all round progress of the country. Let us all take a pledge to complete the task which he laid down for the country's progress and which still remains to be fully achieved.

Swami Vivekananda said, "Education … is a process of man-making, character-forming and life-building assimilation of ideas." Only through education we can equip ourselves to face the challenges of life and only a good

educational system can establish a healthy relationship between the individuals and the society. It is education, which makes us better citizens and inculcates in us virtues of tolerance, discipline, commitment, culture, compassion and sensitivity, "Education", as Nobel Laureate, Prof. Amartya Sen has said, is essentially about "capacity building and it widens the choice of people and empowers the nations."

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 behind. Of special importance is women's education, as they constitute nearly fifty per cent of our population. There is an unacceptably wide disparity between the literacy levels of men and women in our country. Removing the factors that inhibit the full participation of women in the various spheres of society is a very important step for the empowerment of women in our society. To overcome the gap in providing equal opportunity for education we have to employ the full range of educational opportunities and relate them with the available government and private initiatives to the benefit of every segment of our population, both in the urban and rural areas. Our educational system must provide a level-playing field to the cross-section of our people. Special attention must also be given to maintain high standards of teaching and the Government should address the problem of the proliferation of inadequately equipped institutions, charging unaffordable fees.

It is also important to bear in mind that the primary social agenda of education is the development of our human resources in the right direction. It is not to be used as a

medium to further anyone's narrow political or partisan agenda. Mythological beliefs and matters of faith should not be allowed to interfere with scientific enquiry. Education is essentially about rational enquiry and for a highly pluralistic society like ours, it has to be developed as a harmonizing force rather than as an instrument to promote divisiveness and disunity among the people. Social premium on value of education needs to be emphasized as also the organic link between institutions of higher learning and civil society. A progressive education will greatly address our major social evils and will help in strengthening the secular and liberal fabric of our country, remaining sensitive to the specific cultural identities, the plural nature of our society, the democratic ethos of our people and to the need for positive dialogue between cultures.

Over the six decades of freedom, we have, no doubt, made significant achievements in almost all areas of our national life. At the political level, we gave to ourselves a well-defined and elaborate Constitution that has withstood the test of time. Our democracy has been witness to as many as fifteen General Elections at the Centre and many more elections to the State Legislatures and other representative bodies. In the process, we have consolidated our democratic edifice and emerged as the largest working democracy in the world. Over these years, we have striven to improve the quality and content of our democracy by gradually making it more inclusive, people-centric and transparent.

In spite of the substantial progress made in the last six decades, democratic India presents a contrasting picture of affluence and deprivation and different centuries co-exist in India. On the one hand is the India of the rich, of those who have had the benefit of modern education and are

intellectually and materially empowered, and on the other, is the India of those who live under conditions of poverty, deprivation, squalor, illiteracy, ignorance, intolerance and prejudice. With a stratified social structure, characterized by inequity, gender-based discrimination, regional imbalances, with a sizeable section living below the poverty line experiencing unemployment and under-employment, and with substantial sections of our people denied of the benefits of modern science and technology, without access to safe drinking water, dependable energy supply, and good health-care, we have to concede that we have not been able to take full advantage of democratic governance in the past six decades.The polity fractured on religious, caste, regional and linguistic lines and influenced by confrontational politics is greatly weakening our democratic structure and simultaneously stifling the country's progress, and it needs serious attention and sincere national efforts to reverse the process. In our national endeavour, undoubtedly we have to give priority to the efforts to remove poverty and the scourge of illiteracy from the country. We have to succeed in achieving full literacy for our people, stressing on providing quality education and vocational training.

In spite of our many achievements in the fields of Science and Technology particularly Information Technology and in other fields, our country, even more than sixty years after independence, still has the largest number of illiterates in the world and there is wide disparity between the opportunities available to the rich, educated and urban-centred people and the poor, illiterate or semi-illiterate, rural and other disadvantageously placed, and between men and women. Not only is there an unacceptably large proportion of illiterate population, there is also a major unfulfilled demand for quality public education at every

level of learning and research. Socio-economic development is bypassing a significant segment of our population today, as they do not have access to quality education relevant to their requirements.

An important aspect of the challenge facing us is to bridge the urban-rural divide in educational investment and opportunities. Rural India has a vast reservoir of human energy, intelligence and aspirations. Its enormous potential has to be converted into national wealth, by evolving education as an integrated package of traditional know-how, academic knowledge and practical skills, which could support the people to earn a livelihood both in the rural economy and outside of it, for which our system of education must look at vocational training.

In such a scenario, it is also necessary to take urgent measures to ensure gender-parity in education by educating the families and communities about the benefits of girls' education by providing incentives to enroll and retain the girls in schools.

It is a matter of concern that in a sense the country as a whole has failed to implement fully the policies and programmes, which were evolved at the dawn of independence by our great leaders like Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, who had totally committed themselves to the inclusive development of the country in all spheres and gave due emphasis to the spread of education, which they had realized, to be of utmost importance, to bring about and maintain the country's sustained development and for the development of human rights and dignity. We still seem to be experimenting with what will be the appropriate policies and programmes but what we need is a national commitment to achieve what Maulana Abul Kalam Azad as

our first Education minister had laid down by its proper and speedy implementation. We must make all efforts to reach that goal.

We need crusaders for removing the various ills plaguing our society and to provide leadership to change the system for the better. It is of little use to be just critical of the aberrations or non-achievements in the society. Well-meaning people, specially the youth have to be participants in bringing about the change and not be mere bystanders or critics. The country has great expectations from its youth to bring in the freshness of their approach along with youthful energy and passion to address the imperfections in the institutions of democracy and specially in our educational system. They have to realize their obligations and become more proactive participants at all levels of political and other institutions, which can be only through value-based education.

We shall be paying true tribute to Maulana Azad if we continue to effectively carry out the policies and programmes that he laid down as India's first Education Minister and we shall succeed only when we will be able to produce committed, responsible, disciplined, well-integrated and socially sensitive citizens who will be assets of our country. Till then the endeavour should continue and that will be paying true homage to one of our outstanding leaders – Maulana Abul Kalam Azad.

I have the pleasure in inaugurating this Seminar and I am sure the discussions here will greatly help in furthering the cause of education in our country as was visualized by him.

Thank you.

CHAPTER TWO

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad on Education and Culture in Post Independent India

S Irfan Habib*

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad is, by any reckoning, a key figure in twentieth century Indian history. His erudition and training in the traditional Islamic sciences and his robust intellect put him on a high pedestal even among his towering contemporaries. He began his career as a skilful journalist, with a remarkably insightful eye on a large number of burning issues. One of the issues he held dear was education, with an emphasis on scientific and technical education, which he felt was indispensable for the development of a country colonized and exploited for over 150 years. This commitment of Azad can be amply seen in the pages of *Al-Hilal*, as early as the second decade of the 20th century. He systematically pursued education as a discipline from a very early age. Basically, his involvement with the Aligarh movement and the *Nadva-tul-Ulum* of Lucknow gave him an opportunity to articulate his views on educational affairs.

In 1916, he explicitly asserted his having studied, over a period of a decade or so, the problem in its entirety, and

* Maulana Azad Chair, NUEPA, New Delhi

claimed to have developed "a critical-cum-creative insight"[1] in the discipline of education. One of the major early influences on Azad was Ibn Khaldun, the 14th/15th century Moroccan philosopher, historian and traveler, who inspired Azad to question the traditional methods of teaching as well as the curriculum. Maulana Azad agreed with him in holding that what led to stagnation in religious and secular learning was an unquestioning acceptance of theology. He found education to be the sole means to rectifying this error.[2] Azad found the curricula in the Islamic madrasa's fundamentally narrow, with a significant omission of mathematics, which is the basis of science and technology.[3] Another significant influence, in the context of science and education was Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, which attracted Azad towards modern education and modern science for the Muslims; however he later got out of the community concerns alone due to his commitment to the anti-imperialist and nationalist politics. He admitted in his writings like *Azad ki Kahani* that Sir Syed's writings brought about an intense revolution in his thought, both in his religious as well intellectual life.[4] With the intoxication of Sir Syed's writings, he went through the stages as in his father's dictum: 'The way to apostasy in the present age is through *wahhabiyat* to *nechariyat*.'[5] Among the 19th century Islamic thinkers and reformists, Azad was not impressed by Syed

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1 *Ghubar-Khatir*, p. 121.

2 G Rasool Abduh, *The Educational Ideas of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad*, New Delhi, 1973, p.19.

3 *Ghubar-Khatir*, p. 121.

4 Ian Henderson Douglas, *Abul Kalam Azad An intellectual and religious biography*, New Delhi, 1988, p.51.

5 *Nechariyat* was an expression used by the detractors of Sir Syed to explain his belief in nature and his followers were thus dubbed as *necharis* (followers of nature).

Ahmad alone; he was surprisingly in agreement with Sir Syed's bete noir Jamaluddin Afghani and his disciple Mohammad Abduh as well. Azad wanted to imbibe the best from both and in this he found that Afghani was all for modern scientific and technical education and was also critical of those ulema, who urged the community to keep away from anything which has to do with the British.

There is no doubt that Azad's educational perspective was fundamentally Islamic in inspiration, yet he synthesized happily anything of value anywhere. He was not `exclusively an "Islamic" mind or even an "oriental" mind, unacquainted with, or insensitive to, the rich streams of influences emanating from other sources'[6]. He was deeply impressed by the advances made in the West in the realm of elementary education for children. He was firmly committed to what was scientific in the Western system, and the two factors that most inspired him were the idea of freedom as the technique of education, and the all embracing importance of primary education.[7] He was particularly impressed by the French philosopher Rousseau and was in agreement with him in the innate goodness of man.[8] He even wrote about this in his paper *al-Hilal*, where he looked upon Rousseau as one who revolutionized the entire intellectual and social life of his age.[9] Azad agreed with Rousseau in his advocacy of the child's necessity and ability to grasp the truth through his own insight.[10]

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6 K G Saiyidain, Philosophy of Education, in Syeda Saiyidain Hameed, *India's Maulana*, ICCR and Vikas Publishing House, New Delhi, 1990, p.64.

7 G Rasool Abduh, *op.cit.* p. 24.

8 *Al-Balagh*, February 25 1916, pp. 10-11.

9 *Al-Hilal*, August 5 1927.

10 G Rasool Abduh, *op.cit.* p. 25.

Contrasting the centrality extended to education in the West, Azad was bewildered at the apathy towards it in the East, with mediocrity as its hallmark. He strongly felt that we in India are even oblivious of the fact that education is of paramount importance for the nation's overall development.

I just referred briefly to some aspects of Azad's early engagement with education and science and the significance of these matters in his plans for independent India. There is a sizable opinion among scholars that Azad did not really have much to do with education personally, and the task was handed over to him by Nehru, who continued to play a key role in most of the policy formulations in educational and scientific matters. It is a fact that Azad accepted the responsibility on the insistence of both-Nehru as well as Mahatma Gandhi. But this is also a fact that the choice fell on him because Azad was the best available person for the job. Both Nehru and Gandhi were aware of the fact that Azad was passionately committed to education, culture and scientific and technical progress. He surely had his limitations and Nehru always came forward positively to take care of them. On the death of Azad, Nehru called him `a man of luminous intelligence and a mighty intellect with an amazing capacity to pierce through a problem to its core.' His erudition and high intellect led Nehru to compare him in European history, with 'the great men of the Renaissance, or, in a later period, of the Encyclopaedists who preceded the French Revolution, men of intellect, men of action'. Azad was not a professional educationist, nor were so many others like Montessori, Tagore or Gandhi, yet their impact on education have been enormous. He was essentially a scholar, a man of thought, a litterateur, a divine, who found himself pitch-forked into a life of intense political activity and who, amazingly enough, was able to combine the

exacting and almost mutually exclusive demands of the life of the mind and his life of intense political activity- a rare quality which he shared with his life-long friend and colleague, Nehru.[11] If we look retrospectively, Azad was the most eminently suited choice to bring India out of the morass it had gone into after partition. There was a need for a person of great vision and character who may be able to assess the situation correctly and adopt sound 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.[12]

Azad on the medium of instruction

Addressing his one of the first press conferences, just on the eve of independence, Azad said categorically that `A truly liberal and humanitarian education may transform the outlook of the people and set it on the path of progress and prosperity, while an ill-conceived or unscientific system might destroy all the hopes which have been cherished by generations of pioneers in the cause of national struggle.'[13] Azad was conscious of the fact that colonial education system, particularly the post-Macaulyan phase, had done tremendous harm to the Indian education, most importantly the medium of instruction. He somehow agreed with Macaulay's contention that Sanskrit and Persian were unsuited for medium of instruction, "but English could serve the purpose no better".[14] When the East India Company decided to introduce English as the medium of instruction, we made a beginning in an un-Indian way. The

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11 K G Saiyidain, *op.cit*, p. 66.
12 *ibid*. p.68.
13 *Speeches of Maulana Azad,* Press Conference, February 18, 1947, p.1.
14 *ibid*, p.2.

Indians had to shape their minds in artificial and not in natural moulds. He even said that "If the Indian languages had been made the medium of instruction a hundred and fifty years ago they would have come in line with the progressive languages of the world". Here let me recall an attempt made in Delhi itself almost 150 years back when Master Ramchandra and Munshi Zakaullah at Delhi College tried to teach modern science through the medium of Urdu. Zakaullah, very poignantly expressed his faith in the local language, echoing Azad's views, almost 150 years before him, when he once said:

> "*....the constant use of English even from our childhood, so that we begin to express our thoughts in it instead of in our mother tongue, will go far to denationalize us. If we wish to remain an Eastern people, we must not neglect the language which we learnt at our mother's knee...To forget it, or to despise it, is to lose one of the strongest factors in the building up of national character.*" [15]

How close was Azad to Zakaullah's understanding when he said about English as the medium of instruction that "now it became necessary for every child to shape an artificial mind and to tackle every aspect of learning from an unnatural angle of vision. He could not enter the sacred precincts of learning with a natural mind".[16] However, Azad was an intellectual and a freedom fighter, who could articulate the reasons for this inadequacy, in particular the loss of sovereignty to decide about such policy issues. He compared colonized India with Turkey, China and Japan, who had the freedom of choice to go ahead and impart modern education through their own languages. He said: "Supposing this educational revolution had been brought about by our own hands, we should have certainly done

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15 CF Andrews, *Zakaullah of Delhi*, London, 1929. p. 97.

16 Convocation Address at Patna University, December 21, 1947.

what other countries of Asia and the East did in the nineteenth century. Egypt, Syria, Turkey, China and Japan all felt the need of having western education. They established schools and colleges for modern learning, but none of them had the experience of undergoing the artificiality of giving up their own languages and receiving education through the medium of a foreign language." India lost this freedom very early, with the victory of Anglicists in 1835, and since then it had to cope with a foreign language where learning was never a pleasure.

Azad firmly believed that provincial languages need to be developed to serve the purpose of medium of instruction, going ahead he pointed out that "the experiment of imparting instruction in the mother tongue up to the matriculation standard has already been tried with success and the time has come when the process must be extended further and all education in the land made accessible to the people in their own language." His faith in the provincial languages, however, could not be properly introduced in our education system, leading ultimately to the growth of disparate generation of Indians, even alien to each other. We are still grappling with the issue and have no clear solution to resolve the problem.

Education beyond caste and class

Another important issue for Azad, soon after independence, was democratization of education, particularly when India had emerged out of 200 hundred years of colonialism, going through varied forms of discriminations and deprivations. Being primarily an Islamic scholar, he used Islam as a democratic and modernist movement, quite in contrast to what is being done in the name of Islam today all over the world. He

observed Islam as "a perfect system of freedom and democracy whose function consists in bringing back to mankind the freedom snatched away from it".[17] At another place he defined Islam as "the message of democracy and human equality to the world suffering from chronic type of class discriminations".[18] Azad expanded Islamic values on a national scale, going beyond the narrow confines of the faith, to explain and understand the problems of the newly independent nation, particularly the access to education on a universal scale.

Azad strongly felt that our objective cannot be realized unless we get 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. Elaborating further, he said: Like an actor it masquerades in disguise. In the domain of religion it appears in the form of blind faith and wants to deceive us in the name of orthodoxy. In politics it wants to overpower us in the guise of nationalism. In learning and culture it makes an appeal to us in the name of our nation and country. It behoves us not to be taken in by these fictitious names. We must remember that the root cause of all this is nothing but narrow-mindedness." Azad was inspired by the values of our freedom struggle and he was convinced that those values should come in handy for nation building, where education should be seen as a right for all the citizens of this newly independent nation. In this context of age old discrimination and deprivation, Azad also emphasized on

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[17] *Qawati-faisal*, al-Balagh Press, Calcutta, 1921, p. 50, cited in Abduhu, op.cit., p. 94.

[18] *Presidential address*, The Indian National Congress, March 1940, Ramgarh, p. 31.

women's education, most of whom had been marginal. He felt that education of women is doubly purposeful: first that they need to be educated as citizens of free India, and second that their education facilitates the task of educating the younger generation. He raised this issue in the Constituent Assembly as well in 1949 asking for multiplying the educational opportunities for women.

Emphasizing the significance of education for all, Azad referred to Disraeli, who believed that "a democracy has no future unless it educates its masters". In independent and democratic India, with universal franchise as the key principle, the voter was truly the master of democracy, whom Azad wanted to be educated and be aware. He was conscious of the sad inheritance, which had 85% population of illiterates on the eve of independence. Several class and caste discriminations and disabilities were in place, which required to be urgently removed. He was convinced that the state needs to play a key role in combating such afflictions and provide the means of "the acquisition of knowledge and self-betterment"; however, the most disconcerting factor was the lack of necessary funds to carry forward the state's responsibilities. Azad conceded with a sense of guilt as minister of education that the Central Government has only 1% allocation for education and he thus pleaded in the Constituent Assembly to raise the expenditure to 10%. He pursued the issue with passion and was able to raise the allocation from twenty million rupees to around 350 million during his tenure as minister of education. His commitment to the democratization of education is also reflected in his strident position in the Constituent Assembly where he talked of equalizing opportunities in the context of old caste, class and sex prejudices. He thus spoke in 1948, "If they have been left behind in the sphere of progress, it is not their

fault. The society is to be blamed for this. It is all the more necessary, therefore, that the society, which has not until now placed them on an equal footing, should help in their advancement."[19] This is all the more important today when we are in the midst of implementing the Right to Education Act; it's a tribute to Maulana Azad, as he took up this arduous task almost 60 years ago.

Azad's commitment to science and technology

Maulana Azad's commitment to modern scientific and technical education is important to recall today, particularly in the context of Islam, where a debate is being held whether modern science is Islamic enough for the believers or they need to have their own brand of Islamic science. A sizable section of Islamic intellectuals in Euro-American universities as well as Turkey, Malaysia and even India, have been aggressively proposing that modern science is Christian in spirit and inspiration and thus is against the basic Islamic values and fundamentals. The stridency of global political Islam and its reductionism can be seen in the intellectual debates and writings, where all sources of knowledge, including that of science, can be reduced to Quran and hadis. Maulana Azad had categorically pointed out at several places in his writings, particularly in the *Tarjuman*, that we cannot expect the facts of history and science in the Quran. Azad even avoided finding confirmation of the latest scientific theories in the Quran. "The aim of the Quran, he said, is to invite the attention of man to His power and wisdom and not to make an exposition of the creation of the universe".

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19 *The Constituent Assembly*, 1948, p.1952.

The Prophet of Islam consciously encouraged the believers to borrow ideas and expand the horizon of knowledge from all possible sources. He even said once that `he who travels in search of knowledge, to him God shows the way to paradise'. He never qualified that one has to travel only within *Darul Islam* and not elsewhere. There is no instance where the prophet insists that Quran has to be the only source of scientific knowledge. The finality being espoused today came in from 11th century onwards, when free thinkers like Mutazilites lost to the Asharites led by none other than Al-Ghazali. This led to a decisive break between the two phases of Islam-one, an early phase where eclecticism was the spirit while the latter phase was marked by closure, where inward looking Islam was projected as the true face of the religion. It is unfortunate that this latter phase is being glorified, and Islamic civilization, including its science, is being proudly projected as a monolith, solely dependent on Quranic revelation. Today's fundamentalists take a deliberately antiquated stance: either scientific observation and theory must be made to fit the unalterable text of scriptures, or it must be shown that those scriptures anticipated modern scientific findings. Given that the Quran did not anticipate or cannot legitimate many modern discoveries, it becomes necessary to disaffirm those discoveries, and to divide science itself along cultural lines; that is, to fabricate an Islamic science consistent with the Quran in opposition to a "Western" science unsuitable for Islamic societies because its epistemology is basically in conflict with the Islamic view.[20] Azad found it fallacious to say that Islam and modern science are contradictory or

[20] Kaiwar, Vasant, 'Science, Capitalism, and Islam', *South Asia Bulletin*, Vol. xii, No 2, 1992, 40.

pursuit of science leads to atheism.[21] While speaking at a symposium in 1951, Maulana Azad clearly spelt out the compatibility of East and West in the following words: The Eastern conception of man's status is not only consistent with the progress of Western science, but in fact offers an intelligible explanation of how scientific progress is possible. If man were merely a developed animal, there would be a limit to his advancement. If, however, he shares in God's infinity, there can be no limit to the progress he can achieve. Science can then march from triumph to triumph and solve many of the riddles which trouble man even to this day.[22] Maulana emphasizes further in his address when he says that "Science is neutral. Its discoveries can be used equally to heal and to kill. It depends upon the outlook and mentality of the user whether science will be used to create a new heaven on earth or to destroy the world in a common conflagration. If we think of man as only a progressive animal, there is nothing to prevent his using science to further interests based on the passions he shares in common with animals. If, however, we think of him as an emanation of God, he can use science only for the furtherance of God's purpose that is the achievement of peace on earth and goodwill to all men."[23]

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21 Azad's letter to Hakeem Mohammad Ali Tabeeb , 11th June 1902 in Malik Ram ed., *Khutoot Abul Kalam Azad,* vol.1, Sahitya Akademy, (Delhi,1991), pp. 22-23, cited by Rizwan Qaiser in the present volume.

22 Inaugural speech at the Symposium on the Concept of Man and the Philosophy of Education in the East and West, New Delhi, December 13, 1951, in *Speeches of Maulana Azad*, p. 185.

23 *Ibid.*

Institutionalizing Art and Culture

For Maulana Azad, no education at any level was complete without art and culture. He repeatedly emphasized the significance of culture and heritage while formulating his educational policies. While opening an art exhibition in New Delhi, he said "Art is an education of emotions and is thus an essential element in any scheme of truly national education. Education, whether at the secondary or at the university stage, cannot be regarded as complete if it does not train our faculties to the perception of beauty."[24] He wrote in one of his letters that "Beauty, whether in sound, or in face, whether in the Taj Mahal, or Nishat Bagh, beauty is beauty…and it has its natural demands. Pity that miserable soul whose insensitive heart did not learn how to respond to the call of beauty!" It was this commitment of Azad which prompted him to set up most of the art and culture academies, soon after the attainment of freedom.

It is not a very well-known fact that Maulana Azad was an accomplished musician himself, who had undergone proper training to play sitar. In his *Ghubar-i-Khatir*, the longest letter he wrote was on the history and art of music, where he writes to Nawab Sadr Yar Jung, "Perhaps, you don't know that at one time music had been my passion. It engrossed me for several years." His Islam also did not deter him in this pursuit, where he disagreed even with his father's perception of Islam.

Here Azad was following a well established tradition within Islam, which has been marginalized by certain sections during the later centuries of Islam. Even Imam

[24] *Speeches of Maulana Azad,* p. 48.

Ghazali in the eleventh century devoted a chapter on music in his *Ihya Ulum al-Deen* where he says that there is something wrong with the man or woman who does not like music. He declared "One who is not moved by music is unsound of mind and intemperate; is far from spirituality and is denser than birds and beasts because everyone is affected by melodious sounds."[25] Maulana Abul Kalam Azad wrote further in the letter about music, which is in stark contrast to the Wahabi and Talibani perversion of Islam:

> *I can always remain happy doing without the necessities of life, but I cannot live without music. A sweet voice is the support and prop of my life, a healing for my mental labours. Sweet music is the cure for all the ills and ailments of my body and heart.*[26]

Azad was aware that the Prophet only denounced excessive music or poetry as corrupting, music as such was not prohibited. While digging the trench around Medinah in preparation for battle, the Prophet and his companions were singing songs (Bukhari/Muslim)[27]. It is clear that music is an anathema only for the myopic, bigoted, spoilsport apostles of self-righteous Islam and regrettably, most of the Muslims have succumbed to their vicious campaign against this significant cultural expression.

Soon after he joined the interim government, few months before independence, Maulana Azad felt that enough is not being done to promote Indian classical music on All India Radio. He shot off a letter to Sardar Patel, who

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25 Joommal, A S K, *Al-Balaagh*, supplement to August/September, 1985.

26 *Ghubaar-i-Khatir* cited in A S K Joommal, `Music and Islam', *Al-Balaagh*, Vol. 28 No.3, Aug/Sep 2003.

27 Cited in `Is Music Haraam?' *Al-Balaagh*, Vol.28, No.1, Feb/March 2003, 5.

was formally in charge of Broadcasting, where he said: "You perhaps do not know that I have always taken keen interest in Indian classical music and at one time practiced it myself. It has, therefore, been a shock to me to find that the standard of music of All India Radio broadcast is extremely poor. I have always felt that All India Radio should set the standard in Indian music and lead to its continual improvement. Instead, the present programmes have an opposite effect and lead one to suspect that the artistes are sometimes chosen not on grounds of merit."[28] He even proposed that he can find time to advise the concern person who is in charge of the programmes and suggest ways of improvement. This is enough to establish the commitment of Maulana Azad to matters related to arts and aesthetics.

It was this commitment of Azad, which prompted him to institutionalize Indian art and culture in the 1950s. He was conscious that the colonial government had deliberately ignored this aspect that needed to be looked after in independent India. Within a short span of ten years, he established most of the major cultural and literary academies we have today, including the Sangeet Natak Academy, Lalit Kala Academy, Sahitya Academy as well as The Indian Council for Cultural Relations. While setting up these Academies, Azad was clear that all these institutions of creative talent need to be autonomous and free from official government control and interference. He categorically pointed out at the First All India Conference of Letters that "even a National Government cannot, and should not be, expected to develop literature and culture through official fiats. The government should certainly help both by material assistance and by creating an atmosphere

[28] Letter of Azad to Sardar Patel, February 10, 1947.

which is congenial to cultural activities, but the main work of the development of literature and culture must be the responsibility of individuals endowed with talent and genius."[29] The Indian Academy of Dance, Drama and Music was inaugurated on January 28, 1953 and Azad said at the inaugural function that "India can be proud of long heritage and tradition in the field of dance, drama, and music. In the field of fine arts, as in those of philosophy and science, India and Greece occupy an almost unique position in human history. It is my conviction that in the field of music, the achievement of India is greater than that of Greece. The breadth and depth of Indian music is perhaps unrivalled as is its integration of vocal and instrumental music." Azad also pointed out that the essence of Indian civilization and culture has always been a spirit of assimilation and synthesis. Nowhere is this more clearly shown than in the field of music. Maulana Azad's cosmopolitan and international vision is reflected in his comment when he says further in his speech that "This precious heritage of dance, drama and music is one we must cherish and develop. We must do so not only for our own sake but also as our contribution to the cultural heritage of mankind. Nowhere is it truer than in the field of art, that to sustain means to create. Traditions cannot be preserved but can only be created afresh. It will be the aim of these academies to preserve our traditions by offering them an institutional form."[30]

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, as I have tried to bring out in this brief survey, occupies a key position in the

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[29] Inaugural address at the First All India Conference on Letters, New Delhi, March 15, 1951.

[30] Welcome address at the inauguration of the Indian Academy of dance, Drama and Music, New Delhi, January 28, 1953.

educational, cultural and scientific development of independent India. We find that he institutionalized crucial Indian sectors like education and culture and laid the foundations of a future network of scientific and technological institutions. However, I feel that a more extensive research is needed to do justice with the multi-faceted contributions of Maulana Azad and his role in the growth of robust and pluralist independent India.

CHAPTER THREE

Maulana Azad and the Right to Education

Vinod Raina[*]

Most of us are aware that Maulana Azad was appointed independent India's first Minister for Education; some perhaps know that he was part of the Constituent Assembly that drafted India's Constitution. Both these facts are important when we examine his role in the course of history leading to the enactment of the Right to Education legislation in India. The legislation that became effective from April 1, 2010 has had a history of exactly one hundred years, implying thereby that Maulana Azad was a later, but important, actor in its unfolding drama. It might therefore be appropriate to briefly set the stage before examining his entry into bringing in this important legislation that is critical to ensure universal elementary education of the children of India.

History tells us that state legislations for free and compulsory education were the instruments that facilitated universal basic education in what we now call the educationally advanced countries. Detailed accounts of the conditions of children in Britain exist, detailing child labour, sordid working conditions and class discriminations, that inspired great fictional works like David Copperfield by the

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celebrated novelist Charles Dickens. Britain was in fact one of the last European nations to bring in the Compulsory Education Act in 1870, which proved effective in a few decades to transform the landscape of children's education in that country.

Inspired and spurred by such a legislative action in the land of the colonial power, demands for enacting a similar legislation in India were raised by prominent nationalist leaders of that time. For example, the Indian leaders made demands for provision for mass education and Compulsory Education Acts through the Indian Education Commission of 1882. The Maharaja of Baroda in fact introduced the Compulsory Education for boys in Amreli Taluk in 1893, which was extended by him to the rest of the state in 1906. In the same year Gopal Krishna Gokhale made a plea to Imperial Legislative Council for the introduction of Free and Compulsory Education. Using the following words,

> *"I beg to place the following resolution before the council for its consideration….the state should accept in this country the same responsibility in regard to mass education that the government of most civilized countries are already discharging and that a well considered scheme should be drawn up and adhered to till it is carried out.. The well being of millions upon millions of children who are waiting to be brought under the influence education depends upon it...",*

Gokhale actually introduced a private members Bill in the Imperial Legislative Council on 18th march, 1910 for seeking provision of 'Free and Compulsory Primary Education" in India. The Bill was rejected.

The attempts continued and in 1917, Vithalbhai Patel was successful in getting the Bill passed, which became the first law on Compulsory Education, popularly known as the Patel Act. By 1930, every province in British India got

Compulsory Education Act on its statute book, though in practice not much happened due to non-availability of funds. In any case, the compulsory acts put the onus of children's education on the parents, and records suggest the collection of a few rupees and *annas* as punishment from parents for not sending their children to schools. The ineffective laws were further buried in 1930 by the recommendations of the Hartog Committee that laid stress on better quality rather than quantity that hindered the spread of primary education in the country.

When seven provinces came under the self-rule of the Congress party, Mahatma Gandhi gave his stirring call for universal primary education in 1937, to be told that there was no money for that. At the ripe age of 67, Gandhi then made his radical proposals for mass education that he thought were appropriate for India. It has remained a matter of debate whether Gandhi advocated work-based education as a means of self-support in order to circumvent his disappointment regarding the inability of the state to fund universal education, or as a pedagogic necessity, or both. His plea for adequate finances for universal education was met with a response that if at all, the way out was to utilize revenues from liquor sales. That meant he had to either give up his stand on prohibition, or his plea for universal education with state support, which he expressed quite plainly: "the cruelest irony of the new reforms lies in the fact that we are left with nothing but liquor revenue to fall back upon, in order to give our children education". This seems to have led Gandhi to propose a national system of education that would be self-sufficient, rather than solely dependent on state funding thus:

> *"but as a nation we are so backward in education that we cannot hope to fulfill our obligations to the nation in this respect*

> *in a given time during this generation, if the program is to depend on money. I have therefore made bold, even at the risk of losing all reputation for constructive ability, to suggest that education should be self-supporting …. I would therefore begin the child's education by teaching it a useful handicraft and enabling it to produce from the moment it begins training. Thus every school can be made self-supporting, the condition being that the State take over the manufacture of these schools".*

It was a committee led by Zakir Hussain that worked out, in 1942, the contours of this *nai talim* proposed by Gandhi. The 1945 Sergeant Committee report on India's education in the meanwhile predicted that given the number of children and financial needs, universal basic education in India was not feasible in a time frame of less than forty years (1985).

