



## Maulana Azad's vision of modern India

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### Abstract

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, a multi-dimensional personality, bloomed into a valiant freedom fighter; an apostle of Hindu-Muslim unity is one of the pioneer nation builders of modern India. He is remembered in the history of India not only for the role he played in the freedom struggle of the country, but also as the first Education Minister of independent India, he made exemplary contributions in nation-building leaving his indelible imprints in the field of education. He believed that materialization of India as a developed nation is possible only through union, solidarity and communal harmony. Maulana Azad is undoubtedly one of the architects of modern secular India who occupies a special place in the Indian History. Being a creative thinker acquainted with both traditional and modern education, Maulana Azad laid an undying impact on the educational aspects of modern India. This paper is an attempt to explore the vision and thought of Azad which were inevitable in laying down the foundation of modern India. This paper also highlights his policies and principles as existing in his writings and speeches to explore a devised to make India a centre of all intellectual and scientific developments in the world.

**Keywords:** Moulana Azad, modern India, secularism, nationalism, Hindu-Muslim unity

### Introduction

Moulana Azad occupies a distinctive position in the history of our Freedom Movement. An erudite person, Maulana Azad was one of the few Philosopher- Statesmen our nation has been gifted with. He was most assuredly an outstanding scholar, a great journalist, a matchless orator but which equal ease he was also a great statesman who played a significant role in every crisis which India faced in its struggle to make our country free and independent. During the Freedom Movement and in the years immediately following independence, he was closely associated with crucial decision making in the country. Moulana Azad was a man with a mission. His greatest mission in life, perhaps, was Hindu-Muslim unity and the unity and integrity of the country. He detested partition of the country. His mission was for national integration and unity of the country. Azad was passionately patriotic and had strong empathies for anti-colonial politics since his teenage. In the wake of the *Khilafat*, Non-cooperation Movement, he joined the Indian National Congress and presided over its special session of 1923. He remained with Gandhi and Nehru even as their constituency of support amongst the Indian Muslims dwindled over the years. After Independence, he committed himself to project of building a secular, pluralist and progressive nation-state and was instrumental in founding academic and cultural institutions such as the Indian Institute of Technology, Sahitya Akademi, Sangeet Natak Akademi, University Grants Commission and many more institutions and organizations. Maulana Azad's ideals have made significant contribution to India becoming a sovereign, secular and democratic republic. He remained steadfast on his opinion about religion, nationalism and freedom. He said: "partition is a tragedy for India. We must not however, forget that the nation is one and

its cultural life is and will remain one politically. <sup>[1]</sup>" The aim of this paper is to investigate the contribution made by Maulana Azad in nation building. It also discusses the significance and relevance of his thoughts and ideas in the modern age.

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad was born on November 11, 1888 in Mecca, the birth place of Islam. He belonged to an orthodox Muslim family. The original name of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad was Abul Kalam Ghulam Muhiyuddin. His ancestors came to India from Afghanistan. His mother was an Arab and his father Maulana Khairuddin was a Bengali Muslim of Afghan origin. Maulana Khairuddin shifted to Mecca in 1857. He returned to India in 1890 and started living in Calcutta. His mother died when he was only 11 years old. At the age of fourteen, he married to young Zuleikha Begum. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad received the traditional Islamic education at home. After that he was taught Arabic, Persian, philosophy, Geometry, mathematics and algebra by some great teachers. He also acquired huge knowledge in English, history, politics and general science. Maulana Azad started writing articles reinterpreting and analyzing the Qur'an, the *Hadith*, and the rules of *Fiqh* and *Kalam*. He rejected the orthodoxy of *Taqlid* and accepted the modern principles of *Tajdid*. Initially, he was influenced by Pan-Islamic movement of Jamaluddin Afghani and by the thought of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan. He was also deeply inspired by modernism and western philosophy. He visited Iraq and met the revolutionary nationalist who opposed the imperialism. He also went to Egypt and met Shaikh Muhammad Abduh, Saeed Reza and other revolutionary leaders of the Arab world <sup>[2]</sup>. Maulana Azad was moved by the idea of anti-imperialism. He came back to India and joined the Indian freedom movement. He protested against the racial discrimination of the British Government. Maulana Azad had

