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Topic- Study of Maulana Azad

**Online Class Materials**

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# Abul Kalam Azad

## Post-Independence

India's partition and independence on 15 August 1947 brought with it a scourge of violence that swept the Punjab, Bihar, Bengal, Delhi and many other parts of India. Millions of Hindus and Sikhs fled the newly created Pakistan for India, and millions of Muslims fled for West Pakistan and East Pakistan, created out of East Bengal. Violence claimed the lives of an estimated one million people, almost entirely in Punjab. Azad took up responsibility for the safety of Muslims in India, touring affected areas in Bengal, Bihar, Assam and the Punjab, guiding the organisation of refugee camps, supplies and security. Azad gave speeches to large crowds encouraging peace and calm in the border areas and encouraging Muslims across the country to remain in India and not fear for their safety and security. Focusing on bringing the capital of Delhi back to peace, Azad organised security and relief efforts, but was drawn into a dispute with the Deputy prime minister and Home Minister Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel when he demanded the dismissal of Delhi's police commissioner, who was a Sikh accused by Muslims of overlooking attacks and neglecting their safety. Patel argued that the commissioner was not biased, and if his dismissal was forced it would provoke anger amongst Hindus and Sikhs and divide the city police. In Cabinet meetings and discussions with Gandhi, Patel and Azad clashed over security issues in Delhi and Punjab, as well as the allocation of resources for relief and rehabilitation. Patel opposed Azad and Nehru's proposal to reserve the houses vacated by Muslims who had departed for Pakistan for Muslims in India displaced by the violence. Patel argued that a secular government could not offer preferential treatment for any religious community, while Azad remained anxious to assure the rehabilitation of Muslims in India, secularism, religious freedom and equality for all Indians. He supported provisions for Muslim citizens to make avail of Muslim personal law in courts.

Azad remained a close confidante, supporter and advisor to prime minister Nehru, and played an important role in framing national policies. Azad masterminded the creation of national programmes of school and college construction and spreading the enrolment of children and young adults into schools, to promote universal primary education. Elected to the lower house of the Indian Parliament, the Lok Sabha in 1952 from Rampur District cum

Bareilly district West lok sabha seat and again in 1957, Azad supported Nehru's socialist economic and industrial policies, as well as the advancing social rights and economic opportunities for women and underprivileged Indians. In 1956, he served as president of the UNESCO General Conference held in Delhi. Azad spent the final years of his life focusing on writing his book *India Wins Freedom*, an exhaustive account of India's freedom struggle and its leaders, which was published in 1959.

As India's first Minister of Education, he emphasised on educating the rural poor and girls. As Chairman of the Central Advisory Board of Education, he gave thrust to adult literacy, universal primary education, free and compulsory for all children up to the age of 14, girl's education, and diversification of secondary education and vocational training. Addressing the conference on All India Education on 16 January 1948, Maulana Azad emphasised, We must not for a moment forget, it is a birthright of every individual to receive at least the basic education without which he cannot fully discharge his duties as a citizen.

He oversaw the setting up of the Central Institute of Education, Delhi, which later became the Department of Education of the University of Delhi as "a research centre for solving new educational problems of the country". Under his leadership, the Ministry of Education established the first Indian Institute of Technology in 1951 and the University Grants Commission in 1953., He also laid emphasis on the development of the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore and the Faculty of Technology of the Delhi University. He foresaw a great future in the IITs for India:

The Ministry of Minority Affairs of the central Government of India set up the Maulana Azad Education Foundation in 1989 on the occasion of his birth centenary to promote education amongst educationally backward sections of the Society. The Ministry also provides the Maulana Abul Kalam Azad National Fellowship, an integrated five-year fellowship in the form of financial assistance to students from minority communities to pursue higher studies such as M. Phil and Ph.D. In 1992 government of India honoured by giving posthumously Bharat Ratna.

Numerous institutions across India have also been named in his honour. Some of them are the Maulana Azad Medical College in New Delhi, the Maulana Azad National Institute of Technology in Bhopal, the Maulana Azad

National Urdu University in Hyderabad, Maulana Azad Centre for Elementary and Social Education (MACESE Delhi University), the Maulana Azad College, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute of Asian Studies, and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad University of Technology, in Kolkata, Bab – e – Maulana Abul Kalam Azad (Gate No. 7), Jamia Millia Islamia, A Central (Minority) University in New Delhi, the Maulana Azad library in the Aligarh Muslim University in Aligarh and Maulana Azad Stadium in Jammu. His home housed the Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute of Asian Studies earlier, and is now the Maulana Azad Museum. National Education Day (India) an annual observance in India to commemorate the birth anniversary of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, the first education minister of independent India, who served from 15 August 1947 until 2 February 1958. National Education Day of India is celebrated on 11 November every year in India.

He is celebrated as one of the founders and greatest patrons of the Jamia Millia Islamia. Azad's tomb is located next to the Jama Masjid in Delhi. In recent years great concern has been expressed by many in India over the poor maintenance of the tomb. On 16 November 2005 the Delhi High Court ordered that the tomb of Maulana Azad in New Delhi be renovated and restored as a major national monument. Azad's tomb is a major landmark and receives large numbers of visitors annually.

Jawaharlal Nehru referred to him as Mir-i- Karawan (the caravan leader), "a very brave and gallant gentleman, a finished product of the culture that, in these days, pertains to few". Mahatma Gandhi remarked about Azad by counting him as "a person of the calibre of Plato, Aristotle and Pythagorus".

A television series, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, aired on DD National in the 1990s and starred Mangal Dhillon in the titular role. DD Urdu aired Seher Hone Tak, a docudrama television series by Lavlin Thadani based on his life and political career, with Aamir Bashir portraying the role of Azad. It was later shortened and re-released as the film Aashiq-e-Vatan - Maulana Azad. Woh Jo Tha Ek Massiah Maulana Azad, a 2019 biographical film about Azad was directed by Rajendra Gupta Sanjay and Sanjay Singh Negi, with Linesh Fanshe playing the titular role.

His birthday, 11 November is celebrated as National Education Day in India.