

**CONTRIBUTION OF DR. ZAKIR HUSSAIN AS AN
EDUCATIONIST IN INDEPENDENT INDIA**

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ABSTRACT-

Dr. Zakir Hussain's reputation as an educationist has been of the highest order. His educational achievements have become a landmark in the history of Indian education. He has been the third President of India. He secured secular ideas in the capacity of an educationist. He was a great educationist. He realized that national unity and integrity could not be achieved without national education. A true representative of India's culture, Zakir Hussain was a rare combination of wisdom, knowledge and practicality. Born in a reputed family, Dr. Zakir Hussain was very moderate and simple in religion.

His grandfather moved to Aurangabad Deccan where Zakir Hussain was born in 1897. He was only eight years old when his father died in 1905 at Hyderabad. After his family decided to return to their ancestral home in Uttar Pradesh, he went to Islamia High School at Etawah. In 1913, Zakir Hussain joined the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College at Aligarh where he was an active student and Vice President of the Student's Union. He passed his graduation, post-graduation and law classes but due to the National Movement in India in 1919, he could not continue his studies. Gandhi ji visited Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College in 1920. His Non-Cooperation Movement had its impact on the college. Zakir Hussain and some students decided to leave the M.A.O College and started a national college at Aligarh. The institution was known as the Jamia Milia. It was initially financed by the 'Khilafat' and later became the centre of Zakir Hussain's activities. After two years of teaching in Jamia, Zakir Hussain left for Germany in 1922 to secure a PhD in Economics. On 17th March, 1925, the institution was shifted from Aligarh to Delhi. Dr. Zakir Hussain returned to India in 1926 and became the Vice-Chancellor of Jamia at the age of 29. He contributed 22 years of his life as the Vice-Chancellor. Its goal was to spread education among the masses and Muslims because the Muslim community was extremely backward in education. He decided to not accept any financial help from the British Government until the country attained independence.

Dr. Zakir Hussain became a great educationist during 1937. Gandhi ji disliked the type of education given to children in India. In 1937, Congress won the elections in many provinces and thus the Interim Government was formed. Gandhi ji was of the view that there were many shortcomings in Indian education. He wanted education to be reformed. Thus, because of his efforts, The AllIndia National Education Conference was held at Wardha in October 1937. Dr. Zakir Hussain was one of the members of the meeting. Gandhi ji proposed a new type of education based on some craft work. Zakir Hussain supported the proposal. At the end of the meeting, a resolution was passed favouring vocational education. Dr. Zakir Hussain became the Chairman of a committee on 23rd October. He formulated a scheme of basic education. The report of the committee was published on 2nd December, 1937. The committee presented the report in a very short time and spent only four hundred rupees for the work.

In the opinion of the conference, free and compulsory education was provided for seven years at a nationwide scale. The basic principle of the Wardha scheme of Education was underlined by Dr. Zakir Hussain's report. It was suggested that the medium of instruction should be the mother tongue. The conference adopted the proposal of Mahatma Gandhi that the process of education should be skilled and productive work. Dr. Zakir Hussain was appointed at many educational commissions and organisations such as the University Grants Commission, the UNESCO and World University Service. He declared lectures at the convocations of many universities in India and abroad. Dr. Zakir Hussain's classical remark on the Indian political condition at the Kashi Vidyaphit Convocation was "I wish there was more education in our politics and less politics in our education". In 1948, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad requested Zakir Hussain to accept the Vice-Chancellorship of Aligarh Muslim University.

In 1952, he took an oath as a member of the Rajhya Sabha from 1957 to 1962. He served as the Governor of Bihar and from 1962 to 1967. He had the honour to become the Vice President of India. In 1967, he became the third President of India. He was the first Muslim President of India in 1954. He was awarded the Padma Vibhushan. He served the nation without any personal interest. He was inspired by Mahatma Gandhi and decided to serve the nation as well as his community. He died on 3rd May, 1969. He was the recipient of Bharat Ratna, India's highest civilian honour in 1963. He was a humanist philosopher who believed that "overall development should be the main objective of education". Dr. Zakir Hussain was also attentive to the social and cultural aims of education. He believed in an education which permits its students to develop values and ethics in them and it should be deemed as a great insult and humiliation for students to choose education for materialistic purposes i.e. merely earning wealth and luxury.

Contrary to the tradition of keeping the educational work of institutions restricted to the four walls, Dr. Zakir Hussain tried to extend it beyond educational institutions. To enable this, many institutions were established in the country. As for adult education, a department known as *Idara-e-Taleem-o-Taraqqi* was established for the welfare of people in different localities. According to him, the fundamental guiding principles of our educational reconstruction should be the principle of work and social orientation. Dr. Zakir Hussain advanced the development of the heart, mind and soul. He laid a great emphasis on the fact that students should have patience, understanding and a moral compass. In an address at the All India Educational Conference (1940), he said that "All work is not educative. It is educative only when it is preceded by mental effort. Only that work is genuinely educative which serves some value higher than our selfish ends and to which we are devoted. He who works for his own ends may become skilled. He does not become educated. Later, those who wish to make work the medium of education, remember that work is not purposeless, that it is not content with any results that may follow. Work does not mean the passing of time by doing any haphazard things. It is not amusement; it is not play; it is purposeful striving. Work sits in judgement on itself with the strictness of an enemy and when it passes the test of joy, unparalleled and unsurpassed, work is worship". Another school of thought he advocated for, was the Principle of Social Orientation. He developed this philosophy from the influence of the great German educator Kerschensteiner. The 'correspondence' between the growing powers of the individual mind and the totality of the cultural goods which Kerschensteiner advocates as the basis of any educational process pre-suppose a social setting. Dr. Hussain emphasised that isolated development is no development. Dr. Zakir Hussain was a secular nationalist. He rendered valuable service to the nation. He made valuable contributions to the development of modern Indian thought through his educational and social philosophy. He knew that a nation could not progress without proper education. His entire life is the story of service to

the nation. Dr. Zakir Hussain was one of the most eminent educationists of the world. He was the first who realised that improvement of Indian society could not come from a mere political dimension but through reforms in education. Dr. Hussain laid more and more emphasis on continuous improvement of education both qualitatively and quantitatively. He established secular thoughts. He was a true representative of India's composite culture. Regarding the importance of education, he said in his speech after being sworn in as the President of India in the following words "I maintain that education is a prime instrument of national purpose and that the quality of its education is inseparably involved in the quality of the nation." He advocated humanistic education. Dr. Hussain proved himself to be a strong believer in the intellectual integrity of universities in India. He believed that advance learning and encouraging research was the best way to empower a country.

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