

Education System as Envisaged by Quaid-i-Azam

Ayaz Muhammad

Civil rights laws, of course, protect our right to equality under law, but education is what enables each of us to exercise that right.

Lyndon Johnson

The answer for all our national problems, the answer for the problems of the world comes from the word 'education'. Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah was ardent spokesman of education for all. He believed that compulsory and free education was the responsibility of the state. He had strong reservations about the education system which was implemented by the British government in the subcontinent. However, under the circumstances when the Khilafat movement boycotted the government managed institutions, he advised the Muslim community to join the government educational institutions until any other alternative was available. He said:

...young men should go to colleges and schools and take advantage of the education provided for by the Government with India's money.... It might be that the system of education was defective.... But why should they demolish a house, before they had built up another? Let them go to schools, but let them not become slave, but become honest, fearless, independent [and] patriotic....¹

In 1937, Indian National Congress formed its government in various provinces of British India and formulated an education policy to infuse Hindu culture in the new generation. This undemocratic and unethical action of the Congress was strongly condemned by Quaid-i-Azam as the President of the All India Muslim League. He constituted a committee to analyze the repercussions of this policy and to propose suggestions to amend it. But the Indian National Congress by setting aside all democratic and constitutional norms continued to infuse Hindu

¹ S.M. Zaman (ed.), *Quaid-i-Azam and Education* (Islamabad: National Institute of Historical and Cultural Research, 1995), pp. 71-2.

culture in Muslim children through Wardha scheme, which assumed the name of Vidya Mandir in those provinces where they formed government. It is interesting that this educational scheme was funded from government treasury. This action, along with others, demonstrated that constitutional securities were insufficient if the Hindu moderate party like Indian National Congress had such intransigent behaviour. In this connection Quaid-i-Azam expressed his views in the following words:

...If members of that particular faith formed the Government, it is but natural that they would be bound to influence the Government, enforce their own culture, philosophy from the very threshold of the limited power that they may acquire. We have already proof of this in the matter of singing *Bande Mataram* and in the compulsory learning of Hindi or Hindustani.²

Resultantly, this became one of the reasons to the demand of the Muslims for a separate homeland where they could protect their religious and cultural values, socio-political and economic interests. Education system consonant with the requirement of newly emerging state was the first priority of Quaid-i-Azam. He announced in the public meeting in 1946 that 'Education would be one of the first problems that the government of Pakistan will be called upon to deal with when it is established, to be followed by economic and social reforms'.³ After the emergence of Pakistan he reiterated, in November 1947, that the importance of education and right type of education cannot be over emphasized.

Under foreign rule for over a century... sufficient attention has not been paid to the education of our people, and if we are to make any real, speedy and substantial progress, we must earnestly tackle this question and bring our education policy and programme on the lines suited to the genius of our people, consonant with our history and culture, and having regard to the modern conditions and vast developments that have taken place all over the world.⁴

This paper attempts to highlight, through the speeches and writings of Quaid-i-Azam, the importance of education, and the

² *Ibid.*, p.183. Also in Waheed Ahmad (ed.), *The Nation's Voice*, Vol.I (Karachi: Quaid-i-Azam Academy, 1992), pp.206-07.

³ Waheed Ahmad, *ibid.*, Vol.IV, p. 462. Also in S.M. Zaman, *ibid.*, p.xxxv.

⁴ Jamil-ud-din Ahmad (ed.), *Speeches and Writings of Mr. Jinnah*, Vol.II, (Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, Kashmiri Bazar, 1976), pp.431-2.

objectives he wanted to achieve and the responsibility of the government which he expected in this respect.

Importance of education

Regarding the importance of education Quaid-i-Azam reminded that ‘the Holy Prophet had enjoined his followers to go even to China in the pursuit of knowledge. If that was the commandment in those days when communication was difficult, then, truly, Muslims, as the true followers of the glorious heritage of Islam, should surely utilise all available opportunities. No sacrifice of time or personal comfort should be regarded too great for the advancement of the cause of education’.⁵ He said: ‘You should struggle very hard for the sake of education. Education is light and ignorance is darkness. You need education badly’.⁶ According to Quaid-i-Azam strong defense depends on strong economy and strong economy can be ensured through education. ‘When you have got that light of knowledge by means of education and when you have made yourselves strong economically and industrially, then you have got to prepare yourselves for your defence’.⁷ Referring to the sword presented to him he said: ‘It will rise only in defence. But for the present the most important thing is education. Knowledge is a greater force than sword. Go and acquire it’.⁸ Linking education to welfare and development, he said: ‘In fact the welfare and progress of a nation depends to a very great extent upon its intelligentsia and its young generation’.⁹

