

**DECOLONIAL EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY  
IN THIRD WORLD: AN ANALYTICAL STUDY  
ON PAULO FRIERE AND SYED NAQUIB AL ATTAS**

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**Dissertation submitted to the University of Calicut  
for the partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
MASTER OF EDUCATION**



**FAROOK TRAINING COLLEGE  
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## **DECLARATION**

I, RASHEEDA K.P, do hereby declare that the dissertation entitled, “DECOLONIAL EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY IN THIRD WORLD: AN ANALYTICAL STUDY ON PAULO FRIERE AND SYED NAQUIB AL ATTAS” submitted to University of Calicut, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Education is a bonafide and independent research work done by me during the period 2018-20 under the supervision and guidance of Dr. Aseel Abdul Wahid, Assistant Professor, Farook Training College, and it has not formed the basis for the award of any Degree / Diploma / Associateship / Fellowship or other similar title to any candidate to any university.

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### **CERTIFICATE**

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled, “DECOLONIAL EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY IN THIRD WORLD: AN ANALYTICAL STUDY ON PAULO FRIERE AND SYED NAQUIB AL ATTAS” submitted to University of Calicut, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Education is a bonafide research work done by Ms. Rasheeda K.P during the period 2018-20 of her study in Farook Training College and the dissertation has not formed the basis for the award of any Degree / Diploma / Associateship / Fellowship or other similar title to any candidate of any university.

Farook Training College

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Chapter I

**INTRODUCTION**

## INTRODUCTION

One of the fundamental critiques against modern education is that it is a historical sub-product of the European colonialism across the third world. Being the growth and spread of modernity itself linked with colonialism, this interconnectedness is natural and convincing. As an inevitable result, modern education across the world is Eurocentric in terms of educational goals, philosophical frameworks, methodologies, structure, cosmologies and epistemologies. Naturally, modern education is often antithetical to the worldview and value system of the indigenous peoples across the globe. This crucial critique, from across the third world, has often put modern education at a dubious position in the late decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century as opposed to a welcoming and absorbing attitude towards western education.

Western education was introduced and established across the world in the wake of colonialism. The European colonisers, mainly the British and the French, colonised several countries in the remote Asian, African and South American continents and it has had a lasting impact to this day. The intentions of colonisers in establishing schools and colleges were not so noble. The infamous minutes Lord Meccaulay presented in the British parliament in 1835 unambiguously stated that the British colonies, including India, needed intermediaries who know arithmetic and English to negotiate between the ruled and the rulers. In other words, facilitating governance was the purpose and naturally the system, at least then, did not intend to give creative or intellectual or emotional growth towards the full potential of the learner. Later, beyond primary education, the rest of the secondary, higher secondary and higher education sectors also followed the suit.

There are instances of nationalist and independent movements rejecting western education and founding or reinventing its own imagination and philosophical framework of education. A classic example from India would be Mahatma Gandhi writing a book called *Nayi Talim* (1953) and advocating the boycott of British administered institutions (eg. Aligarh Anglo-Oriental College) and prompting to establish indigenous institutions (eg. Jamia Millia Islamia). another instance was Tagore establishing Ananda Pdashala. Also, traditional Muslim religious scholars,

similarly, in Kerala had advocated the boycott of English language and education as a means of resistance to colonialism and epistemological invasion. Though historically proved incapable and strongly debated against within the community, as being inefficient to combat with the vast epistemological hegemony of the British language, banning English was a powerful civilizational resistance.

As the schools in India were established by the colonial rulers, what Mecauly said was literally true and applicable. Ever since independence, not a single cabinet has tried for a radical rethinking and re-imagination of the entire educational system – from kinter-garten to PhD. The educational reforms, whenever they happened, did not go deep into the philosophical frameworks or even structure. They principally dealt with the content, much more than the structure. Superfluous and shallow, the educational reforms in the third world, including in states like Kerala, merely modified what was in full-fledged. However, what was required was a thorough U-turn and bold re-imaginings.

Schools, by and large, still remain, a sophisticated jail of thought-control and behavior modulation; imposing the state sponsored idea of history, ideology, science and culture. A deep undercurrent of violence is a basic tenet of schooling and an acute lack of creativity and sensitivity marks the educational system, to do a gross generalization. Our education system – from school structure to curriculum to evaluation process – is based on the wrong and unscientific idea that everyone has similar mind-growth. Schools, as a result of imparting the values of modernity, strongly discourage mistakes and failures, and thus block the innovative spirit to experience and create new things in life.

The current educational system has been critically evaluated by several educationists in India and across the world, particularly the third world (Walia, 2016). One of the main issues is that its origin lies in the western colonial modernity, which by nature has been invasive and aggressive. As a result, it negates most of the indigenous knowledge traditions and wisdoms, and simply relies on the idea of epistemological conquest to cherish on its own (Kumar, 2014).

The developmental processes and economic growth of the countries largely depend on the western model, thanks to the westernization of mindsets across the

world. Various educational commissions and educational philosophers in the third world have pointed out the original incapability of the flawed educational system – in its content, structure, methodology, objectives and policies (Alvares, 2011). As India is a leading third world country in the world, this thesis critically investigates the possibility of a comprehensive educational philosophy that can be adapted for the future citizens of a truly independent and liberated India.

This study is to bring forth two legendary educationists from two different parts of the third world - Paulo Friere of Brazil and Syed Naquib Al Attas of Malaysia. What is common to both of them are they come from third world countries, which have been colonized by the west. They both are against western ideological and epistemological hegemony of the west and aim at the liberation of the mind and the spirit through education. Paulo Friere's philosophy leads to critical pedagogy and a profound freedom in knowing and questioning the dynamics of oppression. Eventually it leads to an equal bargain with the power and targets to ameliorating the oppression and violence (Friere, 2017). On the other hand, Syed Naquib Al Attas, a staunch critic of the western idea of secular education shakes the foundations of western modernity by arguing for a rearrangement of values, in terms of imagining and practicing civilization. Through individual and communitarian ethics in theorem and praxis, education plays a significant role in reorienting the mindscape of “post-secular” humans (Attas, 1978).

## **NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

Indian educational system is still affected by the colonial past; ever since the inception of schooling in India, since 1835 by Lord Mecauly, no radical redesign has been done in the structure and the content. As a result, western modernity has imposed its values and cosmology upon Indian minds. Like in other colonies, it has been ‘an epistemological conquest’. In the context of globalization and consumer capitalism, this process gets intensified and people get into traps of polarization and compartmentalization. Education facilitates a ‘culture of obedience and dependence’ (slavery) than a ‘culture of freedom and creativity’, in the backdrop of extreme privatization and commercialization of education, as Paulo Friere noted in his *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*.

Paulo Friere was a highly influential educator and philosopher from 20<sup>th</sup> century Brazil. He authored a path-breaking work titled 'Pedagogy of the Oppressed' that advocates Critical Pedagogy. His work and philosophy was to liberate the people of former colonies from illiteracy, oppression and injustice. He connected pedagogy and education with power and political oppression Paulo Friere died in 1997.

Pedagogy of the Oppressed was a seminal work which challenged many notions that were taken for granted. He argued that the oppressors use the 'piggy bank' system while approaching pupils. The current and modern educational system treats students as passive, empty vessels to be filled with knowledge from outside. The question of power in the structure is not answered by the key players of this business. A culture of silence is forcefully used to preserve the authority of teachers, administrators, rulers of the state etc. the status quo doesn't cultivate a culture of freedom among students. He strongly advocated for critical consciousness through cooperation and dialogue between tutor and pupil.