Enter Maulana Azad

This in a way was the stage when Maulana Azad made his entry on the scene, in a dual role one might say; as a designer of the emerging nation state and Republic of India by being a member of the Constituent Assembly, and as a prominent member of Nehru's cabinet, a Minister whose task was to implement and deliver in the area of education.

The Constituent Assembly commenced its task from 1946 that continued till the Constitution was adopted in 1950. It is important to make sense of the Maulana's public utterances during this period, since the Assembly was seriously considering making education a fundamental right in the Constitution itself. It is however not clear from the scanty records I have access to as to the role of Maulana Azad in incorporating education as a fundamental right in the Constitution. Addressing the conference on All India Education on January 16, 1948, Maulana Azad emphasized:

"We must not for a moment forget, it is a birth right of every individual to receive at least the basic education without which he cannot fully discharge his duties as a citizen."

Azad remained a close confidante, supporter and advisor to Prime Minister Nehru and played an important role in framing national policies. For example, his persuasion was instrumental in obtaining the approval of Muslim representatives to end communal electorates, and he was a forceful advocate of enshrining the principle of secularism, religious freedom and equality for all Indians. It is however not clear that while he recognized that basic education was the birthright of every individual, how much well he used his powers of persuasion and clout that he clearly had in the drafting part of this birthright in the Constitution. Because, the Constituent Assembly finally decided to drop the draft article that would have made education a fundamental right from the Constitution.

In brief, it happened like this. In 1947 the Constituent Assembly set up a Ways and Means (Kher) Committee to explore *ways and means* of achieving universal elementary education within ten years at lesser cost. In the same year, the Assembly Sub-committee on Fundamental rights placed free and compulsory education on the list of Fundamental Rights:

"Clause 23 - Every citizen is entitled as of… right to free primary education and it shall be the duty of the State to provide within a period of ten years from the commencement of this Constitution for free and compulsory primary education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen years." In April 1947 the advisory committee of the Constituent Assembly **rejected** free and compulsory education as a fundamental right (costs being the reason). It sent the clause to the list of

"non-justiciable fundamental rights" (later termed as 'Directive Principles of State Policy), that denied a justiciable right.

In the 1949 debate in the Constituent Assembly, the Assembly decided to remove the first line of draft' Article 36'…"*Every citizen is entitled as of right to free primary education and it shall be the duty of the State to.."* and replaced it with *"The State shall endeavour to.."* That effectively put an end to the possible inclusion of Right to Education in the original Constitution itself. How exactly Maulana Azad positioned himself in this debate, whether he made direct or behind the scene efforts to have the draft Article 36 retained are questions for future research. Quite clearly, his public utterances did not find an echo in the drafting of the Constitution. As for the age group finalized for the Directive Principles and the removal of the term *primary education* from the final draft, that was because of the intervention of Babasaheb Ambedkar, the Chairperson of the Assembly, who on November 23, 1949 said that *"… a provision has been made in Article 18 to forbid any child from being employed below the age of 14. Obviously if the child is not to be employed below the age of 14, the child must be kept occupied in some educational institution."* Barring this intervention, the Final directive principle 45 would have said *"up to age 11"* rather than *"up to age 14"*.

It was left to K.T. Shah to make the prophetic pronouncement on the decision of the Assembly to relegate the right to directive principles. In his note of dissent in April 1947, he had said: *"Once an unambiguous declaration of such a (justiciable) right is made, those responsible for it would have to find ways and means to give effect to it. If they had no such obligation placed upon them, they might be inclined to avail themselves of every excuse to justify their own inactivity in the*

matter, indifference or worse". Given that none of the budget speeches from 1950 to 1960, the ten year target set by the Directive Principles, even mentioned education, one must conclude that K.T. Shah was dead right in his dissent.

During and after all this, there are records of what Maulana Azad was saying in public, but one doesn't have much idea as to what he was doing about it, how much of his efforts were being thwarted by those who controlled finances in Nehru's cabinet, and how much support he had from Nehru himself. For example, even after the right was excluded from the Constitution in 1950, in a radio broadcast on September 30, 1953, he was still expressing what he clearly had not been able to get into the constitution:

> *"Every individual has a right to an education that will enable him to develop his faculties and live a full human life. Such education is the birth right of every citizen. A state cannot claim to have discharged its duty till it has provided for every single individual the means to the acquisition of knowledge. Every individual unconditionally and without qualification is entitled to education up to this stage … the state must make available to all citizens the facilities of education up to the secondary stage. Elementary and middle education is more important because the edifice of national education is laid in these two early stages. If the foundation is weak or wrongly laid, the rest of the structure is weak or faulty."*

In contrast, his achievements were more visible in the setting up of institutions, many of them related to higher education and culture. The Indian Institute for Technology (1951), the University Grants Commission (1953), the development of Indian Institute for Sciences, Bangalore and the setting up of Indian Council for Cultural Relations being notable examples. For school education, the major initiative was the setting up of the then premier teacher training facility, the Central Institute for Education at Delhi

University, which was later to become the Department of Education of the University.

A much delayed Right

It is ironic that the Right to Education legislation finally became a reality in India when, many might argue, the politics was least inclined to it compared to the times when Maulana Azad was at the helm of affairs. The argument might go as follows: The nationalistic fervor was at a climax when Maulana Azad headed India's education. Combined with the fact that the political inclination was dominated by Nehruvian socialism, the chances of the state opting for a rights based approach was much more favourable than the present times. The present time is dominated, after the opening of the economy in the early nineties, by policies of privatization and liberalization, by a policy framework that favours market solutions, even in the social sector, in contrast to obligations on the state through the rights based approach. So what couldn't become possible with the intervention of great names like Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Mahatma Gandhi, Babasaheb Ambedkar, Nehru and Maulana Azad finally came through in the times of Manmohan Singh, who many believe to be much more inclined to market based interventions rather than to state obligations.

Arguably, the nudge, if that is what made it happen, came from the Supreme Court's observation in the 1993 Unnikrishnan judgment, which interpreted the constitution to conclude that the right to education already existed under the right to life (Article 21), but was not absolute, being restricted to the age of 14 years because of the directive principles article 45, and was dependent on the state's economic capacity after age 14. In a sense, one might say

that it was always there since 1950, only no one stumbled on it till 1993, including Maulana Azad, the first Education minister of the country. One could also perhaps raise the issue that there was some kind of a muted popular movement at the time of the Supreme Court judgment in 1993, that galvanized a modicum of public pressure on the parliament to pay heed to the Court's interpretation, something that was not so visible at the time of Maulana, when people expected that the government would work in their favour without the need of being pressurized, at least in the area of education; there was unbounded 'faith' in the national leadership, which included the Maulana. As for the constant refrain that the country could not afford the financial burden of such a right, that plagued the present attempt too, when the government discarded the central legislation for exactly the same reason. But one could say with some confidence that public pressure did reverse that situation in 2006.

In the end, one feels inclined to conclude that the public rhetoric of the national leaders immediately after independence, which included the utterances of Maulana Azad too, were not matched by commensurate action, certainly not in the area of universal basic education. Even the Kothari Commission report could be charged likewise, since its much acclaimed egalitarian vision of common schools was not matched with the specific recommendations for the implementation of the common school system. It borrowed the terminology of a National System of Education from Maulana Azad, as like Azad, the demand and directions for implementation were at best tepid.

Which is in such a contrast to the political vocabulary of the current leaders in the times of Manmohan Singh, where the idea of a national system of education, common schools,

mother tongue education and an egalitarian outlook is mostly absent, but yet the right to education legislation is a reality.

Might one conclude that for the national leaders of the immediate post-independent India, egalitarian rhetoric was enough to make them feel politically secure, whereas for the market friendly political class of today, the awareness that market friendliness does not bring electoral political power is a compulsion to act in the area of social rights, as a concession, in order to use the power thus gained to predominantly further the market ideal? Which raises the question whether the egalitarian rhetoric of the Maulana and his peers was more comforting than the legislation of right that has emerged as a political compulsion today, which may not therefore get implemented with the kind of decisiveness it demands. Only time can answer that question.

CHAPTER FOUR

Reflecting the Educational Philosophy of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Khwaja Ghulamus Saiyidain[1]

Syeda Hameed[*]

By way of background Maulana Azad was educated according to the old educational pattern of engaging the best tutors to ground him on the basic academic tenets. His grounding was in Urdu, Persian and Arabic – language and literature. He did not attend a school, college or university. His father Maulana Khairuddin found the best teacher among intellectual elite of Calcutta who came to teach his son occasionally in the august presence of his father. It was considered a privilege to teach the scion of Calcutta's most venerable family of Sufi Pirs and Silsila.

At a very young age Azad had completed *Dars-e-Nizamia*, a course of higher studies in Islamic theology, traditional Muslim history, and philosophy. He had studied and mastered Arabic and Persian. His brilliant literary and journalistic career began when he was no more than 12 years old. By the time he was 24, he had won for himself a

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[1] The source of Maulana Azad's Philosophy of Education is the Maharaja Sayajirao Memorial Lectures, University of Baroda delivered by Dr. K.G. Saiyidain in 1961.

[*] Member, Planning Commission, New Delhi

name as a writer, journalist and public speaker. The year 1912 was a watershed in his life; he started the publication of his weekly journal *Al-Hilal* from Calcutta. Through *Al-Hilal* he created a consciousness of current political affairs and yearning for freedom among the Urdu speaking devout Muslims (on one hand) and love and reverence for religion among the English educated class – at least some of them (on the other). This is confirmed in words of Maulana Mahmudul Hasan and Maulana Shaukat Ali quoted in the introduction of *Tazkirah*. Maulana's autobiography, by his editor – the indefatigable Fazluddin Ahmed. Maulana Mahmudul Hasan told Azad "We had forgotten the real work. It was *Al Hilal* which reminded us of it." And Maulana Shaukat Ali told Fazluddin "Abul Kalam has showed the way to faith".

Azad's message to Indian Muslims was two-fold; first to revive in them the true spirit of religion, and re-organise their religious and social life, second, to infuse in them the spirit of freedom and persuade them to join the national movement of the Congress in its struggle for freedom. At this stage we can call him (like other freedom loving Ulema) an advocate of *Religious Nationalism*.

For some time he played with the idea of bringing about a political revolution with the help of Bengal "terrorist" groups like *Jugantar*. He soon gave it up in favour of the democratic method of the National Congress. At the same time he started in *Al Hilal* – a trenchant criticism of Muslim League which continued until the time that the League and Congress came closer in 1916 and continued as allies for several years. Yet from a religious point of view he regarded (like Mohammad Ali) that a universal organisation of Muslims around the Turkish Khilafat as not only necessary but frasible. Accordingly, when the First World War broke

out between Britain and Turkey. Azad's *Al-Hilal* which in the eyes of Government was more dangerous than Mohammad Ali's journal *Comrade* was forced to close down through the repressive machinery of *The Press Act*. Azad then started *Al-Hilal* in a new avatar, *Al-Balagh*. It was in this journal that he first announced that he was engaged in translating the Quran and writing an explication and commentary. *Al-Balagh* closed down under the Defence Ordinance. The British intelligence marched into his house at Circular Road, Ripon Lane, Calcutta and confiscated all materials including his translation and commentary. He was asked to immediately leave Calcutta.

The three and the half years internment in Ranchi were spent in his mission of making the teaching of Quran comprehensible to the modern age Muslims. After several mishaps, which had to do with confiscation and destruction of his manuscripts, it was there that that he completed his first volume. It consisted of what I consider the most important writing on Islam; *Surat-e-Fatiha* as an introductory volume, consisting of his commentary and explications of Quran. This was followed by a second volume containing the first 8 paras of the Quran with translation and commentary. The volumes were published in 1930 and 1936. *It is this deep understanding of the Quran which underpins Azad's philosophy of education.*

In his article on Azad's philosophy of education, this is precisely the point made by Saiyadain. He says that Azad's educational ideas are grounded in his understanding of Islam. He also says Azad's was not an exclusive *"Islamic mind"* or even an *"oriental"* mind. 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. The most often quoted

pronouncement on this relationship between his Muslim heritage and Indian heritage was made in 1946 during his Presidential address at the Ramgarh session of Indian National Congress. The importance of this address lies in the fact that it throws light not only on the communal problem and the problem of relations between the minorities and majority but also indirectly on the educational problems which we have to face in forging a living sense of unity in the country of religious and cultural diversity. He said, "I am a Muslim and profoundly by conscious of the fact that I have inherited Islam's glorious traditions of the last 1300 years. I am not prepared to lose even a small part of that legacy. The history and teachings of Islam, its arts and letters, its civilization and culture are all part of my wealth and it is my duty to cherish and guard them. As a Muslim, I have a special identity within the field of religion and culture with which I cannot tolerate any undue interference. But with all these feelings, I have another equally deep realization, born out of my life's experience, which is strengthened and not hindered by the spirit of Islam. I am equally proud of the fact that I am an Indian, as essential part of the indivisible unity of Indian nationhood, a vital factor in its total make up without which this noble edifice will remain incomplete. I can never give up this sincere claim…"

These lines, and there are others, sprinkled across political speeches, journalistic pieces, Saiyidain says brings out the fact that Azad did not care for the typical mind of the "*mulla*". It had drawn from many sources – Indian, Islamic, Oriental and Occidental, while retaining the basic heritage of Islamic values and creative originality of his mind. He had assimilated the best that Indian philosophy

and religion as well as what modern Western thought had to offer.

In his life as well as writings, Saiyidain saw a clear link between his life and purpose of education. But he qualifies this link with a caveat. He writes *that this can happen only if one has a thoughtful and creative mind and one's educational ideas are not a confused reflection of what one finds floating about amorphously in ones' environment. Very often educationists grab at that amorphous substance and make it the mainstay of education.* Then he writes, what for him was the bedrock of his educational philosophy; "Educational thinkers generally don't come from the rank of the professional educationists but from philosophers, writers and creative thinker. Neither Plato, nor Rousseau nor Freud not Montessori, Spencer, Tagore, Gandhi or Iqbal can be described as professional Educationists…yet their impact on education has been tremendous." Saiyadain considers Azad as one of those essentially a scholar, a thinker, litterateur, divine; a man who was pitch forked into intense political activity.

Saiyadain writes that he was a little surprised when he was given the education portfolio. The personal standing of Azad was far above that of any Ministerial post. "I could not imagine him, the intellect and consciousness of the nation, holding any portfolio in an official hierarchy." Then he adds, "This was really due to my ignorance and perhaps my unconscious equation of Ministership in free India with similar posts in British regime. I have learnt differently since."

A bad choice of the first education Minister of free India would be fraught with serious consequences. The country was passing through the most trying spiritual and psychological crisis. The struggle for freedom had drawn

together many diverse elements for a common cause. But now the fissiparous tendencies had come overboard. Most people were beginning to behave as if the period of making sacrifices was over and it was time to reap the profits of freedom.

Both Azad and Saiyidain felt that for a country emerging from 150 years of political bondage it was important to train the nation not merely in skills but *train their ideas and emotions in new ways under the inspiration of a new purpose so they prove equal to their new challenges and responsibilities.*

Saiyidain writes, "In retrospect, one realises how wise and how far sighted was his appointment as Minister of Education. There was need for a person of great vision and character who may be able to assess the situation correctly and adopt sound educational policies which would help in the long run to restore mental sanity and balance to national life and instil the right values. Azad was eminently fitted for the task. Ever since his advent into public life he was essentially concerned with the basic educational problem of shaping the hearts and minds of his fellow men and women. He devoted himself to the service of his great purpose; training individuals who will have the qualities of vision, courage, tolerance and integrity and to the creation, through them, of a social order which will be inspired by ideals of social justice, broad mindedness, cooperation and rationalism. He repeatedly affirmed in his speeches that the central purpose of five year plans is not the production of more material wealth and resources but the creation of a new mind and new character for which right education is more essential than the development of industries, trade and hydro-electric projects. So when he stepped into his portfolio he was not taking on a new job but a new challenge – how to transcribe into concrete organisational

terms, some of the ideas and values which he had preached all his life.

Prem Kirpal, his secretary, writes in the article, `The Educationist' about Azad's impact on the education scenario, "New winds of change began to blow. Special aspects of the problems of education such as the promotion of Gandhian teachings and way of life, introduction of general education courses, Home Science programmes, Institutes of rural higher education, the education of teachers, development of library services, audio-visual education, promotion of Hindi and other national languages, scholarship for scheduled castes and tribes, education and training of the handicapped, special programmes of education of women and girls, development of cultural activities, youth welfare and physical education, reflect the vastness of the range of activities and innovations initiated by the Central Ministry of Education." He also refers to the kind of people Azad selected as his aides and advisors, "His chief aides were men of intellectual eminence who could give creative leadership to their specialised concerns. Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar, Tara Chand, Humayun Kabir and Khwaja Ghulamus Saiyidain were highly respected in the world of learning and steered the course of Indian education, science and culture during Maulana Azad's stewardship. Educational administration at the state level was influenced by the example of the Centre. Vice-Chancellors, Education Secretaries and Directors of Education in the states were generally selected from the field of education, and received respect and confidence due to their expertise in the field."

I want to end on the note of religious *"Humanhangi"* which is a hallmark of Azad's and Saiyidain's educational policy. In both the educationists there is a passionate

advocacy of tolerance as one of the basic values of life. Azad deeply cherished belief in the essential similarity of the main teachings of all religions. In Tarjuman one finds his Quran's reverence for all religions and their founders. Azad writes of the categorical imperative in Islam that there is no nation or part of the world which did not have its Prophet…we must either accept them all or reject them all. The real objective of religion is not to divide but to unite, to provide a rallying point for humanity which had been split up with fragments on the basis of race, geography, language, social and economic differences.

He writes: "You may be separated into all these groups but there is one overriding sacred relationship which cannot be broken – you are creatures of the same Almighty God, bound to Him in homage and reverence. This bond cuts across all your man-made differences and can bring your hearts into concord. You may then still feel that the whole world is your home, that the entire human race is a single family and that all men and women are members of the family of one Creator."

This is the underpinning also of Saiyidain's educational philosophy which is found in all his writings. It is very important to state here that the other shared value is not just of tolerance but robust acceptance of all faiths. Azad abhors narrow-minded men – Ta'a Sub and this abhorrence is expressed again and again in his writings. In a convocation address, he said "In the advancement of nations there is no greater hindrance than narrow mindedness. It is our duty to keep ourselves free from this disease in this new era of Independence which has just begun. There is no other disease so dangerous for the healthy growth of national life. It makes its appearance in every field of thought and action. Like an actor it masquerades in disguise. In the domain of

religion it appears in the form of blind faith and wants to deceive us in the name of orthodoxy. In learning and culture, it makes an appeal to us in the name of our nation and country. It behoves us not to be taken in by these fictitious names. We must remember that the root cause of all this is nothing but narrow mindedness."

Tolerance, he says, is the main trait of Indian civilisation, "Other nations may have to learn new lessons for broadening their outlook. But so far as India is concerned, we can say with pride that tolerance is the main trait of our ancient civilizations and we have been steeped for thousands of years in it. In other countries differences of thought and action led to mutual warfare and bloodshed but in India they were resolved in a spirit of compromise and toleration. The highest school of Vedantism flourished side by side with agnosticism and atheism…Many thinkers of the modern world avows that this is the great message of ancient Indian civilization which the world has yet to learn."

The main concern of education was training for becoming a good human being (Iqbal's *Mard-i-Momim*). "In the everyday transactions of life, the rules of right and wrong are the same for all – they cannot be sophistically adjusted to suit "our people" or "our community" versus "other" peoples, as men have often tried to do. "O ye who believe", says the Quran.

"Be steadfast in the service of God's truth and bear witness for justice, and let not hatred of any people seduce you so that you deal with them unjustly. Act justly for that is what piety enjoins."

CHAPTER FIVE

The Madarsa Islamia, Ranchi: Maulana Azad's Early Experimentation with Madarsa Education

Rizwan Qaiser[*]

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad was one of the few nationalist leaders who could easily blend his intellectual prowess with deep commitment to the on-going nationalist political processes in the twentieth century India. Azad's contributions towards the national as well as intellectual life of India are multifaceted and have attracted attention of historians and scholars alike. However, what is not widely known is that he also contained within his intellectual world-view, seeds of an educationist, a fact largely ignored by historians as well as educationists due to the fact that his role as a nationalist attracted more attention. It was perhaps for this reason that his role as a Minister of Education in sovereign India too was paid scant attention. It was only after the decision of the Central Government to observe his birth anniversary on 11 November as the National Education Day that has attracted the attention of scholars. Despite tentative attention, the process of the making of his educational thoughts still remains in the dark due to several reasons, one of them being lack of knowledge of the source language, Urdu which Maulana Azad had extensively used,

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while reflecting upon trends in the realm of education, science and society. It is important to underline the fact that Azad's views on science, education and society can be analysed against the larger background of his involvement in anti-colonial enterprises.

Azad had shown early signs of intellectual pursuit as early in 1902, when he addressed a letter to Hakeem Mohammad Tabeeb Ali (editor of a journal, *Muraaqqua-e-Alam*) in which he dwelt upon many issues of importance. He argued that the protagonists of English education wished to spread western sciences, but English had been accepted as a means of securing jobs. As a result there was hardly any emphasis on learning science and philosophy. The need of the hour was to translate the works of the West in the languages of the country. Azad went on to say that it was time that the fallacy of the perception that those who believed in sciences were turning to atheism was challenged and so the argument that Islam and science were contradictory.[1] Assertions such as this are significant in the light of the fact that Muslims at large had perceived the Western education with suspicion for long since it was thought to be not in conformity with religious injunctions. Sayyed Ahmad Khan had started a Scientific Society at Ghazipur as early as 1866; a major component of its work was to translate the Western Scientific literature into Indian languages particularly Urdu. Even Jamaluddin Afghani in the course of articulating a Pan-Islamic ideology talked about reconciling Islam with modern sciences. The Delhi College in the middle of the nineteenth century had undertaken similar exercises.

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1 Azad's letter to Hakeem Mohammad Ali Tabeeb , 11th June 1902 in Malik Ram ed., *Khutoot Abul Kalam Azad,* vol.1, Sahitya Akademy, (Delhi,1991), pp. 22-23

It is remarkable that Azad should have advocated the learning of Western sciences, since he himself belonged to a family in which anything Western was anathema. His father Maulana Khairuddin, an *Alim* (Scholar) of stature had opposed any possibility of his children picking up western influences, even in the realm of knowledge and language such as English. Maulana Khairuddin's attitude was not at all surprising considering the backdrop of Muslim antipathy towards English education particularly in Bengal. How far Maulana Azad agreed with this perception of his father is difficult to ascertain. However, what is certain and revealed later by Azad himself is that he gradually started moving away from the ambit of the family where the ambience of *piri-muridi* was strong.[2] It was in this religious ambience that Azad was born in 1888 in Mecca where his father had gone with the intention of settling down, and later married an Arab lady.

Maulana Khairuddin Dihlawi belonged to the *Naqshbandi Silsilah* of *pirs* and had a large following, among the business community of *Suratee Nakhudar* of Calcutta. Maulana Khairuddin was perceived to be a serious scholar of the Quran, Hadith and Islamic theology. After his prolonged stay in Arabia, he returned to Calcutta in 1895.[3]

Maulana Khairuddin had spent a considerable part of his life following a strict regimen in Arabia, which he followed in Calcutta. The children of Khairuddin were only to be brought up in a religious atmosphere, where

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[2] Azad, *India Wins Freedom*, the complete version, Orient Longman, Delhi, 1988 p. 3 (The institution of *piri-muridi* was preceded by the notion of *Beit* in order to express allegiance to the Khalifa and subsequently any ruler, which in due course of time became the hall mark of Sufic practices.

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

obligatory performance of *namaz* and other duties were to be followed strictly. In brief, the atmosphere in the family was highly religious and *peeri-muridi* was its dominant overtone. Khairuddin wanted that his sons, Abu Nasir (the elder brother of Azad) and Azad should succeed him as Pirs.[4] Any influence, which was external to Islam, was an anathema to him, and even more so any influence associated with the west.[5]

How did Azad receive his father, Khairuddin's teachings and practices? It is argued that Azad rejected his father's attitude towards *taqlid* (blind imitation) and the structure of *Piri-Muridi*.[6]

However, for Azad the choice was not clear since he belonged to the tradition of his father and in many ways sought to continue it.[7] But the ever-enquiring mind that Azad was endowed with could not have gone on much longer accepting all this. Slowly but surely Azad began chafing against his domineering father. But this was not enough for a man like him. He had to find a path for himself, as he was to say later, "I could not reconcile myself with the prevailing customs and belief and my heart was full of a 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 path"[8] and this resulted in spiritual tumult in

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4 Ibid p.8

5 Ibid

6 Ian Henderson Douglas, *Abul Kalam Azad: An Intellectual and Religious Biography*, Oxford University Press, (Delhi, 1988) p. 37

7 Ibid

8 Azad, *India Wins Freedom*, op. cit., p.3

the life of Azad and for a while he groped in the dark as to what would be the path that he should take to? While he was caught in the spiritual wilderness of the loss and recovery of faith, he was also simultaneously engaged in defining a political course for himself, in view of the fact that there was that his family could hardly claim to have had any political background except Maulana Khiaruddin's stiff opposition to the West and influence of Wahabi movement.

It is surprising that his given Azad's deeply religious family background he chose to start his political career as a revolutionary in the wake of the partition of Bengal. He had given hints about his revolutionary political affiliations in *India Wins Freedom* where he wrote, "Bengal did not take the measure (partition of Bengal) lying down. There was an unprecedented outburst of political and revolutionary enthusiasm." He went on, "It was during this period that I came in contact with Shri Shyam Sunder Chakravarty, who was one of the important revolutionary workers of the day. Through him I met other revolutionaries. I remember having met Shri Aurobindo Ghosh on two or three occasions. The result was that I was attracted to revolutionary politics and joined one of the groups." [9] Similar indications were seen elsewhere too. "Not many people knew that the Maulana was involved in the revolutionary struggle and was preparing for a violent overthrow of British rule. He maintained his contacts with the revolutionaries of Bengal while at the same time his agents were active among certain tribals of the Frontier."[10]

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9 Azad, *India Wins Freedom,* op. cit., pp 4-5

10 A. R. Malihabadi, *Zikre Azad,* op. cit., p. 272

After coming in contact with Shyam Sunder Chakraborty, the Maulana became part of the revolutionary-terrorist world and was introduced to other revolutionaries. When they found that Azad was willing to join them, they were greatly surprised.[11] Thus he became involved with the fringe of the extremist movement.[12]

Azad's participation in revolutionary activities could be seen as an indication of his personal conviction. He must have been aware of their limitations since the masses of the Muslims could barely be involved. It required a different approach and strategy to mobilise them, which in due course of time became Azad's major concern.

He embarked on the course of mobilising them only with the publication of *Al-Hilal* in July 1912. V.N. Datta argues that when after the death of his father Azad journeyed to Islamic countries; he found a new world astir with ideas of liberty, progress and revolutionary Islam. His contacts with these revolutionaries made him lament the indifference of Indian Muslims towards the freedom of their country. 'This made a great impression on Azad.'[13] His trips to the Middle East seem to have been given importance by Azad himself, particularly as regards his desire to mobilise his co-religionists towards the freedom movement. He said that his contact with one or the other type of revolutionaries convinced him that the Muslims should have taken the lead against British Imperialism.[14] "I decided that on my return

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11 Azad, *India Wins Freedom* op. cit., p.5

12 Rajat K. Ray, 'Revolutionaries, Pan-Islamists and Bolshevists: M.A.K. Azad and Political Underworld of Calcutta' in Mushirul Hasan ed., *Communal and Pan-Islamic Trends in Colonial India*, Manohar, (Delhi, 1985) p.103

13 V.N. Datta, op. cit., p. 51

14 Azad, *India Wins Freedom*, op. cit., p.7

to India I would take up political work with greater earnestness."[15]

The Maulana had been given to writing essays since quite early in life, though he may not have got them published. As he put it, "A serious reading of newspapers and journals had already started off and it inspired me to write a few things. I do not remember having written anything serious. Yet by 1899-1900 I did start scribbling a few things, however I never had the courage to get them published".[16] Azad was barely twelve years old when he had begun writing, and got the first chance of editing a paper called *Al-Misbah*.[17] He benefited by his association with *Ahsan-al-Akhbar* brought out by Abdul Ghaffar of Calcutta, who owned a press. Here, according to Azad's narration, he got a chance to browse through papers and journals, which came in exchange from far-off places such as Egypt, Constantinople, Tripoli, Tunis, Algeria and America. Most of these were in Arabic.[18]Azad got to see two Egyptian journals, *Al-Hilal* and *Al-Muqtatif*. He also got to read *Al-Manar*. Of all these journals and papers, *Al-Manar* seemed to have made profound influence on Azad. "From the point of literary style as well as journalistic value the A*l- Mannar* was quite a new experience. In matters of religion it did not have so much of impact since Sir Sayyid's ideas had already cast its influence upon me, but it was a fine example of inspiring Arabic literature, and turned out to be so fruitful in the

15 Ibid., p.8

16 A.R. Malihabadi, *Azad ki Kahani*, op. cit., p. 249

17 Ibid.,p.252

18 Ibid.,p.254

future. Without an iota of doubt I am indebted to the *Al-Manar*."[19]

After his initial brush with the world of journalism Azad was noticed. Shibli Nomani entrusted him with the responsibility of editing a journal, *Al-Nadwa*, brought out by Nadwatul-Uloom of Lucknow. In his chequered career of journalism Azad seems to have given pride of place to the *Vakil,* which he edited for a while. "Around that time the *Vakil* was the most serious of all Urdu newspapers, which took deep interest in national issues and therefore had earned a place of respect for itself."[20]

Against this background of his brush with the world of journalism, Azad felt the need to start his own journal in order to give expression to his political thoughts as well as to discuss other issues of the corporate life of the Muslims. Azad was in constant touch with the developments in the Islamic world, since he had been reading so much of the literature from those societies. He stated that he had come under the influence of the *Al-Manar* group of Egypt, which was carrying forward the ideological legacy of men such as Jamaluddin Afghani, an ideologue of pan-Islamism, a phenomenon which had emerged during the last quarter of the 19th century. The agenda of pan-Islamism as articulated by Afghani largely consisted of bringing reforms within the Islamic community and confronting the growing hegemony of western imperialism. Both the issues posed challenges to the Muslim world. In order to achieve them it was necessary to revitalise Islam and for this it was crucial that there was

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19 Ibid.,p.255

20 Ibid.,p.293

an Islamic centre in the form of the Khilafat.[21] This concern necessitated a pan-Islamic upsurge, seeking solidarity among Muslims the world over. However since colonial domination by the West had given rise to particularism in such societies, Afghani seemed to have taken due recognition of this also.[22] In the long run this produced a strong tendency of particularistic nationalism. In other words Afghani carried along both the tendencies, which cannot be said to be free from contradictions. But the same was true about pan-Islamism itself. For instance, for Afghani pan-Islamism was an ultimate goal, but liberating Muslims from the colonial domination was an immediate one.[23] In the same vein Afghani had argued that while achieving Islamic unity was important it was much more important to achieve national unity.[24] It was not Afghani alone but his followers such as Shaikh Abduh and Rasheed Rida too who pursued a similar line of thinking and wrote extensively on political and social issues concerning Muslims.

It has already been pointed out that Azad had conceded rather early that he was indebted to *Al-Manar.* He made it clear that he had absorbed influences from these thinking men, whose theoretical articulation established that Islam and particularistic nationalism were compatible and that Muslims should forge links with others to combat colonial domination, while still pursuing a Pan-Islamic agenda.