Criticizing Lord Macaulay’s educational system Quaid-i-Azam said: ‘...the system of Government existing hitherto was really to have well-trained, well-equipped clerks. Of course, some of them went higher and found their level, but the whole idea was to get well qualified clerks.... The whole principle was to create a mentality, a psychology, a state of mind, that an average man, when he passed his B.A. or M.A. was to look for some job in Government’.¹⁰ Quaid-i-Azam, on the other hand

⁵ *Ibid.*, p.161. Also in Waheed Ahmad, *op.cit.*, Vol.IV, pp.41-2; S.M.Zaman, *op.cit.*, p.371.

⁶ S.M. Zaman, *ibid.* (Urdu), p.529.

⁷ Jamil-ud-din Ahmed, *op.cit.*, Vol.I, p.235. Also in Waheed Ahmad, *op.cit.*, Vol.III, p.160; S.M.Zaman, *ibid.*, p.250.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p.542. Also in Waheed Ahmad, Vol.III, p.160; S.M.Zaman, *ibid.*, p.250.

⁹ *Star of India*, 20 January 1941, cited in Waheed Ahmad, Vol.II, p.132. Also in S.M. Zaman, *ibid.* (Urdu), p.512.

¹⁰ Jamil-ud-din Ahmed, *op.cit.*, Vol.II, p.499. Also in Waheed Ahmad, *ibid.*, Vol.VII, p.278; S.M. Zaman, *ibid.*, p.444.

desired a system that would infuse leadership qualities, national loyalties, high moral character, professional excellency and commitment to their religion and culture in the new generation. In his speech delivered in 1947, he said: 'In short, we have to built up the character of our future generations which means highest sense of honour, integrity, selfless service to the nation, and sense of responsibility, and we have to see that they are fully qualified or equipped to play their part in the various branches of economic life in a manner which will do honour to Pakistan'.¹¹ 'We want to produce independent, progressive and fearless men who will work sincerely for the country, and when we have done that, we mean to make as great a contribution to the freedom of our motherland as any other community...'.¹²

Jinnah laid great stress on dignity and strength of character, to him character was the basis of all conduct. Addressing the Muslim Youth League at Aligarh in October 1942, he said: 'Build up your character, that is more than all the degrees. All degrees and no character is a waste of time. You should also develop a keen sense of honour, integrity and duty'.¹³ He defined character as 'biggest sense of integrity and incorruptibility and readiness to efface one self for the creative good of nation'.

Quaid-i-Azam was also conscious that every nation should promotes and protects its culture and civilization through its formal as well as informal education system. As a Muslim he said 'I give all respect to the civilization and culture of other people; at the same time I love my own Islamic culture and civilization. I do not want our future generations to be deprived of Islamic philosophy and culture...'.¹⁴

During the British period the government introduced some reforms to modernize the agriculture and mining system in India, to ensure the flow of raw material in bulk and on cheaper rate to Europe. But at the same time other productive sectors were ignored. Quaid-i-Azam realizing the need to modernize the educational system, demanded

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p.432. Also in S.M. Zaman, *ibid.*, p.432.

¹² Talat Chatha, 'The Quaid-e-Azam – Our Teacher', *Taleem-o-Tehqeeq*, 1979-1980 (Lahore: Institute of Education and Research, University of Punjab, 1980).

¹³ Kh. Nazir Ahmad, 'Schooling as Agency to Maintaining the Status Quo or An Agency for Effecting the Social Change', *Taleem-o-Tehqeeq*, 1979-80 (Lahore: Institute of Education and Research, University of Punjab, 1980).

¹⁴ Sarfraz Hussain Mirza (ed.), *Muslim Students and Pakistan Movement: Selected Documents (1937-1947)*, Vol.3, (Lahore: Pakistan Study Centre, University of the Punjab, 1989), p.133.

training for the Indians in various modern technologies. He said that Government of India should 'take early steps to establish a Polytechnic College for giving instruction in the higher branches of mechanical engineering, electrical engineering, marine engineering, railway engineering, textile manufacture, mining and metallurgy and the different departments of industrial chemistry'. After emergence of Pakistan, directing the educationalist, intellectuals and political leadership of the country to make appropriate arrangements in this direction, he said 'I say to you and to all our leaders that we must now take immediate steps to train our youth in a manner that they may be diverted to other useful channels, where they have better prospects'.¹⁵ Science and medical subjects, he said, should also be introduced in the colleges.