Syed Naquib Al Attas is an extremely significant educator and philosopher from contemporary Malaysia. He authored the seminal work titled 'The Concept of Education in Islam: A Framework for an Islamic Philosophy of Education'. His revolutionary proposal was an idea called *Islamization of Education*, for which there were many takers across the Muslims world. This influential project reshaped the educational scene of the Muslim world, as for the first time in the intellectual history of education in the Muslim imagination, he advocated a new philosophical approach of 'tadib', which is antithetical to the traditional understanding of 'ta'lim'. He also strongly stood for the innovative in content and methodology.

The vision of Al Attas inspired the establishment of several new campuses and redesigning of several ongoing institutions. Al Attas has been profoundly original as he started his philosophical mission from the basics. He reminded of the people of the need for rediscovering the epistemological and cosmological foundation of Islam in order to understand and rethink what education is and should be. He formulated comprehensive definitions to key concepts such as human (insan), knowledge (ma'rifah and `ilm), wisdom (hikmah), justice (`adl), right action (amal and adab) and religion (din). Al Attas formulated them into a framework for an Islamic philosophy

of education. In his book, he elaborates the differences between tarbiyyah, ta'dib and ta'lim, as epistemological and ethical processes and linguistic terms.

Both Paulo Friere and Syed Naquib Al Attas are two revolutionary educationists from two different parts of the world. Their backgrounds are different and philosophies are also varied. However, there are certain strong areas where their educational vision gets overlapped and connected. Both of them have questioned the current mode of education – both in its objective, vision, content and methodology. They were against colonial modernity and its different levels of oppression and injustice that worked through modern education. Both of them strongly critiqued the theory and practice of modern education and offered alternatives to it. Though they used very different language and jargon, one can see parallels between their thoughts. They were of the strong opinion that the current system needs a thorough revision and these two decolonial scholars have important ideas to practice: in goals, content and pedagogy.

The educational philosophy of two decolonial thinkers from the third world, Paulo Friere and Syed Naquib Al Attas, are analysed in the present study.

## **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The researcher in her study examines the philosophical and practical frameworks of two decolonial thinkers namely Paulo Friere and Syed Naquib Al Attas because of their commitment to challenge the current the education system and potential to offer effective alternatives.

The current education we follow in our country is deeply flawed and that doesn't help children lead a meaningful and just life and hence education should be radically re-imagined. The problem is stated as “Decolonial Educational Philosophy in Third World: An Analytical Study on Paulo Friere and Syed Naquib Al Attas”.

## **DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS**

The key terms used in examining the problem of this study are:

a) **Analytical Study** - An Analytical study is a comparative study designed to reach causal inferences about hypothesised relationships between two factors, as defined by

the Websters.com. This procedure is based on an evaluation process with the help of some analytical tools.

b) **Educational Philosophy** – Encyclopedia of Education says that the philosophy of education may be either the philosophy of the process of education or the philosophy of the discipline of education. That is, it may be part of the discipline in the sense of being concerned with the aims, forms, methods, or results of the process of educating or being educated; or it may be metadisciplinary in the sense of being concerned with the concepts, aims, and methods of the discipline. In short, by educational philosophy, what is meant are the goals, forms, pedagogic methods and meaning of education within a value system.

c) **De-colonial thinkers** - Decolonial scholars strive to remove the burden of colonial knowledge and epistemology based on the wisdom of ancient masters in the locality. Decoloniality is an emerging critical social theory and tool that looks at how colonialism has structurally brainwashed and conquered the minds of teachers and learners in all disciplines and thus offered a superior status to western knowledge and an inferior status to local and eastern knowledge. As the prefix “de” mean to “remove” or “eradicate”, decoloniality is about ending the colonial mindset. (Alvares, 2011)

d) **Third world** – this is a broad term used to denote the developing countries of Africa, Asia and South America. The third world also has socio-economic and political connotations historically, particularly in the backdrop of the erstwhile cold war. (Alvares, 2011)

e) **Paulo Friere** – A radical Brazilian educationist who penned the ground-breaking book ‘Pedagogy of the Oppressed’. His philosophy leads to critical pedagogy and a profound freedom in understanding and questioning the dynamics and source of oppression. Through co-learning process with the teacher, the learner equips herself to question dominance in every level of the social structure in the long run. Eventually it leads to an equal bargain with the power and targets to ameliorating the oppression and violence. He died in 1997.

f) **Syed Naquib Al Attas** – An influential Malaysian educationist and philosopher who penned the seminal text ‘The Concept of Education in Islam’. A staunch critic of the western idea of secular education, he shakes the foundations of western modernity and secular epistemology and argued that education is not about giving knowledge and skills but about instilling a sense of the hierarchy of the divine order in the

universe, so that every learner is able to respect it and avoid injustice and violence. He argued for a rearrangement of values and methods in education, in terms of imagining and practicing civilization.

### **VARIABLES OF THE STUDY**

The present study is to investigate the educational philosophy of Paulo Friere and Syed Naquib Al Attas in a decolonial perspective. This will be done upon the variables of educational goals, curriculum, methods of teaching, evaluation strategies, role of learner, role of teacher and decolonial aspects. These different aspects of education are considered as variables as unstable or non-fixed category of the study on the educational philosophy of Paulo Friere and Syed Naquib Al Attas in a decolonial perspective.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The objectives of the study are the following.

1. To investigate the philosophical framework of Paulo Friere and Syed Naquib Al Attas.
2. To analyse the following aspects of education in the educational philosophy of Paulo Friere and Syed Naquib Al Attas.
  - a) Goals of education
  - b) Curriculum
  - c) Methods of teaching
  - d) Evaluation Strategy
  - e) Role of learner
  - f) Role of teacher
3. To compare the decolonial elements of pedagogy in Brazilian and Malay settings in the thoughts of Paulo Friere and Syed Naquib Al Attas.



## **METHODOLOGY**

The research questions of this study will demand a qualitative approach in finding and analysing data. This study will closely investigate how the variables work in the writings of the two educationists studied. This will be qualitative in nature and will use content analysis, as a means to understand the seminal works of the authors – Paulo Friere and Syed Naquib Al Attas: ‘Pedagogy of the Oppressed’ and ‘The Concept of Education in Islam: A Framework for an Islamic Philosophy of Education’, mainly along with other titles they have produced.

### **a) Procedure Employed**

This study being a comparative critical analysis of two educationists, the investigator selected the system of referring books and qualitative content analysis based on research questions and tools stated in the Objectives. The procedure employed for the study was a systematic analysis of the seminal works of Paulo Friere and Syed Naquib Al Attas in order to reach the conclusions. It was a critical approach based on qualitative content analysis and comparative study based on the research questions formed from the Objectives. The path-breaking books *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* by Paulo Friere and *The Concept of Education in Islam* by Syed Naquib Al Attas were examined by the investigator for analysing the research questions, that are pertaining to the major concepts, issues and players in the field of education in a theoretical and practical sense. The analysis engaged with the research questions critically. The tools used was a set of detailed questionnaire to find how Paulo Friere and Syed Naquib Al Attas addressed the vital aspects of education in their radical rethinking of the philosophy and process of education.

### **b) Research Design**

This research uses the data obtained from the seminal texts of Paulo Friere and Syed Naquib Al Attas, based on the specific research questions, as primary data to analyse the objectives. As both educationalists have been towering intellectuals of their times, there are several studies on their books and contributions. This study uses such analysis as secondary data and builds the original argument based on them. In short, this study not only compares and contrasts their critical perspectives, by using descriptive statistics derived from their own works and previous studies, draws

suggestions and recommendations for policy reforms or creative changes in the educational field.