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21 Shan Muhammad, *Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, A Political Biography*, Minakshi Publications, (Meerut, 1969), p.26

22 John L. Esposito, op. cit., pp.127-8

23 James Piscatori,, *Islam in a World of Nation- States*, Cambridge University Press, (Cambridge,1986), p. 87

24 Ibid.,p.78

Such was the background of long years of ideological and theoretical preparedness for Azad's endeavours, where various streams of political thought produced a blend of tradition, religion and liberalism to create a new brand of politics with specific reference to Muslims. By June 1912 Azad "took a momentous step of publishing the *Al-Hilal*". Contrary to common assumption *Al-Hilal* did not start with the outbreak of the Balkan Wars in October 1912, which had stirred the Muslim mind and given rise to a country-wide Pan-Islamic agitation.[25] What then was the immediate inspiration? It has been argued that, "it was revolutionary nationalism as well as the fate of Turkey which inspired its publication."[26]

Humayun Kabir has characterised Azad's style as unique in the history of the Urdu language and literature, capturing the imagination of the youth of the community with its poetic grace and its formulation of a new faith. This was the greatest appeal of *Al-Hilal*.[27] Not Humayun Kabir alone but Syed Sulaiman Nadvi too, who never hid his bitterness towards Azad, once commented, "I must in all fairness say one thing, the time Maulana Abul Kalam Azad was bringing out *Al-Hilal,* the Muslims' mind was set on fire by his passionate words. He sounded loudly and fiercely the trumpet of *Jihad*, whose name people were afraid to mention, so that the forgotten lessons were on the tongues of the people again."[28] "*Al-Hilal* spoke in the language of a

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25 Rajat K. Ray, op. cit., p.107
26 Ibid.p.107
27 Ian Henderson Douglas, op. cit., p.99
28 Syed Sulaiman Nadavi, as quoted in Ibid., p.100

'High souled prophet', throughout he had the stamp of a *Mujtahid*."[29]

The first issue of *Al-Hilal* came out on 13th July 1912. This issue did not discuss the objective of the paper. The third issue barely hinted at it. However, later, Azad discussed quite elaborately that *Al-Hilal* would call upon Muslims to follow the true spirit of the *Quran* and *Sunnah* (Practices of the Prophet Mohammad) in all spheres of life – education, culture or politics. In brief, *Al-Hilal* called upon the Muslims to be true Muslims.[30] In another issue Azad argued that once Muslims truly followed the *Quran*, they would experience a new life.[31] *Al-Hilal's* content and message initially baffled its readers since religious issues were enmeshed with political issues. There were innumerable queries as to what *Al-Hilal* stood for as regards these questions. In response to one such query Azad wrote, "The question whether political discussion should be separated from religious education is very important. But you must know that this is the very foundation on which one intends to build the whole edifice of *Al-Hilal*. If you say that the arch is not beautiful, one may try to alter its shape, but if you wish that the keystone be removed then one cannot accede to your wishes. There will be nothing left with us if we separate politics from religion."[32]

He described the fight against the British as Jihad. Once he argued, 'Thus, like many other things, the call of *Al-Hilal* is that neither trust the government nor follow the Hindus. Take only the right path, '*Seerat-ul Mustuqeem*', as suggested

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29 Ibid., p.100

30 *Al-Hilal*, Vol. I, no.9, September 8,1912

31 Ibid., Vol. I, no.11, September 22,1912

32 Ibid., Vol. 1, no.9, September 8,1912

by Islam." He further added, "If we take to the political path as suggested by Islam then of course we shall be a group not to be daunted by anything. We shall express ourselves fearlessly as we should not be afraid of anyone but God."[33] The agenda of *Jihad* would encompass many other things too, for instance establishing democracy and founding of a parliamentary and constitutional government. As he put it:

'Islam stands for freedom and is against those who wish to perpetuate an autocratic rule through brute force. It (Islam) wants its followers to be in action in order to attain freedom. It is the soul of democracy and equality and considers that government to be against the will of God, which is not parliamentary and constitutional. This lesson is not to be learnt from the Hindus but from the *Quran*, and should be as such made the motto of life.'[34] These concerns formed the core of *Al-Hilal*.

Maulana Azad wished to reassure Muslims that they must have faith in themselves and trust the Hindus and work out a scheme of lasting co-operation with them, since they were the main flag-bearers of the freedom movement. The freedom movement would lack teeth without an active co-operation between the two communities. He argued, "There is no need to fear Hindus. If at all you fear anyone you should fear God. If you want to live in India then embrace your neighbours. You have seen the consequence of keeping aloof from them, now you should join them".[35] Hindu-Muslim unity was not conditioned by convenience nor was a matter of exigencies. For Azad, indeed it was a matter of conviction, throughout his political life.

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33 *Al-Hilal*, Vol.1, no.9, September 8,1912

34 *Al-Hilal*,vol.1,no.9 September 8,1912

35 Ibid.

While Azad was concerned about Hindu- Muslim understanding in the national arena, he was no less concerned about Muslims developing a sense of solidarity on an international scale, more so in the light of a perpetual threat to the existence of Turkey. In his view the 'Christian West' was bent upon destroying the last outpost of Islamic power. Developments concerning Turkey had already agitated the minds of Muslims but from 1910 many developments took place, which stirred the minds of the Indian-Muslims.

It has already been pointed out how Azad had come under the influence of *Al-Manar* and the writing of Shaikh Abduh and Rashid Rida in the years preceding the launching of *Al-Hilal*. However, since its publication, the Pan-Islamic thoughts of these leaders found more than adequate space in the pages of *Al-Hilal*. There was a purpose in it, since Azad wished his readers too should be familiar with these contemporary thinkers and ideologically prepare them for a long drawn-out struggle against the Raj. The Balkan Wars were given a prominent place in *Al-Hilal*.[36]

These international developments too shaped Azad's view on Pan-Islam, which found adequate space in the pages of *Al-Hilal*. He solicited support for Turkey, spiritual or material. "It becomes a religious duty that the seat of *Khalifa* should be held dear to every Muslim purely as a matter of religious relationship. Any government, which is Khilafat's enemy should be considered enemy of Islam and one which is friendly towards it a friend. Because the friendship and enmity for a Muslim should not depend on personal losses and gains rather it should be for the sake of

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[36] B.R. Nanda, *Gandhi, Pan-Islamism, Imperialism and India Nationalism*, Oxford University Press, (Bombay, 1989), pp.105-6

religion."[37] Such a stance was to serve the purpose of generating anti-British sentiments among Muslims. Therefore it is possible to argue that Azad's Pan-Islamism was in consonance with Indian nationalism.[38]

When the First World War began, Azad clearly sympathised with Germany, as an ally of Turkey. Azad emphasised that Germans were superior to the British in the war theatre, in terms of material resources as well as discipline and training. His bias in favour of Germany aroused Government suspicion about the man and his newspaper. V.N. Datta argues that Azad's pro-German attitude cost him the security deposit of Rs.2000/- initially. Later the government took a pretty serious view of the anti-British and pro-Turkish and pro-German views of *Al-Hilal* and this became a subject of discussion in pro-Government papers, which provoked the government to take action against Azad.

However, a reading of the secret files prepared by government agencies leaves a clear impression that Azad had been a suspect in the eyes of the government for quite some time. Intelligence agencies kept a close watch on this "dangerous man" since the time he had protested legally against the government for its action against the *Comrade* for publishing an article, "The Choice of Turks." The article had caused quite a stir in official circles, as a result the security deposited in respect of the *Comrade* and *Hamdard* press was forfeited.[39]

As a reaction to this, on 30 November 1914, Azad, forwarded to the Commissioner of Police under protest, a

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37 *Al-Hilal*, vol.1, no.16, November 6, 1912

38 Ian Henderson Douglas, n.14, p.149

39 Home Political. A. Feb.1915, no. 265-292 k &w

copy of the issue of the *Comrade* and asked for an acknowledgement, if it was seized."[40] On its confirmation, the next best thing Azad could do to protest against the high-handedness of the administration was to legally challenge the validity of the orders of confiscation of the *Comrade*.[41] On his petition a special Bench of the High Court, Calcutta was appointed under the Indian Press Act 1910 and proceedings were to take place on 11th January 1915.[42] Azad's pleading took a strange turn when he argued that the article had exhorted Indian Muslims to remain loyal to the government established by law even if the Turks participated in the War against his Majesty and his allies "and does not contain any thing to cause disaffection."[43]

But the official opinion was that the article was potent enough to cause disaffection. Eventually the special Bench of High Court dismissed Azad's petition on technical grounds.[44]

Azad's writings in *Al-Hilal* and his protest against the measures against the *Comrade* convinced the government that, "the Editor (Maulana Azad) does his best to make his readers believe in the bad chances of the Allies and in the prospects of German victory. Mohammad Ali in the *Hamdard* is playing the same game. The insidious disloyalty of these people in spite of warning and promises is most discreditable. They are unfit to be allowed to publish newspapers, at the present time."[45]

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40 Ibid., p 19
41 Ibid., p 19
42 Ibid., p 20
43 Ibid., p 21
44 Ibid., p 21
45 Home Political A, Feb. 1915, no. 178-204, p 4

The Maulana was suspected to be part of Turkish and German intrigue not only from the time the War began but since the winter of 1911-12 when a German emissary moved about in Pan-Islamic circles and "consorted with the friends of the editor of *Al-Hilal*.[46]

Such a suspicion led C.R. Cleveland, the Director of Intelligence, to suggest that the paper be thoroughly searched and confiscated. If possible, the provision of the Press Act and the Indian Penal Code should be invoked.[47] What was the immediate provocation for the governmental agencies to sound so harsh about Azad? The reasons were articles carried by *Al-Hilal* in August 1914, which analysed various aspects of the war theatre and the prospects of different warring countries with an obvious anti-British touch. Certain articles carried in the September 1914 too were serious cause of concern to the British authorities.

Finally, the official circles recognised that Abul Kalam Azad, "the editor of the *Al-Hilal* is a dangerous man, that his private feelings which probably lead him to regard Germany as the friend of Turkey and that no chance should be lost checking his activities."[48] It was further assessed "that the Editor, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad is a well informed man, who is quite capable of discussing strategic and political questions from a wide point of view."[49]

In the course of the World War the *Al-Hilal* and its editor had become a source of anxiety to various provincial Governments such as Bengal, Punjab, Bihar, Orissa, as also princely states such as Hyderabad. All the provincial

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46 Ibid., p 15
47 Ibid., p 1
48 Ibid., p 10
49 Ibid., p 12

governments began asking the central government if measures were being suggested to put a halt on the dissemination of his thoughts in *Al-Hilal*. The Lt. Governor of the Punjab, Sir M.O. Dwyer showed severe anxiety on account of a likely visit to the Punjab by Mohammad Ali and Shaukat Ali accompanied by Azad. Referring to their earlier visits which had caused quite a stir, particularly among the Muslims, M.O. Dwyer asserted, "If I find any of the above trio in the Punjab, I won't hesitate to use the War Act to exclude them, but it is of course much better to restrict their movements from the source."[50]

Finally, action was initiated against Azad's paper on 16th November1914 at the press and residence, 13-14, Macleod Street, Calcutta. At the time of the raid it seems Azad was away in Delhi to meet Mohammad Ali.[51] Copies of *Al-Hilal* were seized and with this came to an end the efforts of Azad to be in communication with his co-religionists on matters of politics as well as religion. The Government may have thought that they have won but it was a temporary victory, since Azad's conviction helped him withstand such pressures.

After a brief respite, Azad started another paper *Al-Balagh* from Calcutta itself, (the address was Ripon Lane, Calcutta). The first issue appeared on 12th November1915, and it lasted till the end of March 1916, when Azad was externed from Calcutta for his continuous exhortation of the Muslims towards education including political education which essentially meant building up self-confidence to resist British rule. The "well informed" and yet "dangerous" man

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50 Government of India, Home Dept. Pol. Deposit proceedings, May 1915 no.36

51 Ibid.

i.e. Azad had become a thorn in the side of the Government. He was externed from Calcutta in April 1916 under the Defence of India Regulation and sent to Ranchi.

The externment of Azad from Calcutta brought his political as well as journalistic and literary activities to a sudden halt. In Ranchi he was compelled to live in confinement where any contact with outside world was impossible. And yet it did not dishearten him. Even in confinement he felt free but only in the realm of ideas. His messages through *Al-Hilal* and *Al-Balagh,* which had been moulded in the light of the Quran were reverberating in the minds of his readers.

However, Azad was convinced that Muslims must get access to the Quran in a language, which they understood easily. Thus, there arose the need to translate the Quran into Urdu and write a commentary on it. Azad had begun the task during the *Al-Hilal* and *Al-Balagh* days, but confinement in Ranchi gave him the gift of time, which went into the making of *Tazkirah,* the translation of the Quran and founding of Madrsa-i- Islamia in 1917

In Ranchi, at Moorabadi, a place largely inhabited by the Munda and Oraon tribes, Azad was to find himself confined bereft of the comfort of home and the company of the learned in Calcutta. And yet rather philosophically he said that he "yearned for peace of heart and freedom of thought and action." Azad was to have plenty of freedom of thought in Ranchi, where he could reflect upon any theme of his choice and write extensively, which he actually did. But so far as the action part was concerned, perhaps Azad was able to realise the limitation, only in course of his stay there, since the government agencies had kept their vigil on the 'dangerous man' rather seriously. One instance to establish

that Azad's yearning for the freedom of political action may never have been fulfilled for the Government was quite serious about him. In one of the secret government reports it was argued. "Abul Kalam Azad was deeply involved in the 'Silk letter Conspiracy' case. He is interned in Ranchi and first of all subjected to numerous restrictions under the Defence of India Act, but these were subsequently removed with the exception of the condition that he should not leave that station without first obtaining the consent of the local Government."[52] It is quite clear that the Government's resolve was firm as regards Azad, so much so that even his personal correspondence was scrutinised by the secret intelligence agencies.[53] Under no circumstances the restrictions imposed were to be relaxed in any manner.[54] The government's concern about Azad grew much graver, when the peace terms with Turkey were shortly to be announced. Since the terms were likely to be as harsh as with any other vanquished country, therefore, any talk of releasing Azad was unlikely to be entertained, because it was thought "It would be taking a grave risk to release this man at present.[55]

Under watchful eyes of the secret agencies, was it possible for Azad to enjoy the freedom of thought and action? Freedom of thought may have been possible, but action part must have remained a bit problematic, since the government at best would have allowed Azad to carry out some religious activities not having direct bearing upon the contemporary political development. Then the question

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52 G.O.I., Home Political A., proceedings nos., 180-192 Nov.1919
53 Ibid.
54 Ibid.
55 Ibid.

that arises is as to what were Azad's actions and thoughts during the Ranchi days.

Soon after his externment from Calcutta Azad came to Ranchi to take residence, as per the Government orders. It may seem that he would be depressed at the turn of events. But contrary to being depressed or dejected, he seemed to be much more concerned about his journal the *Al-Balagh*, which he had started soon after the closure of the *Al-Hilal*. Soon after reaching Ranchi Azad wrote to Syed Suleiman Nadavi and the very first sentence is highly reflective of his mind and resolute determination. He said, "I have just reached Ranchi. The *Al-Balagh* will continue on."[56] He went on asking him to write an essay of eight columns every two weeks and also request Maulvi Abdussalam that he should also write an essay of similar size. "Thus two forms shall easily be ready. And the remaining three forms I shall write myself."[57] Though it is different matter that despite Azad's best of intentions not a single issue of the paper could be brought out ever since he was externed from Calcutta.

Azad's externment had generated a sense of scare among those who earlier used to correspond with him. On one occasion he happened to remark that he didn't write to people till he received letters from them, since many had become wary of the government agencies who kept a close watch on his correspondence.[58] And he didn't give up correspondence with the people who really mattered to him. For instance he kept corresponding with Syed Suleiman Nadavi on several issues of academic importance and

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[56] A letter to Syed Suleiman Nadavi, letter no. 11 in Ghulam Rasool Mehar, ed., *Tabarrukat-I-Azad*, Adabi Duniya, (Delhi,1963), p.112

[57] Ibid.

[58] Ibid., letter no 115

showed keen interest in developments concerning the *Darul-Mussanifin*,[59] and advised him not to snap his association with this centre of learning since Allama Shibli started it.

It is commonly believed that the only thing Azad did during his stay at Ranchi, was to write *Tazkirah* and made a beginning of his magnum opus, the *Tarjumanul Quran*.[60] On the contrary, Azad did not remain quiet during the Ranchi days. Azad indulged himself in several activities. Ranchi was not the place with any significant concentration of the educated people, but still the Maulana's presence evoked a warm response, where men started flocking around Azad. Gradually Azad began giving the Friday *Khutba* (Sermons) in one of the local Mosques of Ranchi, which not only attracted the local people but in several cases people travelled from far off places such as Calcutta.[61]

In Ranchi the Maulana, established one *Anjuman-i-Islamia* under whose auspices later a Madrsa was also founded. To undertake a job such as this was not easy for Azad, considering that Ranchi was a new place and the paucity of resources could easily hamper any venture of this kind. However, by this time Azad had gained in stature that his appeal for the purpose was responded to rather warmly by the Hindus and Muslims alike.[62] However, in this endeavour of Azad the financial support came from Calcutta also, a city with many prosperous Azad followers. He was acutely conscious of the efforts that which bore fruits in the founding of the Anjuman-i-Islamia and subsequently the Madrasa-i-Islamia. While addressing the

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59 Ibid., letter no. 17 p.112

60 Suhail Azimabadi, "Maulana Azad Ranchi Mein", in Azad Number of *Payam-i- Watan*, (Delhi, 1977), p.69

61 Ibid.,p.69

62 Ibid., p.9

first anniversary of the Anjuman in November 1918, he complimented all those who were associated with this endeavour and admitted, 'Gentlemen, the foundations of your Anjuman were laid in August 1917 and it is barely one year and two months that despite many difficulties you have achieved so much'.[63] It was revealed that the Madrasa was inaugurated on 4 November 1918, even though the year mentioned in the marble plaque was 1917.[64] He also revealed in this speech that this Madrasa would represent the reformed madrasa curriculum, with a combination of the best of Arabic and English education. The senior classes of this system would not study the old and outdated subjects as arrangements were made to introduce a holistic syllabus, the need for which was felt for a long time.[65]

Two aspects of the founding of the Madrasa-i-Islamia are of historical interest. One, the marble plaque on the wall of the main building of the Madrasa mentions a list of thirty one donors, which was headed by Rai Saheb Thakur Das, *Rais-i- Ranchi* as it also mentions the name of one Babu Jagatpal Sahai, *vakil,* apart from names of men from all walks of life. For instance there were retired police inspectors, school inspectors, contractors, businessmen and others. In certain cases even zamindars such Sheikh Safdar Ali of Milki, district Gaya also contributed towards to the

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63 Maulana Azad's address to the annual meeting of the Anjuman-i-Islamia 3-4 November 1918 at Ranchi, in Jamshed Qamar ed. Maulana Azad ka Qeyam Ranchi, Ahwal wa Aasar, Maulana Azad Study Circle, Ranchi, 1994, p.32

64 Ibid. Maulana Azad stated that it was significant to mention that the Madrsa thus founded under the auspices of *Anjuman-i-Islamia* would be inaugurated on 4 November 1918.

65 Ibid. p. 33

Madrasa fund.[66] It was decided to have a chronogram embossed on the entry gate of the Madrasa, which read as *Futohat-i-Ghaibi*, which meant that divine help would come for it as it also implied 1917 as the year of its foundation.

The second most important aspect of this Madrasa was its syllabus about which, Maulana Azad did not say much in his above mentioned speech. All he had done was to cursorily mention an outline of the curriculum and syllabus. Details of all this were revealed much later in a letter addressed to Mohiuddin Ahmad Qusuri sometime in June 1919. This revelation had come in the context of some enquiry as regards new syllabus prepared for Madrasa-i-Aaliya, Calcutta. Apparently, the Director of Education, Government of Bengal had wanted a new syllabus prepared for it and one Maulvi Sahib Abdullah Tonki was directly charged with this responsibility. Subsequently, a sub-committee was constituted for the purpose and it solicited Maulana Azad's help as well. This was the context in which it was known that Maulana Azad had already prepared a syllabus for the Madrasa-i-Islamia, Ranchi, which was already in use there.[67] It seems the document prepared for the purpose had run into two hundred pages, however, what is stated in the letter mentions only an outline of it. Azad stated that the total number of years to transact this curriculum were eighteen, including three years of *Maktab*, the primary stage of learning. However, if three years of the primary stage were excluded, then it would still have

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66 Marble plaque placed on the wall of this Madrsa, which was covered with posters in utter disregard to its historical importance. On the insistence of the author these were removed, which made it possible to take photographs for the record.

67 Jamshed Qamar ed. *Maulana Azad ka Qeyam Ranchi, Ahwal wa Aasar,* Maulana Azad Study Circle, Ranchi, 1994, p.182

thirteen years in total.[68] Then these thirteen years were further divided into junior and senior classes, consisting of eight and five years respectively. While discussing all this he clearly stated that 'the experience of Madrasa-i-Ranchi has proved that such a division is adequate.'[69] Azad wanted that curriculum introduced in the Madrasa was in tune with existing system of education and therefore suggested that in ordinary circumstances a student would be able to complete his studies in thirteen years, however, in case of failure at any stage, a grace period of two years would help a student complete 16 years.[70]

As suggested by Azad that in the fifth year of the junior classes, subjects such English, mathematics, Indian geography, Indian history, history of Islam and sciences should be introduced. This would bring madrasa education at par with the government run schools.[71] Moreover subjects such as Tarjuman-al-Quran, Seerat-un-Nabi (life of the Prophet), and Logic etc could also be introduced. Azad was conscious of the fact that the curriculum so designed should be in keeping with the university education in the country. As he put it, 'No system of education can be complete till such times as elements of Government University system too are introduced.'[72] Azad believed that a system such as

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68 Letter addressed to Mohiuddin Ahmad Qusuri in Qamar Astan Khan ed., *Maulana Azad aur Madaris Islamia, Nadwatul Ulema kai Tareekh ka ek Baab*, Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library, Patna, 1992, p. 39.

69 Ibid.

70 Ibid. It was Azad's view that with the introduction of curriculum such as this a madras product would be treated at par with a matriculate since sixteen years were stipulated condition. There is some confusion in his statement when stated that a student might start his education at an age of six instead of five.

71 Ibid., p.39

72 Ibid.

this would equip any student to emerge as knowledgeable and be known as *Arabidan*, (person with good knowledge of Arabic) with the backing of his knowledge of Persian and Islamic studies, while being comfortable with English.

Azad was conscious of the fact that no curriculum could ever be successful with only minor reshuffling of study material here and there as he emphasised that new books should be written in subjects such as theology, translation of Quran, basics of natural sciences, life history of the Prophet and logic. He further underlined the fact especially in the field of logic, basic books should be written either in Urdu or Persian that too in modern rather than archaic style.[73] He admitted that it was not possible to bring about revolutionary changes in curriculum and syllabus in view of the fact older syllabus as known as *Allama Taftazani ke Nesab* (Allama Taftazani's syllabus) had been in practice and acceptable to a large number of people. He also underlined certain difficulties of introducing a revolutionary syllabus in view of the fact it might become too difficult to find a teacher, who could teach.

In view of these difficulties in introducing new syllabus and books which were unfamiliar to a large number of madrasa teachers, Maulana Azad highlighted the importance of producing more educationists rather than teachers alone. He argued that the growing number of *Mutallemeen* (educationists) would ensure that good *Muallemeen* (teachers) too would be turned out of these institutions.[74] According to Azad, bringing about these changes was crucial because it was important that Muslims were introduced to new areas of knowledge in order to

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[73] Ibid., p.40

[74] Ibid., p.44

overcome weakness in this field. He admits that earlier too some attempts were made to bring about reforms but they were half-hearted and incomplete. As compared to these attempts, holistic efforts should be made to keep madarsa education in tune with the changing times and at par with governments' institutions.

However, it remains a lamentable fact about this Madarsa that sources available hardly reveal about as to who was its *Muhtamim* (principal) and how many students were admitted, if residential then how these people managed food and other things. These are questions which remain unanswered, despite being so important.

The *Anjuman-i-Islamia* founded by the Maulana under extreme pecuniary conditions started flourishing within a short period. As a matter of fact once Azad narrated to G.R. Mehar that in the beginning in order to run the Anjuman, a handful of flour was collected in the town. However shortly the source of income stabilised and annual functions could be organised. It was on the occasion of the second annual function that the Maulana so keenly invited Syed Suleiman Nadavi to Ranchi. He requested, 'your participation is essential. No matter what happens you have to come. Your not coming would hurt me.'[75]

This function was to take place on 24-26 October 1919 and for this Azad's unguarded enthusiasm could be clearly seen in this letter. To spread education including political among his co-religionists remained his main agenda, however he lamented that Bihar hardly showed any enthusiasm in these endeavours and he wanted Suleiman

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[75] Azad to Suleiman Nadavi, undated but perhaps written in August or September, in Mehar ed., op. cit., p.128

Nadvi to highlight the academic achievements of Bihar as a reminder to its people in one of the sessions of the annual functions.[76]

Behind all these activities of Azad the guiding motive was to spread the Islamic education among the less fortunate co-religionists at Ranchi. He tried to do so to sustain an image that he had projected about himself that he was an Islamic scholar who was committed to uphold the Islamic ideals in the public as well as private life. He was quite self-conscious of it all through. In one of the letters that he wrote from Ranchi, while responding to objections raised about his arguments not being in the light of the *Quran*, he asserted that he never said anything, which was beyond the *Quran*.[77] He reiterated the same with much greater emphasis that, "Till such time that I have control over my tongue it is impossible that I could ever suggest any thing which is against the Quran."[78] Azad went on to lament the fact that the correspondent doubted Azad's credentials in terms of his arguments not being in the light of the *Quran*.[79]

The Madrasa-i-Islamia at Ranchi stands on the same spot as it was in 1918. However the landscape of this Madrasa has undergone drastic changes. It is surrounded by innumerable shops, chaotic traffic and noise. Those responsible for running this Madrasa of such historical importance have added a college to its premises in his name, which makes the surrounding so cramped. There are people

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76 Ibid., p.128

77 A letter written from Ranchi, (Name of the person is not clear), 20th May 1919, Azad Papers, NMML, p.1

78 Ibid.,p.2

79 Ibid.

who swear by Maulana Azad and his association with Ranchi but have not been able to accord the level of respect that an institution such as *Madrasa-i-Islamia* deserves.

CHAPTER SIX

Language Issues in Education

Mukul Priyadarshini[*]

Language is the basis of learning – this fact has long been established. However, in Indian education system it continues to remain on the periphery and hence, neglected. Language in our school education is viewed merely as one of the subjects; its role across the curriculum has never been recognised. However, the reality is that language plays key role in a child's development of concepts. Besides being the means of communication, language performs a variety of functions. It helps us understand the world around us. By means of language we observe, describe, analyse, question, argue, imagine and create. Since a child employs language as a tool to develop an understanding of various concepts, its significance across the curriculum cannot be denied. In India, language related issues that need attention in education are manifold. The present paper focuses on a few of them pertaining to early and later years in school.

Understanding about a child's ability

A child enters school with the knowledge of the world around her and the language being spoken in that world.

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However, our education system and pedagogy are still driven by the popular behaviouristic perspective that considers a child to be a *tabula rasa* or raw clay which can be moulded and shaped by the teacher. The fact is that children enter school with a fully developed language which they acquire in their preschool years without any formal tutoring. Simultaneously, they also develop cognitive skills. With the help of these skills, they play an active role in the process of learning in school and are not passive recipients of knowledge.

However, our schools refuse to recognise a child's language, experience and knowledge. It is felt that a child's learning process begins in school and language and experience that she brings from home do not have any relevance in the formal domain of school. Here begins the process of silencing a child as she is expected to sit quietly and listen and learn what is being 'imparted' by the teacher.

Objectives of language teaching

Unfortunately the objectives of language teaching in our education system have remained confined till date to the four skills of Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. It is high time we started thinking in terms of overall language proficiency and take cognizance of cognitive and aesthetic dimensions too. We must ensure that this perspective also translates into appropriate teaching practices. Further, we need to view language abilities in terms of basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS) to cognitive-academic language proficiency (CALP).[1] Language abilities associated with BICS involve skills for comprehension & use of language in situations that are rich in context and are not very demanding at the level of cognition, for example, conversational situations and narrative texts. CALP on the

other hand, refers to abilities needed in contextually poor and cognitively demanding situations that require scaffolding or tutoring, for example, expository or non-fiction text and tasks of writing essays in higher classes on topics a student is not familiar with.

Pedagogy of language

One of the major ailments of language education in our school education system is the kind of pedagogy adopted. The nature of curriculum and pedagogy is determined by perspectives about the nature of language, children's cognitive development, children's learning process, their role in the learning process it and position of language in the entire enterprise of education.

As argued earlier, in school education all the subject classes are also essentially language classes. A child's language acquisition process in school includes acquisition of 'registers' too because every discipline has its own unique register comprising of specific concepts and terminology.[2] Language development at school would be incomplete if a student is not able to use a given language effectively as a tool or a medium.

The issue of language across the curriculum apart, language classrooms in our country remain one of the most boring and uninspiring spaces for learning. Language education cannot remain confined to a single textbook written very often in a very pedantic way with questions that are cognitively undemanding. To achieve the objectives of language teaching mentioned above, children in early as well as later years of schooling must get rich exposure of language. In this respect the importance of children's literature in the curriculum can never be overemphasized.

To give rich exposure of language to students, one has to go beyond the textbook so that they get an opportunity to engage with language in diverse hues and shades in a variety of contexts in life and in literature. After all in preschool years if a child can acquire language and its complex rules effortlessly through exposure without any formal training, why can't she do so in later years of her life? We need to pose trust in children's abilities, acknowledge their experience and give them rich exposure of language in stress free learning atmosphere.

Learning to read [and write]

Early Literacy is the most important as well as the most neglected aspect of primary schooling. To know a language means the ability to use the language effectively in different ways for a variety of purposes, to have an appreciation for aesthetics of language and to be independent learners. Good reading and writing skills are a prerequisite for that. However, the methods of teaching reading and writing in our schools are such that they do not take a child beyond decoding; since children are trained to read in an additive fashion by putting together alphabets, they fail to read with comprehension. That is one reason why a large number of people in our society do not derive pleasure out of reading.

Same is the case with writing where too much emphasis is laid on the mechanics of writing such as spelling, punctuation etc. "Whether [children] express their own thoughts and feelings is not considered important. Just as the prematurely imposed discipline of pronunciation stifles the child's motivation to talk freely…the demand for writing in mechanically correct ways bocks the urge to use writing to express… one's ideas".[3] Thus, writing needs to be seen as a process of choosing a topic, thinking and

organizing ideas around it, writing with a sense of audience etc. Further, students should be assessed not for the final product but for the process they have gone through. However, the fact is that poor teaching methods adopted make the process of learning to read and write so laborious that it becomes one of the crucial factors responsible for pushing many children out of school every year in primary classes.[4]

Besides the methods of teaching, attitude towards errors by children are also guided by perspectives about learning. There remains a tendency to penalise children for grammatical or spelling related errors; copying and practicing is considered to be the remedy for this. The fact is that no system of knowledge is acquired without going through "a fairly well understood progressive path whose milestones are 'errors'… [they] are indicators of systematic knowledge than ignorance".[5]

Reading to learn

If at the primary level learning to read and write need attention, in later years of school using these skills to be independent learner needs to be highlighted. The ability to read critically empowers us in many ways. However, the significance of reading to learn has hardly been in focus in the school curriculum. Therefore in addition to narrative texts, children at this level need to be given exposure to expository texts too. Theory and research tells us that the process of and strategies involved in reading an expository text are different from those involved in a narrative text Development of skills for reading expository (non-fiction) texts is an issue which has not even managed to get scant attention in India. Probably, this is one of the reasons why we have remained a nation of non-readers. In later school

years, students are never faced with an opportunity to read critically, comprehend and reflect on such texts. Their engagement with such texts is for memorising selective excerpts for answering questions in exams. As for narrative texts, children at this stage must gradually be able to read for pleasure and develop the confidence to interpret a text in their own way.

Since writing in higher classes is restricted to preparing answers by culling out portions from textbooks, students do not get sufficient exposure to the mental process of reflecting, organising the points, building arguments and creating their own piece of writing. As a result few students manage to move from basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS) to cognitive-academic language proficiency (CALP) and be independent learners.

Challenges of Multilingualism

India has a very rich multilingual profile (both at the individual and at the societal level) with 4 language families, 22 scheduled languages and 1652 mother tongues. Various work domains, social groups and even classrooms in schools are characterised by multilingualism. At the individual level, irrespective of caste, class, gender, region or education it is difficult to come across a person who is not habitual to using more than one language in her day to day life. However, multilingualism in India is also characterised by unequal status of languages. This is reflected in the fact that many languages face neglect, discrimination and deprivation with regard to "constitutional, legal, political, economic and educational status".[6] It is a global phenomenon that languages often form a part of competition for "access to power and resources" and in the

process "less powerful, local languages are prone to be sacrificed".[7]

Hegemony of English

In India too, there exists a hierarchy among languages where English is dominant in official, economic and educational spheres. It has impacted various aspects of Indian life to the extent that the "traditional relationship of sharing, coexistence and tolerance between languages seems to have been obliterated by the powerful presence of English as an international 'killer language' in post-colonial India".[8] At another level, the hierarchy also prevails among Indian languages driven by factors such as inclusion in the eighth schedule of the Constitution, notion of a standard language, differentiation between language and dialect, language(s) used by people who hold positions of power and those who belong to the lower strata of the society. Thus, hegemony of English and prevalence of many stereotypes regarding tribal, minority ['dialects'] and non-scheduled languages has led to a situation where 80% languages that constitute Multilingualism in India are endangered. This has had direct and serious repercussions for education in many ways.