The issue of language

Every nation promotes and protects its language because it is not only a symbol of national integration and cultural aggrandizement, it also make easier to impart and receive knowledge. Muslims of the subcontinent were very touchy on this issue. In 1867 the first Hindu Muslim riots erupted on the issue of language. This event compelled the moderate leaders like Sir Syed Ahmad Khan to think that Hindus and Muslims were two separate nations and it was difficult for them to live together in peace, without making appropriate arrangement to secure their social, political and economic interests. For this purpose he launched a movement to educate the Muslim community. All freedom fighters including Quaid-i-Azam gave extraordinary importance to this issue. When Congress tried to impose Hindi and Hindu culture through governmental policies this was strongly resisted by Muslim leadership under the patronage of the Quaid-i-Azam. He said 'that the language has a deep impression on the social, cultural and religious reform and reconstruction. In view of this, Muslims demanded the continuation of Urdu as their language, but the Congress did not listen to us. Deliberately, they are forcing Hindi or Hindustani as a compulsory language not only in public schools, but also in all Government schools. Now think, when Muslim children read Hindi language, Hindu philosophy, Hindu literature, what will be their social, cultural, and religious condition?.... The inevitable consequence will be that the Urdu language will die and the Muslims will lose all their Islamic characteristics'.¹⁶ He said that the compulsory introduction of Hindi

¹⁵ S.M. Zaman, *op.cit.*, p.333. Also in Waheed Ahmad, *op.cit.*, Vol.III, p.403; Jamil-ud-din Ahmad, *op.cit.*, Vol.II, p.7.

¹⁶ S.M. Zaman, *ibid.*, p.195.

(Hindustani) in various schools in the Congress-ruled provinces 'is the death-knell for Islamic culture and the Urdu language. It will prove fatal for our children'.¹⁷

In his speech in the meeting of Memon Merchants Association at Bombay he said that there must be some ulterior motive behind making Hindi a compulsory language in municipal and government schools. The objective, he said, was 'to make young Muslim girls and boys imbibe Hindu culture'.¹⁸ 'They', he said, 'have been forcing radical changes in the educational system of the Provinces and to run the department on Wardha scheme which has assumed the name of *Vidya Mandir* and make Hindi compulsory in the guise of Hindustani but highly Sanskritised as *lingua franca* of India and leave no stone unturned to suppress Urdu which is the language of largest number of Musalmans in India.'¹⁹ He further said:

The Working Committee disapproves of the Wardha Scheme of education on the following grounds.... Apart from its origin, conception and communal aspect, there are fundamental objections to the scheme: (1) the scheme is calculated to destroy Muslim culture gradually but surely, and the Working Committee is of opinion that the textbooks are entirely unacceptable. The scheme is intended to secure domination of Hindu culture and language. (2) It imposes the Congress Party ideology, and aims at inculcating, among others, the doctrine of Ahimsa. (3) Its objective is to infuse the political creed, policy and program of one party namely, the Congress, in the minds of children. (4) It has neglected the question of providing facilities for religious instructions. (5) Under the guise of the name of Hindustani, the scheme is meant to spread highly Sanskritised Hindi and suppress Urdu which is really the *lingua franca* of India at present. (6) The text books prescribed and provisionally sanctioned by certain Provincial Governments are highly objectionable from the Muslim point of view, in that they are not only offensive to the feelings and sentiment of Muslims but are mainly devoted to the praise of Hindu religious philosophy and heroes, minimizing Islamic contribution to the world, and to India in particular and ignoring their culture, history and heroes, and speaking of them with scant courtesy.²⁰

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p.188.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p.194.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p.198.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp.219-20. Also in Waheed Ahmad, *op.cit.*, Vol.I, p.379.

After emergence of Pakistan, considering the importance of this issue, he categorically stated:

Let me restate my views on the question of a State language for Pakistan. For official use in this province, the people of the province can choose any language they wish.... There can, however, be only one lingua franca, that is, the language for inter-communication between the various provinces of the State, and that language should be Urdu and cannot be any other. The State language, therefore, must obviously be Urdu, a language that has been nurtured by a hundred million Muslims of this sub-continent, a language understood throughout the length and breadth of Pakistan and above all, a language which, more than any other provincial language, embodies the best in Islamic culture and Muslim tradition and is nearest to the language used in other Islamic countries.²¹

I will only say that Urdu is our national language and we should strain every nerve to keep it unharmed and unpolluted and save it from the aggressive and hostile attitude of our opponents. I hope your conference will do a great deal for the advancement of Urdu and I wish all success to it.²²

Female education

Female education has a strong and significant positive effect on human life. It is established fact that social, economic and political development is not possible with out male and female education. Latest studies highlight that gender inequality in education reduces economic growth and female education has positive impact on growth rate directly and indirectly.