A schedule prepared by the investigator for the purpose of this analytical study includes the following areas of common questions that are examined in the texts of both Paulo Friere and Syed Naquib Al Attas.

1. What is the concept of education, according to them?
2. What are the goals of education?
3. How can the goals of education be achieved?
4. What are the key terms and their definitions?
5. What should be the content of education, and what is its criterion?
6. Who holds the power to decide and regulate curriculum?
7. What are the characteristics of a learner?
8. What role learner ideally plays in the learning system?
9. What are the qualities of a teacher?
10. What role teacher plays in the learning process?
11. How is evaluation imagined by both these educationists?
12. Is evaluation in the current education system desirable and advisable?
13. How to re-imagine a new mode of evaluation?
14. How colonialism and education are interconnected and what is wrong with this connection?
15. What is the historical setting of the thought – colonial / western hegemonic / modern etc.
16. How to use decolonial tools in educational settings?
17. What is the Conceptual Framework?
18. What are the suggested remedies?

The conceptual and theoretical framework of this study will make use of the answers given to these questions in a social science research background.

### **c) Statistical Techniques Used**

This study is qualitative in nature and method, and hence uses the primary data obtained from the seminal texts, based on an analytical investigation of the specific

research questions. This study makes use of descriptive statistics to find the answers to the research questions. Descriptive statistics are used to describe the basic features of the data in a study. They provide simple summaries about the sample and the measures. Descriptive statistics simply describes what the data shows and helps to simplify large amounts of data in a sensible way. Each descriptive statistic reduces lots of data into a simpler summary.

### **SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

This study is aimed at bringing forth the fundamental flaws of modern education as it is practiced particularly in India and generally in the third world. By using the arguments put forward by experienced and learned educationists from two different cultures, this study looks critically at deep flaws in the very imagination about the current educational system and articulates possible alternatives to experiment in alter in purposes, content, pedagogy and other aspects. The scope of the study is mainly in creating a deep awareness about the real issues that we face in implementing the education to students and thus this will be useful for teachers in the minor setting of making classrooms a true, free and creative learning and growing space as well as for educational policy makers in bringing about changes in the larger context of educational reforms.

### **DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY**

The major delimitation of this study is that it examines only two important works of Paulo Friere and Syed Naquib Al Attas. Although the books studied in this thesis are the most important and influential works done by them, they have written other books. Those other books are not directly related to the subject of education, however, there are indirect reference. Another delimitation of the work is their two different contexts that make possibilities of comparison challenging. And certain variables chosen by this researcher is not detailed in the books.

## **ORGANISATION OF REPORT**

This study consists of five chapters which covers the analysis of the educational philosophies of Paulo Friere and Syed Naquib Al Attas in a third-world, decolonial perspective. Here is an overview of the content of each presented chapter:

- Chapter I: this chapter introduces the problem of modern education originated from western colonialism, gives an overview about the study and describes the needs and significance of finding alternative modes of framework to solve the grave issues of education. This chapter also discusses the scope of the study, its objectives and delimitation.
- Chapter II: this chapter consists of two sections. The first one contains conceptual overview of Paulo Friere and Syed Naquib Al Attas. The second section is a detailed review of studies related to Friere and Al Attas.
- Chapter III: this chapter explains the details of the selected methodology of qualitative analysis used to study the procedure employed, research design and statistical techniques used for the study.
- Chapter IV: this central chapter explains the educational philosophy of Paulo Friere and Syed Naquib Al Attas in the theoretical framework based on the criteria of research followed by the research questions.
- Chapter V: this chapter discusses the summary, findings and recommendations to use in reforming classrooms, schools and educational systems with the help of the inputs received from the analytical study in a decolonial perspective.

Chapter II

**REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

## **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Reviewing related literature is intended to locate, comprehend and evaluate the findings of previous researches done in the similar area. It involves surveying documents like researches, articles, encyclopedia entries, research abstracts and similar set of documents relevant to the research that are either published or otherwise. For any worthwhile study in any field of knowledge, the researcher needs adequate familiarity with the works that have already been done in the area or related areas as well as acquire new information persisting in the relevant field. She has to build up on the accumulated and recorded knowledge of the past as it helps the researcher to drive maximum benefit from previous investigations. According to Best and Kahn (1997), “the search for related literature is one of the first steps in the research process. It is a valuable guide in defining the problem, recognizing its significance, suggesting promising data gathering devices and source of data.”

As the critique of colonial modernity and modern education developed across the academia, particularly in the global south and the Muslim world, a lot of focus has been given on re-imagining educational reforms. Despite the limitations of developing alternative paradigms in theorem and praxis, the trend of attempting for such an educational set up, at least in the level of discourse, is evident in many third world countries. As a result, there has been no dearth of studies in this regard.

However, as this study aims to look at asking fundamental critical questions about the pedagogical approaches of the modern world, especially in places like India, based on two legendary educationists of the third world - Paulo Friere of Brazil and Syed Naquib Al Attas of Malaysia, this chapter focuses on the studies that have already been done on both of their works, philosophies and later critical influences.

## SECTION 01

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF PAULO FRIERE ON EDUCATION

The legendary Brazilian educationist Paulo Friere published his seminal work *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* in 1968 in Portuguese language, and in 1970 in English. It shook the world of education to radical proportion. Paulo Friere is considered to be one of the most influential educationists from the third world that the twentieth century ever saw. His ideas and critique were more relevant in a decolonial perspective that is both an academic and political project to fight the continued impact of colonialism in a post colonial world.

#### **Pedagogy of the Oppressed**

Paulo Friere's book was titled *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* and it gave complete justice to what it proposed in the title. He formulated that liberation of the oppressed masses in the third world necessitated a pedagogy of freedom and emancipation. Friere related the existence and maintenance of oppressive power system to the educational methods and contents they adopted. Friere's critique of oppression and his ideas about education were informed by how he posed the problem of being human. Problematizing humanity as a "project," Freire explored the dialectical interdependency of subject and object, conscious human action and the world. A critical education is a "problem-posing" pedagogy. It contrasts with the "banking concept of education," which posits students as only objects (not also subjects), receptacles or deposit boxes into which nuggets of knowledge can be inserted. The banking model assumes a problematic "dichotomy between human beings and the world," supposing a person merely exists in the world, not *with* that world and *with others* whom he or she co-creates said world with.

Progressive education and practice can liberate a poor society through critical pedagogy. He conceived that people in a society are in two strata – the oppressed and the oppressors. And when it comes to education, he said, the major problem is that the developer of the agenda of educational process and programme is the oppressor. What they devise is an education to govern, not to live. Actually education is to be developed and practiced from the oppressed side. Friere believed that the concept of

human nature is defined differently for the elite (oppressors) and others (oppressed). The elite naturally believe that they are superior and better and anyone else is naturally inferior.

### **Critical Pedagogy for Conscientisation**

Paulo Friere argued that education becomes relevant only when it equips students to have critical consciousness. The process of acquiring critical consciousness is termed conscientisation in simple terms. Towards achieving this, Friere suggested to use critical pedagogy, his most reputed and widely used term in educational rethinking discourses. Friere critically questioned the subject-object pattern of teacher-student relationship inside and outside school. It reveals its fundamentally *narrative* character of education. The relationship involves a narrating subject (teacher) and a patient listener (object) and the content is values or empirical dimensions of reality. Friere famously said, modern education is suffering from “narrating sickness”. Teacher talks about the reality as if it is static, motionless, compartmentalized and predictable. She espouses on a topic completely alien to the existential experience of the learner. Her task is to “fill” students with the content of her narration. The outstanding characteristic of this narrative of education is the sonority of words. The learners completely devour the words without understanding the deeper, complex aspects. Students record, memorise and repeat these phrases without perceiving their true reality. It turns them into “containers” and “receptable” to be filled by the teacher. The more completely she fills the receptables, the better teacher she is. Thus education becomes an act of depositing in which students are depositories and teacher is depositor.