Medium of instruction

Medium of instruction, in this regard, has been one of the most contested aspects of our education. Given the multilingual and multicultural character of Indian classrooms, the issue is extremely challenging as well as interesting. The major task at hand in this regard is to problematise the issue.

Since language serves as a medium to understand concepts in various subject disciplines, it is extremely crucial

as to which language is available to a child to be used as a tool; it is pertinent as to which language(s) form a part of teaching-learning process in a classroom. What is the language of the textbooks? What is the linguistic repertoire of a classroom? Do the children of a classroom use the same language outside the school domain? In other words, is there a difference between school language and home language of children? If yes, then is the home language of a child one of the scheduled languages of the Constitution, a

Non-scheduled language or a minority language termed as a 'dialect' or a non-standard form of a language? What is the attitude of the teacher towards language, culture and abilities of those children who fall under any of these categories? The "lack of any strategy to bridge [the gap between school and home language] is responsible for …wastage and stagnation at the primary stage… development of a low self-image and lower achievement all through education in school".[9]

The answers to the questions posed above may vary depending on how we define a language and whether we perceive those languages as 'dialects' that are not listed in the eighth schedule? Popular perception in this regard is that languages are more 'scientific', are rule governed and are more widely used than 'dialects'. Hence, they have no legitimate space in the formal domain of school and children should continuously strive to master the 'standard language'. However, a child can actively participate in the process of learning only if she is comfortable with the linguistic tools at hand. Research tells us that instruction in mother tongue helps in the "search for self-affirmation, establishes group identity, satisfies the national urge for cultural rootedness and avoids fanaticism".[10] However, out of 126 languages listed in the Census 2001, only twenty two

are used as a medium of instruction at primary stage. Of these twenty two languages, only six belong to the hundred non-scheduled languages mentioned in the Census and all these six languages are from North-eastern region. These statistics show that a majority of children begin school studies in an unfamiliar language.

It is important to examine the implications of the choice of medium of instruction for a given set of students or a given class. As has been discussed earlier, in education, language exists in dual capacity: as a subject and as a medium. Language is used as a medium for classroom transaction. Thus, concept acquisition of various subjects happens through language be it Sciences, Math or Social Sciences.

It is important that the language available to a child as a tool is not alien to her; it is not something far removed from her socio-cultural moorings. If English is the medium of instruction for a child who does not get ample exposure to the language outside the classroom in the neighbourhood or at home, it is problematic for three reasons: firstly, the learning process for a child in such a situation may be self-restricting. The child will encounter double barriers: the barrier of language and the barrier of concept. Secondly, such a situation is pedagogically flawed: the most basic principle of any good pedagogy would advocate building on a child's previous knowledge.[11] If we choose an unfamiliar language like English, or a state/regional language as medium of instruction, we ignore a child's existing linguistic knowledge and experience and render the child into a passive recipient of knowledge. Thirdly, such a system does not provide equal opportunity for children not speaking the dominant language: they remain deprived of the quality education in two respects: in terms of the gap

between what they know and what they are expected to learn, and in terms of the quality and quantity of teaching learning materials available to them. The latter is especially true of higher classes.

The issue of Identity

Language and culture are two essential components that form an individual's identity. Besides linguistic and cognitive development, medium of instruction also has an impact on a child's identity. As mentioned earlier, languages in India have a hierarchical status. On the one hand, we have the hegemony of English which is the language of power and elitism, and on the other hand are Hindi and other state languages listed in the eighth schedule of the constitution. Very often the language which is the medium of instruction is considered prestigious and hierarchically superior to the languages of children in the class, be it Hindi (or other regional languages) in a class where children's mother tongue(s) are non-scheduled languages, or English in a class comprising of children speaking any of the scheduled languages. We know that in such a situation there is a stigma attached to child's language and it is almost forbidden in the classroom. Thus, we not only reject her language, culture and society, but we also bruise her identity in the process. Thus, teacher-child relationship and teachers' attitude (very often driven by stereotypes) towards the language and the culture of children who are not the native speakers of the dominant language assumes a lot of significance. Not accepting a child's language in the class is like rejecting her language, culture and identity. Absence of positive classroom ethos leads to diminishing of motivation and confidence for learning. Consequently such children get dissuaded and fail

to 'perform' well. This reinforces the prevailing wrong perceptions about the learning abilities of such children. Since at any given point of time, there exist multiple mother tongues and first languages in a classroom, it is pertinent to examine the linguistic profile of a classroom. Further, we also need to examine with great care and sensitivity what happens when a child's mother tongue (MT) or language of the neighbourhood is not her medium of instruction. Also, what happens when there is a huge gap between school language and home language? Should the medium of instruction then be the language of the neighbourhood?

Conclusion

A very brief glimpse of the language related issues with regard to school education has been presented here. Neither the issues listed above nor their treatment is exhaustive. While the issue of assessment needs a separate attention and focus, the linkages between school education and higher education need to be widely understood. The complexity of the issues discussed above demands an in-depth analysis from the angle of state policies, politics of language and education and language rights. It may be reiterated though that centrality of language in education needs to be recognised and accepted by all stakeholders. The perspective that a strong linguistic, rather multilingual foundation strengthens children's cognitive abilities and makes them independent learners for life needs to be woven into the curriculum, the pedagogy and the teaching-learning processes.

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CHAPTER SEVEN

Zakir Husain on the Sanctity of the Autonomy of the University

Dhruv Raina[*]

This paper is not so much about Zakir Husain's ideas about the autonomy of the university as an attempt to engage with the idea of the university and its actual evolution in modern India. As contemporary discussions have it, the university not just in India, but at the global level is seen to be in a state of crisis for quite some time. The crisis has been variously construed. It is nevertheless undeniable that historically, universities have been structurally and organizationally shaped by the societies and communities within which they were established and as a result that founded them. "Each generation has established a social contract between the university and the society it serves" [Duderstadt, 1999]. Consequently, in our own times the question needs to be posed as to what are the forces that shape the university.

These forces can be conceptualized differently, but to begin with we can speak of the arrival of the much

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discussed knowledge society. As has been pointed out the sustainability of this society depends increasingly on specialized knowledge and expertise, particularly from the new information, communication and bio-technologies [UNESCO Report, 2005]. Knowledge becomes a strategic resource, whose production is dependent on social institutions such as research institutes, universities and think tanks. In this context the future society's existence is dependent upon institutions that "…create knowledge, educate people, and provide those people with learning resources throughout their lives" [Duderstadt, 1999].

In a serious work on the "ruins of the university", Readings pointed out to the decline of the university of culture, which was in a way the elite university [Readings, 1996]. However, since the 1950s the university has reached out to new segments of society on a global scale and the university committed as it previously was to the nation is now reaching out to a student community that is multicultural and transnational. This would require that the university foster intercultural, inter-religious and transnational understanding, both within its walls and finally extend this understanding beyond the tangible boundaries of the university [Duderstadt, 1999]. In other words whether consciously done or not the university encounters the imperative need to redefine the disciplinary and curricular boundaries in order to sustain its salience to the changing demographic profile of the university [La Capra,1998].

This opening out of the university to new segments of the population both within and across national boundaries was an outcome of a diversity of other socio-economic and technological developments and interventions on the part of nation states that has created a demand for professional

expertise that spans the globe. This has resulted not just in the movement of professionals but of students between universities and across nations and continents. This too has created a pressure to nurture student populations, the professionals of tomorrow, to work in multicultural settings. It could well be argued that this development was not entirely foreign to the university. While that is true in a limited sense never before in the thousand year history of the university has it confronted such cultural and transnational diversity.

And finally, sociologists of science have been cautioning for a long time now about the commoditization of knowledge [Gibbons and Wittrock, 1985; Klein et. al., 2001]. This means that the logics of the market and business of management will now be extended and condition the functioning of the university. As a result we may gradually encounter a situation where the University of Collegial Solidarity would be replaced by the market model of the university [Readings, 1996]. "In the past, universities enjoyed a monopoly over advanced education because of geographical location and their control of the accreditation of academic programs necessary for awarding degrees…The growth in the size and complexity of the post-secondary enterprise is creating an expanding array of … educational providers. ...new competitive forces, such as virtual universities and for-profit education providers, enter the marketplace to challenge the process of credentializing" [Duderstadt, 1999]. These factors then combine to pose three sets of crises for the university: the first for the ideal of knowledge, the second for the sacred autonomy of the university, and finally for the procedures and norms of credentializing professionals and experts. But this is the

subject for another paper and it is time to return to the theme of the workshop.

In discussing the origins of the university in modern India it could be suggested that the modern university was shaped over the last two centuries by a multiplicity of forces and interests. Several historiographic frames have strung together narratives of the history of university education at the collegiate and university levels. These accounts usually commence by pointing out to the state of decline of indigenous institutions during a period of rapid social and political change that marked the early decades of the nineteenth century [Raina, 2008]. The first modern universities were established in India in 1857 and a few more were subsequently established before the end of the century [Basu, 1981]. Different historiographic perspectives are woven together either by the idea of modernization or the idea of the civilizing mission. The narratives of imperial history share a common ground of modernization as would several of the more liberal and nationalist historiographies of education under colonial rule [Raina, 2008].

Amongst the several frames available for studying the evolution of higher education in colonial India; the standard model proposes the transplantation and cloning of British institutions and organizations such as the university on South Asian soil. The anti-colonial nationalist critique of the cultural imperialism of the colonizing power engages with the emergence of modern institutions of higher education against the backdrop of the erasure of pre-modern institutions. Post-colonial theories on the other hand depart from percolation models and portray a reality that is perhaps far more nuanced and is premised on notions of the reinvention of modernity and more recently on multiple modernities – but an adequate post-colonial history of the

university and higher education is still to emerge. [Raina, 2008].

Institutional structures patterned on Western institutions were established during and after the period of colonial rule and were subsequently domesticated to the Indian environment. First established in the early half of the nineteenth century, some of these modern institutions of higher education are probably the oldest institutions of the type in the Third World. The experience of combining scale with processes of domesticating the Western form of the university has provided many lessons and exemplars for Third World nations [Altbach, 1993]. Contrary to the popular idea that the Indian system of higher education is merely a clone of the British educational system existing during the period of colonial rule is to miss the process of the evolution of the university in India and the spirit of Eric Ashby's marvelous work [Ashby, 1966].

Ashby pointed out that the ontogeny of medieval higher education played itself out again and again, in other words there was a structural replication of the process of domestication of the system of higher education. There were several stages in the ontogeny of higher education in the developing countries. [1] Students of a "developing country" traveled abroad due to the absence or scarcity of universities, [2] This created a pressure for indigenous education, resulting finally in the creation of a university as a "facsimile of some prototype", [3] The university eventually contributed to society by ensuring that human affairs are administered by educated men. [4] The new feature of this process of replication is that national forces played a very important role in adapting the university to national needs [Ashby, 1966]. In other words extending

Ashby's argument, the cloned university is not isomorphic with the original but undergoes a process of differentiation.

From the perspective of the spread of universities, there have been four waves of intellectual colonization. The third wave of this colonization peaked in the middle of the nineteenth century when universities were first founded in non-Christian societies and in the process supplanted ancient indigenous centers of learning [Ashby, 1966]. In the eighteenth century the deeply rooted indigenous systems of education of the Hindus and Muslims were, according to one historiography, in a state of decline. Initially, the officials of the East India Company tended to support these systems under a modern format by founding the Calcutta Madrasah in 1781 and the Benaras Sanskrit College in 1792; other endeavours were initiated in Poona and elsewhere. But this policy was challenged in England with the passage of time by the evangelicals, liberals and utilitarians [Basu, 1981].

The first universities established in India in 1857 were "examining universities" modeled on London University, that in turn became a "teaching university" in or around 1900. We shall not get into the question of why out of the five genres of British universities only London University served as a model for export to India in the mid nineteenth century. The Indian university was a concretization of the ideas of utilitarianism that in turn was an important influence on the newly modernizing Indian professional class. While the first generation universities in India founded in the nineteenth century were established under the rubric of nineteenth century utilitarianism, in the early twentieth century there arose the demand among Indians to transform the university into a teaching body and to extend its charter to that of a research institute as well. As

happened in Europe, the "selective influence of national ideas" [Kumar, 1995] resulted in the differentiation of universities in the twentieth century.

A combination of circumstances crystallized in the rise of the nationalist movement. The period 1850-1860 was organizationally significant for the creation of institutions and structures for lodging the rudiments of a system of higher education and science teaching; the 1870s were important from another point of view as well. Within an emergent Western educated class, the prestige associated with science began to seep deep into literary culture as well. For this class both Mill and Comte were central intellectual inspirational thinkers, widely influential in validating the belief in scientific reason [Forbes, 1975; Stokes, 1959; Raina and Habib, 2004]. This produced a search for alternatives to the colonial policy of governing the empire which in turn would have to be guided by a different system of education. Part of this endeavour entailed a search for other models of the university. Increasingly, the idea of the teaching university and the Humboldtian idea of the teaching and research university gained wide currency. The movement for the establishment of what may be referred to as the second generation universities in India, that departed from those modeled on London University commenced in the second decade of the twentieth century. The idea of having a system of higher education under a national management and on national lines was spreading. It is in this developmental context that the system of higher education was domesticated to the national context [Raina and Habib, 2004]. The second generation universities mushroomed throughout the country in the decades before the Second World War. These universities were residential and teaching and/or research universities established through private

donations and grants from local rulers, landlords and industrialists. Often enough the states also contributed to these endeavours.

The idea of the "developmental state" propelled as it were by a network of scientific and technological institutions more or less began to pick up with the setting up of the Indian Industrial Commission in the second decade of the twentieth century as questions of the state of industrialization became pressing [Viswanathan, 1985]. In fact some of the leading industrial houses such as that of Tata had entertained the idea of founding research institutes that would train professionals for their industrial ventures. In the 1930s the National Planning Council was established to plan for India's future envisaging the possibility that India would soon become independent of colonial rule. These deliberations from the 1930s and 40s prepared the ground for education and research for the period after the formal passing of colonialism [Raina and Habib, 2004; Kumar, 1995]. So much so, in a convocation address delivered at Allahabad University just after independence, Nehru dwelt upon the role of knowledge in human advancement and pointed to the ideals of scholarship, humanism and civility for which a modern university stands, adding that if the universities discharge their duty adequately, then it is well with the nation and the people. [Nehru, 1958]. Since independence the number of universities has grown enormously and this growth has been responsive to, as Andre Beteille points out, pressures that are far removed from the ideals of scholarship, humanism and civility for which Nehru believed the universities ought to stand. Beteille of course goes on to point out that the Indian university has played a significant part in the education for democratic citizenship although

this education, which began more than a hundred and fifty years ago, has not by any means been completed [Beteille, 2005].

As pointed out earlier, the authoritative history of the university and the history of the idea of the idea of the university has still to be written. What we have thus far are merely archives of commemorative volumes, and yet the deliberation on the idea of the university in the Indian context has been non-trivial [Bangaru, 2002]. However, the reflections of Jawaharlal Nehru, Rabindranath Tagore, S. Radhakrishan and Zakir Husain among others reveal how carefully the university was thought about [Alam, 2002]. I shall not present a comparative perspective of these thinkers highlighting the similarities and differences between their views. What could be said is that their thinking about the university was shaped by the socio-political developments of the 1930s and 1940s, both national and international. Interestingly enough, the quartet was comprised of two future presidents and one prime minister of independent India. But the more important concern for us is that two of them, Tagore and Zakir Husain went on to found universities. But of the four I would consider Zakir Husain's ideas about the university as those of a professional educationalist deeply involved in a number of educational projects of his time, while those of the other three as philosophical and visionary. No value is being ascribed to this difference but rather the different discursive location of these thinkers is emphasized. The reflection of these philosophical thinkers is in the spirit of Henry Cardinal Newman's *The Idea of the University* [Newman, 1927]. Furthermore, it is not suggested that they had read Newman, but inasmuch as the university was the locus for the cultivation of the mind and the transmission not just of

liberal values but of culture there were common elements in their thought.

The issue to be addressed now is the key notion of autonomy in the thinking of Zakir Husain. The university has always been conceived as a space that transcends time and geography and yet in reality there have been variations across regional and national boundaries. The principle of work and social orientation were quite central to Zakir Husain's thinking about higher education, though he would write that there was no reason to believe that it was of no relevance to school education. According to this principle: "Educationally productive work initiates new ideas or makes possible new combinations of ideas already present with a view to reach a higher unity of mental life or a higher development of the capacity to express them" [Husain, 1965]. Clearly he was gesturing to the teacher as much as the student in asserting that novelty in the realm of ideas was an outcome of what he considered being educationally productive work, and the worker was as much the teacher as the student. This gesturing towards both student and teacher as partners in a joint enterprise often enough surfaces in his writing and one wonders whether educationists have taken adequate notice of it either in their pedagogical disquisitions or in the historical reconstruction of the educational imaginary of that era. But this re-imagining of the relation between students and teachers was a prerequisite to re-imagining the relationship between university and society.

The university was an institution for the education and training of intellect workers for a society that was functionally differentiated. The effectiveness of the workers trained by the university depended upon thorough systematic training. The important question to be asked is

whether the social orientation of the university constrained the freedom of the university. In other words, did the university as an institution responsive to the needs of society have an autonomy of that very society that supported it. Commencing from the perspective of the students Zakir Husain pointed out that the education of adult students could not be undertaken by the enforcement of authority. Clearly this was a signature of an idea of the continental university as opposed to the English university where the university was a place where adolescence was extended [Rothblatt, 1997]. But granting freedom to adult students would be premised on the recognition of an inner freedom that comes with some regulation without which institutional structures could not reproduce themselves.

Autonomy itself was considered a sacred possession for all universities, without which the university would be unable to take sound decisions free of external pressures. In making this observation it is not clear whether Zakir Husain refers to the knowledge making process itself and how this autonomy could ensure the robustness of the knowledge produced within the university. Speaking at the convocation of Jadavpur University he remarked that the only restraints on freedom should be those of decorum and social responsibility: "Freedom is never given it is earned, and kept only by those who continue to earn it every minute of their active life" [Husain, 1965]. The salience of the remark resides in reckoning with the quotidian life of university contexts where the autonomy of the university is conceded to the bureaucracy and vocal constituencies as if they were overburdened by what Sartre would have called a "fear or denial of freedom" operating not at the level of individuals but institutions. Nevertheless, he recognized the difficulty with cultivating this passion for autonomy and freedom in

India because institutions he would say were controlled by "government or proprietary institutions…and members of the teaching profession were brought at low prices and treated almost as refugees from the world of competitive advancement in life" [Husain, 1965].

With the other visionary thinkers of the time Zakir Husain shared the idea that the university should be at the centre of moral and intellectual life of the nation. But in order to do so the university could perform certain tasks only if it were autonomous. It had to transmit a culture of healthy criticism to society in order to "defeat the forces of ignorance, superstitions and prejudices" and at the same time safeguard "knowledge and wisdom, high morals and noble life" [Husain, 1965]. Sadly enough, contrary to the visionaries, Zakir Husain reckoned with the university that was in the making and not the university that ought to be. He pointed out quite candidly that the universities had failed since they were preoccupied with transmitting the knowledge acquired by the few to the many. The failure was first grounded with an unjustifiable faith in established structures. As a result there was a little opportunity to reflect upon the philosophical foundations of knowledge, either in terms of its nature or in terms of "the methods and techniques employed in furthering its techniques" [Husain, 1965].

The argument is developed further and along several lines, but the shortage of time and space restrains its elaboration. All the same he develops one of the earliest philosophical and pedagogical critiques of university education in modern India that proceeds from the idea of the corporate autonomy of the university, and that differentiates the university from most of institutions of higher learning that preceded it anywhere in the world. This

also provides the context to elucidate the meaning of Andre Beteille's remark that even in India the "universities were almost from the beginning open and secular institutions. They were among the first such institutions in the country, and as such have had a social and not just an intellectual significance far in excess of their size and material resources" [Beteille, 2005]. At a time when the system of higher education is frequently confronted with rampaging politicians who either consciously or otherwise trample the sacred autonomy of the university one could do well to reflect upon those who have cherished and understood the centrality of university autonomy essential as much to the "knowledge ideals" of disciplinary academic communities as to the notions of culture that are to be transmitted to the next generation.

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CHAPTER EIGHT

Policy Processes in Higher Education

Sudhanshu Bhushan*

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad stood for secularism, humanism and institution building in independent India. He lived in a period when the task of nation building acquired importance and in this endeavor he had a spirited support of leaders who had a unity of purpose. The freedom struggle presented a milieu for long term vision that became the basis for public policy. An important feature of nation building was the determination and drive of the people who turned vision and policy into reality. The discourse on policy and on all such matters relating to development was intense and interspersed with the objective of nation building that reigned supreme. As a result, the follow up, though difficult, found supports from the lowest persons down the hierarchy in the implementation chain. The initial momentum provided by the education leader like Maulana Azad, however, could not be sustained for very long. In a period of over sixty years the dynamics of the process of policy making and implementation acquired complexity that needs to be understood. The meaning and context of rationality in policy formulation during the Maulana's

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period was derived from nation building and upliftment of the marginalized in our newly independent India. The rationality guided by utilitarian perspective was less dominant in the minds of education leader.

The present phase of development, in contrast to the phase of development characterized by nation building is completely different. The context of nation building guided by the nationalist urge to ameliorate the conditions of poor seems to have disappeared from the minds of political leaders who are now guided by the compulsions of the politics of vote to remain in power. Globalization, more importantly, is leading to the turn of events at a high pace. This phase of globalization is characterized by the intense struggle to acquire knowledge and disseminate it in a manner that provides opportunity to earn profit. An important instrumentality in the complex dynamics of knowledge production and distribution is the institutions of higher education. As a result higher education faces the pressure of ever growing commodification.

The labour market in certain sectors is global in character. This creates high expectations and ambitions of the prospective students to exploit opportunities in the global labour market. The efficiency is the pressing call of governance in the universities. With growing fiscal constraint, the privatisation and liberalization of higher education is becoming a widespread phenomenon. In this scenario the binding thread among leaders, teachers and students in terms of nation building is indeed very weak.

The process of policy change to cope with the changing environment in the absence of the climate of nation building becomes all the more difficult, as the state is subject to various pulls and pressures of vested interests. The market

mechanism dominates and acquires spaces so far reserved for public. The policy decisions per se are something externally imposed. They suffer from the lack of understanding of events taking place within the universities and colleges. The policy making fails to establish organic linkages with the living organism of institutions which move with its own inertia. In the phase of globalization when state exerts change in response to external events, institutions' own inertia may not always keep pace with state driven change agenda. The process of policy making, the relation between state, institutions and individuals and finally transmission of the policy signals and its reception by an individual in the context of higher education in India is the subject on which more light needs to be thrown.

In many respects the current phase may be characterized as the second wave of institution building, the first phase being the period of Maulana Azad and Nehru when the foundations of many institutions were laid, many of which have excelled till now. In the present phase, too, new institutions such as central universities, innovation universities, IITs, IIMs, IISERs are being established on a large scale. The National Commission of Higher Education and Research as an apex body to provide new directions is proposed. The plan for National Accreditation Council is being firmed up to introduce the policy of transparency and accountability in the quality assurance. The grievance redressal machinery and Educational Tribunals are being established as part of government's action plan in higher education. Thus a swift change in higher education reform has many a parallels to the first phase. Can the second phase lift the morals of academia and help in the reconstruction and rejuvenation of higher education? An answer to the question lies in understanding the nature of the state and

the market and the vital connections between the state, institutions and individuals. Hence there is a rationale to examine the policy process. It would help in building the bridge and directing policy towards revitalizing the campuses rather than merely dealing with macro issues. A serious engagement in the second wave, calls towards developing an organic link with organizations and concentrating on organisations in higher education. So far this element has been missing in reforms, research and discourse in delineating the policy agenda. It is this element of organization that was central in the phase of nation building. I would like to concentrate attention on policy processes in education with special reference to higher education.

The rationality in policy making in the second wave of institution building finds favour with the policy of privatisation. The argument is in terms of resource crunch. It was also noted that a shortfall in the growth rate may impinge on resources allocated for higher education in the 11th plan. As a result the argument for decontrol, transparency through accreditation, public-private partnership, intensifying competition through the entry of foreign universities and grievance redressal machinery turn out to be the favoured reasons for policies supporting privatization. In the present phase, the language of rationalist argument is influenced by globalization. The issue of nation building, which reigned supreme during the days of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad is not of much consequence in the current phase. The state control and regulated structure that was built over the years is now becoming irrational and irrelevant. Hence argument is made in favour of dismantling control for greater efficiency.

The proposed paper aims to deal with the process of change in higher education by focusing on the dynamics of policy making. In the dynamics of policy making the dominance of rationalist view, the influence of market and advocacy coalition of dominant class is analyzed. The paper also shows that individuals and institutions stand at the other end without a strong bond with the central policy making structure. They have their own life, ideas and discourse. As a result the transmission of policy is poor. Thus state driven agenda is bound to suffer in the implementation. On the other hand, organizational understanding needs to be brought to the fore out of the discourses arising there from. The state needs to support those discourses and choose the elements of policy from that. Why for example, state universities of repute suffer today? What are the constraints in terms of leadership, governance, research, faculty and student support services? How can those be ensured? What is, therefore, analysed in the paper is the need of reversal in the policy processes from text to discourse, from top to bottom and from the agenda of state to the masses being in the lead role to build own agenda of policy. The reversal in the policy process rather than any hyperactivity in policy from the top is suggested in the paper. The reversal necessarily means turning to the phase of freedom struggle that provided the agenda of people's reform immediately in the post independence period. This was also the phase of Keynesian welfare state ideology that supported government's welfare policy as a matter of duty of the state.

I will come back to Maulana Abul Kalam Azad again. He was able to connect himself to the society in the true sense as he understood the needs of the society. The freedom struggle provided that opportunity. The message,

therefore, was transmitted almost immediately and with reception. The education policy makers today, following in the footsteps of Maulana Azad, should adopt the same methodology. They should concentrate on people and institutions representing the people. Connecting with the people and organization – learning from them and awakening their consciousness, in other words, policy reversal would be leading the education in Maulana style. I hope filling in some gaps in the understanding of the policy process would be an appropriate tribute to the education leader like Maulana Azad.

Policy, Contexts and Decision Making Process

Rationalist Approach

This is the most common sense approach to the understanding of policy. Grant Harman (1984) refers to policy as "implicit or explicit specification of courses of purposive action being followed or to be followed in dealing with a recognized problem or matter of concern, and directed towards the accomplishment of some intended or desired set of goals". Rational decision making is concerned with choosing the best out of alternative choices. Best is understood in terms of maximizing satisfaction/outcome based on certain criteria of indifference or preference.

Above definition of policy identifies almost in a sequential manner four distinct stages of a policy process. The four stages are:

(i) Issue emergence and identification of problem: This is the first stage in which a problem of utmost importance is identified and gets the attention of the government.

(ii) Policy formulation and authorization: This is the second stage in which exploration of alternatives and formulation of a preferred course of action through consensus or compromise and finally authorization through legislation takes place. Regulation and publication of directives follows thereafter.

(iii) Implementation: This is a stage of the development of programmes and its execution. This is a detailed process where the management of the programmes acquires importance.

(iv) Termination or Change: The success of implementation is seen in terms of the target against the goal. If policy is successful it is terminated. If not, it may be replaced by a new policy.

Rationalist approach to policy has following features.

(i) *Sequential:* All the four stages follow a sequence. The implementation always follows policy making. These are two separate and identifiable stages. There is thus no overlapping between policy making and implementation. There is also a unique policy for a problem and hence no two or more policies exist for a single problem. Even if two policies exist for a single problem any interaction or overlap is ruled out. Due to sequential nature policy always originates at the hands of the government and its agencies such as bureaucrats and ministers. It terminates at the targeted individual whose problem it is intended to serve. It thus follows from top to the down.

(ii) *Causal:* The rationalist approach implies causation as well. The policy gives rise to implementation,

without policy implementation is not possible. Thus policy is the cause, while implementation is the effect. The policy involves certain course of action. Implementation includes the targeted achievement. It is policy that is said to cause achievement of targets. Thus for example, the policy of the right to education causes the implementation of programmes and it might by ensuring the right leads to achieving universal education. Thus rationalist approach implies causal sequence.

(iii) *Perfect Information:* Rationalist approach implies there is no information failure. Things are knowable, identifiable and certain. Problems, for example, can be unambiguously identified. A unique solution exists as well. Even if there is conflict in identifying actions to achieve something, it can be resolved to find a unique solution. In other words, we live in the world of perfect information.

(iv) *Autonomy of the State:* Authoritative course of action is determined by the government. State is autonomous to decide the course of action. State's discretion is final. State is further neutral and is not guided by the vested interests. It is further assumed that state is powerful and resourceful enough to achieve through its implementation machinery. State is always right in policy formulation and problem lies at the other end of implementation. Very often it is believed that it is not policy failure; it is implementation failure that is responsible for non-achievement of targets.

(v) *Congruency:* Another heroic assumption of rational approach to policy making is that values and goals

of implementers are congruent with those of policy makers. It shows there does not exist any asymmetry between the two actors which are situated so differently - policy makers living in ivory tower and implementers facing the hard reality of field.

(vi) *Discrete (linear) Time:* It implies that notion of time is one of discreteness in rational model. There is a definite beginning and a termination to the policy process. Along time different stages pass through giving it the character of linearity.

Contexts

The context of Policy Making is important in deciding the agenda and strategy of the policy. In a fast growing economy, the important agenda for change relates to expansion in higher education. A country with low gross enrollment ratio, in a bid to catch up with the rest of the world puts up an ambitious target of increasing participation in higher education. To ensure an inclusive growth process requires that higher education provides equal opportunities to all social and economic groups. Expansion and equity emerge as internal compulsions for policy intervention. Important driver of change that arises from external source is the force of globalization. Improving quality to ensure competitiveness in global economy may be another important compulsion for change. Thus policy for improving quality arises mainly from external context.

Another important context is that of privatisation and liberalization. Among internal drivers of privatisation is the fiscal constraint. Among external drivers of privatisation is the context of globalization. The internal contexts for policy in higher education towards improving access and equity

are growth with inclusion. The external context of globalization gives rise to policy for quality improvement. At the same time the internal as well as external context requires promotion of the policy for privatisation. A rational decision making process has to take account of the above contexts in deciding the policy.

The neo-liberalism emerged as an important doctrine in the late phase of capitalism. Foucault's analysis of neo-liberalism reinforced the principles of market in following way (Foucault, M. 1990).

1. Market and competition to be engineered by the state
2. Increase competitive forms throughout society, social and work relations to assume market form
3. Supports active creation of social conditions for an effective market order
4. Policies geared to create entrepreneurism and opposing bureaucratic initiatives
5. To correct bureaucratic dislocations
6. State itself subject to market laws

Neo-liberalism reinforced the idea of individual rationality of liberalism. It also argued in favour of competition as the basis of market mechanism in achieving equilibrium. The further shift from liberalism to neo-liberalism means that state is supposed to intensify the market operations. It implies privatisation of a part of services produced by the state. Neo-liberalism means that bureaucracy is to be replaced by new doctrine of managerialism, contracting and performance appraisal. It is assumed that self interest of bureaucrats leads to corruption and inefficiency as there is nothing called collective self

interest. An individual as part of the state needs to be manipulated in such a manner that it becomes responsive to market signals and performance orientation.

The neo-liberalism argues that public monopoly should be abolished. Barriers to entry should be done away with and opportunities should be created for the private participants. There is greater role for the policy in favour of restructuring rather than planning by the state. Market based incentives need to be promoted by the state. Thus role of the state is not negated. The state participates more and more not in the production of goods and services but in facilitating the production by the privatized mode. The neo-liberal doctrines were propagated in variants such as Human Capital Theory (Schultz, 1968), Agency Theory, Public Choice Theory (Buchanan,1960; 1975), Transaction Cost Economics (Williamson Oliver, 1975) and the conservatism propagated by monetarism.