Stephan Klasen has concluded that, first, gender inequality in education undermines economic growth directly by lowering average human capital and indirectly through its impact on investment and population growth; second, gender inequality in education has a persistent effect on economic growth; third, it advances economic prosperity and efficiency, promotes other essential human development goals (such as lower mortality and fertility), and is intrinsically valuable

²¹ Z.H. Zaidi (ed.), *Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah Papers*, Vol.VII, (Islamabad: Culture Division, Government of Pakistan, 2002), p.274. Also in Jamil-ud-din Ahmed, *op.cit.*, Vol.II, pp.496-97; Waheed Ahmad, *op.cit.*, Vol.VII, pp.274-75.

²² S.M. Zaman, *op.cit.*, p.244.

as well.²³ Jean Dreze and Sen Amartya (1989), L. Pritchett and L. Summers (1996), D. Dollar and A. Kraay (2000) and M. Ravallion (2001)²⁴ are of the opinion that gender bias in education may generate instrumental problems for development policy makers as it compromise progress on other important development goals. Gender inequality may reduce economic growth. This issue is important to the extent that economic growth advances well being (as measured by such indicators as longevity, literacy, and poverty); though not all types of growth do so to the same extent. Given diminishing returns to each factor, a more balanced distribution of education among males and females would lead to higher and steady per capita income.

If women have enough education to participate effectively in the system this reduces fertility rates. Lower fertility could affect economic growth in four different ways.

- Lower fertility reduces population growth and thus facilitate investments being used for capital deepening (more capital per worker) rather than capital widening (equipping new workers with capital), which would promote economic growth.
- Reduced fertility lowers the dependency burden, increasing savings rates in an economy, which would increase growth.
- Lower fertility will, for a limited period of time, increase the share of workers in the population.
- If growth in the labour force is absorbed through increased employment, per capita economic growth will rise even if wages and productivity remain the same. This is because more workers will be sharing their wages with fewer dependents, boosting average per capita income.

Hill and King (1955), relate gender inequality in education to GDP levels. They find that a lower female-male enrollment ratio is associated with lower GDP per capita.²⁵ Gender inequality in education

²³ S. Klasen and Claudia Wink, 'A Turning Point in Gender Bias in Mortality', *Population and Development Review*, Vol.28, No.2, pp.85-212.

²⁴ D. Dollar and A Kraay, *Growth is Good for the Poor*, World Bank, Research Department, Washington DC; Jean Dreze and Sen Amartya, *Hunger and Public Action* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989); L.Pritchett and L Summers, 'Wealthier if Healthier', *Journal of Human Resources*, 31: 4, (1996), pp.842-68; M. Ravallion, 'Growth, Inequality and Poverty: Looking Beyond Averages', *World Development*, 29: 11 (2001), pp.1803-16.

²⁵ A. Hill and E. King, *Women Education in Development Countries* (Baltimore: John Hopkin University Press, 1995).

lower the average level of human capital in the economy and therefore slow economic growth.²⁶

Realizing the importance of female education, Quaid-i-Azam emphasized: 'Women's education is very necessary, otherwise the future generation, which depends on women for its upbringing, will remain ignorant. Men alone cannot achieve anything, but together a lot can be done. March forward along with men to solve the important issues of our national life'.²⁷ 'You cannot expect a woman who is herself ignorant to bring up your children properly. The woman has the power to bring up children on right lines. Let us not throw away this asset'.²⁸ On another occasion he said: 'There are two powers in the world. One is represented by the sword and the other by the pen. There is a great competition and rivalry between the two. There is a third power stronger than both. That is the woman. It is woman and woman alone who can teach man how and when to use the sword or pen when the occasion arises'.²⁹

As far as co-education is concerned Quaid-i-Azam was fully aware about the cultural compulsion of Muslim society. He perceived the possibility that conservative families would avoid sending their daughters in co-education, resultantly, it would retard the progress of girls education in Pakistan. He, therefore, said: 'I may tell you that I believe in the progress of women and their education. But does that mean that you should first destroy everything that you have inherited in your culture? Do you know that many Muslim parents who are sending their daughters to Girls Colleges will withdraw them if these are turned into co-educational institutions... tell me; will it mean the progress of education among girls, or depriving many girls of the benefits of higher education?' He was not satisfied with the available facilities of education for girls. He directed the policy makers to improve the quality as well as quantity of education for women. He said that girls schools should be

²⁶ Stephan Kalsen, 'Low School for Girls, Slower Growth For All? Cross Country Evidence on the Effect of Gender Inequality in Education on Economic Development, *The World Bank Economic Review*, Vol.16, No.3, 2003, p.351.