Friere also argued this sort of banking followed in education regards men as adaptable, manageable beings. Critical consciousness is less when students become depositories. Banking education minimizes creative power, the interest of oppressors lie in changing the consciousness of the oppressed, not the situation which oppression operates. Education as a practice of freedom as opposed to education as a practice of domination denies that man is man is abstract, isolated, independent and unattached to the world. It also denies that the world exists as a reality apart from people. Banking education anesthetizes and inhibits creative power; problem-posing involves a constant unveiling of reality.



The major part of Friere's educational project was the idea called critical pedagogy. It is a prism that reflects the complexities between teaching and learning, a prism that sheds light of the hidden subtleties that might have escaped our view previously. The prism has a tendency to focus on the shades of social, cultural, political and even economic conditions and it does all of this under the broad view of history. Education is radically about love. Teachers, in education, are a mirror of society and critical pedagogy challenges our long-held assumptions and leads us to ask new questions. The questions we ask will determine the answers we get. Critical pedagogy gives voice to the voiceless and power to the powerless.

Pedagogy of the Oppressed was a global, historical event for counter-hegemonic theorists and activists in search of new ways of linking social theory to narration of human freedom. Critical pedagogy is to learn, re-learn and unlearn the world and its systems of relationships. Change is often difficult, but critical pedagogy is all about change from coercive to collaborative, from transmission to transformative, from inert to catalytic, from passive to active.

### **Cultural Action for Freedom**

As Paulo Friere fundamentally focused on a social structure that is devoid of oppression and injustice of any sort, cultural cooperation holds a significant space in his thought process. His proposal of dialogical action as a fundamental strategy against "cultural invasion" was intended towards a social environment where no culture violates another culture. This is very akin to the Gramscian idea of hegemony and he opposes the cultural invasion as it loses the identity of invaded cultures. "For cultural invasion to succeed, it is essential that those invaded become convinced of their intrinsic inferiority," wrote Friere.

According to Gramsci (2011), hegemony ("predominance by consent") is a condition in which a class of people in a society exercises political, intellectual, and cultural role of leadership within a hegemonic system cemented by a common world-view or "organic ideology." This "leadership" role is executed with violence in the social structure and by imposing their cultural norms upon relatively less powerful cultures. Friere also problematizes this in the context of education as he adds to what

Gramsci said by pointing out at the political and cultural structures the oppression creates in order for it to sustain and survive.

So, the cultural action Friere proposes is based on cooperation and acceptance rather than invasion and hegemony. Based on a “collective will, forming a new worldview and challenging the oppressive, hegemonic power structures in an agenda that he sets pedagogically in the settings of education.

### **Paulo Friere’s Educational Works in Action**

Paulo Friere was not an ivory tower intellectual who looked at people from far away and thought of solving their problems. He worked with them, among them and for them. His most famous book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* itself was a result of his several years educational social work with peasants and “illiterates”. In his literacy campaigns, he never treated the peasants as people who knew nothing. Friere never underestimated them in anyway or looked them down. He knew they were storehouses of knowledge and wisdom and he always learned things from them before teaching them anything. It was a collaborative process based on a method that was dialogical and conversational.

Paulo Friere has extremely rich and diverse experience in applying his revolutionary ideas on education. This challenges the criticism posed by some conservative educationists that Paulo Friere’s educational vision is too idealistic and Utopian. In his exile years in Bolivia and Chile, he worked for the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the Chilean Institute for Agrarian Reform before he published his famous book. Later, after the book was published, in the United States where he held a brief appointment at Harvard University's Center for Studies in Development and Social Change; and Switzerland where he worked for the World Council of Churches as the director of their education program. He also served as an adviser for various governments, most notably the government of Guinea-Bissau. In 1980 he returned to Brazil to teach and later to serve as secretary of education for São Paulo. He worked as a consultant for revolutionary governments such as the New Jewel Movement in Grenada, the Sandinista government in Nicaragua, and the government of Julius K. Nyerere in

Tanzania. From 1985 until his death in 1997, Freire served as the honorary president of the International Council for Adult Education.

Freire's conception of education was a deeply political project oriented towards social justice and freedom of people. His idea of literacy was different. He believed that it is a mistake to speak of reading as solely the decoding of text. Rather, reading is a process of apprehending power and causality in society and one's location in it, or a "self-transformation producing a stance of intervention". Freire's goal was to transform structural oppression. Both educator and educand (Freire's word for "student," designed to convey an equitable and reciprocal relationship) teach and learn from each other, assuming that the world is an unfolding historical process; everything and everyone is interrelated.

Dialogue and participatory action research are two practices heavily influenced by Freire that are now common in the fields of popular education, critical pedagogy, Theater of the Oppressed, and eco-pedagogy. Freire explains that what most people think of as dialogue is really just debate, a zero-sum game in which people compete to deposit ideas into one another or name the world on behalf of others as an end in itself. In dialogue, on the other hand, both parties work together to name their world by exploring their lived experiences to identify common patterns and generate action. Participatory action research, meanwhile, is a community-led process in which people determine solutions to their problems by gathering data from their peers, analyzing it, and then taking informed action. It's a model of community organizing that builds the capacity and expertise of those on the front lines.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF SYED NAQUIB AL ATTAS ON EDUCATION

The influential Malaysian educationist and philosopher Syed Naquib Al-Attas is the original conceptualizer of the notion of Islamization of education. It has been a highly influential decolonial movement across the Muslim world in particular and third world in general. Attas is a trained philosopher and his educational framework is based on a deep-rooted understanding of the metaphysical worldview of Islam; the purpose of knowledge and knowing; the meaning, content and method of education; the concept and reality of life on the earth in Islamic cosmology etc. The theories and projects of Al Attas have been passionately applied in different institutes across the Muslim world and two international universities were set up in Malaysia and Pakistan as a result of his proposals. Also his philosophy has been applied in his own lifelong endeavors at Muslim higher learning institutions, particularly at the institute he established in Kuala Lumpur.

### *Ta'dib versus Ta'lim*

Attas fundamentally re-defined education, from the very word used in Arabic for it. Traditionally, Muslims used the word *Ta'lim* in the languages of Arabic, Persian and Urdu. It is important to note that Gandhi's book on education was titled *Nayi Ta'lim* or 'Towards New Education' (1953). It comes from the base word *ilm* in Arabic which means knowledge and thus *Ta'lim* is a process of imparting knowledge and skills to students. Al Attas found issues with envisaging the educational process merely related to knowledge and proposed the new word *Ta'dib* whose base word is *adab*, which means proper manners of behaviour in ordinary parlance but contains a profound meaning in a philo-linguistic analysis. *Adab* is about the hierarchy of things and systems in the universe and *Ta'dib*, or education, for Attas, is about knowing the order of things in the hierarchy as divinely placed and respecting each phenomenon the way it demands. This is essentially a metaphysical notion and its philosophical and ethical framework is developed within the Islamic value system.

The Arabic word *ilm* can easily be translated as knowledge and the word *adab* challenges an easy translation. It brings deep cultural and civilizational implications. According to Al Attas, the aim of education is the cultivation or culmination of *adab*

in individuals, not accumulation of knowledge. He argues the crisis of the modern world is an epistemological crisis of losing the just order (divine hierarchy) of things, and thus annihilation of the paths to justice and wisdom. He deepened this thought and analysed the process based on instilling adab (sense of justice in a broad sense, both politically and spiritually) in the minds and actions of people. He made it clear that he is not talking about religious education, but education in general.