The neo-liberal doctrine rests upon the following maxims:

- Tariffs and subsidies should be abolished
- Cost recovery should be made
- Entry barriers such as legislative requirement should not exist
- Competition should be generated through more and more players in the provision of services
- Control in the export and import of capital as well as goods and services should be over
- argues against too many regulations as it prevents competition
- Accountability should be generated through measurable yardstick and competitive pressures

- Individual rationality is preferred to collective rationality; in fact collective rationality does not exist at all.
- Quality is maintained only when there is competition.

It is important to bear in mind that under neo-liberalism state is not negated. It actively constructs the market. The discourse of state management and control is authoritarian to invoke principles of market. It points towards more effective means of social engineering. The control of state is more devolved and flexible. The decentralization of power and provision of services is preferred.

Decision Making Process

There are two ways in which a decision making process can be conceptualized – top down approach and the bottom up approach. In the top down approach policy change results from changes in the preferences of actors. The politicians and governments have been taking actions continuously as a response to internal and external drivers of change[1]. Further, a network of actors is also suggested and depending upon the cohesion or conflict among the network of actors a policy compromise is approached. In the network of actors, there may be the minister and bureaucrats as one cohesive group, guided by the dictates of the minister. There is another group of actors, mainly academic elite, who may consist of institutional heads and another belonging to academic community from the

[1] New ideas and concepts affecting preferences of actors are shaped by the new roles in which state finds itself. Under new labels such as 'managerialism' (Henkel 1991), 'new public management' (Pollitt 1993) and the 'evaluative state' (Neave 1988), the role of state has been no less important.

universities. These academic elites may have varying roles; the institutional heads following ministers' leadership and majority academia from universities having a critical outlook. Among academic elite there may be co-opted elites who arrive at positions of power because they are nominated as heads of committees and commissions by the government. There is a third group of powerful actors supporting some ideology or the other. For example, there may be a group interest for supporting privatisation or there may be group ideology opposing privatisation and favoring active role of state intervention.

An active network of actors may be distinguished from a majority of stakeholders – teachers, administrators and students. This network of actors, at the top, influences decision making. The majority is powerless; it merely receives the policy signals in the top down approach.

Analysis of Recent Policy Initiatives

The second wave of institution building is guided by the rationalism of neo-liberals. The policy process is influenced by the decisions taken at the top devoid of any organic linkages with the stakeholders. The basis of neo-liberal rationalism is the rejection of the role of welfare state, the context of nation building that guided the policy in the first wave of developmental agenda of the state. Given the present context of policy, it is worth analyzing the recent policy initiatives.

Deregulation: Government is planning to establish The National Commission for Higher Education and Research (NCHER) following the recommendations from Yashpal Committee Report (YCR) and National Knowledge Commission (NKC, 2006). The YCR notes that universities

need to be self regulating agencies. The regime of control and regulation by University Grants Commission (UGC) and other professional councils have so far been not conducive to the generation of knowledge. The NKC relates the control regime to overregulation and under-governance. The over-regulation has led to corruption and inefficiency in the higher education system. Arguing from two different standpoints of knowledge generation and inefficiency, both the reports point to the need for an apex and independent regulatory body which will be free from government intervention. The YCR prescribes the advisory and supportive role of NCHER. The NKC viewed the apex body as an authority to grant license to institutions for conferring degree granting power as well as a body to grant license to accredit institutions to carry out its accrediting functions. The NKC notes that the freedom to entry and exit of the institutions of higher education by promoting competitiveness would be conducive to quality. From varying perspectives deregulation of higher education is the central theme of the policy behind establishing NCHER.

Transparency: Centre is also contemplating a law for mandatory assessment and accreditation in higher education through an independent regulatory authority. The NKC assigned the role to an Independent Regulatory Authority in Higher Education (IRAHE). The YCR notes that the NCHER would create appropriate norms, processes and structures for ensuring quality and accrediting universities. The objective of accreditation is to promote quality by bringing in the transparency and informing the students about the status of the quality of institutions. The students would then make more informed decision to choose the institution and programme. On the other hand, the teachers and the administrators would respond

appropriately to the accreditation report. The transparency, in a regime of deregulation and autonomy acquired through self regulation, would promote the accountability of the teachers towards their functions. The objective of maintaining transparency through accreditation is to have information about the institution and the individual in the realm of public to make informed choices.

Competition: Self regulation, autonomy and transparency are necessary to promote competition. Policy also envisages that globalization necessitates a competitive drive in higher education system to maintain standards at global scale. The foreign capital needs to be permitted to provide an entry to the foreign universities so that Indian universities progress through competition. A law to regulate entry and operation of foreign educational providers is being planned to infuse competitiveness. Another measure that the government plans relate to the brain gain policy to attract talent from across the world to the existing and new institutions. This is expected to provide a level playing field to Indian institutions.

Rules Based System: Given deregulation and transparency in the higher education system, it is maintained that competition will lead to an optimal result and efficiency will be generated. In case, an optimal efficiency is not achieved that may be because there are providers who have not followed the rules. In such a situation, it is envisaged that the guilty needs to be brought to the book. It is quite possible that an educational malpractice takes place in spite of the transparent rules and procedures and that an individual or an institution does not follow the rules of the game. The central government has decided to institute a law to prevent, prohibit and punish educational malpractices. Besides, dispute need to be settled, if any, that arises due to

one or the other not following the rule or if someone feels that an injustice has been done by some party or the other. A law is planned to establish an Educational Tribunal to fast-track adjudication of disputes concerning stake holders (teachers, students, employees and management) in higher education.

Inclusion: The rules of market to promote competition in higher education, even after allowing for a Tribunal and a law to prevent malpractices, may not be sufficient to guarantee equity. For those who cannot afford to pay and compete in the market, it is necessary to provide resources. The government is considering launching of a new scheme of interest subsidy on educational loans taken for professional courses by the economically weaker students. This is expected to promote inclusion in higher education. Besides the government is planning to strengthen and expand the 'Scheme for Remedial Coaching' for students from SC/ST/minority communities in higher education. For effective implementation of schemes for disadvantaged sections of the society creation of 'Equal Opportunity Offices' in all universities is also contemplated as part of 11th plan agenda.

A rational argument in all these measures for reform in higher education needs to be understood. Faster economic growth, as noted above, provides the context of expansion in higher education to catch up with the growth process. There is, however, limit to the public financing. Hence expansion through the private participation seems to be the most rational approach. This, however, requires dismantling of control. The institutional structure in terms of UGC prescribing regulations for the maintenance of standards needs to be dismantled. The expansion through private participation also means that all barriers to entry be

removed. There exists at present the barrier to entry. Universities can be established by central or provincial act. The NKC recommended that IRAHE can be given authority to grant license to provide degree granting right to an institution. The government may consider granting this authority to NCHER, and it is also considering allowing private institutions to come up through the Companies Act. These measures would ease the barriers to entry. Within the public sector the public private partnership is considered as a way for mobilizing resources for expansion. Thus the rational argument that finds favour is the process of privatisation to meet the needs of expansion.

If privatisation has to be successful it is necessary that there is minimum control. The regulatory structure of UGC then has to be dismantled. The present argument is that universities need to be self regulatory bodies and an apex institution such as NCHER will maintain transparency through accreditation. The rational argument further finds favour to attract the foreign universities. It would attract foreign capital. The brain gain initiative will attempt to provide level playing field to the Indian universities. There will be self disclosure process under which universities will provide all information. Regulation will be rule based under which anyone following the malpractice will be punished. Further if any of the stakeholders feel dissatisfied with the provider of education programme, through the grievance redressal machinery, the effort will be made to satisfy the aggrieved party. Above rationality assumes that individual/institution will respond to the information and the law of the land.

Now the question is whether above way of looking at the policy of privatisation is the right course of policy. Is it the only rational argument?

Why Top Down Rationalist Approach of Neo-liberals May Not Succeed?

The neo-liberal policy agenda is the rationalist agenda. This is the agenda that gets fullest advocacy. There are various reasons why a rational approach to policy and a top down process of decision making and implementation may not achieve optimal results? It is important to note that the policy process that is top down heavy is an imposition from above. The expert committees and commissions appointed by the government and academic elites make recommendations in favour of neo-liberal policy taking the recourse to rational argument. The government failure to mobilize resources is assumed in the rationality argument. Why government fails to mobilize the resources is not questioned? The more fundamental issue of teacher shortage, infrastructural deficiency etc. is not attempted. To think of reform in the public sector is not considered as rational argument. The reforms in the public higher education are not at the forefront of the policy agenda, as rationality directs the thinking in favour of privatisation only. The process of policy making is, in other words, dictated by the preferences of an individual or the group of an individual who serve group interests through rationality implicit in the privatisation argument.

From the point of view of implementation they assume a rational organisation so that it is expected to achieve the desired results. The top down approach emphasizes the central objective of decision makers. There is a tendency to neglect the initiatives coming from local implementing officials, from other policy sub systems and civil society. Top down model is difficult to use in situations where there is no dominant policy or agency, but rather a multitude of government directives and sectors. The role of professionals

in implementation chain is simply carrying out the policy agenda and not their productive use in framing the policy and implementation.

In a study by Clark (1986) it was pointed out that a large higher education system like that of US has little of policy reforms through the national centre and by way of systematic planning. It is through the decentralized authority of powers that opportunities to innovate are mostly at the institutional levels and in the hands of real stakeholders. Leavers of change are usually beyond the reach of higher level of authority. Reforms and policy change is dependent considerably on local initiative, have small expectations and are incremental rather than large.

Cerych and Sabatier (1986, p.256), analysing policy implementation in the contexts of European and US higher education systems further note that higher education is generally characterized by many autonomous actors and diffusion of authority throughout the structure. Even in a highly centralized system it is more 'bottom heavy' than any other social sector. Policy implementation then becomes highly interactive. Implementation is complicated by its ambiguousness and multiplicity of goals. It is quite natural then that if any policy change is introduced discussion is on many contentious issues. They are immediately questioned and contested.

A change in political ideology, a new set of philosophy and new practices also affects the implementation. When the structure of state control is dominant and a new message of the "self regulation" and "autonomy" is passed on, it becomes difficult to view implementation in a different light. For example, when accreditation as an external quality assurance was introduced, it was said that the process of

peer review will introduce an element of self introspection and initiative and that accountability through greater transparency will create a new quality culture. The practice of accreditation was imposed in a system of state control and academia did not find it so easy to change the behaviour and practices. As a result the quality improvement is so difficult to achieve through external quality assurance measures. At the level of actual policy in many western countries the formal structures of the former state control models linger on alongside the ideological and practical decentralized and automated structures (Gornitzka and Maassen, 2000 cited in Ase Gornitzka et.al. 2005) Most of these systems are still in a "hybrid" state where remnants of old systems are blended with the new. When ideas of self regulation mix with continued aspirations and practices of central control, and when structures of responsibility and governance are unclear, the complexity of public policy in the implementation phase increases.

Limits of Neo-liberalism

The point to note is that neo-liberalism is the doctrine of present day capitalism. Developed countries have been following it and in a way also attempting to synthesize market and the state. However, as noted in the earlier section, neo-liberalism has produced its own negative effects. The societies in developing countries are highly differentiated and if neo-liberal policies are followed, it will add to the process of differentiation and inequality. There are, therefore, strong limits to the extent to which neo-liberal policies can be followed in developing countries.

The perspective of neo-liberal recommendations to higher education is that university system should become efficient in the sense that it fully caters to needs of corporate

sector. For this reason the university needs to restructure curricula. For an effective teaching learning process it relies on system of accountability to be imposed through student's evaluation, peer evaluation, incentives, disclosure norms etc. Accountability along with information through a "competitive process", will lead to quality improvement. The concept of a university is thus far removed from the necessity of reproducing society in a meaningful manner. It is guided by the necessity of reproducing the corporate capitalism. Thus while its recommendations will guide India to be a major capitalist power, it will be India of greater differentiation and hierarchy.

The NKC mentioned that there is bound to have pluralism, diversity and differentiation. In this context the suggestion of NKC of encouraging pluralism, diversity and differentiation in educational institutions and avoidance of uniform "one-size fits-all" institutions also needs to be understood properly. There is need to draw distinction between differentiation, diversity and pluralism on the one hand and disparity and inequality in the educational structure on the other. Often there is a thin line between the two. Uniform educational system may lead to a differentiation and diversity which is positive. Less uniform education on the other hand will generate disparity and inequality which is all together different from differentiation and diversity. The unequal and hierarchical education system today prevails not only between private and public education institutions, but also within public education institutions. Unequal and hierarchical education system is not at all desirable, if inclusive growth is the accepted approach to development. NKC notes that 'higher education is about a quest for excellence. It is, at least in part, about distinction and not always about leveling.' However, there

is no reason why equal opportunities should not be created for all institutions, although at any point of time there will remain differentiation.

The issue of hierarchy and differentiation is much deeper in the recommendations of Knowledge Commission. NKC is aware of the threats respecting the 'identity of the professoriate', if differential salary between and within universities is accepted. It qualifies the recommendation by stating that upper and lower limit to the differential salary should be made. This will threaten the concept of 'community of scholars' of the university system. Identity of the professoriate is an organic identity. Under this conceptualization none is good or bad. Every member is important. In principle salary structure should be one and only one. Differences may be permitted only to compensate the hard work that one does as good teacher or researcher.

Alternative Conceptualization in Policy Process

As argued above the rationalist approach to neo-liberal reform agenda implicit in current policy of education reform suffers from various limitations. It is an ahistoric approach, carried out at the top. It is devoid of the concerns of stakeholders and deals with organization and institutional reforms at the least. It protects dominant interests of elites by reproducing and rather intensifying existing relations, as the reform process leads to greater hierarchy.

It is possible to develop alternative conceptualization of policy process – the process that was very much inherent during the post independent phase which was steered by the personalities like Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and other nationalist leaders of the period. Alternative conceptualization of the policy process can be presented in

terms of inter-related set of theories and propositions derived from Marxist and Neo Marxist traditions of thought.

Marxist Approach to Policy Process

Within a traditional Marxist analysis, the basic proposition is that politics is the manifestation of class conflict in society. The basic proposition leads to the argument that the primary function of the state is to ensure the legal, institutional and ideological hegemony of the dominant class or class alliance over the sub ordinate classes. An important consequence that follows from this is that policy change occurs when there is a shift in relationship among the social classes. Hence policy change is not the result of the actor. It takes place because they represent certain class interests. In Marxian approach to policy, researchers analyse how different groups fight over scarce resources that state allocates. How public officials facilitate the process of bargaining?

Mathur (2001, 225-40) notes that educational policy process in India is the result of the play of social groups. However, it is also influenced by state apparatus on many occasions. Thus policy makers have a room to maneuver and shape policy outcomes. In other words, state has relative autonomy in shaping the policy.

Within a truly Marxist tradition there is economic determinism in shaping policy outcomes. It implies that policy is always the result of supporting capitalist mode and relations of production. State is, therefore, not a neutral entity. The Marxist approach also accepts dialectical materialism. Thus policy results from certain conflict in historical process where mode of production and forces of

production describe the economic system. Thus modern schooling asserts class dominance rather than denies it. State builds institutions and policies to support class dominance.

Neo Marxist Approach to Policy Process

A general framework of an approach to understand policy could be presented in terms of integrating political, ideological and economic factors. Ball Stephen (1990) in his study of education policy presents a schema based on the work of Althusser (1969). Althusser analyses total social system as represented by the political, the ideological and the economic. The same analysis is applied to any subsystem such as education. Each level is relatively autonomous of each other level. It means that economic factors affecting education policy cannot be understood in isolation of political and ideological. Economic effect on policy can be seen only within a unified system. Hence total autonomy of economic factors becomes impossible. Similarly political or ideological effects cannot be seen autonomously, rather within a unified system. It allows thus to look at the contradictions inherent between economic, ideological and political levels. Ball Stephen notes that theoretical strategy in the case of economic is the structural; realist and interactionist in the case of political and discursive in the case of ideological. Economic effects in the realm of education policy are concerned with funding and return from education. Political effects in the realm of education policy are concerned with forms of governance of education, politics of education and the role of groups. Influence of ideology leads to consideration of the ways in which education policy is conceived of and discussed and to examination of education's role in transmitting an effective, dominant culture.

Conceptualising Policy Process

There are few distinguishing features of education reform during the phase of Maulana Azad that distinguishes it from the contemporary phase of neo-liberal reform process.

Nationalism

The immediate post independence period emerged out of the freedom struggle. During freedom struggle the nationalism was the dominant ideology and nation building reigned supreme in the mind of political leaders. The axis of conflict was foreign vs. national in which the foreign lost control though not before damaging the nation in economic, social and political terms. The nationalist ideology later exhausted itself in repairing the damage caused by the colonial power. The nationalist spirit, however, lived for short period only during the period of front leaders of freedom struggle.

Welfare State Ideology

The period is also characterized by the ideology of welfare state. The reconstruction of the world capitalist order in the post world war II phase was based on the premise of active role of state. The evils of market in terms of exchange rate fluctuation, unemployment and price instability were noted threatening the stability of economies. In a developing country such as India state was a predominant role in the industrial development of the country. The complete reliance on the active role of the state was helpful in shaping the reconstruction of educational institutions. Educational infrastructure was built within control and regulatory framework.

Organisational Reform

Many political leaders were themselves instrumental in the development of institutions. They camped at the headquarters of institutions and sought public support to build the institution. Institution was owned by the society. The philanthropy was the main support mechanism to build the institution. The accountability of the institution was directly to the people. Macro policy tool helped shape the institution but the efforts made at the level of organization supported the process of implementation of policy effectively.

Class Conflict

The role of the interplay of class conflict cannot be ruled. The development agenda set by the Mahalanobis model was in favour of industries and rural peasantry was not immediately at the centre of development. It was assumed that agriculture sector would respond positively to the industrial development. The institutional constraint in agricultural development was ignored or sidelined. As a result the development strategy could not uplift the rural economy. The development of social sectors such as public health and education in rural area became a weak link of the development process.

Conclusion

Thus the period of education reform during the times of Maulana Azad is characterized by the positive forces of ideology of nationalism and state dominance combined with political forces that concentrated on organizational reform. Yet the dominant coalition of class interest helped to serve the interests of urban elite. The positive forces brought a forward movement, yet the class interests moved it

backward so far as the educational development is concerned. Understanding of the conflicts and support within ideological, political and economic and between them constitute the crux of the policy process.

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CHAPTER IX

Contradictions and Governance of Indian Higher Education: From UGC to NCHER

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Introduction

Expectations of the country are widening in respect of the need for equity in the expansion and improvement in the quality of higher education. The national system of higher education is being challenged at the moment from all sides. If there is a growing demand for improved access from the socially and economically deprived sections to the elite public sector institutions that are known for supplying "world class" quality higher education to the students, the middle classes are busy asking for the expansion of higher education in the direction that would give them a competitive edge in the new and emerging labour markets linked mainly to the opportunities in outsourcing markets arising out of the growing global integration of the Indian economy. Almost for a decade these and other such contradictions of the Indian system of higher education have been aggravating and become acute. The Indian universities are facing a crisis that has manifold dimensions. The aggravation of the crisis is reflected not only in the crisis

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of funding and governance but also in the crisis of purpose and credibility of education being imparted by the institutions of higher and technical education in India. For a country that dreams of taking an advantage of the large young population that it has the dismal condition of its system of higher education and research should be a cause for serious concern.

Of course, the new and emerging political-bureaucratic apparatus has also been looking for the right moment to push the solutions that would be fitting in well with their overall vision and strategy of development of the economy and society. Although some attempts were made during the reign of even the first government of United Progressive Alliance (UPA), but the government in power was prevented by the left to go ahead with the proposed education reforms. From the flurry of activity going on in the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) it is apparent that the second government of UPA believes that on account of not being dependent on the left for its majority in the parliament the current political situation is quite favourable to the reforms in education. All the policymakers who wish to inject in private and foreign investment in education to fix the existing system have chosen to rally behind the reforms. Mr. Kapil Sibal, the Minister of Human Resource Development is fully prepared and ready to seize the moment. For more than a decade this particular school of policymakers has been ready and waiting in the wings to implement the new framework of funding and governance for the Indian system of higher education. It also seems that the Ministry of Human Resource Development has the signal to go from the top leadership of the political bureaucratic apparatus. It is quite clear that the big bang reforms in education are coming and

the country would be soon able to get the "bonanza" of a "radically altered" system of governance in the case of Indian system of higher education.

However, while the country watches from the stands the process of latest radical closure to policy reforms being put for the second time by the political-bureaucratic apparatus during the post-independence period, it is essential for those of us who work on education and research planning to ask this question that how much of the crisis of purpose and credibility of education that besets the national system of higher education would be actually resolved through the proposed reforms in the arrangements for funding and governance of higher education in India. In order to answer this question we believe that a close investigation is also required to be carried out into the process and outcomes of previous closure. We know that the political bureaucratic leadership had managed to successfully put a closure on the discourse which had also been taking place in the country on the establishment of the structure of governance of the existing national system of higher education for many years during the period of early fifties. Investigations are required to explore where rest really the roots of the present crisis of Indian system of higher education and whether the proposed structure of governance would be able to give the country an outcome which is relevant and effective in respect of tackling the challenges facing the system.

Keeping this specific issue in front, in this paper we wish to examine the history to understand better the achievements and limitations of the type of closure obtained by the immediate post-independence leadership in respect of the discourse that took place on the establishment of the existing system of funding and governance in the early fifties. We ask that how come the outcome of this closure

was hardly durable and why did it get into a crisis within a period of just two decades. We claim to show through this analysis that the proposed new institutional arrangements of funding and governance are also in no way a robust solution to the fast deepening crisis of purpose and credibility of education being imparted through the existing system of higher education. The new institutional arrangements will change the structure and activity of higher education in a way that will work to the detriment of not only the system and have very serious consequences for the attainment of excellence and relevance in the system of higher education but also destroy the national and republican character of the Indian system of higher education that Maulana Azad and Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru sought to build after India got Independence.

Scope and background

First of all, there is a need to put in our view a major caveat to the scope of the paper. The new institutional arrangements for funding and governance are being created not just through the bill being drafted for the National Commission on Higher Education and Research (NCHER) but also through the other nine or ten bills that the policymakers are planning to push in respect of regulation and promotion of higher education in India. In our mind, while there is no doubt that the details of those bills are also going to affect considerably the future of Indian system of higher education, but we do consider that the new institutional arrangements being put in place through the NCHER would be certainly playing quite a critical role in the future design of the system. The NCHER is going to provide an overarching framework to the proposed institutional changes. In order to stabilise the new system

the rest of the proposed reforms need for their successful execution a supporting governance structure that the NCHER offers.

Second, it needs to be recognised at the outset that the draft bill for the National Commission on Higher Education and Research (NCHER), which is going to write ultimately the obituary of University Grants Commission (UGC), has been formulated on the basis of the recommendation for the establishment of an independent regulatory authority by not one but two very high level bodies namely, the National Knowledge Commission (NKC) and the Yash Pal Committee Report. It needs to be noted that the concerns and challenges identified in respect of the Indian system of higher education by both the reports were hardly identical. But their recommendation for the institutional arrangements of governance was almost the same and not very different. The spirit of the time counts. Before we go into the details of the process used or the way previous closure was put some remarks on the proposed structure of governance are in order.

Proposed new institutional arrangements and the nature of departure

Coming straightway to the nature of the new structure of governance, it needs to be kept in view that the specific recommendation made in respect of the constitution of new arrangements for governance is well couched in the rhetoric of new public management, the neo-liberal philosophy of governance used in many countries for undertaking similar reforms that also give command of the system to the market. First of all, both the reports seem to have been inspired in a big way by the understanding that the multiplicity and the rigidities of the existing regulatory structure are not

conducive to the future expansion of higher education system in India. Second, both the reports also seem to think that the proposed new institutional arrangements for funding and governance would be able to offer greater autonomy to the institutions of higher education, make the teachers far more accountable to the students and undertake greater experimentation and innovation in the case of Indian system of higher education. In our view, these are interesting, legitimising arguments for the new school of policymakers which have been invented to do the thing which is quite different.

It is quite clear to us that the policymakers need centralization of the decision making to implement their vision and strategy of market governance. They have a major difficulty with the University Grant Commission (UGC), a structure of governance that the post-independence period leadership carved out as a compromise arrived at between the centre and states and the UGC and Indian universities. However, it must also be mentioned that there was no investigation into the issue of how the ideas of the revised bill draft (2010) that is going to provide for a high degree of centralization of decision making with regard to the functions of promotion and regulation of higher education would be able to do better with regard to experimentation and innovation. The issue of what kind of innovation would be promoted by the system of market governance which the government seeks to stabilise through the National Commission on Higher Education and Research (NCHER) was not even examined in these two reports.

As the things stand today the bill only provides in the proposed new governance structures a semblance of partnership to the centre and states. It has been framed in a

manner that hides the actual depth of the changes. The kind of governance structure that the UPA government is seeking to push through the bill pertaining to the formation of NCHER take away actually the arrangements made by the post-independence leadership for the provision of autonomy to Indian universities in the proposed new structure of governance. It offers to the states and universities only a feeble voice through a structure of governance that is apparently a structure of partnership which works in the name of participation of all stakeholders through an advisory body to be constituted in the form of a General Council including representatives / nominees of the union and state governments, heads of the 14 professional bodies like the Medical Council of India, 13 research councils like the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, heads of central universities, Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs), and Chambers of Commerce and Industry. In practice it offers all the powers and functions to the executive to be constituted in the form of a Commission consisting of the chairperson, members, the Collegium and the Governing Council, which has been accorded all the necessary powers to decide, advise and facilitate on the establishment of universities, in the appointment of vice-chancellors and heads of central universities and central educational institutions, and in the commencement of academic operations by the institutions of higher education and research.

It is also important to note that the Commission has been entrusted with the powers for the laying down of standards for leadership positions, and norms and regulations for a university to commence its academic operations. But the reports did not even examine the issue of how the select few

sitting in the commission would be able to decide properly for all the fields of knowledge that the country needs to develop in future for the benefit of Indian society which is so diverse in its requirements and the challenges of development. Both the reports also never examined even the aspect that how the preparation of the eligibility conditions and of the Directory of Academics for appointment as vice-chancellors would be able to ensure from the appointed leaders the perusal of commitment to autonomy and accountability of the academics working in the institutions of higher education in India. It seems that for these new policymakers the rhetoric of "failure" of the existing system is enough of evidence, and they do not think that they need to provide any further evidence for why would their structure of governance be better.

Powers granted to the commission cover issues concerning the establishment and winding up of universities, award of degrees and diplomas, development of framework for curriculum for different courses, workload of the universities, standards of quality and accreditation, processes of interaction between students and teachers, and so on. As the bill is quite clear about the new funding arrangements, there is no doubt in mind that the higher education market is being constituted by the leadership through the new arrangements of governance. The ruling class politicians, the foreign education service providers and the new emerging domestic private players need profits and safety of their investment. The revised bill proposes that the NCHER would be setting up a Higher Education Financial Services Corporation. This corporation would be receiving funds from the union government to disburse them to the universities. Not even one report dealt with the issue of accountability and autonomy of the institutions of higher

education if their establishment is going to involve borrowings by the students and institutions. Furthermore, as the NCHER is not going to be even accountable to the parliament, what impact the new structures of governance would have on the achievement of public goals which are expected to be determined by the parliament in a country which is supposedly adherent to the constitution definitely bearing at least a republican character.

Of course, it needs to be kept in mind that the bills being framed in the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) have also the stamp of Mr. Kapil Sibal, the Minister himself who alone is mostly putting the closure to the negotiations and discourse going on in the area of higher education policymaking on behalf of the Executive, the government in power. It needs to be recalled that Mr. Kapil Sibal was the Minister of Science and Technology in the previous government and was the one who started his stint with the statement that he would encourage foreign direct investment in biotechnology to foster indigenous technology development. Even then there existed evidence that multinationals do not engage in the business of indigenous technology development for the latecomer nations. The nation is still dependent on the government and domestic companies for the development of indigenous technology.

Apparently the proposed institutional arrangements for governance and funding of higher education have been put by him and the government in power because the government is keen to offer only a limited set of resources for the advanced components of higher education to the public sector institutions. It is motivated by only the need to expand the "routine, non-advanced components" of the system of higher education using the private and foreign

education institutions. It considers this arrangement to be a rational way of doing things in the new world. How much this new arrangement will suffice in respect of the challenges that the country face in the "new brave world" and provide political stability needs to be examined in detail. The NCHER bill will soon be brought before the parliament and the political leadership of all colours would be deciding on the pros and cons of the proposed new arrangements. It is therefore still not perhaps too late to discuss the arrangements. Since the final word is yet to be written in respect of the new institutional arrangements for funding and governance, let us examine the history because we cannot gaze the events of the future fully and with certainty.

Post-independence period evolution of governance structure and the emergent determinants of higher education activity

Our examination of the history of the process of previous closure tells us that during the course of freedom movement the ideas developed in respect of the conceptions of autonomy of the universities and the rights of state governments had a major influence on the creation of structures chosen for the governance of the Indian system of higher education in the early years of free India. First of all, the blue print of governance structures was forged in the course of negotiations taking place on the bill between the vice-chancellors and the union government. The members of parliament actively amended the bill moved by the union government with regard to the regulation of university standards. Second, even the conception of types of higher education institutions that the country should establish was not borrowed by the political leaders from the colonial

masters. It cannot be said that the country failed in the establishment of an "appropriate" structure of governance because it copied slavishly the structure of University Grants Commission (UGC) from United Kingdom. Third, the Central government had to negotiate with the state leadership and vice chancellors bon the basis of the ideas that had been developed in respect of autonomy of the universities and the states in a country having republican constitution. Details of the process of negotiations tell us quite a bit about the spirit of the times in which Maulana Azad and Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru were required to work.

The UGC came into existence through an Act of Parliament in November 1956. The establishment of UGC was recommended by the Radhakrishnan Commission (1948) better known as the First Education Commission. In order to understand the process of evolution of governance structure and the relationship established by the constituents of the system through this structure with the activities of higher education during the post-independence period, we also need to keep in mind that that it was not decided in one shot and required a conscious intervention from the constituents active in the Indian system of higher education. Certainly the origins of some of the elements of the initial structure and functions of UGC can be traced back to the ideas proposed by the actors working with the Government of India during the colonial period. The idea of UGC existed and was demanded by the vice-chancellors and the important leaders of provinces. It was shaped by their actual experience with the government in respect of the problems that had faced in the development of universities during the colonial period.

Of course, all these constituents had themselves also engaged quite actively with the problems in respect of

adequate funding for the development of universities during the colonial period. They were very keen to get more funds from the union government. While they chose to negotiate with the union government for the safeguarding of academic autonomy of the universities, they were also willing to subject themselves to the coordination and determination of standards by the union government for the benefit of receiving funds. But still the provincial leaders did not leave ultimately any stone unturned to safeguard the autonomy of state leadership with regard to the establishment and termination of state universities in the parliament when the bill for the establishment of UGC came up for discussion. Before we take up the details of negotiations that went on and the concepts and principles that got used to achieve the closure it is necessary to provide some information on the pre-history of the processes that had gone on already during the colonial times in respect of the formation of a UGC like structure of governance.

UGC and the assessment of colonial pre-history

The first effort to establish an All India university organization was made in 1924 when the colonial government in India called a conference in Shimla of the representatives of the fourteen universities in India. It needs a specific mention that this effort was born in the background of "financial stringency affecting the complete execution of projects," the need "for mutual help and for co-operation between universities," for a "united front" and "a joint effort to develop higher education in India to the highest standards'. From this conference developed the Inter-University Board of India, which today is known as Association of Indian Universities. Its main concerns were the coordination of standards, mutual recognition of

degrees, and safeguarding the autonomy of universities. But as the universities needed greater funds than were available to them from the fee of various kinds paid by the students the proposed structure in the form of Inter-University Board of India was also found to be inadequate.

The proposal for establishment of a body on the lines of UGC in the form of a grant giving body at the level of each province or region was mooted for the first time in 1936. In 1943, the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) drew up a National (Sargent) Plan for the post-war development of education. Through this plan, the Inter-University Board revived this time the idea of a "Central Grants Committee". It was felt that a national plan of development of education could not be implemented without central financial aid. The idea was to set up the Indian University Grants Committee as a statutory body consisting of a few eminent persons, who were not to be full time persons and neither going to be directly connected with the Government nor with any particular university. It was envisaged that financial assistance would be given as block grants for a certain number of years, to enable the universities to plan ahead.