a natural inclination towards writing and this resulted in the start of the monthly magazine "*Nairang-e-alam*" in 1899. He opposed the communal separatism of All India Muslim League in 1905. Azad fiercely criticized the Muslim politicians who were more inclined towards the communal issues without focusing on the national interest. He also rejected the theories of communal separatism advocated by the All India Muslim League. In 1912, He started publishing a weekly journal in Urdu named *Al-Hilal* to propagate revolutionary ideas amongst the Muslims<sup>[3]</sup>. He also wrote many articles in this journal to promote communal harmony. In 1914, British Government banned *Al-Hilal* for spreading extremist views. Latter, he started a new journal named *Al-Balagh and* again started propagating revolutionary ideas and nationalism through this journal<sup>[4]</sup>.

In 1923, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad became the President of the special session of the Indian National Congress. In 1930, he participated in Mahatma Gandhi movement Salt Satyagraha. In his presidential speech he clearly stated that ignoring the idea of religious separatism is very important. His speech thus still stands as the insignia of communal harmony. He held this post till the year 1946. He wanted unified nation and opposed the partition as well as Jinnah's Two-Nation Theory. After independence Maulana Abul Kalam Azad became the first education Minister of India. He was the member of Constituent Assembly which was responsible for drafting the constitution of India. Maulana Azad wanted to spread education among the common people of the country. In 1956 he was selected as the President of the UNESCO General Conference in Delhi. On February 22, 1958, he passed away. His birthday, November 11, is celebrated as National Education Day in India. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad was posthumously awarded India's highest civilian honour *Bharat Ratna* in 1992.

### **Maulana Azad and Khilafat Movement**

The Khilafat Movement (1919-1924) was a major pan-Islamic movement started to save the Ottoman Empire and it extended to India against the British power. During the First World War, Turkey helped Germany to war against British. Turkish being the founder of Islamic government and the central power of the Muslim unity, the Turkish emperor "*Khalifa*" was the political and religious leader of all Muslims across the world. Khilafat movement had quite an impact on India. Khilafat movement brought Maulana Azad into limelight. He played the key-role in it as an ideologue. This movement is quite significant both in the history of Indian struggle for freedom and of Islamic political institutions. Azad was under the influence of Pan-Islamism. The *Khilafat* movement period marked a transformation in Azad's own life. Along with fellow *Khilafat* leaders Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed Ansari, Hakim Ajmal Khan & others, Azad grew personally close to Gandhi and his philosophy. Both Azad and Gandhi shared a deep passion for religion. Azad developed a close friendship with him. He adopted the prophet Muhammad's ideas by living simply, rejecting material possessions and pleasures. Maulana Azad came onboard with the *Khilafat* movement in 1920<sup>[5]</sup>. He became involved with the Indian freedom struggle through the Non-cooperation movement initiated by Gandhi, of which the *Khilafat* issue was a big part of. He wholeheartedly

advocated the principles of the non-cooperation movement and in the process became drawn to Gandhi and his philosophy. During that time he supported the *Khilafat* movement. It is worth mentioning that Azad was not anti-British till 1905. He was influenced by Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, though he did not subscribe to the philosophy of Aligarh movement. Afterwards he got disillusioned with the British and became anti-imperialistic. Till the end of the *Khilafat Movement*, Azad emphasized the Hindu-Muslim unity. The period 1919-22 is understood as the heyday of Hindu-Muslim unity against the colonial rule. This was the period when the leaderships of Congress and the *Khilafat* movement often overlapped. This was in tune with Gandhi's idea that British can be fought only with united Hindus and Muslims. Strikes, demonstrations and Satyagrahas took place around the country, while '*Hindu-Muslim ki Jai*' was the famous slogan.