### Three Components of Education

Al Attas analyses that there are three components in every definitions of education whosoever practices that. They are *the process, the content and the recipient*. In most of the educational settings, the discussion is mostly about the content and then the process and the recipient gets final attention. Attas thought there should be an ontological reversal of this order of importance and the first attempt in any conceptualisation or practice of education should be to understand the recipient in her totality and full potential. In a colonised worldview, the western centric profit based worldviews towards “development” and notions of “success” imagine humans as merely rational beings. It unfortunately ignores the more profound potential of humans in the emotional and spiritual realms. Attas problematises this philosophically and warns that the modern civilization has already paid the price for this modern disregard for a comprehensive understanding of humans, in the forms of environmental crises, nuclear wars, refugee crises and genocides.

Attas defines humans are sublime creatures with a gift of the use of language in sophisticated ways. By using Islamic theological sources, he places humans at the center of the Creation and gives her the agency to represent God’s divine will on the earth. At the same time, this position of vicegerency is against the western colonial notion of anthropocentrism. When being anthropocentric is about being able to exploit anything on the earth for the welfare and comfort of humans, and for their profits, vicegerency is about being responsible and respecting the purpose of creation with regard to everything.

Attas looks into the content of education secondly only. It is here he comes with his radical redefinition with the word adab. Hence, the content is a manifestation of the divine hierarchical order of the things in the universe and the symbiotic

relationship among them and the grand balance they naturally have achieved. This is possible, according to Attas, only through the help of divine guidance which is given through Scriptures. He enquires what is knowledge and its sources and purposes. The proper knowledge should lead to action (amal) and justice (adl) for Attas; for it is the only way to attain wisdom (hikmah). He classifies knowledge into revealed knowledge and acquired knowledge and believes that acquired knowledge that has no respect for revealed knowledge can be dangerous to humankind. The over-emphasis of modernity upon rationality and reason does this disservice to humanity and the damage is already upon the earth and every life suffers from it. An epistemological hijacking of the divine traditions of the world has changed the perceptions about the world and life. It has become something to be conquered and exploited in order to be called successful by other beings. Attas challenges this and asks to find the genuine order of balance and hierarchy of things in the Universe. He argued all knowledge is not equal and cannot be equal. For instance, there are certain disciplines that are essential for a locality and there are certain disciplines that are non-essential, but welcome. And there are certain knowledge that are harmful to people and hence should be avoided from pursuing. The first could be exemplified with medical knowledge, second with fashion technology and third with what leads to any harmful invention. In other words, like all spiritual masters in different traditions, Attas also suggests wisdom is more valuable than information and knowledge.

The process or the methodology is only the third aspect for Attas in his hierarchy. Attas focuses on instilling adab rather than giving ilm - two key terms that are already explained. By adab, what Attas means is the proper place of things. It is “the discipline of body, mind and soul; the discipline that assures the recognition and acknowledgment of one’s proper place in relation to one’s physical, intellectual and spiritual capacities and potentials; the recognition and acknowledgement of the reality that knowledge and being are ordered hierarchically according to their various levels (maratib) and degrees (darajat).”

### **Islamisation of Education as a Decolonial Tool**

Al Attas was also a strong critic of Eurocentric western modernity and advocated for the de-westernization of knowledge and de-colonisation of mind through Ta’dib or education. Attas also defined the dual nature of man – in

combination of the spirit and body, in terms of its requirements of both faculties to grow and nourish.

Al Attas theorized that modernity and western idea of a sanctified and unquestionable secularism have done great damages to the minds and cultures of the east. He argued that faith and tradition are integral part of the constitution of humans and the system of creating binaries or divisions and imposing it upon people create a collective inferiority complex which leads to accept western values and ideas as inherently superior. This is cultural invasion and epistemological colonisation of the eastern knowledge traditions and even theologies. For him a project of Islamisation of education, the way he formulated under the term Ta'dib is a means of decolonising the Muslim world.

By using the concept of adab, and the flaws with the traditionally used term Ta'lim, Attas argued that merely imparting knowledge is not enough but Islamisation of mind and soul is necessary. By Islamization he meant, grasping the divine order of things and imbibing the natural values of Universe and acting accordingly. He vehemently pointed out that the western values and ideas dominate the traditional knowledge systems and wisdom lineages of the eastern societies and is harmful.

## **SECTION 02**

### **REVIEW OF RELATED STUDIES**

The review of related literature studied by the researcher is divided into two categories - studies related to Paulo Friere and studies related to Syed Naquib Al Attas. The studies have been analysed by keeping objectives, methodology and findings of the study to draw in the conclusion to study the rationale of the present research.

#### **A) STUDIES RELATED TO PAULO FRIERE**

About Paulo Friere, there has been innumerable studies in depth and breadth. The most vital and the most widely quoted has been an anthology of critical essays by the best experts of the subject in the world – “Paulo Friere – A Critical Encounter”, edited by Peter MacLaren and Peter Leonardo, published in 1993.

In a book titled, “Paulo Friere: Teaching for Freedom and Transformation”, the author John Dale (2011) brings out important questions and thorough observations. He argues that Friere tries to connect the questions of social justice and equality to the process and products of education. The world today is in need of a rethinking of education, educational purposes and educational methods so that ultimately, people who suffer from various levels and modes of oppression find ways towards “liberation”. In dominant modes of pedagogy, questions about the issues of race, gender, class, caste, religion, sexuality, colonialism and other social dynamics are rarely asked. This book clearly explains the philosophical contributions of Paulo Friere. The ideological stances call for teachers to identify sources of power, how power works and how the marginalized are repressed due to a lack of share in power, or lack of freedom and rights to use resources. And this is caused by those who hegemonically enjoy power and exploit its privileges. Education is supposed to create an environment of empowerment, and hence the curriculum needs to have a focus on empowering the students rather than creating dependency. Autonomy and self-reliance in multiple ways are the need of the hour.

The term “culture of fear”, as famously used by Friere, has a deep connotation. We discuss this term in cultural studies when we associate power and its dynamics with the aspects of culture. Mostly, prejudices are rooted in visceral fear and ignorance. It is commonplace that a culture of fear exists in public schools and even higher education centers, on a ridiculously daily basis.

Joan Wink (2010), author of the work, “Critical Pedagogy: Notes from the Real World” answers to the question why critical pedagogy matters to the world. She writes: “kids matter—that’s why. Our future matters—that’s why. It is as simple as that. It also is something we all know. This is serious business we are talking about. Students and teachers are hurting. We, in education, are a mirror of society. Critical pedagogy challenges our long-held assumptions and leads us to ask new questions, and the questions we ask will determine the answers we get. Critical pedagogy gives voice to the voiceless; gives power to the powerless. Change is often difficult, and critical pedagogy is all about change from coercive to collaborative; from transmission to transformative; from inert to catalytic; from passive to active. Critical



pedagogy leads us to advocacy and activism on behalf of those who are the most vulnerable in classroom and society.”

The critical education advocated by Paulo Friere is a crucial mechanism in the deconstruction of prevailing social discourses, an indispensable tool to eliminate widespread social inequality by exposing the deleterious impact of ideology on consciousness and social construction. To put it in simple words, as the scholar opines, Friere’s works enhances our understanding and description of the world.

It is also important to know the implications of Friere’s work for critical pedagogy. He advocated all his life to dismantle the various inequalities through reinventing and reimagining public schools on its every layer. Joan Wink (2010) defines critical pedagogy in a crisp way: “It is a prism that reflects the complexities between teaching and learning. It is a prism which sheds light on the hidden subtleties that might have escaped our view previously. The prism has a tendency to focus on shades of social, cultural, political, and even economic conditions, and it does all of this under the broad view of history”.