The Government of India did appoint a University Grants Committee in 1945 to give grants to the Central Universities; but the scope of this mechanism was enlarged in 1947 to deal with the other universities also. The new government could not limit the provision of governmental financial support to the funding of central universities. Although the new committee could not be effective for several reasons[1], but the new arrangement was certainly

[1] The committee had no funds of its own and could only make recommendations to the Education Ministry, which, in turn, forwarded them to the Finance Ministry.

quite different from the colonial times. Of course, it was kept in abeyance after 1950. Once the Government of India accepted the recommendations of the University Education (Radhakrishnan) Commission a new process had got set in. But even then it was not a straightforward give away; the forces of resistance did not sit back. Their negotiations with the central government took several more years. They got the central government to enunciate a set of principles which had no place in the colonial history of education in India.

It is true that education in India had been traditionally also a provincial concern. But even when Article 246 of the constitution of India gave the Central Government the responsibility of coordination and determination of standards in institutions for higher education or research including scientific and technical institutions the states were not willing to lose the space that they thought needed for the planning of education to take care of the national character of education. The Indian union was a multinational state. The Radhakrishnan Commission had therefore recommended the principle of joint planning of education. Of course, how this joint planning was to be conducted by the centre and states was not worked out by the commission in detail. It was a contested process, and the Indian pan consciousness had also to have its place. But this balance was also not easy to work out. Ignoring the stiff opposition that existed at that time quite prominently among the vice chancellors and provincial political leaders to the very idea of UGC being set up by the Central government, the Radhakrishnan Commission went on to even plead that the UGC should be given the powers and function of securing the cooperation of various agencies for the purpose of joint planning through the means of

sanctioning or withholding grants. This idea became the centre of controversy and the leadership had to find a way of putting closure on this debate in the parliament and outside the parliament. Since in order to move further on the front of coordination of the development and regulation of the universities for the Government of India the passing of a central legislation through the parliament was necessary under the constitution establishment of the UGC had to wait until November 1956.

The history of passage of the bill for UGC establishment

Although the Government of India had moved the Bill called the "Universities (Regulation of Standards) Bill for the establishment of UGC in 1951, but it needs to be also recalled that it took the country five more years to adopt the UGC Act. The bill had to go through the tussle that was going on between the centre and states in respect of how the national system of higher education must be constituted. The idea of India was still in making, and the tussle over the UGC Act was a part of this struggle for the political leadership in the post-independent India. Initially the union government prepared draft Bill of 1951 did not even envisage the funding function to be allocated to the apex body to be established by the union government. The apex body was to be established only for the coordination and determination of standards; this bill received much opposition from the vice-chancellors. The following three main objections came from the vice chancellors of almost all the existing twenty-five universities. One, they felt that it was for the universities themselves to regulate, maintain and coordinate their own academic standards. Two, if an outside body undertook this job this would amount to an interference with the university autonomy. Three, standards

were low because of lack of funds and once adequate funds were made available there would be hardly any problems.

It was only in April 1953 that the Central Government relented and agreed at the conference of vice-chancellors and State Education Ministers to set up a body like the UGC which combined the powers of coordination of standards and grant giving functions. The body was to be called a 'Commission' rather than the 'Committee' to indicate that it had more autonomy than a committee would have. The Interim University Grants Commission set up by the Government of India began to function from the last week of December 1953 with its first chairman being S.S. Bhatnagar who was a noted scientist and also held simultaneously the office of Director General of Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR). The Commission had begun its life in the middle of the First Five Year Plan. The Planning Commission tended to think in terms of 'targets" to be achieved during the plan and only "allocated" funds for them. The development of education, the raising of standards, the improvement of quality of teaching and the encouragement of research, could not always be expressed in financial terms or quantitative targets.

Similarly, when on 30th September 1954 the Ministry of Education reached with the Bill in the parliament, the government had perhaps only a little idea of what kind of debate it will have to face from the members. The motion for the reference of the Bill to a Joint Committee of the Houses had a major debate was discussed in terms of the objects as well as principles on 18 December, 1954, 22 and 28 February 1955. The motion for referring the Bill to the Joint Committee of the Houses was adopted on the 28 February, 1955 in the Lok Sabha. In the Rajya Sabha the members

discussed the motion on the 15, 16 and 21 March, 1955. In fact this debate on the motion that lasted for about six hours was quite a historic event for the Lok Sabha. The Joint Committee had five sittings on the Bill. It had to seek an extension of time. Keeping the concerns expressed by the majority of members that the Central Government would exert undue influence upon the universities through the UGC and thereby endangering their autonomy, the government had to inform the members that the guiding principles of the Committee were the maintenance of academic independence and autonomy of the universities.

The Joint Committee was of the opinion that "University Education is a State subject and the States should be responsible for the maintenance of the universities, their constituent and affiliate colleges. The Centre should not take upon itself any responsibilities in the matter. The UGC will give grants where it thinks that it is helping a university in achieving its raison d'etre, the advancing of the bounds of knowledge. University autonomy is basic to democracy in education and education for democracy. The concept of educational planning and engineering is also essential in a modern society, and therefore, any agencies set up for educational planning must be democratically constituted so that the criterion for determining such planning will be the claims of individual and academic freedom and communication with the needs of society rather than the policies of the government administrations.

Of course, in order to have a smooth passage two important provisions of the 1951Bill, which gave teeth to the proposed UGC, had to be deleted. The UGC Act of 1956 was a negotiated act between the centre and states and the central government and vice chancellors. The 1951 Bill vested the Central Government with the power of

approving or not approving a university established by a State Legislature. In the 1956 Act this provision was deleted and it was now completely open to the State Legislatures to establish any university without reference to the UGC. Second another important change related to the provision that had given the Central Government the power to derecognize any degree conferred by a university provided the said university failed to carry out directions given to it. Now this provision too stood deleted from the UGC Act of 1956.

Closure of the UGC debate and its boundaries

Although the history of parliamentary debate on the UGC Act clearly tells us that not only the Bill was debated in both Houses of the Parliament and the government had to accept two important amendments, but it is important to note that issues discussed in respect of the bill ranged from the very need of UGC to what was meant by determination of standards and coordination, women's education, sports, rural universities, the examination systems and the reforms required in it, the need to help and look after affiliated colleges where most of the teaching and learning took place, the funding of educational institutions and its implications, university autonomy and the demands of planning, national purposes to be achieved and a host of other concerns. The Minister had to come forward to state that the UGC and the government could not function as rival bodies. Their relationship would have to be built as a partnership between the two if university education was to be promoted properly.

However, it is also critical to recognise that while the government was successfully able to put a closure on the debate on autonomy of institutions and states by assuring

them of the commitment to academic autonomy and pointing out that autonomy would have to be circumscribed only by the framework of developmental requirements of the society and the need for planning of such requirements by the centre and states, it had still left a void at the level of provisions in respect of the idea of how would the centre and states carry out this joint planning, use what kind of mechanisms and how would the mismatches arising between the demand and supply sides would have to be ultimately handled by them. Although there was some discussion with regard to the idea of making the university design suitable in the context of rural areas, but as far as the organisation of general education or advanced S&T education is concerned, but there occurred little discussion on the notion of purpose and needs of higher education system. Below we discuss how the parliament discussed the needs of rural areas and left the outcome to the Executive in respect of the idea of rural university. Our analysis seems to show that the ideas floating regarding the university design in the country needed to be concretised in the parliament. By leaving the outcome to the Executive the parliamentarians did not do the right thing.

The idea of designing the university to suit the needs of Indian society was explored in the Radhakrishnan Commission and was very much there in the discourse taking place on the system of higher education in the country. Take for example the decision on education in rural areas and the idea of rural university to which the Radhakrishnan Commission had devoted much effort. Perhaps it is not so well known that the Radhakrishnan Commission had also recommended the establishment of rural universities for which it had reviewed the models found for the agricultural universities in Europe, United

Kingdom and United States and had come to the conclusion that the country needed a different model. It had spent much effort on the elaboration of this model. In the debate carried out in the parliament a large numbers of members had emphasised the importance of rural universities as there had been neglect of rural areas and practically all the funds had been spent on university education in urban areas. But the Government of India managed to set aside this issue by stating in the parliament that the Council of Rural Education is going to be soon established. The Committee on Rural Education had submitted its report and the Government would, on that basis, consider the necessary steps to be taken for the improvement of rural education. The Government also stated that in any case, whenever a rural university came into place, it would automatically come within the purview of the UGC. However, it is now history that the conception of rural universities was later transformed by the Government of India in collaboration with the Government of United States to completely a new model of university that proved to be only a run down version of land grant university model of university of United States.

Later even when the UGC examined agriculture and looked into the desirability of establishing agricultural universities, it suggested that the universities giving importance to universities did not have to be called agricultural universities but could be named simply after the town in which they were established. It partly happened because a lot of PL 480 funds were available by the mid sixties for use in such universities for research in agriculture. The Kothari Commission, which is otherwise believed to be a body that upheld the republican values and had tried to establish a system of national education, did not go back to

ask the question of that Radhakrishnan Commission had tried answering in respect of how the system of education for agriculture must be planned in the case of India. The Radhakrishnan Commission had linked its conception of the rural university to the need of development of economy of rural areas as the technologically transformed local economy systems deriving their strength from the diversity that existed in respect of farm and rural non-farm sectors in India.

The Kothari Commission was working on the basis of the recommendations of all those who were already wedded and known to be associated with the idea of pushing the pathway chosen for rural development and agriculture by the Executive in collaboration with the Rockfeller and Ford Foundations and the USAID. The Commission was treating agriculture as the responsibility of the department of agriculture. By supporting a conception of agricultural university that had nothing in common with the conception of rural university it had ended up putting a closure to the idea of having a very different model of university as well as agriculture in the case of India. All that the Radhakrishnan Commission had supported in respect of rural university had by then become just a history. The chapter of Educational for Agriculture was written by the authors of the team that was working out the Indo-US Agreement on Agricultural Education and Research. It needs to be pointed out that all the agricultural universities that got set up in the process of collaboration undertaken with the United States measured their contribution and success in terms of how much area was brought under the spread of high external input responsive varieties. The notion of rural development had evaporated; all the diverse

needs of Indian rural areas and of agriculture had evaporated for even the educationists.

Of course, it needs to be recalled that in order to satisfy the constituents that still backed the conception of rural university in the Ministry of Education they were given support in a tokenistic way to establish a small number of rural institutes. But as most of the rural institutes have not been able to get the support needed for them to be recognised as universities the UGC has no jurisdiction over them. Even today their number is something like mere fifteen institutes. As these institutions receive a meagre support from the Central Government, it would not be wrong to conclude that the conception of rural university was virtually killed by the Central Government, the UGC and the intelligentsia through their combined neglect of the underlying systemic conception of the rural university. Although it was sought to be revived by Dr. S.K. Sinha, the Former Director of Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI) who had been made the Chairperson of Working Group on Agricultural Education and Research set up by the Planning Commission during the course of Tenth Five Year Plan, but it appears that it was not enthusiastically picked up in any way by the agricultural research community which matters even today most to the rural population.

UGC, higher education expansion and the emergence of crisis

The crisis for UGC and the Indian Universities came sooner than expected precisely for the reason of failure of the larger political-bureaucratic apparatus on the one hand, to develop the much needed mechanisms of joint planning of higher education at the level of centre and states and on

the other hand, to give a proper direction to the system of higher education by putting in place such designs of the universities that would give support to balanced development of the Indian society and economy for the benefit of all the regions and the people of India as a whole. Due to the failure on these two important fronts the success of UGC as well as the Indian universities was extremely short lived. The period of formative years of UGC of 1953-1963 and the decade of expansion (1963-73) were not long enough to bring them to the stage of development of world class organisations.

It also needs to be underlined that during the period of expansion which means the First, Second, Third and Fourth Five Year Plans a distinctive feature of the expansion carried out in the then new and emerging system of higher education was the creation of a small number of highly privileged set of elite institutions. In India, while the treatment meted out in respect of funding and regulation of these institutions was certainly liberal, but this liberal treatment never became available to the mass oriented (non-elite) institutions that have had to cater to the laggards and deprived sections on account of the multiple failures namely, the weaknesses of school education, the imbalances that continue to exist in respect of development of the economy, etc,2. This added to the frustration, and the crisis got deepened only account of social disparities created by the system of education.

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[2] Although all over the world higher education has been in the business of formation of the national elites, but in our view the business of higher education through the premier institutions in India has been utilised to create a highly privileged elite whose links with nation building have been tenuous.

Further, as there was also a crisis brewing in the economy on the demand side due to the inability of the government to absorb the graduates and post graduates coming out of the system, and the student unrest was growing fast in the country, put together the impact of mismatches and disparities that India was witness to in the decade of seventies the Central Government was forced to altogether stop the expansion of the system. The decade of seventies saw a turbulent India in which the students were showing their restlessness on the roads and in the jungles. And the rulers wanted to contain this by all means, and the stopping of expansion of higher education through the public sector non elite institutions was one such option that they made the UGC to exercise.

It is also our case that the pathway that India chose for agricultural development was at the most suitable for four or five states. As a result India saw the coming of the town and countryside contradiction to the fore very quickly within less than a decade of implementation of the green revolution model of agricultural development. We know that how the party that had ruled the country from the day India became independent was on the brink of being ousted by the early seventies in even the states like Punjab and Haryana and Uttar Pradesh. It was forced to impose political emergency. It needed the crutches of authoritarian rule to deal with the opposition emerging to its rule in the country.

Analysis of the impact realised on the functioning of the system of higher education of the pathway of development is a subject by itself. If the economy is unable to absorb the graduates and post graduates being produced by the universities, then the trouble would occur is undeniable. Similarly, it can be suggested that if the universities are so

designed that we are also able to make them an integral part of the experiments and innovation which must be carried out in respect of development in any latecomer country, then it is not wrong to suggest that the implementation of alternate ideas regarding how to build a university could have been an important mechanism of joint planning between the centre and states and the central government economic planners and educationists. It is arguable that India missed on the synergy of education with development process when it abandoned the conception of rural university. In our view, India will have to experiment with the idea of building a developmental university in which teaching, research and extension would be treated as necessary components integrated scholarship. India missed on the pace of and the balance in the process of development by not working actively on the notion of joint planning and alternate university designs, first in the mid sixties and then in the eighties. It is not our argument that mismatches could have been avoided altogether with the help of alternate university designs. But the intensity of mismatches could have been reduced. Corrections could have occurred faster. The UGC would not have been compelled to stop the expansion of higher education through the public sector institutions within a period of two decades in India.

Our short point is that in India the period of expansion was extremely short lived. It takes time to build a new university. The system was too small to stop expansion and enter into what began to be called by the UGC a phase of consolidation in the decade of seventies. It is to be noted that the system of higher education which the country went on to construct was also a highly dualistic system. It was therefore both turbulent and fragile. The system of higher

education lacked in robustness. It was not an instrument of mobility for all. It served the mobility of only a few who were already better off. As the ability that the system of higher education needed to deal with the crisis brewing outside in the economy and society was missing, the solution was "stop expansion of public sector" and "privatise higher education" to get over the crisis.

Let us also go a bit deeper into the details of the main failures that dogged the system of higher education during the decade of seventies in India. First, the country was face to face with the emergence of all kinds of mismatches being experienced between the supply and demand of professionals. Second, the crisis that embraced first only the field of pure, classical sciences had spread quickly to several branches of knowledge by the mid eighties. Third, strong conservative political voices had begun to be raised. They had a view that the system was only creating an army of unemployed youth, which could not be gainfully employed in industry by the public and private sector firms. Fourth, the much talked about decline of science enrolment which is getting now much attention from the scientific community had already begun to raise its head in the early eighties in India. The drop in demand for science education continued right through the decade of eighties. In the matter of two and half decades, the percentage of students who take up basic science as their specialisation had come down from the figure of 30 % to 19.6%. The problem of drop in science enrolment had much to do with the lack of investment in the development of S&T systems including education. Fifth, even the problem of internal brain drain of engineers, doctors and science postgraduates to the lure of administrative jobs is now a two-decade old phenomenon. It persisted then also as the other side of external brain drain.

During the decade of eighties the planners decided to shift to the expansion of engineering and management education. In the field of engineering electronics was considered to be a branch of promise. A lot of engineering colleges were opened in private sector. It was thought that the country would be in position to absorb them because China is doing well in the hardware sector. India would also be able to build a strong hardware sector in electronics. India failed to repeat the success of China in electronics. Quite a large number of unemployed engineers are electronics engineers. In the nineties, the planners chose to give emphasis to the field of information technology (IT). Although India has done better in terms of economic development of IT enabled services sector, but as the system of education in IT was sought to be expanded indiscriminately through low grade private sector institutions there is again unemployment among the IT graduates on account of their quality of education itself being poor. Even the bandwagon expansion of electronics and IT education through low grade private sector engineering institutions has again roots in the failure to undertake joint planning and to develop the system design of higher education in these otherwise important fields of electronics and information technology. The country is dependent on foreign demand and the capacity to tap home market demand remains underdeveloped because of not being tried. While it is true that there always existed the need and the system should have taken up the challenges in industrial electronics, low cost automation, rural electronics and e-governance, but the emphasis was elsewhere. Focus of the system was mainly restricted to the exploitation of opportunities in outsourcing opening up through IT enabled services. Such has been the mad rush for IT education that it has impacted adversely even the post-graduate education in

Indian universities during the period of last two decades. As the students are focused far more on doing evening courses in IT and using the universities as hostel facilities, for the universities there has virtually emerged a crisis of purpose and credibility.

We should not forget that after the seventies almost right through the public sector system of higher and technical education has been faced with the lack of problem of sufficient investment in respect of their upgradation. During this period there was no will on the part of the governments in power to upgrade the non-elite components of the public sector system. It needs to be recalled that it is in these institutions where the mass of students received their higher education up to the decade of seventies. As the public sector in science and engineering education was forced to become a victim of the contradictions of Nehurvian framework in the seventies itself, its neglect has hurt both the economy as well education. It was the bulwark for the production of design and production engineers in the first three decades for the public and private sector alike. India lost on engineering and design capabilities when the planners did not choose to upgrade their facilities and faculty. And the Indian state could find its way out through only the route of commercialisation and privatisation of the institutions in higher education. The state funding for the system was reduced drastically for this part of the public sector system during the next decades of eighties and nineties. Thus, it would not be wrong to suggest that the poor credibility of the outturns that even quite a few of the non-elite public sector institutions are today generating as a part of the inherited system of degrees and courses in the area of general education, be in natural and social sciences or humanities and arts, were a built-in feature of the dualistic

framework that the ruling classes had ended up establishing. Ultimately the planners have created a dualistic system which was initially set up as only a system consisting of advanced and non-advanced components of higher education. This dualistic system is producing social tensions, affecting the production of excellence and relevance and hurting the processes of balanced economic development in India.

Whose politics is in command?

Since the crisis occurred within a short period of just twenty years and has adversely affected the establishment of very post-independent Indian system of higher education that aspired to create scientists, doctors and engineers for making India self-reliant, it would not be wrong to ask how come the original questions which in our view did remain unsettled in the course of the parliamentary debate on the UGC Act have not been brought to the front by the Indian society. At least a part of the answer is that the politics of higher education in this country is still revolving around the needs of middle classes only. And there too the upper middle classes have so far had an upper hand. It needs to be noted that even when by the time of the beginning of Fourth Plan the crisis came to be deep enough and the UGC was asking the Indian universities to stop expansion, consolidate and economize, the burden of downsizing fell totally on the mass oriented (non-elite) institutions. For the elite institutions it was always the business as usual. Take the privileged nature of the treatment that we have meted out to IITs, IIMs and Central Universities. Although legally speaking no technical institution is outside the All India Council of Technical Education (AICTE's) purview, but it is only by convention that the Council does not exercise its statutory powers on institutions such as IITs and IIMs.

Admissions for the students to these institutions, being a function of the merit constructed through their access to a select set of schools and specialised coaching institutions, became a matter of privilege of the chosen few who were able to clear the tightly regulated national level entrance tests.

In India, most of the elite institutions are run by the central government and have enjoyed a cushion that the state governments are unable to offer to their non-elite institutions of higher education. Right from the time of their establishment in India, the elite institutions have been receiving a major share of the public resources allocated to higher education by the Ministry of Education. Admissions to these institutions have been particularly tightly regulated through the mechanism of Centralised Test. As far as the question of their accountability is concerned that many of these institutions were set up by the Central Government in the tradition of research universities within the fields of professional education. But these institutions have been let off the hook even when they have largely failed to serve the country in respect of its national priorities of development. Their engagement with the national research system is also less than intense. Achievements on the front of the realisation of goals of development of indigenous technology are also far and few for most of these institutions. Although the situation of enrolment is a bit better in the case of Central Universities that the federal government administers and have been set up in the tradition of liberal academic institutions and offer essentially only graduate and post-graduate courses in sciences, arts and humanities, but the same cannot be said of the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), All India Institute

of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) and other such medical institutions, Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs)[3].

Even as in the case of second-rung institutions the efforts made earlier by the UGC to improve the quality of education became few and far between over the period it is the non-elite sections who lost the most until recently. Since the efforts required to be made in the case of non-elite institutions were not of as much interest to the Indian elites due to their small size then, they had forgotten that they also exist and can serve some purpose for their kith and kin. Of course, the size of elite sections is on the increase in the country due to liberalization. They thought that the option of private sector in professional education is open to them as a solution and could solve at least their own limited problem of effectively getting access to higher and technical education for the benefit of getting jobs in the new and

[3] In the case of Delhi University, there are two lakh students trying to compete for forty thousand seats. It means that a lot of them will be forced to join the correspondence courses and also go out of Delhi to obtain entry into higher education. Take the IITs that touched a figure of 200,000 plus annual test takers for a little under 3900 seats. This means that presently, in the case of IITs, close to only one or maximum two percent of those who appear in the entrance test for getting admission are able to make an entry into the institution. Whereas even in the case of institutions like the MIT, Stanford, Caltech, etc. having higher reputation the acceptance rate is in the range of sixteen to twenty percent. Out of the 150,000-250,000 students who have begun to appear in that order every year for the Joint Entrance Examination (JEE), the academic credentials of 15,000 who don't make it to an IIT would be highly comparable to the intake of any top state university in the United States. Statistics show that the IITs currently account for just over 1 percent of those entering the four-year engineering degree programme. Compare this with the top 50 schools in the USA that have a comparable undergraduate programme in engineering and account for close to 40 percent of the intake.

emerging sectors of electronics, IT-enabled services, and bioinformatics and so on. But as the uptake of graduates being produced by the low grade private sector professional education institutions is now becoming a problem for them they have decided to solve it through the proposed next phase of education reforms. We know that only when in the case of important regional engineering institutions the neglect became quite visible to them and due to their growing size and the failure of private sector educational institutions to deliver goodies in the new and emerging sectors, efforts were begun by the government under their pressure at the centre to upgrade a few of these institutions to the level of national institutes of technology (NITs). And this happened only towards the end of the decade of nineties.

Current conjecture

The first decade of twenty first century is about to be completed for the new brave world; the global economy is however still in the midst of a crisis of some depth. As a result today the middle classes are rethinking their own options once again. They are trying to plot a new pathway for the expansion of the Indian system of higher education. They are thinking of establishing innovation universities in which the government would be employing the Non Resident Indians who want to return back on account of the problems that they confront today in the face of the crisis that the developed world institutions are facing. They are seeing an opportunity in the crisis. However, they have so far succeeded in getting only the second rate foreign education institutions. They want the first rung institutions to come and invest in the Indian system of higher education, which is a doubtful proposition. Although the chosen option

is not a proven measure, but the Indian planners are still interested to give a try to this option. The desire is strong. Their motivation is clear; all those rich kids who have difficulty in making to the elite institutions where the socially and economically deprived sections have taken away a part of their access through the mechanism of reservation should have now access to the foreign institutions.

Today the Indian system of higher education is being once again reconstituted to serve mainly the powerful interests of big business and upper middle classes. But it is not clear that how long their new choice will work for them and satisfy their dream of making to the plum jobs that they think are emerging in the global corporate economy. Coming to the rhetoric that the government would also be able to achieve through the proposed institutional reforms strengthening of the system, their premise is completely false because we are going to also see an exodus of competent teachers to the private and foreign sector institutions. As far as the demand side is concerned, we know that after the global economic crisis the US and Europe have become far more protectionist. Therefore, in the medium run, these policies make now much less sense even from the point of view of the middle classes.

But it seems that all of this matters very little to the neo-liberal policymakers. Their vision on the role of higher education is limited to making the system to prioritise the requirements of the so-called knowledge economy of the emerging sector of select services. They want to integrate the Indian "knowledge workers" with the emerging international division of labour. Since the neo-liberal policy makers want the higher education institutions to impart instruction on priority for the development of competencies

needed by the big business in respect of the service sector, there is no place for the reinvention of Indian universities in the plans of the government in power. Since today there already exists an influential section of the Indian middle class that can realise the perceived benefits of increased access to the emerging tendency of globalisation of the labour markets for selected professions of accounting, management and engineering the paradigm of private and foreign education institutions imparting higher education is a saleable proposition for these policymakers.

But our analysis of the past experience clearly tells us that the framework for proposed institutional arrangements is based on an extremely myopic paradigm, and cannot solve the aggravating contradiction of the system with the needs of the people. Of course, the new policies will end up doing much damage to the existing system. They will destroy even those processes of competence development that have been producing excellence and relevance in the existing system of public sector institutions. The country will be filled with more of new diploma mills which one can expect the foreign institutions to set up far more easily in India. Though it is true that we will still witness some celebration in respect of the establishment of a few elite institutions, but even sooner than expected the system would be faced once again with a crisis of credibility and purpose.

Concluding remarks

Finally, we would like to note that while the conception of a single window which the government in power wants to use to facilitate the entry of new domestic private and foreign universities, the policymakers do not need to deploy in this sector recklessly those very structures of promotion

and regulation that have failed to give a balanced development to the telecom services and the power sector. Lastly, we also need to remember something even more important that the activity of higher education has nothing in common with the activities of sectors like telecom or power or civil aviation. The system of higher education cannot be governed by the structures of promotion and regulation that are known to treat the concerned activity only as a commodity to be exchanged in the market between producers and consumers. The activity of higher education is not a commodity that the students and teachers can exchange freely in the market and would be able to realise the value that the activity of higher education entails for even the individual. As far as the vast majority of Indian people are concerned, the nation is going to lose the possibility of generating its own organic intellectuals. Our new system will have an intelligentsia which would have little understanding of what all can be actually done to improve the lot of the poor in India. Of course, we need to actively deliberate that how the mechanisms can be still created for joint planning to take care of the social demand in the framework of decentralised planning, and the new university designs are still possible. The onus is also on the opposition because it is not discussing the issues that remained unsettled then and are still important for the proper design and planning of the system of education and economy.

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Appendix

Here are some of the selected addresses of Maulana Azad, which are pertinent to the policies and decisions taken by the independent Indian government during his decade long stint as a minister for education, science and culture from 1947 to 1958.

Education and National Reconstruction*

It is universally recognised today that a system of national education is one of the fundamental tasks which faces any government. Not only is the existing condition of society determined by the quality of individuals composing it but its future as well. Nothing has a more important bearing on the quality of the individual than the type of education imparted. A truly liberal and humanitarian education may transform the outlook of the people and set it on the path of progress and prosperity, while an ill-conceived or unscientific system might destroy all the hopes which have been cherished by generations of pioneers in the cause of national freedom.

India is today on the threshold of freedom. It is therefore imperative that we survey the prevalent systems of education in order to find out how far they meet our national requirements. There can be no denying that the existing system of education was shaped by non-nationals in non-national interests. Macaulay is primarily responsible for our existing educational methods and ideals. He never concealed the fact that his chief aim was to create in India men in who in training, outlook and loyalties would be devoted to the interest to Great Britain. Nevertheless, the great

* Press Conference, February 18,1947

services which the existing system of education has rendered to the Indian people need not be denied. It opened to them a new world of science and modern technology. It inculcated a progressive spirit and brought Indian educational standards in line with the standards obtaining elsewhere. It has led a re-awakening of the national spirit and a growth of modern and progressive outlook in all affairs of the world. There is equally no denying that this system has led to the creation of a small intelligentsia separated from the mass of the Indian people. It has also at times tended to divorce the educated class from the currents of Indian traditional life. Dazzled by the achievements of the West, it has at times encouraged a tendency to disown or look down upon our national heritage. It has also tended to encourage fissiparous tendencies. The greatest charge against the present system of education is that it has not led to the development of a national mind.

Macaulay's contempt for oriental studies is well known. History has not justified the sweeping condemnations which Macaulay extended to them. Nor can history justify the method which Macaulay adopted for the promulgation of learning in this land. Macaulay's contention that Sanskrit and Persian were unsuited to be the medium of instruction in India is no doubt correct, but English could serve the purpose no better. It is true that the different Provincial languages were not at the time sufficiently developed to serve as the medium of instruction but there can be no doubt that a National Government would have taken these languages in hand and gradually developed them to serve the purpose. In any case, the Indian languages today have attained a development where they can serve as the medium of instruction up to the highest stage. The experiment of imparting instruction in the mother tongue up to the matriculation standard has already been tried with success and the time has come when the process must be extended further and all education in land made accessible to the people in their own language.

All such development, however, presupposes a sound system of basic education. If the foundations have not been truly and

firmly laid, no abiding superstructure can be built. The whole edifice of education and culture ultimately rests upon the teaching imparted in the early stages. In India this has been unfortunately neglected in a way which cannot be too strongly condemned. Education has often been left in the charge of persons who do not possess the minimum qualifications for it. Nor can they be blamed, for the profession of teaching as been debased against the best traditions of the land. In the past the status of the teacher in Indian society was an exalted one. He might not have been wealthy but his comparative poverty was compensated by the need of respect and prestige which the profession of teaching carried with it. Today unfortunately all this has changed, and the teacher, especially in primary stages, is considered as hardly better than an inferior servant. Any programme for reconstruction of education must therefore place in the forefront the task of improving the status and condition of teachers, and I am confident that the new National Government of India will recognise this as one of its first and foremost tasks.

It is must necessary to go into the details of the scheme for reorganisation of basic education as that has already been sufficiently discussed in the press and on the platform. It will suffice to say that the basic scheme of education will go a long way towards meeting some of the points indicated above. This report popularly known as the Sergeant Report not only ensures an improvement in the status of teachers in all stages but also lays down the criteria along which education for citizenship should proceed. The emphasis on the development of education through the mother tongue has also been sufficiently recognised in that scheme. It is a matter for pleasure that the provinces are making arrangements for giving immediate effect to the scheme and have requested co-operation from the Centre. The Educational Advisor has received invitations from most of the Provinces and is shortly going out on tour. I propose to call a conference of Provincial Ministers and representatives of universities in order to plan out a comprehensive programme of work

One question on which the Report has not come to any definite conclusion is that of religious instruction in schools. I know that there is a sharp difference of opinion among experts on this question. Two committees appointed by the Central Advisory Board of Education have submitted contrary reports. In the past a majority of educationists placed the emphasis on purely secular education. This was true of Great Britain and in Russia, after the Soviet Revolution; there was a positive anti-religious temper in educational policy. Those who hold a different view emphasise that experience tends to prove the futility of education from which religion has been divorced. Today in Great Britain a system of education has been evolved under the supervision of the State. It is reported that Russia also has in the recent past recognised the value of religious instruction and taken steps to that effect.

The Government will have to give proper weight to both these points of view and come to a decision on the question. One thing, which, however, has to be remembered, is that in India the emphasis on religion has been and is greater than in other countries. Not only the past traditions of India but also the present tempers of the people tend to emphasise the importance of religious instruction. If the Government decide that religious instruction should be included in education, it seems imperative that the religious instruction offered should be of the best type. The religious instruction often imparted in India in private institutions is of a kind which instead of broadening the outlook and inculcating a spirit of toleration and goodwill to all men produces exactly the opposite results. It is likely that under State supervision even denominational teaching can be imparted in a more liberal spirit than under private control. The aim of all religious teaching should be to make men more tolerant and broadminded and it is my opinion that this can be more effectively done if the State takes charge of the question than if it is left to private initiatives. I will indicate the decision of the Government on this question at an early date.

Another point on which I want to express my opinion is in respects of the educational activities of missionary societies.