### **Maulana Azad: A revolutionary journalist**

Maulana Azad, an erudite religious scholar, combining in him the finest of the traditional values with the best of modern concepts; a prolific writer and fearless journalist; he acquired proficiency in several languages, including Urdu, Arabic, Persian and Hindi. 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 worked for a short period with al- Nadwa under guidance of Shibli Nomani. He worked with the renowned newspaper "*Wakeel*" in Amritsar. Azad's background shaped him to be a scholar but his rebellious minds led to the politics that turned him towards journalism. He brought an Urdu weekly *Al-Hilal* and started to attack British policies for Indians. After *Al-Hilal* he launched second weekly named *Al-Balagh*. In 1914, The British Government put a ban on the weekly. Unfazed by the move, Maulana Azad, few months later, launched a new weekly, called "*Al-Balagh*". Failed to put a prohibition on the writings of Maulana Azad, the British Government then finally decided to deport him off Calcutta in 1916. When Maulana Azad reached Bihar, he was arrested and put under house arrest. This detention continued till December 31, 1919. After his release on January 1, 1920, Azad returned to the political atmosphere and actively participated in the movement. In fact, he continued to write provocative articles against the British Government. Azad, inspired by the passion of Indian as well as foreign revolutionary leaders, started publishing a weekly called "*Al-Hilal*" in 1912<sup>[6]</sup>. The weekly was a platform to attack the policies of the British Government and highlight the problems faced by the common Indians. Azad, from a very young age, showed great literary flare and edited a weekly called *Al-Misbah*<sup>[7]</sup> and also brought out a monthly journal called *Lissan-us-Sidq*. 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. 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.

### **Azad's views on nationalism**

The basic concept of Indian Nationalism is secular in nature. It

is a synthesis of Hindu and Muslim cultures According to Azad Indian nationalism was neither Hindu nor Islamic. He became an advocate of Islam in liberal and Islamic sense. He said that religion and reason were not opposed to each other. There are two aspects of Azad's concept of nationalism. It is to be noted that Maulana Azad was not anti-British till 1905. He was influenced by Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, though he did not subscribe to the philosophy of Aligarh movement. Afterwards he got disillusioned with the British and became anti-imperialistic. He emphasized that the Hindus and Muslims formed a single nationality. He said:

*"I am a Muslim and I feel proud that I am a Muslim. I have inherited the rich Islamic traditions of thirteen hundred years. I am not prepared to lose even the smallest part of it. Islamic teachings, Islamic history, Islamic arts and sciences, Islamic culture are all my treasures. By virtue of being a Muslim, I possess an individuality of my own in religious matters and I would not tolerate any body's interference in them. But with all these sentiments I possess one more sentiment, which is the product of the reality of my own life. Islamic spirit would not come in its way. It guides me in the direction of that feeling. I feel proud I am an Indian. I am a part and parcel of that indivisible united nationalism without which the structure of India's greatness would remain incomplete. I am an inevitable factor in its structure. I will never forfeit this claim."<sup>[8]</sup>*

He felt that nationalism could be a strong force, if it was liberated from religious orthodoxy and narrow-mindedness. Gandhi said Azad's faith in nationalism was "as robust as his faith in Islam". Azad believed a unity between Hindus and Muslims would bring nationalism in India. He was opposed to the partition of India on religious grounds. Unlike the liberals, he believed that if constitutional means were not successful in achieving their political purpose, violence could be always taken recourse to. Non-violence for him was a matter of policy, not creed. The political thoughts of Maulana Azad focused on the issues relating to the relationships between Islam and political concepts, democracy, nationalism and nationality, relationship between Islam and Hinduism, between Hindus and Muslims and attitude towards the British. Unlike the other three leaders Azad believed that Indian nationalism was secular and was a synthesis of the Hindu and Muslim cultures. He stood for the synthesis of west and east. He supported the western concept of democracy. As a Muslim, Azad believed that it is his sacred duty to spread the nationalist message of Islam. Azad's concept of nationalism was based on Islam to destroy the fabric of imperialism. Azad thought that Indian nationalism would not kill Islamic spirit, it would rather strengthen it<sup>[9]</sup>.