Scholars have taken note of the applicability and relevance of Friere’s approach in the current context of growing disparities across the world in terms of economies, and resource sharing. “We have suggested that Freire’s work is arguably more relevant than ever before in the history of social development. In the present context of current global economic reform, the prevailing market economy practices are sustained by ideological forces that marginalize counter discourses while at the same time operate through public education to legitimize their own. The language myths accompanying the prevailing economic view are especially salient within functional literacy. They lend a distinctively delusionary objectivist slant to discussions about education generally, and literacy in particular. The value of contemporary education programs at all levels is almost exclusively judged on how well they meet labor market requirements. As workers and citizens, then, we simply inherit and interpret the world as a static entity, and adopt a servile approach to social interaction and labor market participation”, John Dale and Emery J. Hyslop-Margison wrote in their study.

Coronel West (1993), in the scholarly introduction written for the famous work “Paulo Friere: A Critical Encounter” – this was published when Paulo Friere was still

alive as a tribute to his contribution and he himself wrote a foreword – says that “the classic work *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*” was a world-historic event for counter-hegemonic theorists and activists in search of new ways of linking social theory to narratives of human freedom. This complex lineage led Friere to put a premium on dialogue, the construction of new subjects of history and the creation of new social possibilities in history. (.....) Friere’s project is attuned to the concrete operations of power (in and out of the classroom) and grounded in the painful yet empowering process of conscientization.”

There has been several scholarly attempts to demystify the word conscientization. Paulo Friere first used the word in Portuguese, as *conscientizacao*, and refused to be translated to English as he was afraid of losing its real meaning in rendering. However, as his theory got popularised, he had to agree to his fellow scholars and the word was translated as conscientization, writes Keqi David Liu (2014). The Freirean notion of conscientization is a moral response of love and dialogue to the perilous violence of globalisation as Liu argues it in the current context. To put it simply is to give educators a power to have a constant critical thinking.

Also, it is important to mention that there has been criticisms against Paulo Friere’s educational vision from different quarters. Encyclopedia of Education, published by State University, US, analysed: “...conservatives who are opposed to the political horizon of what is essentially a revolutionary project of emancipation have been quick to condemn him as demagogic and utopian. Freire has faced criticism from the left as well. Some Marxists have been suspicious of the Christian influences in his work and have accused him of idealism in his view of popular consciousness. Freire has also been criticized by feminists and others for failing to take into account the radical differences between forms of oppression, as well as their complex and contradictory instantiation in subjects. It has been pointed out that Freire's writing suffers from sexism in its language and from a patriarchal notion of revolution and subjecthood, as well as a lack of emphasis on domination based on race and ethnicity. Postmodernists have pointed to the contradiction between Freire's sense of the historicity and contingency of social formations versus his vision of liberation as a universal human vocation.”

However, Freire was always responsive and honest to criticism. In his later

works, he undertook a process of self-criticism regarding his own sexism. He also sought to develop a more nuanced view of oppression and subjectivity. At the same time, Freire was suspicious of postmodernists who felt that the Marxist legacy of class struggle was obsolete. He retorted that the antiracist and antisexist efforts at educational reform by postmodernists did little to alleviate existing divisions of labor based on social relations of capitalist exploitation. On the other hand, their educational reforms rather assisted the capitalist onslaught, according to Freire.

All the above works show that how important is Friere in the educational reforms in the post-colonial third world. His insights continue to be of crucial importance. These innumerable works are a testimony to the fact that Friere has radically revolutionized the way people imagined and practiced education, in a way that more freedom, creativity, un-oppression and liberation are practiced in many places.

## **B) STUDIES RELATED TO SYED NAQUIB AL ATTAS**

When it comes to reviewing the studies done on the philosophy, work and influence Syed Naquib Al Attas, there are several theses available in Malay language. However, that doesn't mean that in English, he has not been studied or written about. Although in comparison with Paulo Friere, Syed Attas is yet to be accepted widely and known popularly in the third world. His fame and name are mainly in the Muslim lands. It has several reasons. One of them could be the fact that he talks about education clearly standing inside an Islamic parlance. Many words he uses are from within the cosmology and epistemology of Islam, and he is strongly avert to European terms and concepts in a decolonial spirit. This often makes him slightly inaccessible to those who are ignorant or biased about the Islamic epistemology and theology.

According to scholars like Aris Widodo (2009), understanding the way Al Attas understood Islam is vital in entering his philosophical world as everything else he talks about, particularly education stands within his framework or imagination on Islam. Widodo writes: "Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas' opinion on the scope of Islam—a discourse that has become a hot issue among Muslim scholars since fourteen centuries ago and strongly reappeared along with the presence of a work of an orientalist, H.A.R. Gibb. According to Al-Attas, semantic approach is the best way to figure out whether Islam only touches upon religious matters or also includes a notion

of civilization, because it is through this approach that the connotation of Islam will become clearer. As Islam is explicitly mentioned in the Qur'an as *din*, so the best way to identify the scope of Islam is to study the word-focus of *din* from semantic approach. From this approach, Al-Attas concludes that Islam as *din* includes the connotation of civilization, as the word *din* is closely related to the word Madinah, a word that is also closely related to the word *tamaddun* (civilization)."

In other words, one can see that the Islam Al Attas referring to is a little more than "religion" in the conventional understanding of the word. Even though he doesn't deny the jurisprudential implications and obligations of the *din*, his emphasis is on the civilizational aspects of it. For this, education is an essential ingredient and he is emphatic that, contrary to the common Arabic word *taalim*, the proper replacement should be *taadib*.

Muhd Saufi B. Jelani (2012), in his remarkable essay titled "Islam and the Philosophy of Education" endorses this perspective and explains 'Adab' as education in Islam. "Adab is the discipline of body, mind and soul; that assure the recognition and acknowledgement of one's proper place in relation to one's physical, intellectual and spiritual capacities and potentials. Education couched in *ta'dib* – imparting knowledge, which is progressively inculcated in Islamic education, should aim to produce a good man or a 'man of *adab*', includes every activity by which an individual improves in *adab*, whether mentally, spiritually or morally. *Adab* referred to the inviting to the banquet. In Arabic language, both the act of inviting (*adab*) and the banquet (*ma'dabah*), are derived from the same root word *a-d-b*. Sharif al-Jurjani (d. 843/1413) interprets *adab* as "special knowledge that guards one against all types of error (*ma'rifatun ma yuhtaraz bihi 'an jami' anwa al-khata'*).

What is being suggested here, expanding the argument of Syed Al Attas is that Islamic education embraces the disciplining of one's mind, the acquisition of good qualities and attributes of the soul, and the performing of correct or right actions, as against erroneous or wrong ones. Also, a person of *adab* is a person of universally adorable values and reverence. In many ways, it stands in contrast to the western idea of being a good citizen. In short, *adab*, so applied and used, signifies one's good discipline of manners, good breeding and polite accomplishment. *Adab* may also be specified as *zarf*, or excellence of mind, manners, address and speech. An elaborate

and clear meaning of what means to be free for having practiced religion in *adab* to achieve a state of happiness.

Jilani further argues about the well-known project of Islamisation of education, put forth by the Attas school. He says the authoritatively defined meaning of ‘*islamization*’ is highly important along with the epistemological definition of knowledge. “Without proper definitions, ‘*islamization*’ has often been reduced to legalization or to the establishment of some socio-political entities, and knowledge has been wrongly equated with mere facts, skills and technology. Islamization on the correct usage and authentic meaning use as ‘..the liberation of man first from magical, mythological, animistic, national-cultural tradition, and from secular control over his reason and his language’.”