Friends from England have sent me cuttings from papers in which this question has been raised. There is no doubt that missionary societies have played a very important part in the dissemination of modern education and the development of modern outlook. This is true not only of India but of other countries of the east as well. I can speak with personal knowledge of the Middle East countries. Before 1907 the only institution imparting modern higher education in turkey was Robert College run by the American Mission and its contribution to the awakening of Turkey can never be forgotten. Modern education in Syria was largely the work of missionaries who founded three colleges in Beirut of which the most famous was the American Missionary College (*AI kulliyatus-suria*). Higher education in Iraq is similarly indebted to '*kulliya Qudais Yusuf*', i.e. St. Joseph's college. The same story is repeated in Egypt. It is true that Mohammad Ali the great founded in the first quarter of the 19th century overseas scholarships for Europe under the name of 'Irsaliat' but most of the important personalities in Egyptian renaissance are products of the missionary college of Beirut. The well known modern Arabic author, George Zaidan, whose history of Islamic Civilization has been translated into English by Nicholson, was a student of missionary college of Beirut. The Sarroof Brothers, well-known editors of *'AI Muqattam'* and *'AI Moqatataf'* also received their education and their inspiration of service from the same missionary college.

These missionary societies helped not only in the spread of modern education but, what is more, contributed greatly to the development of indigenous languages. They were also in many cases the pioneers in Oriental research and scholarship. Vondyke came as an American missionary to Beirut when he was only 18 and devoted himself to the development of modern education in Syria. The scientific series which he published under the name of *'An Naqsh Fil Hajar'* is one of the best scientific works in Arabic of the 20th century. Perhaps the best modern book on astronomy in Arabic is his work entitled *'Al Hai-at'*. I do not want to dilate here

on the services they have rendered in China, Japan and other South-East Asian countries.

New education in India also began with the work of the missionary societies. The East India Company had at first been in favour of Oriental education and it was through the efforts of the Serampore Mission that the foundations of European education in India were laid. Since that time missionary societies have kept up their educational work and brought learning to millions who, but for their help, would have remained immersed in illiteracy and ignorance.

Their work in the development of Indian languages has also been of the greatest value. One of the first standard works in Urdu prose is a translation of the Bible that they completed in the beginning of the 19th century. Urdu has made tremendous strides in the last 150 years and yet this early translation of the Bible remains a standard of Urdu prose.

With such valuable examples of the work done by the missionaries in the past there is no reason why their work on the same humanitarian lines should not receive equal appreciation in the future. It is only in respect of one problem that difficulties arise at times. This is on the vexed questions of conversions and especially conversions *en masse*. World opinion has undergone great changes on the question and responsible missionaries have themselves come to recognise that mass conversions are in reality no conversion at all. Christ himself emphasized the baptism of the spirit rather than formal baptism by water, and missionaries would be true to the spirit of Christ, if they preached His message of humanity instead of attempting convert people to the dogma of a Church. If all missionary societies adopt this enlightened outlook, there is no reason why independent India should in any way hesitate to accept the services which it is theirs to offer.

I would like to say a few words about another problem. The Deputy Educational Advisor (Resettlement) informs me that during the war two million soldiers were made literate by the army through the use of the Roman script. Experience showed

that they could acquire a working knowledge of Hindustani in three to six months time. I am told that this would have been impossible to achieve if the Devanagri or the Urdu script had been used. Roman has thus solved the problem of finding alternative for men of different provinces. If these men who have been made literate during their service in the army are not to lapse into illiteracy, we must provide them with suitable literature in Roman Hindustani. There is a great demand for such literature and the Department is considering how to meet this demand.

It is desirable that every Indian should learn both Devanagri and Urdu scripts. This will, however, take time and till this is achieved, it would be worth considering whether the use of Roman as a supplementary script, in addition to Devanagri and Urdu, in Central educational publications may not be a temporary expedient. There are millions of Bengalis, Madrasis, Oriyas, Assamese and man speaking other languages who can understand Hindustani and pick it up quickly but find an impediment in their progress because of the script. This, however, is a question which ought to be considered by educationists all over the land.

I will now indicate some of the main items which may be taken up in the near future:

1. The time has come for setting up a National Museum where the finest representations of Indian philosophy, literature and art may be preserved. The first step in this direction will be the setting up a National Cultural Trust as proposed recently by the Central Advisory Board of Education.
2. There should be provision for fundamental research work, and for this, definite sums should be allocated every years. It is obvious that there can be no advance in either industry or technology without fundamental research work. The scope of such research should, however, be extended and cover not only the scientific subjects but also the Humanities including philosophy, the Social Sciences,

Anthropology etc. The Co-ordination Committee of the Cabinet has approved, in principle, of a grant of Rs. 75,000 for fundamental research work in the next five years.

3. (a) There is also a proposal for the appointment of a Committee to prepare a guide for teachers for the new scheme of education. While the Central Government do not wish to impose uniformity but to leave the greatest possible margin of freedom to the Provinces, there should be some indication of the general lines on which this education is to be imparted.

   (b) The question of preparing some kind of generalised curriculum may also be considered. Any fixed curriculum has the tendency of imposing rigid uniformity and therefore the preparation of this curriculum should be undertaken with the greatest possible care.

4. The Government of India are considering the question of making grants to educational experimental institutions without waiting to verify the results of such experiments. There are not many institutions of this kind and most of them have been unable to give their best as financial difficulties hampered them from the very outset. It is not suggested that the Government of India should be lavish or careless in making grants but where ever genuine efforts of this kind are in evidence, the Government should come to the help of the institution at the initial stages so that lack of funds may not hinder the institutions from carrying out their experiments. Two institutions of this type which have recently received Government help are the Jamia Milia University, Delhi, and Santiniketan in Bengal. It is, however, obviously impossible to mention all such institutions.

5. Another field which requires immediate attention is the development of Archaeological Studies in India. We have as yet no complete history of India and it will have to be reconstructed from the monuments and other

archaeological remains which are scattered all over the land.

6. Disraeli very rightly recognised that a democracy has no future unless it educates its masses. In India, the problem arises with even greater intensity. The problem of mass education here is of vast proportions and will require time for its solution. It cannot, however, wait and modern science has placed in our hands effective instruments in the form of broadcasting and the film. I am considering schemes by which they may be utilised to the fullest extent for broadening the mind of the masses and opening up a new world of knowledge to them.

   I will conclude by stressing once again the imperative necessity of reforming and expanding our system of education. Education should have the highest priority in our national budget and should take its place immediately after food and clothing. In fact, the proper system of education is necessary in order to tackle satisfactorily even these problems. I have every hope that we shall be able to make up our leeway by a determined and concerted effort and place education in India on a par with education in other civilised countries of the world.

Education and Independence*

Last year the Chancellor of your University invited me to come here and deliver the Convocation Address. Your Vice-Chancellor too pressed me for it. I would have certainly agreed to your request but my ill health stood in my way and I have to beg leave to be excused. But this year again when I was approached I could not venture to offer an excuse. Now I am here, and thank you for the opportunity you have given me to place my views before you.

Perhaps this is the first time in the history of Indian Universities when English is being replaced by an Indian language for delivering a Convocation Address. I don't know what your reactions would be to my speaking in Hindustani. Do you think it is necessary for me to offer an apology for breaking with the past? No doubt it is a departure from the old established practice and whenever a tradition is given up it is customary to offer an excuse. But I don't think you require an explanation from me. Whatever I am doing is no doubt an innovation, but I may be permitted to say that it is neither improper nor inopportune. Therefore, there is no need for an apology. Standing as I do before an audience entirely composed of Indians and within the precincts of an Indian University what could be more natural for me then to speak in an Indian language? Indeed, if an apology was needed, it was only for the adoption of a language forced upon us by the course of historical events. Even in our own country we were made to give up our own languages and adopt the language of a foreign country. Today we find ourselves in the unenviable predicament of offering explanations. The rest of the world naturally wants to know why we are without a national language in spite of our independence. How is it that this unnatural state of affairs has come to exist that we have no Indian language for running our Government and our education?

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* Convocation Address at Patna University, December 21, 1947

Now the question arises how this unnatural state of affairs came to pass. There can be only one answer to this question. Our educational system was not introduced by us. It was founded and controlled by the foreigners. Whatever they decided to teach us was right, but their method of imparting education was wrong.

It is already known to you that during the regime of the East India Company when the question of introducing Western education in India first arose, the British officials were divided. One group was of the opinion that the old indigenous system of education should be encouraged while the second group was in favour Western education. Ultimately, it so happened that the second group had its way. The famous Minute of Lord Macaulay bears upon this controversy. So far as this Minute deals with the introduction of Western learning, it was correct and we have nothing to say against it, but the method of teaching adopted by them was entirely unsuited to the life and needs of our country men. No Indian language but English which was foreign to us was made the medium of instruction. The result was that Modern Education in India began to be imparted in an un-Indian way. The Indians had to shape their minds in artificial and not in natural moulds. Not only they had to change their language but also their minds. Their whole approach to different branches of learning was through the medium of a foreign tongue. Now it became necessary for every Indian child to shape an artificial mind and to tackle every aspect of learning from an unnatural angle of vision. He could not enter the sacred precincts of learning with a natural mind.

His whole energy which should have been entirely devoted to learning is now divided, and he is forced to spend a great part of it in learning and mastering of a foreign language.

Another great harm that accrued from it was that the development of our languages was impeded. If the Indian languages had been made the media of instruction a hundred and

fifty years ago they would have come in line with the progressive languages of the world.

Supposing this educational evolution had been brought about by our own hands, we should have certainly done what other countries in Asia and the East did in the 19th century. Egypt, Syria, Turkey, Persia, China and Japan all felt the need of having Western education. They established schools and colleges for modern learning, but none of them had the experience of undergoing artificiality of giving up their own language and receiving education through the medium of a foreign language.

It cannot be denied that the conditions prevailing in India were certainly different from those of the other Eastern countries and it was not easy to decide which language of the country should be the medium of instruction. At that time three classical languages, Persian, Arabic and Sanskrit were taught in India. They were capable of becoming the media for Western education but none of them could become the medium of instruction in India. Sanskrit was not a spoken language and its teaching was confined only to a few. Arabic too was in the same category so far as India was concerned. It was known only to a limited number of scholars. Persian, no doubt, was generally studied and was the official language of the country for about 600 years. But that too was not an Indian language. No Indian could speak Persian without learning it in the first instance. Evidently, only those languages could be adopted as the media of instruction which were spoken in the various parts of India. But all these languages had not fully developed, and they were not so refined or polished that they could serve the purpose of higher education. Under the circumstances they were brushed aside. Persian was disposed of simply by saying that it would not do for India. Thus, ended the whole controversy.

But it may be remarked here that the difficulties which India had to face in the matter of language also presented themselves to some of the other Asian countries. Indeed, Egypt, China and Persia had their own classical languages. Both Turkey and Japan

were linguistically more or less in the same position as the Indian languages in nineteenth century. Their whole literary wealth was only poetical, but they had little prose literature. Still, unlike India they did not adopt a foreign language for purpose of education. They made their own languages the media of instruction and the result is before the world. Today in all Universities of Turkey and Japan education is imparted through the language of the country. There is no field in any branch of learning where their national languages are not advancing.

Had the educational policy of India been in the hands of Indians they would have adopted the same course as was done by Turkey and Japan. India today in that case would not have had to face a situation when I have to think of making excuses for delivering an Address in our own language.

But friends, there are always two sides to a picture in this pictorial world of ours. Whatever I have said up to now is one aspect of it. Justice demands that was we should examine the other side of the medal as well.

Howsoever, wrongly the English language made its way into our life, the fact remains that it has influenced our mental and educational outlook for the past one hundred and fifty years. This state of affairs though harmful in some ways has also benefited us in many ways. We have to acknowledge it without reservations. The greatest advantage that we gained from the adoption of English was that many of the obstacles were automatically removed from our newly born national life. It has laid to the unification of the whole of the country. All the different parts of the country were brought together in spite of distances and different languages. In this respect it can be said that English has played the same part in commenting and uniting India as did Persian in Mughal times. Our country is a sub-continent and every part has its separate entity. But the English language has been responsible for creating a bond of mental philosophy among all educated Indians from Kashmir to Cape Comorin. It is a

connecting link between all the Provincial Governments, Universities, legislative Assemblies, Public platforms and National Organisations. It was this state of affairs that led to the birth of the Indian National Congress in 1885 which created political awakening and gave a new national life to the country.

Then we have been benefited in another direction also. Through English, India cultivated direct intellectual relationship with Europe and America. Her voice reached the outer world without any intermediary. I do not feel the slightest hesitation in saying that India's position and recognition in the international world are greatly due to our having recourse to the English language both written and spoken.

Anyway whatever opinion we may hold about English we find it influencing all aspects of our national life. Now a basic problem confronts us. What is to be our attitude in future towards English? As the Ministry of Education in the Government of India has been entrusted to me, naturally you will want to know my views on education and language. I have given ample expression to my ideas before but I will utilise this occasion and invite your attention to an important aspect of this question.

One thing is quite clear and definite, and I have no doubt that any Indian will disagree with me. The position that English occupies today in our educational and official life cannot be sustained in future. It is but essential that Indian languages should find their legitimate position. But we have to decide after mature deliberation how to bring about this change. Obviously there are two courses open to us. We may either take an immediate and sudden step or we may proceed gradually measuring our way and considering the pros and cons of our steps. I wish to make it quite plain to you that after having considered all the aspects of the question I have come to the conclusion that it is the second alternative alone that can suit us. If we are precipitous and take hasty steps without due consideration, we may endanger our national fabric.

Surely you cannot be unaware of the fact that no Indian would be more anxious than me to see that Indian languages should replace English. You are also aware of the fact that I am not indebted to English college or school. I was brought up in a family where the old traditions of Indian learning and culture prevailed and there could not be the slightest trace of English education. Whatever education I received as a student was Arabic and Persian and was imparted in the old style. I came to learn English much later by self-study only. From this it will be clear to you that my educational connection with English is not of the same type as yours. You need not therefore suspect that I am in any way influenced in my opinion by my English education. I can make bold to say that my opinion is perfectly unbiased. I am not one of those who are the products of English type of universities. I am entirely disconnected with them and as such can take a detached point of view and understand your needs and requirements.

I find that from various parts of the country voices have been raised that we should at once banish English from our government offices. In some provinces decisions have been taken to the effect that from the New Year the Government Gazette will not be published in English. I have not the slightest doubt that this kind of precipitancy will retard the government machinery. It is correct and essential to install provincial languages in place of English. But howsoever essential and desirable a thing may be, any hurried step, instead of helping us, may prove harmful. Even a good thing, if done in haste, may stand in our way.

Suppose you decide today in your province that after six months in all government offices English will be discarded. Just imagine what will come to pass in that case. Today English is serving the purpose of an inter-provincial language. The Central government is being run with the help of English. What language is going to take the place of English? What will be the connecting link between Bengal and Madras? How will Assam and Bombay communicate with each other? How will the Central Government correspond with the provinces? You will naturally say we shall

have a common language instead of English. But I put to you where is that language as yet? Will that language suddenly replace English? Ample time will be required for an Indian language to develop so as to become a vehicle of thought among all the peoples of India and serve as the official language of the country. If you suddenly displace a language which is holding its own for the past one hundred and fifty years and install in its place a language which needs some time to develop, you will create chaos and confusion in all your affairs.

We should remember that so long as the British were the rulers in India there was the danger that we might be swept away by all those influences which were the direct outcome of British rule. Now that we are a free nation, that danger is past. But then again there is the danger of going to the other extreme. We may become anti-everything that is English. I may warn you against this new danger. If you are not on your guard it may again thwart your national aspirations.

We have yet to evolve our national life. It can be perfected only when our languages come to occupy their natural position. We should first make a well thought out plan and proceed step by step.

After carefully considering all the implications of this question I have come to the conclusion that the problem of language has two aspects- one concerns government offices and the other education.

For government offices we should chalk out a programme on the following lines:

(1) The Central Government and the Provincial Governments should decide that in all government offices in future an Indian language will be used side by side with English. But in so far as English is the official language, *status quo* will be preserved for five years.

(2) During these five years the Indian language will have to be so developed as to adapt itself to the official language.

Its use may be encouraged gradually so that in the 6th year it may completely replace English.

In other words in the next five years there will be two official languages – one Indian language and the other English. In the 6th year only one language will be left. English will naturally lose its trace except in some special departments.

So far as education is concerned the following should be the programme:

(1) We should decide that the medium of instruction throughout will be the regional language.

(2) So far as elementary and secondary education is concerned there is no obstacle in our way. But we have to make a start straightway. Here, too, we shall have to fix a time limit of five years. In this period we have to show advance that in the 6th year all branches of higher education should be handled through our own regional languages.

(3) By making the Indian languages the media of instruction it should not be understood that there will be no room left for English in our educational system. In order to keep ourselves in direct touch with the achievements of Europe and America a large section of our people will have to depend on English. English at present occupies an honoured place in the curriculum of studies in Asia and the East. It is serving a useful purpose in creating contacts for us with foreign countries. We have connections with countries such as China, Japan, Indonesia, Burma, Ceylon, Egypt, Mesopotamia, Syria, Persia, and Turkey only through English. English is an international language today. It is in our interest that we should make the best use of our knowledge of English and continue its study in our educational institutions. But it goes without saying that with the adoption of an Indian language it can be given the place of an important second language. English

will be one of the special subjects for post-graduate studies.

As the problem of language and education is equally important for all the provinces, the best method for its consideration will be for the representative of provinces to assemble together and deliberate on it. The central government will help them as much as it can. It was one of the objects for which an educational conference was to be called by the Government of India in July 1947 but it had to be postponed on account of the political conditions prevailing them. Now it has been decided to hold it in January 1948. It is hoped that we will fully considered this problem on that occasion.

In this connection there is another thing to which I shall invite your attention. Man is always inclined to go to extremes in realms of thought and action. It is very seldom that he steers a middle course, and it is where he stumbles. He is like the watch of which the regulator has gone wrong. It goes either too first or too slow. It never keeps right time. It is not many years when our educated young men had themselves in imitating the English, in their language, dress, manners etc. They were not mindful of their own heritage. Some of them felt ashamed to talk to their own countrymen in their language. They were ever ready to quote Shakespeare, Milton, Goethe and Wordsworth but they felt no love for Valmiki, Kalidasa, Khusro or Anis. Then there came a time when under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi the national movement took a new turn and the craze for imitating the British began to wane. But now I notice that a number of my countrymen are on the verge of making another mistake. Previously they were on one brink of the precipice and now they want to jump over to the other extreme. By Indian nationalism it is now meant that we should forget the English language and literature and that we should have nothing to do with Milton or Shakespeare. From certain quarters I hear that in order to be true nationalists

> we should have no tinge of modern civilization in us. I belief there is nobody here who holds these views. But if there is any I must remind him that just as the previous position was wrong, this latter position will also be in the same category. In the ineffaceable words of the Buddha via media is the only tangible reality.

Just as it was not proper for you to lose yourself in the slavish love of western civilization or literature to the extent that you might forget the grand and proud civilisation of your own country, similarly it would be wrong to put yourself in a cage so that no ray of the light of western learning and civilisation may enter it. Do not forget that you can seal all your worldly possessions within national and geographical limits but no seal can be put on learning and civilisation. They are outside the pale of boundaries, and seals are of no avail there. For them there are no territorial limits. They are above nationalities. They are free from the stains of race, colour or factions. They might have originated in any part of the world but they are now the common heritage of mankind and are the joint property of all countries and nations. No doubt Shakespeare was born in England but the immortal works of Shakespeare are for all countries. Even if England wants it she cannot keep Shakespeare to herself. Do you think that the dramas of Kalidasa were also Indian nationals just as Kalidasa was? Do you think no foreigner has a claim on them?

Friends, in the advancement of nations there is no greater hindrance than narrow-mindedness. It is our duty to keep ourselves free from this disease in this new era of independence which has just begun. There is no other disease so dangerous for the healthy growth of national life. It makes appearance in every field of thought and action. Like an actor it masquerades in disguise. In the domain of religion it appears in the form of blind faith and wants to deceive us in the name of orthodoxy. In politics it wants to overpower us in the guise of nationalism. In learning and culture it makes an appeal to us in the name of our nation and country. It behoves us not to be taken in by these fictitious names.

We must remember that the root cause of all this is nothing but narrow-mindedness.

We have to keep in mind that the nationalism propagated in the nineteenth century Europe is all shattered and the world is sick of the bounds of narrow nationalism. It is anxious to break those shackles. Instead of small cooped up nationalities the world wants to build super-nationalism. Obviously there is no room for narrow-mindedness in this modern age. We shall find a secure place in the comity of nations only if we are international minded and tolerant.

It is possible that other nations may have to learn new lessons for broadening their outlook and for cultivating a spirit of tolerance. But so far as India is concerned we can say with pride and glory that it is the main trait of our ancient civilisation, and that we have steeped in it for thousands of years. In other countries differences of thought and action led to mutual warfare and bloodshed but in India they were resolved in a spirit of compromise and toleration. Here every kind of faith, every kind of culture, every mode of living was allowed to flourish and find its own salvation.

From the dawn of history Indian mind has been comprehensive, and tolerant of every kind of thought. It admitted every kind of faith and accommodated all shades of opinion. It was ready to offer hospitality to every new-comer. New caravans of various peoples and cultures arrived here and found their resting places. Its orbit of social life was not shut on any creed or religion. The highest school of Vedantism flourished side by side with the agnosticism and atheism. Today the world is wonderstruck at the vast all-comprehensive nature of Indian philosophy. There is no school of philosophical thought which is not found here. What we actually do not find is the clash of opinions or the breaking of heads merely because of the differences of opinion. This is one grand feature of ancient Indian culture which has been recognised by a great many thinkers of the modern world. They candidly avow that this is the great message

of ancient Indian civilisation. The world has yet to learn it. In this connection I shall quote from Dr. Radhakrishnan, the famous Indian author, the well-chosen and balanced words which he has used in his valuable book entitled – *Indian Philosophy*: "the explanation of the miscellaneous character of the Hindu religion, which embraces all the intermediate regions of thought and belief from the wandering fancies of savage superstitions to the highest insight of daring thought, is here. From the beginning the Aryan religion was expansive, self developing and tolerant. It went on accommodating itself to the new forces it met with in its growth. In this can be discerned a refined sense of true humility and sympathetic understanding. The Indian refused to ignore the lower religions and fight them out of existence. He did not possess the pride of the fanatic that his was the one true religion. If a god satisfies the human mind in its own way, it is a form of truth. None can lay hold upon the whole of truth. It can be won only by degrees, partially and provisionally.

If liberality of thought and toleration are the most precious heritage of ancient Indian civilisation, shall we not prove worthy inheritors of this great heritage? Shall we let that kind of narrow-mindedness raise its ugly head which is in the air today? Today when all the advanced nations of the world are looking up to India for her ancient message of toleration and broad-mindedness, shall we, too, engrossing ourselves in sectionalism degrade ourselves to the extent that we may have to learn this lesson from others? Today India is free. There is no outside pressure to check her. She can have any kind of mental mould she please. Will it be exclusive, of which the world is sick today, or will it be all-inclusive which has been the characteristic of Indian culture throughout the ages? The eyes of the whole world are turned towards us. It is for us now either to disappoint or to carry a message of hope to the distressed world.

Plan for National Education*

It is exactly a year ago that I assumed charge of this Ministry on January 15, 1947. It was then my intention to summon immediately an Educational Conference of representatives of Provincial Governments, the States and the universities in order to chalk out our future programme of action. In fact, dates had been announced for such Conference twice, but circumstance over which we had no control intervened on both occasions. I need not go into the reasons for these postponements as they are well known to you and will only say that I have spared no efforts to summon the Conference as early as possible. In any case we have met today and I have every hope that the combine wisdom of all who are present today will enable us to formulate schemes that will meet adequately the educational requirements of this ancient land. I extend to you my cordial welcome and thank you all for your response to my invitation.

The agenda is already before you. You will find that it contains only the most pressing problems that confront us today. The first issue refers to the provision of basic education for every citizen of the state. It is accepted on all hands that without such education a modern democratic state cannot flourish or perform those functions which are expected of it. The scheme of post-war educational development prepare by the Central Advisory Board of Education has been accepted by the Central and Provincial Governments. Steps have already been taken to set on foot the programme of action according to a five year plan, but I most point out that all these have been done according to old methods and on the old scales. After the attainment of our Independence, we cannot, however, be content with programmes which were considered adequate for the old regime. Thus, no one will for a moment tolerate today that 40 years most elapse before the full scheme of Basic education for all the inhabitants of this land can be implemented. In fact, even half that period will seem too many

* Opening Address at the All India Educational Conference, New Delhi, January 16, 1948

to savour of delay and procrastination. We must therefore devise methods by which the educational progress of this country can be so accelerated that we reach our objective within a much shorter time.

I know the many difficulties and obstacles which face us. I know that on account of the happenings in the recent past, the attention of the Government and the people has often been diverted from constructive work. After full consideration of all these factors, I would still assert that education cannot wait. Even if other nation building activities of the Government have to be slowed down or differed on account of such difficulties, education, at any rate, must be pushed forward as rapidly as possible. We must not, for a moment, forget that it is the birth right of every individual to receive at least the basic education without which he cannot fully discharge his duties as a citizen.

In talking of basic education, we have to deal separately with the problem of providing education to school going children and to adults. The population of India today, after partition, is roughly 24 crores, if we leave out of account the people of the states. The school population will therefore be about 2,93,72,000 if we consider the age group of 6-11 years. If we calculate on the basis of even three teachers for every hundred pupils this would require about nine lakhs of teacher for teaching about three crores of boys and girls. I will not raise here the question whether we should discourage single teacher schools, though the best educational opinion favours at least two teachers for a school. In any case, the provision of nine lakhs of trained teachers immediately seems an altogether impossible task and nothing that the Government can do can remedy this defect over night. In fact, this seems to be one of the main reasons why 40 years was regarded as the minimum period which must elapse before educational facilities can be provided for all citizens of the land.

We have, however, already seen that we cannot wait for such a long time and therefore my appeal will be to all educated men and women of this country to come forward to meet this deficiency. I

would urge upon every educated men and women to regard it as a sacred national service to come forward and serve as a teacher for at least two years. They should regard it as a sacrifice to the national cause and accept for their service whatever allowance the state may afford. We may also consider some kind of conscription for the purpose. If every matriculate is required to put in one years and every Graduate two years service in education before he or she obtain his or her certificate, we would get a large supply of teachers for our purpose. If two lakhs of educated men and women come forward every year we can in five years have the minimum number of teachers necessary for fulfilling our plans. This will, however, be an emergency measure and cannot continue indefinitely. We must therefore devote these five years for the greatest possible expansion in the provision of facilities for training teachers, so that, by the end of that period we may gradually replace volunteer teachers by teachers who have taken up teaching as their vocation.

Another great obstacle towards the immediate provision of educational facilities for all is the financial implication of constructing the necessary school houses and other buildings. This, however, need not and should not deter us. I would go so far as to say that we need not just now make any provision for building expenses at all. India is a country where for nine months in the year pupils can work in the open without any difficulty or injury to their health. In villages, if necessary, educational work can be carried on under the trees and even where structures have to be put up whether in town or villages these can be built with bamboo and mud at a much lower cost than a pucca building would cost. In addition, we must never forget that in India there have already been voluntary contributions towards the establishment of schools and I have no doubt that if we can tap fully the resources of private munificence, the problem of meeting the cost of educational structure will at least be partially met.

Another chief obstacle to the immediate fulfilment of the basic education plan is the problem of the finance. For basic education alone we require at least nine lakhs of teachers. The pay

commission recommended a scale of Rs. 30-50 for such teachers. I realize that this is hardly enough to attract the best type of candidates but as I have stated earlier, my appeal is to educated men and women to regard this educational service for two years as a sacrifice in the cause of the nation. They must therefore agree to work on this meagre pay and look at it more in the nature of an allowance than wages for their labour. I have suggested that we should have at least two lakhs volunteers every year which will give four lakhs of such volunteers at a time from the second year of the enforcement of the scheme. Even on the basis of the pay suggested in the pay commission's report, this would mean a wages bill of Rs. 2 crore per month or Rs. 24 core per year for the next five years. The amount actually spent on primary education by the provinces and the centre as shown in the budget for the year 1945-46 is given in the following table.

Name of province	Expenditure on primary education By various provinces during 1945-46
Assam	21,66,186
Bihar	2,09,820
Bombay	1,71,22,281
C.P. & Berar	23,60,391
Madras	2,89,28,403
Orissa	16,77,017
United Provinces	57,52,008
Total	5,82,16,106
Bengal (undivided)	74,10,142
Punjab (undivided)	57,66,474
Total	1,31,76,616
Total of all provinces	7,13,92,722
Centrally Administered Areas	
Ajmer-Merwara	2,29,634
Civil & Military stations	
Bangalore	1,03,958
Coorg	47,430
Delhi	2,72,564
Minor Administration	1,49,960
Total	8,03,546
Grand total	7,21,96,268

The figures have been taken from the Provincial General Educational Table. Since then there have been considerable increases in the provision for Education in the Central and Provincial Budgets, but figures are not at present available for the years 1946-47, except in the case of the Centre. In the Centre, the Budget provides for a little over Rs. 11 lakh for 1947-48. We may, however, ignore these variations as well as the variation that has been caused by the partition of the Provinces of Bengal and the Punjab.

We would therefore have to find additional funds to the extent of about Rs. 16 crore for the next five years. In Bengal, an attempt has been made to find money for educational purposes by the imposition of an educational cess. It is for you to consider whether some such method may not be applied to other provinces in order to meet part of this gap. You have also to suggest what further steps the Central Government can take in addition to what it has already done.

I now come to the problem of providing for the education of adults who are illiterate. Its importance need hardly be emphasised, especially to a body of educational experts like you. It is obvious that with the extension of democracy, the problem of adult education has become even more important than it was in the past. As you know, some work for adult education has been started in the provinces since 1938 but this was on a very small scale and must be increased and expedited manifold, if we are to obtain the desired result. Adult education has two aspects, viz., (a) arrangements for making the adults literate, and (b) the provision of measures to enlarge their minds and enable them to take an intelligent interest in the affairs of the country.

I will take up the question of education in the second sense first, as obviously this is more important in the case of adults than mere provision of literacy. Such expansion of the mind of the adults can largely be affected today through the use of scientific methods and machinery which has made our task in this respect much lighter than it was before. There is experience of countries

like Russia and the U.S.A. where open-air drama, the film and the radio have been used to very great effect. Russia has, in fact, succeeded in carrying out her successive five year plans largely through the use of such scientific methods and machinery. We should benefit by the experience of these countries and draw upon the vast stores of educational films which have been built up in Russia and the U.S.A. At the same time, it has to be remembered that our conditions differ in many respects and their experience will have to be modified to meet our requirements. Ii am glad to inform you that the Education Ministry has recently established a Department of social Education which will take up this problem. The expansion of the Department is, however, necessary in order to make it possible to provide such dramas, films, and radio programmes in all Indian languages. I hope that very soon the Ministry will be able to publish complete plans and schemes for this purpose.

The problem of imparting literacy to adults must be taken up along with that of providing basic education to school going children. For this purpose, we must not only depend upon the teachers who are engaged in such school, but also call upon government employees of all categories to render such volunteer service as may be possible. This would be necessary, especially in the rural areas where it would not be possible to provide any alternative machinery for adult education. Government employees can render great help both in their spare time by working in night schools and Sunday schools, and also by their example in introducing a 'drive' for literacy among their own subordinate who are illiterate. A time must soon come when literacy will be made one of the conditions for any employment under the government, and in the mean time, Government are considering method by which illiterate government servants may be encouraged to become literate.

I now come to the second broad problem which we have to discuss in this conference today. This concerns the medium of instruction in the schools and colleges. You are already aware of

my views on this question. I hold that there is no place for English as a medium of instruction in future India, but at the same time there should be no precipitate action that may damage the cause of education. I hold that the replacement of English as a medium of instruction should be gradual and stage by stage so that there is the least possible interruption or interference with the process of education in the country.

I think it is not necessary to raise the question of the medium of instruction in the primary and secondary stages. Opinion is unanimous that instruction in these stages can be imparted only through the mother tongue. Differences arise only when we come to the stage of education in the university. Two sharply divided schools of thought hold the field. There are on the one hand those who want one common language as the medium of instruction for all the universities in India. There is another school that holds that education in the universities should be imparted through regional language. I realise that there are weighty arguments in favour of both the alternatives. The Central Advisory Board, which has just completed its session has discussed this question and decided to appoint a committee of export to going to it and submit recommendations. I have been asked to nominate the members of the committee and I will announce the names as soon as this educational conference is over.