#### **Azad's views on secularism**

Religion is a very sensitive issue. India has always followed a policy of secularism. Secularist state would be better in general for progress. Secularism must not be understood as simply the view that there is no God, or that religious doctrines are not true, or that religious morality should be rejected. A secular state guided by secularist accounts of

reality, the human person, morality and the good life. The basic principle of secularism is to seek for human development by material means only. Secularism held that its principles could be established and sustained by the intellect as principle of reason and intelligence equally applicable to all humanity. Maulana Azad considered secularism to be the most proper and holistic approach to the political and social scenario of Modern India. According to him secularism is the only legitimate principles that could guarantee the safety and assure the promotion of spirit among its various faith, because secularism is the most adequate and scientific ways of development. It is most suitable conviction of the mankind. He believed that Islam is a religion which is in complete harmony with secularism. His vast knowledge of Islamic History and culture had convinced him that it totally wrong motion that secularism is opposite to Islam. Secularism draws a line between politics and religion. Secularism should be enshrined in the Constitution along with religious freedom and equality for all Indians. Azad strongly opposed the separate electorates based on religion and called for a single nation committed to secularism. Maulana Azad approach to secularism is based on the universal view of Islam<sup>[10]</sup>. For him, Islam is a religion that essentially stood for moral and spiritual vision of life. Islam does not commend narrow mindedness that why it prohibit racial and religious prejudice. The basic tenet of Islam is to respect every person who is good by virtue, whatever his be his religion. Islamic approach of secularism lies in the direction in which Islam wanted to lead the world. Maulana Azad believed that there is no distinction between the main principle of Islam and secularism. His secular ideas always inspire future generation.

#### **Azad's views on democracy**

Democracy is considered the finest form of government in which every individual participates consciously and in which the people remain the sovereign power determining their destiny. In democracy the people are the ultimate source of power and its success and failure depend on their wisdom, consciousness and vigilance. Democracy is very effective and proved to be very successful. It has successfully ensured individual freedom. Maulana Azad believed that an understanding of Quran would help in political, social and cultural reconstruction of life. He expressed his political views in '*Al-Hilal*'<sup>[11]</sup>. He expressed profound belief in the sovereignty of God, establishment of the divine kingdom, order and good government and in the supremacy of truth. He analyzed Indian politics in terms of religion. Maulana Azad envisioned Islam as a perfect suitable ideology for the modern age. Islam provides a complete solution for socio-cultural, economic and political problems. He believed that Islam ensures complete equality, liberty, tolerance, freedom of conscience and expression, fraternity and brotherhood. He made his all effort to develop a systematic Islamic theory of politics along the lines of his romanticism. Perhaps he was the only Muslim intellectual to do so. Maulana Azad had a deeper faith on India's plurality and its secular ethos, an Islamic scholar detached from the conformity of thoughts and ideas on religion, avid admirer of art and culture and a renowned educationist. He also becomes important for us to re-discover his ideas and visions for a healthier democracy to flourish in

India. He was deeply convinced that true secular credentials of Indian society and the State fully discharging its responsibilities for the welfare of its people would only help India break herself away from the shackles of poverty and deprivation after the 200 long years of colonial rule. To him democracy is based on the will of people, characterized by tolerance, equality and liberty. Liberty was an essential prerequisite for the development of individuals in every society. He said the absence of liberty resulted in slavery which was against the tenets of Islam. He, however, said in case of war liberty of a person could be curtailed. He said unrestricted liberty is dangerous. Liberty like Islam demands faith and action. That is why he supported the Indian National Movement. Azad said Islam recognizes the value of equality. He said Islam "swept off racial and national distinctions and showed the world at large that all human beings held an equal rank and all possessed equal rights. It proclaimed that excellence did not lie in race, nationality or colour. It was only righteous action that counted and the noblest among man was he who did his work most righteously." Islamic conception of equality is thus not mechanical but spiritual. Sovereignty of the Prophet and the *Khalif* constituted the perfect conception of equality and it only could take the shape of the whole nation's free will unity suffrage and elections. He expressed belief in the sovereignty of the people. He said that the country belonged to the people. All people enjoyed equal rights. The head of the state or Caliph should be elected by the people. The head of the state should not claim special privileges in relation to the people. The head of the state should consult people having insight in all administrative and legal matters. The treasury of the country should be considered as the property and possession of the people. He made a plea for the establishment of parliamentary form of government in India. He said this concept of democracy was not averse to the principles of Islam. Moulana Azad had throughout his whole political life opposed forces which encouraged separatist trends in our national life. 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"<sup>[12]</sup>.