Al Attas is a rare scholar who doesn’t consider a discipline in an atomistic way and hence his intellectual articulations on education inevitably cover linguistic, metaphysical and theological realms apart from exploring philosophical questions. This is well-stated in the study by Malaysian scholar Salina Ahmed (2017), when she combines his thoughts in different areas. She reminds us that for Attas, defining human beings is radically a linguistic and spiritual task and only upon this definition the continual educational act of leading him/her towards his/her original or natural or divine self works effectively. In her remarkable essay titled “The Doctrine Of *Al-Mithaq*, Man (*Insan*), Knowledge (*‘Ilm*) And Witnessing (*Shuhud*): An Analysis From Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas’ Metaphysical And Linguistic Ideas”, Salina Ahmed writes, “al-Attas follows the Quran that man, before he became manifested in human form, has sealed an individual and collective covenant (*mithaq*) collectively with God in recognizing and acknowledging God’s Lordship. This means that before he assumed physical form man has already been equipped with the faculty of spiritual cognition that enabled him to recognize and acknowledge, through what he said in affirmation (i.e. *qawl*) by his intellectual power of speech (*nutq*). Indeed, this Covenant, and what it implies, is the very essence of religion (*al-din*); and all the principles of Islam ultimately revert to that spiritual, pre-existent condition. In virtue of this ability to recognize and acknowledge his Lord by means of an intellectual power that is manifested by speech, the men of spiritual discernments have referred to man in that spiritual condition as *al-nafs al-natiqah* – the rational or articulate soul.

This interrelated ability of speech and ability to differentiate are very much apparent if we are to consider al-Attas' definition of man: We define man as a 'rational animal' where the term 'rational' is signified by the term *natiq*, which points to an innate faculty of knowing that apprehends the meaning of the universals and that formulates meaning. This formulation of meaning, which involves judgment, discrimination, and clarification, is what constitutes his rationality. The terms 'rational' (*natiq*) and 'having the power to formulate meaning' (*dhu nutq*) are derived from the same root that conveys the basic meaning of 'speech', in the sense of human speech, so that they both signify a certain power and capacity innate in man to articulate words or symbolic forms in meaningful patterns.

In his "*The Educational Philosophy and Practices of Al-Attas*", Wan Mohd Nor (2003) elaborates that "the metaphysics of al-Attas, in fact all his articulations on Islam, are based on his interpretation of the *Quran* and the *Sunnah* of the Prophet, and the teaching of what Iqbal calls the "more genuine schools of *Sufism*."

According to Febri Priyodudanto (2013), in al-Attas metaphysics, the reality and concept of God forms the major thrust of the Islamic worldview and this has deep implications for the concept of knowledge and the concept, contents and methods of Islamic education. He asserts that the knowledge about God is not merely propositional or cognitive but also more importantly experiential, based on one's intuitive experience and awareness of one's self and of the external world of creation. He enunciates that all knowledge of reality and of truth and the projection of a true vision of the ultimate nature of things is originally derived through the medium of intuition.

Febri Priyodudanto writes: "He affirms that the Western vision of reality and truth is not founded on Revealed Truth but is established upon philosophical speculations which are characterized by uncertainty and relativity. Consequently, knowledge and sciences that emerge from it are also relative, uncertain, always subject to change and entail alterations in the worldview and the metaphysical system that project it. According to al-Attas, Islam derives its sources from revelations, confirmed by religion and affirmed by intellectual and intuitive principles. The Islamic worldview is not to be understood as a dualism, for Islam affirms only One Reality and truth, and all Islamic values pertain ultimately to it alone, so that to the

Muslim, individually and collectively, all endeavor towards change and development and progress and perfection is invariably determined by the world view that projects the vision of the One Reality and confirms the affirmation of the same Truth.”

According to Febri, Al-Attas maintains that knowledge is not totally and purely the product of the human mind and experience but is also based on revealed truth. Knowledge continuously requires direction, supervision and confirmation from the revealed truth. This is so because the metaphysics of Islam is not only based upon reason and experience but also firmly grounded upon Revelation. Thus, Islamization of contemporary knowledge; that knowledge of the realities of things and their ultimate nature can be established with certainty by means of our external and internal senses and faculties, reason and intuition, and true reports of scientific or religious nature, transmitted by their authentic authorities.

Every serious scholar who has studied the intellectual world of Al Attas has well-acknowledged the importance of understanding the inter-connectedness between knowledge and human. What makes us human *in essence* is the knowledge of purpose we have about our lives. This knowledge cannot be manmade or acquired, he argued, in opposition to the western and European understanding of knowledge. It has to be revealed knowledge, coming from a divine source through an ordained channel. This categorically refuses to buy the secular and liberal and modern way of founding the epistemology and knowledge culture. Al Attas strongly stands for a divine, revealed, comprehensive, mystical way of understanding the purpose and meaning of life and the world’s interconnectedness. When he say Islam and Islamisation, he doesn’t mean it in a specific, conventional religious sense – though he is never apologetic about it – but in the sense of making a civilization that sustains and burtures its members and institutions.

As Mohammad Kaosar Ahmed (2014) noted, Islamic educationists and thinkers have put forward that the concepts of education should be anchored in the strengths of aqidah (faith or theology). They prescribe that faith and knowledge should be integrated to ensure that the individuals can be guided to be the khalifatullah (Allah’s vicegerent). Knowledge should be relied to permanent sources and not to relative ones to ensure that its existence is in line with the ultimate and permanent faith and beliefs. As human intellectual abilities are closely linked to the Creator, they argued,

educational system must be aqidah (theologically) oriented and otherwise it will produce imbalanced and less harmonious societies. The issues of modern societies - from racial violence to nuclear war to climate change - are caused by this lack of adab, they argued. In a decolonial way, they blamed the White European colonising mission for this abysmal failure of a just and sacred order. As a result of several campaigns and conferences, the Muslim educationists went into the projects of Islamisation of knowledge, which was formulated by Ismail AL Faruqi (1982) and Islamisation of Education, by Al Attas.

However, there have been critical perspectives on Syed Naquib Al Attas' work from within the Muslim world itself. For instance, Ziauddin Sardar (2017) argued that the Muslim world requires a more transdisciplinary, future-sensitive and inclusive approach towards reforming higher education. For him, though Al Attas lifts the concept of education to a new level, Al Attas is restrictive to Muslim societies and thus setting an impractical framework in a globally over-networked and multiracial environment. Sardar argued for an integration of knowledge, rather than Islamization. "The reform of Higher Education in Muslim Societies requires a paradigm shift in perspective, driven by important considerations including the aims of education itself. It may require reforming existing disciplines, inventing new ones, as well as working in conjunction with current knowledge(s) and discourses by taking effective account of the ethical, spiritual norms of Muslim society, its guiding principles and the underlying basis of its makeup and spiritual identity. Rather than creating divisions, reform of higher education in Muslim societies should recognize the plurality and diversity of the modern networked world, and seek to replace sterile and uniform approaches to knowledge with a broader and more creative understanding of reality as lived on different soils and different cultures."

In total, writings and serious deliberations on Syed Naquib Al Attas clearly describe his great philosophical accomplishment and influence in the Islamicate world, with regard to the concept, frameworks and methodologies of education, within a dewesternised, decolonial and demodernised worldview.