²⁷ Khurshid Ahmad Khan Yusufi (ed.), *Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah. Some Rare Speeches and Statements, 1944-1947*, Lahore, 1988, p.233. Also in S.M. Zaman, *op.cit.*, p.422. Also in Jamil-ud-din Ahmad, *op.cit.*, Vol.II, p.18.

²⁸ Sarfraz Hussain Mirza, *op.cit.*, p.177. Also in Jamil-ud-din Ahmad, *op.cit.*, Vol.II, p.18.

²⁹ Sarfraz Hussain Mirza, *The Muslim Student Federation, 1937-1947*, (Islamabad: National Institute of Historical and Cultural Research), p.58. Also in S.M. Zaman, *op.cit.*, p.234.

established in the province in larger numbers; he considered the then prevalent arrangements as ‘utterly unsatisfactory’.³⁰

Free & compulsory education

Quaid-i-Azam believed in free and compulsory education at the primary level. Speaking in the Indian Legislative Council, he said:

It is high time now to make a beginning in the direction of elementary education being made compulsory and free. It fell from the Hon’ble Sir Sasson David, that the time has not come to introduce elementary education in India free and make it compulsory. It seems to me, Sir, that there is a great deal of misconception on that subject. That a scheme whereby it may be made universal, compulsory and free throughout British India within a period of 15 years may be drawn up and sanctioned at an early date, and introduced, as soon as possible, after the termination of the war. Sir, anxious as we are, and strongly as we feel, that primary education should be made free and compulsory....

- This Council recommends to the Governor-General in Council that one of the post-war reforms should be the introduction throughout British India of free and compulsory primary education immediately after the war.
- This Council recommends to the Governor-General in Council that if the land revenue be not wholly provincialised, the Government of India should undertake to finance free and compulsory primary education out of imperial revenues.³¹

At the first session of the Balochistan Muslim Students Federation he said ‘The school and college fees are so high that they need to be reduced’.³²

Conclusion

There is an urgent need to materialize the dream of the Quaid and make the people realize that they are enjoying equal civil rights in the 21

³⁰ Inamul Haq Kausar, *Jidd Wa Juhdd-i-Azadi Mein Balochistan Ka Hissah* (Urdu) (Lahore: Research Society of Pakistan, 1991), p.155. Speech at the First Session of the Balochistan Muslim Student Federation held at Islamia High School, Quetta.

³¹ S.M. Zaman, *op.cit.*, p.69.

³² Mukhtar Zaman, *Student Role in Pakistan Movement*, (Karachi: Quaid-i-Azam Academy) p.242. Also in S.M. Zaman, *op.cit.*, p.315.

century. We must make schools, colleges and universities more affordable for low-income students and make sure that every child receives a quality grade school and high-school education. Without it the government policy on equal educational opportunity may not work. Without a public education system that allocates resources – not just money, but quality teachers, facilities, libraries, and other fundamentals of education – the promise of equal opportunity for all, which is at the heart of our constitution and civil rights laws, will be an empty promise.

Access to quality and equality has been critical in Pakistan. The cost of education at the school, college and university level continue to increase due to mushroom growing, unplanned, uncontrolled and profit oriented private educational institutions and government inclination to make government and semi-government institutions economically self reliant or, in some cases, profit oriented. It seems that policy makers and administrators are much more interested in financial profile of educational institutions rather than quality and quantity of education. Resultantly the students are forced to take on crushing debt, and more and more low and middle-income students are shut out of college.

The legislature should make arrangement to introduce and pass ‘the Student Bill of Rights’ according to which the state must provide compulsory and quality education to each and every child; provide adequate educational resources to the education sector for the above mentioned purpose and to make appropriate arrangement to control fee structure and quality of education in private educational institutions by providing representation to the student and parents through democratic process and fixing fee limits according to purchasing capacity of respective areas and providing some controlling authority to district governments.