#### **Maulana Azad views on Hindu-Muslim unity**

Maulana Azad was a firm believer in the co-existence of religions. His dream was that of a unified independent India where Hindu and Muslims co-habited peacefully. Azad represented a synthesis of the west and the east. He combined religion with reason. He had basic differences with the Aligarh movement. He did not believe that the majority Hindus would prevail upon the identity of the minorities or the Muslims. He was not hostile to the British rule before 1905. His earlier political attitude was shaped by his understanding of Islam. He had regarded Islam as a guide for all actions which could provide solution to all the problems. In Islam, according to Azad, religion and politics are obverse and reverse of the same coin. Mmmmm Maulna Azad's stands in the unforgettable pages in the history as a refutation of Jinnah's concept of tow nation theory based on religion. Delivering

presidential address of congress in 1923 session, He said:

*"Today, If an angel were to descend from the heaven and declare from the top of the Qutub Miar, that India will get Swaraj within twenty four hours, provided she relinquishes Hindu- Muslim Unity, I will relinquish Swaraj rather than Hindu- Muslim Unity, Delay in the attainment Swaraj will be a loss to India, but if our unity is lost, it will be loss for entire mankind."<sup>[13]</sup>*

Maulana Azad stands out unique that have left a deep impact on the intellectual thoughts. His contribution to Indian nationalism and Hindu- Muslim unity in India, but also to the idea of universal humanism is tremendous. Azad will not only be remembered in the history of India for the role he played in the national freedom movement but also as a Muslim leader who stood for a dialogue among Hindus and Muslims. His personality was multi -faceted: a great nationalist firmly and irrevocably committed to the cause of Hindu-Muslim Unity. Azad is remembered as amongst the leading Indian nationalists of his time. His firm belief in Hindu-Muslim unity earned him the respect of the Hindu community and he still remains one of the most important symbols of communal harmony in modern India. His work for education and social upliftment in India made him an important influence in guiding India's economic and social development. From the day Azad picked up the pen at the age of 24 as editor of *Al-Hilal*, the most revolutionary weekly of Calcutta, with the mission of three objectives, Hindu- Muslim Unity, National Integrity and complete freedom<sup>[14]</sup>.

#### **Azad's views on communal harmony**

Communal Harmony is necessary for every nation. Only if there is peace and harmony in the country can it grow. However, there are certain groups and individuals that disrupt the peace and harmony in the country by spreading communal violence. Moulana Azad always talked in term of a broad-based nationalism embracing all religions and communities in a country like India where there has been great diversity in the matter of language and culture. He had a firm faith in a balanced mind representing a composite nationalism which is all inclusive. His life and works are the source of inspiration and teachings of clean and fair deal politics, being up from all the differences for the cause of the nation and live to be open eyed for the interest of national welfare, unity and integrity. Moulana Azad was Staunch Muslim, but he stood for national unity and communal harmony as inevitable ingredients for newly born India as a nation. He made no difference between Hindu and Muslim and looked all kith and kin. He considered the interest of all without any discrimination. According to Maulana Azad, Islam considers the whole mankind as a single family, Islam's key principle; *Tawheed* "Oneness of God" gives out this very message<sup>[15]</sup>.

#### **Maulana Azad: The architecture of modern education in India**

Maulana Azad was many ways an astonishing person. His knowledge was very vast. He was a great reformer of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He was one of the architects of modern India. Maulana Azad was appointed as India's first Minister of

Education. Under Maulana Azad's tenure, a number of measures were undertaken to promote primary and secondary education, scientific education, establishment of universities and promotion of avenues of research and higher studies. 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. Maulana Azad believed 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 Nation. 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. 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.