I placed my own views before the Central Advisory Board and said that we should not change the medium of instruction in the university suddenly but allow a period of five years during which we can prepare for the gradual replacement of English by an Indian language. This would mean that by the sixth year, English would no longer be necessary as the medium of instruction in the universities and an Indian language would take its place. I am glad to inform you that the Board is in full agreement with this view.

One important problem in this connection is in respect of scientific terms, but the Central Advisory Board has tried to solve it by declaring that scientific terms are international, and it would

be a serious mistake to try to translate them. I agree with the view of the Board and believe that this is the only rational solution of the difficulty.

I may here refer to the experience of other Eastern countries which have already made the experiment of coining new words for scientific and technical terms or importing them from ancient classics. In Egypt the question scientific terminology became important in the 19th century when she took to modern European education on a large scale. Egypt, as you are aware, has a rich classical language from which it can derive most of the scientific terms. In fact, Arabic possessed many terms in astronomy, chemistry, physiology and other sciences which have since been incorporated into the European languages. It was therefore easy for modern Egypt to coin new Arabic terms in the old moulds and one group in Egypt sought to adopt these Arabic terms for current use in Egyptian education. Many words were thus derived from the Arabic classics and many new words coined, but experiments soon proved that this was not the happiest solution of the problem. With experience the Egyptians were convinced that the scientific terms in current usages in modern Europe should be adopted, as they have become international and do not now belong to any particular nation or country. Turkey and Iraq have also come to the conclusion that in matters of science and knowledge there should be no narrow nationalism but a truly international approach. Similar has been the experience of China and Japan. It must, however, be admitted that for certain technical terms, especially in philosophy, logic, and mathematics, many terms are already available in the Indian classical languages and we should certainly use them, especially as in their case there is not the same universal agreement as in the case of scientific terms.

The next problem I want you to consider is the question of reforms in university education. As I have already stated, there can be no question of narrow nationalism in the field of knowledge, but at the same time we must see that there is no wrong perspective of a nation's past history and culture for a

failure to encourage the highest ideals in national character and civilisation. Unfortunately, this has happened in India and I will draw your attention by way of example to the two particular instances of Philosophy and History.

To take up philosophy first, Greek philosophy was revived in Europe through the agency of Arabs who were its commenter's and critics during the Middle Ages. It was only during the Renaissance that direct translations were made from Greek and Latin. The result is that in Europe, even the general history of philosophy starts with the Greeks and ends with modern European Philosophy, touching merely the fringe of Indian and Chinese thought. This is the history of Philosophy which the universities teach in India. But you will all admit that this does not represent the true facts of the development of philosophical thought in the world. No one today can deny the supreme achievements of the Indian mind in the realms of metaphysics and philosophy. It is true that recently Indian philosophy has been introduced as one of the subjects of study in the Indian universities, but it has not yet gained the position which it deserves in the general history of the philosophy of the world.

One of the earliest schools of Greek Philosophy is that of Pythagoras. The tradition of his visit to India may or may not be true. But his philosophy shows unmistakeable marks of the influence of Indian thought. There is little doubt that the Indian mind had already advanced beyond the stage reached by Pythagoras. In fact, almost every school of Greek Philosophy has its counterpart in India. In addition, there are flashes of insight which we do not find in Greek Philosophy. I think that with the exception of two specific branches of learning, the Indian mind has shown itself superior in every respect to the achievements of the Greeks. The only two exceptions are in logic and Astronomy. Aristotle's '*logic*' is superior in structure and scope to Indian *'Nyaya'*, while in Astronomy Ptolemy's 'Majestic' is superior to Brahma Gupta's *'Siddhanta'* and the work of Aryabhatt. We therefore need a new history of Philosophy in which Indian Philosophy may find its rightful place.

Similarly, in the field of history up to the time of Vincent Smith, there has been no reasonably true or correct history of India in English. Even Smith's History is defective and in many respects out of date. All histories used in our Universities today reflect these defects. They suffer from both lacunae and distortions. Nothing is more important today than the reorientation of Historical studies from the primary to the highest stages. This is a task which the Universities must immediately undertake. The most practical method would be to prepare books in English which can then be translated into all the Indian languages. This would not only mean economy in labour but also give uniformity in tone and treatment of the subject. I would therefore appeal to all the Indian Universities to help in this noble task, and I can assure then that the Central Ministry will extend to them every possible help.

Another important question that I would like the Conference to consider is the study of Oriental Languages and Culture. We must admit that this has been most inadequate till now. I am sure there will be no difference of opinion that in the future we must make ample provision for remedying this defect. For this, two things are immediately necessary. We must, on the one hand, have a reform and simplification in the methods of teaching and, on the other; we must afford both encouragement and facility for such studies.

Even where Oriental subjects have been taught in the Universities, they have been treated in a most cavalier fashion. If we look at the plight of Sanskrit or any other of the classical languages in the Universities, we cannot deny that this has been done in a most half-hearted fashion in spite of the fact that such studies are essential for a true appreciation of Indian History and Culture. What applies to Sanskrit, applies also to the study of Arabic and Persian.

I would like to draw your attention to the provision of facilities for the study of other Oriental languages as well and

especially of Tibetan and Chinese. It is well known that many of the Buddhist scriptures and literatures preserved in Tibetan, though the original in Sanskrit has been lost. For instance, the Taraka Bhashya of Mokashankar Gupta could not for long be obtained in Sanskrit but a Tibetan translation was available and till recently that constituted the only source of our access to his thought. It is only lately that the original has been found and published in the Gaekwar Oriental Series.

The accounts of Chinese travellers are similar sources of illumination in respect of Ancient India. Other treasures lie hidden in the Chinese language and literature for the interpretation of our ancient history, if only they were accessible to us. For these reasons it is essential that our universities must provide adequate facilities for the study of these Oriental languages. We must not forget that in the past, India was a centre where the currents of Asiatic thought met and from which flowed out streams which spread to the farthest corner of the Asiatic continent. To appreciate ancient India truly it is therefore essential to have a knowledge and understanding of other Asiatic languages and cultures as well.

Research in Education*

Immediately after I assumed the charge of the Ministry of Education in January 1947, I looked into the development projects which had been accepted in principle but not carried out in practice. Of these, one of the most outstanding was the scheme for a Central College of Training for Teachers. The Central Advisory Board of Education had, in 1944, recommended the establishment of two training colleges-one for men and the other for women, each providing for an intake of 200 students for the service of the Centrally Administered Areas and the smaller provinces and states. On grounds of economy the Government of India modified that recommendation and decided to establish one college for both men and women, with a capacity of 300. Provision was accordingly made in the budget of 1946-47 for the establishment of the college.

When I took office, I was therefore surprised to find that the whole programme had been held up on the ground of shortage of building materials. I was aware of the difficulties in securing steel and cement and other equipment and I could understand the delay in the implementation of the building programme. I could not, however, understand why this led to a postponement of the entire scheme. Even if buildings were lacking, the Institute could have been started in temporary structures or hired houses, but here, as in so many other cases, programmes of educational development were held up on the ground of lack of accommodation. This undue stress upon buildings has always seemed to me to be an instance of confusing ends with means. Buildings are only a means of which the end is education, and yet it seemed to me that many of our educational planners were so engrossed with building projects that they could not conceive of carrying on educational work in their absence. I therefore decided

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* Speech delivered at the laying foundation of the Central Institute of Education by Sri Jawaharlal Nehru, New Delhi, April 18, 1949

forthwith that the institution must be started immediately with whatever accommodation was readily available.

The period was an exceedingly difficult one and all the attention of Government was concentrated first on the disturbances in the Punjab and later on the impending division of the country. Even then, a small house was secured in the Delhi University area in July 1947. I realise that this was not adequate for our needs and the work of the institute even on the smallest scale could be carried out only by the additional accommodation provided in tents. In spite of our anxiety to get the institute working, a further period of delay was enforced by the division of the country and the extension of disturbances of Delhi itself, and for several months all normal activities had to be totally suspended. As soon, however, as the situation was brought under control, on the 19th December, 1947, the Central Institute of Education was formally opened by Lady Mountbatten and it started to work in one hired building and several tents.

It is hardly necessary for me to relate at length the importance of an institute of this kind. With literacy figures as low as only 15 per cent, the paramount importance of expanding the facilities of education is obvious. The acceptance of democracy as the pattern of our State has, if anything, added to the urgency of the problem. It is self-evident that the first step towards expanding the facilities of education is to provide for an increase in the number of trained teachers. Equally necessary is an institution to assess the results of educational methods followed till now and devise improvements, demanded in the changing circumstances of today.

It will be noticed that the institution, which was started in December 1947, was the Central Institute of Education and not the training colleges which had originally been planned in 1944 and 1945. This meant not merely a change in nomenclature, but a considerable expansion in the purpose and functions of the institution. I felt that changes were necessary in two directions. First, it should not be merely a college for training teachers but also an institution for research in the fields of education. Secondly,

its services should not be restricted to the Centrally Administered Areas but should extend to the whole of India.

The Central Institute will therefore both train teachers for higher and secondary schools and also carry on research on the problems of basic and secondary education. The stage at which a child should be introduced to a craft as distinct from activity, the relative emphasis on craft and academic subjects and their correlations, the production of a new type of school literature to bring out the social functions of all human activity, the degree of abstraction possible in the earlier stages of education, the stage at which there may be some bifurcation between academic subjects and crafts, the grouping of children according to aptitude, taste and ability, the place of art in the school curriculum-these are only a few of the many problems which arise out of a new conception of basic education and require constant and careful study in research institution.

There are also problems relating to adult education which demand fresh and careful scrutiny. It is a common place that the methods which are suitable for children cannot without modification be applied to adults. No doubt, a good deal of work in this connection has been done in other countries of the world but each country has its own peculiar problems arising out of its social and economic background and its political history. We will have to devise the quickest methods of liquidating adult literacy. Equally important is the maintenance of a continued service of literature to prevent relapse into illiteracy. Thus alone can we provide adult literates with the knowledge to discharge their functions as citizens of a democratic state.

I could go on referring to many other problems which require immediate attention if we are to make our education truly creative. The system of examinations is itself being studied all over the world. The problem of textbooks which will provide useful and interesting information and at the same time develop a truly human outlook on world affairs is also engaging the attention of many countries. The aim and purpose of secondary

education also require a re-examination. It is my hope that the Central Institute of Education will be our laboratory for examining these important questions under controlled conditions and offering suggestions as to the best methods for their solution.

I have already stated that we did not allow the lack of buildings to delay the stating of institution and I am glad that, in spite of these difficulties, the institution has made good progress. Nevertheless, I felt that now the Institute has started to work, we must provide suitable buildings for it as soon as possible. When the plans were made in 1945, the estimated expenditure for buildings was Rs. 18 lakh, but the sharp rise in the cost of construction is bound to lead to an increase in expenditure. I am, however, glad that, notwithstanding the difficulties, we are today in a position to take in hand the building programme of the Institute and I hope that it will, in the near future, have all the building it needs.

A library of over 5,000 books has been built up at a cost of approximately forty thousand rupees. We are hoping that when completed, the Institute Library will be comparable with similar research libraries elsewhere. I am also hoping that we shall, in the course of the next year or so, attach to the Institute a Psychological Section to carry out experiments in aptitude tests, selection methods, vocational guidance and other services.

We are conscious that only a beginning has been made and all that we propose and hope to accomplish is still in the realm of the future. Foundations truly laid are, however, a guarantee of future success, and no one, Mr Prime Minister, is more aware than yourself of the need of imaginative planning and bold execution in order to achieve our objects. It is for this reason that we requested you to lay the foundation of this Institute, so that this new institution may, from its very inception, be inspired by that broad humanism and width of culture which have distinguished your actions in public and private life. I have, Mr. Prime Minister, great pleasure in requesting you to lay the foundation stone of this Institute.

Programme for National Education*

This is the third meeting of the Central Advisory Board of Education since India attained her independence. It is now necessary in the light of experience we have gained in the last three years to consider carefully and dispassionately our hopes and plans for the education of free India in the coming years. It was but natural that after the attainment of freedom we should have considered ambitious programmes for the expansion of our national education. This was necessary as education is one of the most important of our nation building activities. We had also to make special efforts to wipe out the deficiency in education created by over a hundred years of foreign rule. It was in this spirit that the Ministry of Education prepared a programme of work for the next ten years.

It was obvious that we had to build our educational structure from its very basis and improve it both qualitatively and quantitatively. The number of our literates was and is lamentably low. Even the literacy that is imparted is not of the highest quality. In view of the demand for an all-round expansion and improvement, it became necessary to fix an order of priorities, so that our limited resources were not frittered away in attempting too many things simultaneously. You will remember that it was with this object in view that the Ministry of Education, with your general support, proposed that our immediate objectives should be four, namely:

(i) The provision of basic education on a universal free and compulsory basis for all our school-going children.

(ii) The provision of adult education in order to wipe out the colossal illiteracy of our masses;

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* Address at the Central Advisory Board of Education, Cuttack, January 8, 1950.

(iii) The improvement and expansion of technical education in order to solve the problem of manpower for industrial and technical development; and

(iv) The reorganisation and improvement of university education from a national point of view.

The Post-War Development Plan laid down that it would take 40 years to implement a scheme of basic education and cost the nation a sum of Rs. 8,000 crore at the rate of about Rs. 200 crore a year. You will remember that after attainment of independence we all felt that the period was too long and exigencies of our national economy demanded reduction in the cost. Nor was this all. We realised that lack of finance was not the only obstacle in our way. A truly national system of education demanded the creation of a new spirit among our educated men and women, so that they would regard the spread of education as a national obligation for all. The question of buildings had also to be faced from a new angle, for if we waited for the construction programme envisaged in the Post-War Plan, the introduction of compulsory, universal and free education would be deferred indefinitely. We therefore felt that we must utilise whatever accommodation was available in the land and employ the entire educated personnel of the land either on a voluntary basis or through some form of social conscription. It was with this end in view that we prepared a plan of junior basic education to be implemented in ten years and at greatly reduced cost.

In the field of adult education, we revised our programme so that it became one of social education for training in citizenship and aimed at making at least 50 per cent of illiterates' adult literate in the course of the next ten years.

You considered these reports last year and generally approved of the recommendations. I agree with your views and in the light of the modifications suggested, we may prepare our programmes on the basis of co-operation by the State and the people, so that the State may extend the necessary facilities and

services on the one hand and the people on the other supplement on a voluntary basis the efforts of the State.

To improve our standards of technical education, the programme that we had envisaged was the establishment of four higher technological institutes in addition to the strengthening of existing institutions. Considerations of finance did not permit it us to start with all the four, but we thought that at least a beginning should be made. The Eastern Higher Technological Institute near Calcutta was taken in hand without even waiting for the construction of all the necessary buildings. The scheme is in progress and I hope that the next academic year will see the first batch of teachers and students working in this Institute. Simultaneously, it has been our aim to strengthen the existing institutions by improving their quality and increasing their capacity.

In the field of university education, the Indian University Education Commission under the Chairmanship of Professor Radhakrishnan was asked to submit its report within nine months. You will be glad to know that it has already done so. The Report is before you and one of the main functions of this meeting of the Board will be to consider the recommendations of the Commission.

I have even at the risk of some repetition recapitulated these points, so that we may be in a position to judge where we are. You will appreciate that so far as planning is concerned, the Ministry is ready with its programme in all the four fields mentioned by me. I would therefore like to draw your attention to the obstacle which stands in the way of their immediate implementation.

You will remember that in 1947 the problem of refugees from Western Pakistan absorbed almost all the energy and a major portion of the finances of the nation. There was therefore no hope of adequate funds being available for educational expansion in the immediate future, but in spite of these difficulties the budget for 1948-49 saw an increase in provision for education. During 1948-49

our educational reconstruction reached a suitable stage for implementation. It was my hope that the 1949-50 budgets will enable us to make a beginning with the programmes.

In spite of our best efforts, we were, however, unable to provide sufficient funds even for the very modest programme of expansion which we had framed. Our intention was to provide an amount of Rs. 11 crore for 1949-50 as this would enable us to start the basic education programme and undertake the primary work for social education. Our financial position, however, allowed us to provide only about Rs. 6 crore. We accepted the situation, as we hoped that at least during 1950-51, conditions would improve sufficiently to enable us to carry out the scheme which had been carefully prepared and repeatedly revised in order to cut down cost.

To our great disappointment even this expectation is now belied. Within six months of the adoption of this year's budget, we have had to face a financial crisis of such magnitude as to force a reduction of ten to twenty per cent in the already approved budgets. This was followed by devaluation and still further difficulties with the result that our current year's budget has been severely curtailed. Instead of going ahead as we had originally planned, we suddenly realised that we had to retreat. For 1949-50, we had to surrender about Rs. 153 lakh out of a total budget of about Rs. 588 lakh. The result is that a country with a population of almost 350 million and with hardly 14 per cent literates cannot provide more than Rs. 4.5 crore from its Central revenues for education.

The problem before us today is not what schemes we should prepare for national education. These are already there. We have to consider whether we can take any forward step in the immediate future. It is true that education is a Provincial subject, but, in the existing circumstances, the problem of education cannot be solved unless the Centre assumes appropriate responsibility for its expansion and growth. We are as keenly conscious of this as all of you and this makes the present

situation even more painful to us. There are no two opinions about the need for of education on an expanded and improved scale. They are also ready, but, in spite of the urgency, we cannot go ahead because of the shortage of funds.

I may bring to your notice the policy which the British Government have adopted in a simi1ar situation. In a recent circular, the Ministry of Education of that Government have said:

Local education authorities will be aware that the economic difficulties of the country have called for a close review of Government expenditure. They will also have noted the announcements that the Government do not contemplate any major change in policy which would result in a reduction in the scope of the services for which the Minister of Education is responsible.

The Minister wishes to make it clear in particular that:

a) There is to be no going back on reforms already instituted or on the plans by which the number of teachers in primary and secondary schools will be increased with the increasing school population;

b) There is to be no cut in the extent of the building programmes already approved to meet the increasing number of children, the needs of new housing estates and of technical education. Every effort, however, must be made to reduce costs. A separate circular is being sent to the authorities on these points and on the measures which have to be taken to reduce capital investment for other educational purposes;

c) Schemes for further education, including plans for country colleges, not yet completed should be proceeded with and submitted in due course;

d) Arrangements for maintaining an adequate number of University awards should proceed concurrently with

> termination of the Further Education and Training Scheme, and discussions between universities and local education authorities on the adoption of a new procedure for local awards based on paragraph 34 of the Working Party's Report should continue.

There is, however, no point in merely discussing these difficulties and obstacles. What we have to do is to devise ways and means so that funds may be found for education and other constructive projects. There is no immediate prospect of a large increase in our revenues. Funds can therefore be found only by diverting a larger proportion of our available resources to education and other nation building activities. As you are aware, the main burden on our finance today is due to the expenditure on the import of food, the rehabilitation of refugees and defence. It is obvious that welfare Services cannot be expanded till these burdens are lightened. There is every hope that the expenses on the food account will be diminished and ultimately disappear. The expenditure for rehabilitation cannot be curtailed till our displaced people have been re-established on a sound basis, but it is diminishing with the flux of time. There remains Defence. During the British regime, we have always complained that the Defence expenditure was excessive. After the attainment of freedom, it was therefore natural to expect savings in this field, but circumstances took turn, where in spite of all our efforts, the expenditure on Defence had to be further increased. The Government are, however, keenly alive to the situation and I can assure you that we are examining every possible avenue of saving and economy.

The need for education is accepted in principle by everyone. It is necessary to wipe out the illiteracy of 150 years and make our people efficient, productive and responsible citizens of a democratic State. The new Constitution gives power to people, but if this power is to be exercised with wisdom and foresight, it is necessary that the people must have the required knowledge. Even from the point of view of increasing the economic and industrial efficiency of the people, it is essential that our

educational facilities must be expanded. As a famous economist has said, there are no poor or rich countries but only countries in which the people use their resources and countries in which they do not. Some parts of Africa are among the richest in world in natural resources and yet because the people are illiterate and ignorant, they are poor and suppressed. There are other parts of the world poor in natural resources, which have been developed and enriched through the knowledge and, industry of their people. India will have to decide to which category her people should belong.

University Grants Commission*

I am glad to welcome you to the first meeting of the University Grants Commission.

In accordance with one of the recommendations of the Central Advisory Board of Education, the Government of India decided in 1945 to set up a University Grants Committee. The functions of this Committee were confined to the three Central Universities and it was only an advisory body. There were several non-officials who were members but they acted on a part-time basis and there was only one whole-time officer who acted as Secretary for the Committee. With this limited personnel and the circumscribed powers, it was not surprising that the University Grants Committee was not able to make any effective contribution to the development of University education. In 1947, the Committee was re-constituted with somewhat enlarged membership but since the functions and the official assistance remained more or less the same, this Committee also did not prove effective.

In 1952, the Government of India therefore decided to set up a re-constituted University Grants Commission with a full-time Chairman and full-time Secretary and with enlarged membership. It was intended that this Commission should look mainly after the four Central Universities and be entrusted with the following functions:

1. to advise the Government on the allocation of grants in - aid from public funds to Central Universities;
2. to advise the Government on the allocation of grants in-aid to other universities and institutions of higher learning whose case for such grants may be referred to the Commission by the Government; and
3. To advise the universities and other institutions of higher learning in respect of any question referred by the Government to the Commission.

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* Speech at the first meeting of the University Grants Commission, New Delhi, December 28, 1953.

After the passing of the Constitution, the Central Government was entrusted with an important responsibility in higher education in respect of the co-ordination of facilities and the maintenance of standards in the universities. The Government considered various measures for the discharge of this responsibility and came to the conclusion that it could be best fulfilled by the establishment of a Council of University Education by an Act of Parliament. A draft Bill to set up a Council of University Education was accordingly prepared and circulated to the universities in order to secure the largest possible support and cooperation from them. The draft Bill was considered by the Inter-University Board which agreed with the objects of the Bill but felt that its provisions might not lead to the desired end. Since the Government of India wanted to carry out the reforms with the greatest possible support and co-operation of the universities, it took note of these objections and convened, in April 1953, a conference of the State Education Ministers and Vice-Chancellors to consider the matter and suggest suitable measures for the purpose. This conference recommended unanimously that in-stead of setting up a separate body for the co-ordination of facilities and maintenance of standards, the Government should establish a University Grants Commission in terms of the recommendations of the University Education Commission's recommendations allot to it the functions proposed to be delegated to the Council. University Education Commission held that the University Grants Commission with enlarged power and functions would be better able to co-ordinate the facilities and suggest proper measures of reforms 'as it would be in constant touch with the various universities and be sensitive to their requirements and needs.

The Government accepted this recommendation as it itself felt that a properly constituted University Grants Commission with enlarged powers and functions could discharge these duties more effectively.

This also appeared to be in consonance with the recommendations of the University Education Commission. In its Report, the Commission had recommended that a University Grants Commission on the lines of the University Grants Committee in Great Britain should be set up as early as possible. The Scientific Man Power Committee had also recommended the provision of generous grants for the development of post-graduate facilities in universities .The Government has accepted these recommendations in principle, but on account of financial stringency, action could not be taken on them at the time. After the acceptance of the Five Year Plan, it was known that some funds had been provided for the improvement of University education, and the Ministry of Education considered the time appropriate for the establishment of a University Grants Commission. Further discussions have been held by the Government to increase the quantum of these funds, particularly in view of the fact that the University Grants Commission would have to deal not merely with the four Central Universities but all the universities of India. I am happy to announce that we are now in a position to establish a statutory University Grants Commission with larger funds to look after all universities, and this Commission will also serve as an instrument of university reform. A draft Bill has been prepared, and it is hoped that this will be presented to Parliament at an early date.

The consideration of the Bill by the Parliament and its enactment is likely to take some time. The Government, however, felt that in view of the growing problems of the universities immediate action was needed. It has therefore considered it desirable to set up a University Grants Commission in accordance with the resolution of November last and allow it to start functioning immediately. This Commission will consist of members and have as its Chairman Dr. S. S. Bhatnagar. In order to ensure that the universities do not look upon it as an external body, it has been decided to associate a number of Vice-Chancellors with it.

I am sure you will agree that this is a momentous decision and will have far-reaching influence on the development of university education in India. I therefore want that the importance of this step and the results which we hope to attain through this Commission should be properly appreciated by the people at large. The first thing I want to make clear is that while the choice of the Chairman and the members had necessarily to be made by the Government, the Commission will be fully free and will have no interference in its day-to-day work from the Government. The second thing is that even though its findings may be in the nature of- recommendations, the Government will treat these recommendations as binding and will be guided by the Commission's advice. Once the budget for the year has been approved by the Government, the Commission will be informed of the amount available for university education. Within the limits thus fixed, the Commission will be free to allocate amounts among the universities, and the Government wi1l be guided by such advice. Further, the Government of India will not consider the establishment of any new university or the grant of assistance to any such university established otherwise except on the recommendation of the Commission.

In order to enable the Commission to discharge its responsibilities satisfactorily, it must have full access to information, and the universities must freely supply it with any data that it requires. The Commission will examine such data and frame its recommendations which it will send to the universities or the Government in accordance with the needs of the case. Both the Government and the universities will give full consideration to its advice. The Commission will thus help, among other things, in avoiding unnecessary duplication and allow the full utilisation of our limited resources in money and personnel. It will also help the Government in realising its objective of achieving co-ordination of facilities and maintenance of standards in university education. All these, of course, greatly enhance the responsibility of the

Commission, and I have no doubt it will discharge its duties to the full satisfaction of the government and the universities.

I am happy that the Prime Minister has taken much interest in the proposal to set up the University Grants Commission and agreed to participate in its first meeting. I will now invite him to address the Commission and give it the benefit of his views.

Tagore and Indian Education*

As I stand here today, my thoughts go back to the memory of Gurudev Rabindra Nath Tagore who some fifty years ago started this institution to provide a meeting place for the culture of the East and the West. It was from its inception a unique educational experiment; for, while it sought to preserve all that was of value in our ancient heritage, it was modern in spirit and welcomed the contributions which the West has made to the development of the human spirit. It was this combination of the past and the present which distinguished Santiniketan.

There were, no doubt, some Indian institutions which sought to preserve our traditional values, but since they shut their doors against the influence of modern age, they were mere relics of the past than the institutions with living message. On the other hand, the Government of the day founded an educational system which was intended primarily to train people for employment under the Government. Its main object was not the dissemination of culture, and even when it did so it was the culture of the West. There was hardly any educational institution which fully appreciated Indian culture and civilisation, while at the same time recognising the need for changes in the light of changed circumstances. It was Gurudev's achievement that he, almost single-handed, filled this void. A great admirer of the Western culture and science, he was at the same time conscious of the values of our ancient heritage. He held that neither must the West drive out the East, nor the East resist the beneficial influences coming from the West.

The thing which has always struck me about Gurudev was his lofty humanism which arose above all sectarian and communal limitations. Burning in one of the pioneer Brahmo families of Bengal, he developed quite early in life an-outlook in which the

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* Address at the formal inauguration of the Visva-Bharati as a Central University, Santiniketan, September 22, 1951

whole world became to him a home and he felt a close affiliation with all humanity. This sense of kinship with the whole world is the essence of Indian culture, and perhaps its greatest contribution to the world. The development of such a spirit in Gurudev was encouraged by the atmosphere of his family in which the influence of Sufi poetry mingled with the humanitarianism of the nineteenth century England above all there reigned the spirit of the truths of the *Upanishads*. It was this consciousness of the fundamental spiritual unity of man that led Gurudev to found the, Visva-Bharati where the world could unite in common brotherhood and realise the ideals of peace, goodness and unity.

You are all aware that in the Visva-Bharati Act we have included a quotation from the objects of Visva-Bharati as defined by Gurudev. I may, tell you that some of my colleagues did not consider the inclusion of this necessary and it was not therefore included in the draft Bill as presented to Parliament. I, however, found that there was a strong feeling in Parliament for its inclusion in the Act and accordingly it was decided to do so with the exception of the last phrase in the objectives as defined by Gurudev. I do not wish to tell you what my personal opinion was. In a matter like this, the Cabinet is jointly responsible, and therefore we are all party to the decision which was finally taken. I may, however, tell you that those who favoured the leaving out of this passage did not do so because of any doubt about the noble idea expressed therein, but only because they felt that a reference to God is out of place in legislation concerning a University. The reason for leaving out this phrase was the same as that for which the name of God was left out of our Constitution. There is, as you know, a school of thought which holds that anything which lends itself to religious colouring should be excluded from a legal enactment.

I would, however, like to impress upon you that it is immaterial that this phrase has been left out of the Act. It may find no place in legislation, but it certainly has a place and perhaps a place of supreme importance in the life of this University. I will declare with all the emphasis at my command that the objective as

defined by Gurudev, including the phrase left out in the Act, must remain the objective of your University and of all its teachers and its pupils. The truth is that in these three terms used by Gurudev:

Shantam, Shivam, Advaitam,

we have a conception of God which raises above all narrow limitations of race, religion or creed. I may also tell you that if the term is translated into Arabic, it would read as *Wahidalan La Sariq:* the one *who* has no second, which is the highest affirmation of the monotheistic belief.

Another element in the objectives of the Visva-Bharati has appealed to me greatly is the phrase which Gurudev used in inaugurating all ceremonial functions of the University. In affirming the ideal of theVisva-Bharati the Chairman first reads or causes to be read, "*Yatra Viswam Bhabatyekanedam"* (the whole world has here become one home). I can think of no higher conception of humanity than that expressed in this beautiful phrase. I will appeal to every one of you that whenever you have any function, you will never forget to start it with this proclamation of faith in the unity of mankind.

Today, with the passing of the Act a new order has started for you, but you must always remember that yours is a unique institution. You should therefore not merely try to imitate what other institutions do, but on the contrary try to set an example to them. You should derive your inspiration not from the practice or profession of other universities, but from the lofty ideals of Gurudev. Other universities have over the decades developed a pattern which cannot be changed overnight, even though we may desire such a change. You have the advantage of starting with a pattern which is much nearer our ideals. Your effort should therefore be that other universities should adopt the message which Gurudev gave to the Visva-Bharati. I would appeal to you that you should maintain the traditions and the spirit which till now have inspired you, and enrich them further in the spirit in which Gurudev welcomed good things from all sources.

I would like to address one word particularly to the teachers of the University. In the end, the quality of any institution depends upon the quality of its teachers. This is particularly true of a university like the Visva-Bharati which was built up by Gurudev, not on external pomp and grandeur, but the foundation of a spirit of service of his fellow-men. I am sure that those who have come to teach at this University have done so because they share that spirit. I know that materially many of you would have fared better if you had gone elsewhere, but nevertheless you came here to a life of comparative poverty because the ideal of Gurudev appealed to you. Now that the Visva-Bharati has become a Central University, I am sure that the same spirit will continue to inspire you. I am not for a moment suggest that emoluments here should be such as to deny teachers a reasonable standard of life, but I do insist that the teachers of this University owe it to the memory of Gurudev that they will not compare their scales of salary with those in other universities, but continue to teach according to the tradition he built up. This tradition has distinguished Visva-Bharati in the past and I am confident it will continue to do so the future as well.

The same remarks will apply to the new constructions you have undertaken to house new departments of the University. I have already said that Gurudev did not depend on buildings to found his institution, but laid it down that much of the teaching should be in the open. This was in pursuance of his principles that education should be in conformity with nature, and keep as close to nature as possible. I am sure that the new constructions which you undertake will be in keeping with the traditions and atmosphere of the Visva-Bharati and you will place our emphasis on the spirit rather than on the bricks and mortar of the buildings.

You have today a very heavy responsibility for you have to bear the burden which Gurudev passed on to you. While he was with us, we could always look to him for inspiration and guidance, but now that he is no longer with us in body, we have to interpret to the best of our ability his ideals and principles. My sincere wish is that the authorities of the new University will all be

inspired by his spirit, and carry out their duties and the objectives of Gurudev in a manner which he would have found commendable. I need hardly assure you that so far as the Government are concerned, we will always take a special interest in your achievements, and watch your progress with interest and care.

I wish you Godspeed in your career as a Central University in the name of One Supreme Being who is *Shantam, Shivam* and *Advaitam.*