- a. **Azad's views on education for all:** Maulana Azad was the foremost advocate for the free basic education to India's citizens. While addressing one of the meets during his early days after observing the post of Education Minister of India he had exhorted the policy makers to never forget that it was the birth right of every Individual to receive at least the basic education without which he could not fully discharge his duties as a citizen. Maulana Azad wanted to see fast rising India on the status of literacy of its citizens and the expansion of higher education to the greater heights.
- b. **Azad's views on child education:** Maulana Azad took special interest in primary education. As the Minister of Education Maulana Azad 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. As the Minister of Education of free India, Maulana created a nation-wide system of basic education for all children of school going age. He also believed that the medium of instruction in schools should be in the mother tongue. Maulana Azad re-emphasized the fivefold programme for the expansion of education in the country. The provision of basic education on a universal free and compulsory basis for all the school going children
- c. **Azad's views on free education:** The Constitution of India to provide free and compulsory education of all children in the age group of six upto fourteen years as a fundamental right. Maulana Azad strongly advocated of free basic education to all its citizens. He also convinced the Constituent Assembly that it should be the responsibility of the State to provide free and compulsory education to all its citizens.
- d. **Azad's views on adult education:** He was very much pained at the then prevailing situation of India's education system and adult education. Despite the huge financial crisis India was facing, he had allocated considerable

budget to education sector. His target was to raise the expenditure on education till 10% for promoting the adult education. Therefore, he wanted that the scope of adult education should also include provision for social education.

- The provision of adult education in order to wipe out the colossal illiteracy of the masses.
  - The improvement and expansion of technical education in order to solve the manpower for industrial and technical development
  - The reorganization and improvement of university education from a national point of view.
- e. **Azad's views on girl education:** Education is one of the most critical areas of empowerment for women. Maulana Azad saw that the girl education can bring a drastic change in the society. He was of the opinion that educated girls can play an important role in the development of the country. Education of girls was of prime concern for him. Maulana observed that without an educated electorate, democracy cannot perform the functions expected of it. He believed that education alone can bring about democratic consolidation, social cohesiveness and sustained growth. Our education system 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. The full participation of women in the various spheres of society is a very important step for the empowerment of women in our society.
  - f. **Azad's views on higher education:** Maulana Azad had special attention on higher education and he wanted to take note of the learning and best practices of other countries. He always wanted that concentrated focus should be given on research in education to make it more creative. For this purpose he had also set up Central Institute of Education. The UGC which was founded under the guidance of Maulana Azad with the aim to the development of university education in India has recently given an ambiguous notice for the discontinuation of the fellowships to the non NET research scholars. Students are up in arms against this decision of the UGC. To his credit goes the foundations of Indian Institute of Technology, University Grants Commission (UGC), All India Council of Technical Education (AICTE), Sahitya Academy and Centre for Science and Industrial Research (CSIR). Gandhi described Maulana Azad as the Emperor of learning.

#### **Azad's views on modern education**

Education is a dynamic process in any society. Education develops the human struggle for survival and enlightenment. Modern education refers to the general social process by which human beings acquire the knowledge and skills needed to function in their culture. The contribution made by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad in nation building could not be overlooked. He was appointed as India's first Minister for Education and inducted in the Constituent Assembly to draft India's constitution. Maulana said addressing the inaugural session of IIT Kharagpur and emphasizing on these words, "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. Education is essentially about rational enquiry and for a highly pluralistic societies, it has to be developed as a harmonizing force rather than as an instrument to promote divisiveness and disunity among the people. 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, and the plural nature of our society, the democratic ethos of our people and to the need for positive dialogue between cultures. Democratic India presents a contrasting picture of affluence and deprivation and different centuries co-exist in India. 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, and the plural nature of our society, the democratic ethos of our people and to the need for positive dialogue between cultures. Azad was passionately committed to education, culture and scientific and technical progress.

#### **Azad's views on Islamic education**

Islam has a holistic view of human development, which views education and knowledge as central. Islam encourages the acquisition of knowledge and its use for the benefit of humanity. While knowledge is needed to fulfill religious and spiritual responsibilities, it is also highly important for achieving social and economic development for ensuring social harmony, freedom and human rights. Islamic education is helpful for people in all areas of life. Complete guidance is available for all areas of life and followers of Islam are able to get the assistance for solving their problems. Azad found the curricula in the Islamic Madrasas fundamentally narrow, with a significant omission of mathematics, which is the basis of science and technology<sup>[16]</sup>. Keeping this in mind, Maulana Azad had a tryst with Islamic Education as well. During his house arrest days at Ranchi in 1916 his political, educational and journalistic activities had faced a sudden halt. He offered Friday sermons at a local mosque in Ranchi which invited people from far places to listen to him. He founded *Madrassa Islamia* in 1917 at Ranchi, the land and money donated by both Hindus and Muslims<sup>[17]</sup>. He said that *Madrassa Islamia* was founded to represent the reformed Madrasa curriculum, with a combination of the best of English and Arabic education<sup>[18]</sup>. (18) Azad believed that a good educational system can establish a healthy relationship between the individuals and the society. As education Minister, he laid utmost emphasis on importance of secular education and the importance of education in moulding the character of our young citizens.

#### **Azad's views on art and culture**

Azad envisioned that 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

<sup>[19]</sup>. Art and culture binds together not only hearts and souls, but entire societies and nations. Arts and Culture are important because it preserves our heritage. Arts and culture as a mixture of our history and our identity give a sense of unity. Art is an education of the emotions and is thus an essential element in any scheme of truly national education.

Maulana Azad was not only a great patron of music but also an accomplished musician who played the sitar. In *Ghubar-i-Khatir*, a collection of his letters, written while in prison, the longest letter is on the history and art of music. Azad views music as tool to cure all the ills and ailments of my body and heart. He says:

*"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."*<sup>[20]</sup>

Maulana Azad felt that enough is not being done to promote Indian classical music. Azad also believed that the essence of Indian civilization and culture has always been the spirit of assimilation and synthesis. Azad for his institutionalization of art and aesthetics in independent India as he was the founder of Sangeet Natak Akademi, Sahitya Akademi, Lalit Kala Akademi as well as the Indian Council for Cultural Relations. The views of Maulana Azad on education and culture in post independent India refers to his early influences of thinking and the evolution as an educationist and an intellectual leader.

#### **Azad's views on science and technology**

Science and Technology are fundamental in modern contemporary society. The understanding of how social, cultural and material elements influence the production of new practices, new ways of understanding and new institutions is vital in our understanding of contemporary postmodern society. Science and technology are in interaction with social, political, economical and cultural processes of change. Science and Technology are in all means essential tools for rapid development of a nation. 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. 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. Maulana Azad's commitment to modern scientific and technical education is important to recall today.

#### **Conclusion**

Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad was a leading figure in India's struggle for freedom, apart from being a noted writer, poet and journalist. He edited Urdu weekly newspapers, named *Al-Hilal*. It was consequently banned following which he started a new journal *Al-Balagh*. He published many works,

criticizing the British rule and advocating self-rule for India. It was as a leader of the *Khilafat Movement* that he became close to Mahatma Gandhi. He was elected Congress President for the second time and presided over several annual sessions. He led all negotiations, with the British government, during the crucial phase of transfer of power. He became the youngest President of the Indian National Congress. He always supported the cause of Hindu-Muslim unity and staunchly opposed the demand for a separate Muslim state of Pakistan. He served in the Constituent Assembly, formed to draft India's Constitution. After India's independence, he served as the first Minister of education. He was honoured with 'Bharat Ratna' posthumously. Azad's ideals have made significant contribution to India becoming a sovereign, secular and democratic republic. Maulana Azad will be remembered for his spiritual intellect and political achievements as also for the sacrifices he made for the country, particularly in an extremely adverse pre-partition situation. He will be remembered for his educational contribution to the country and as a symbol and practical example of India really being a secular country. Azad's intellectual and political contribution to modern India needs to recall again and again to the younger generation of India. His life and works call for re-visiting and re- evaluation.

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