## Discussion

A thorough review of the available works on both Paulo Friere and Syed Naquib Al Attas reveals the fact that both these third world scholars have been seriously investigated about by well-meaning scholars in the field of education. The various aspects of their educational vision has been dealt with occasionally by erudite scholars. The massive scholarship on Paulo Friere shows us him in better light and greater context. However, a decolonial perspective and the practical day-today aspects of educational environment are by and large missing from the studies. This makes him largely inaccessible to the teachers and school administrators who would want to follow his ideas. On the other hand, the scholarship on Syed Naquib Al Attas is no less bulky and elaborate. However, many remarkable studies have been conducted in Malay language, which in the mother tongue of Al Attas, and due to linguistic barriers, those studies are not considered in this review. In the case of studies on Naquib Al Attas, most of the studies are done within the framework of strict Islamic jargon and that may make it remote for those who are not well-versed in Muslim theological or cultural terms, despite its vast significance for anyone who is interested in the process of education. The decolonial angle of Al Attas' thought has been explored in some works as his fundamental premise comes from an antithetical perspective towards western modernity, there is certainly no study available that makes him a universally accessible figure beyond the Muslim world, though he highly deserves it. And finally, there is hardly any comparative study that analyses both Paulo Friere and Syed Naquib Al Attas by using same parameters though they could be, for the benefit of the third world in resisting oppression and injustice in deep ways.

Chapter III  
**METHODOLOGY**

# METHODOLOGY

## INTRODUCTION

Methodology is a process which reveals all those methods and techniques used by the researcher during the course of content work. The machinery of the methodology occupies a very important position in any kind of research. The vehicle of research cannot perform its function without methodology, since it outlines the detailed description of the research variables and procedures. Thus the function of methodology is to take on research work in the scientific and valid manner. Adoption of suitable methodology can raise the efficiency and dignity of the research work.

The methodology used for the study is described in this chapter under the following heads- Variables of the Study, Research Design, Research Questions, Procedure Employed for the Study, Tools and Techniques and Statistical Techniques used.

In the present study the investigator used an analytical investigation of the educational philosophy of two radical, decolonial educationalists from the third world – Paulo Friere from Brazil and Syed Naquib Al Attas from Malaysia. By using a set of tools, this research uses the methodology of qualitative content analysis in order to accomplish its objectives. In any research project, particularly in humanities and social sciences, employing the most suitable methodology is vital for the success of the thesis. Examining the objectives in the present study is made effective by employing the methodology of comparative and contrasting content analysis of two texts written by the said educationists. While doing the content analysis, a common theoretical framework has been kept and varied set of tools are used. They are described in this chapter with emphasis of their need and relevance.

## VARIABLES OF THE STUDY

Unstable or non-fixed category of each study is to be precisely stated for any scientific investigation. In this study, different aspects of education are considered the variables. These aspects include educational goals, curriculum, methods of teaching, evaluation strategies, role of learner, role of teacher and decolonial aspects.

## RESEARCH DESIGN

A research design is a framework that has been created to find answers to research questions. It is helpful in making decisions about the type of data, sources, variables, objectives and the methods for collecting and analyzing data. The design also defines the criteria by which results and conclusions are drawn. In short, a design is used to structure the research, to show how all of the major parts of the research project work together to address the central research questions.

As this study is a qualitative research, qualitative data is being used. Qualitative data encircles the descriptive experience of the data and shows the relationship between the observation and collected data in terms of interpretation and conceptual understanding of the research. This research is conducted within the framework of a qualitative content analysis of two seminal works in the context of decolonial educational reforms in the previously colonised countries. A set of tools are elaborated for the systematic analysis of the seminal texts investigated in mutual comparison and contrasting. This research uses the content analysis of their works *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* and *The Concept of Education in Islam* by Paulo Friere and Syed Naquib Al Attas respectively. Both Friere and Al Attas, the revolutionary educationists being studied in this work, have questioned the current mode of education – both in its objective, vision, content and methodology. The current system needs a thorough revision and these two decolonial scholars have important ideas to practice: in goals, content and pedagogy. This study looks each of these realities in theory and praxis and examines them by the set tools within a broad theoretical framework of decolonial educational philosophy.

When western modernity imposed its values and cosmology upon the minds of the colonised third world in Asia, Africa and South America, it has been “an

epistemological conquest". In the context of globalization and consumer capitalism, this process gets more intensified and aggravated to the extent that people get into traps of polarization and compartmentalization. Education facilitates a "culture of obedience and dependence" (slavery) than a "culture of freedom and creativity", in the backdrop of extreme privatization and commercialization of education, as Paulo Friere noted. He connected pedagogy and education with power and political oppression. Syed Naquib al-Attas, from contemporary Malaysia, called for *Islamization of Education*, in which he advocated a new philosophical approach of 'tadib', which is antithetical to the traditional understanding of 'taalim'. He also strongly stood for the innovativeness in content and methodology, against western onslaught of the eastern values and worldviews.

This research uses the data obtained from their texts, based on the specific research questions, as primary data to analyse the objectives. As both educationalists have been towering intellectuals of their times, there are several studies on their books and contributions. This study uses such analysis as secondary data and builds the original argument based on them. In short, this study not only compares and contrasts their critical perspectives, by using descriptive statistics derived from their own works and previous studies, draws suggestions and recommendations for policy reforms or creative changes in the educational field.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

In every research, there are research questions to navigate the investigation and they are set in accordance with the objectives of the study. The current educational system has been critically evaluated by several educationists in India and across the world, particularly the third world (Walia, 2016). One of the main issues is that its origin lies in the western colonial modernity, which by nature has been invasive and aggressive. As a result, it negates most of the indigenous knowledge traditions and wisdoms, and simply relies on the idea of epistemological conquest to cherish on its own (Kumar, 2014).

The developmental processes and economic growth of the countries largely depend on the western model, thanks to the westernization of mindsets across the world. Various educational commissions and educational philosophers in the third

world have pointed out the original incapability of the flawed educational system – in its content, structure, methodology, objectives and policies (Alvares, 2011). As India is a leading third world country in the world, this paper critically investigates the possibility of a comprehensive educational philosophy that can be adapted for the future citizens of a truly independent and liberated India.

As mentioned before, this paper intentionally brings forth two legendary educationists from two different parts of the third world - Paulo Friere of Brazil and Syed Naquib Al Attas of Malaysia. What is common to both of them are they come from third world countries that were colonized by the west. They both are against western ideological and epistemological hegemony of the west and aim at the liberation of the mind and the spirit through education. Friere's philosophy leads to critical pedagogy and a profound freedom in knowing and questioning the dynamics of oppression. Eventually it leads to an equal bargain with the power and targets to ameliorating the oppression and violence (Friere, 1970). On the other hand, Al Attas, a staunch critic of the western idea of secular education shakes the foundations of western modernity by arguing for a rearrangement of values, in terms of imagining and practicing civilization. Through individual and communitarian ethics in theorem and praxis, education plays a significant role in reorienting the mindscape of the "post-secular" humans (Attas, 1978).

However, the present study focuses on six crucial areas to analyse how Friere and Al Attas understood the current education system as a continuation of colonially designed educational project and formulated a new system. Two seminal texts of the respective authors ('Pedagogy of the Oppressed' and 'The Concept of Education in Islam') are used to examine their educational philosophy for a new paradigm for educational reforms in the third world. The variables used to analyse their philosophical framework are goal of education, curriculum, methods of teaching, evaluation strategy, role of learner and teacher and decoloniality. By using these variables, a set of questions related to the important aspects and areas of education have been formed and used as tools to answer the issues relevant. Each of these crucial elements carry important research questions that are mentioned in table 3.1.

Table 3.1  
Research Questions

Major Areas	Research Questions
Goals of Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ What is the concept of education, according to them?</li> <li>■ What are the goals of education?</li> <li>■ How can the goals of education be achieved?</li> <li>■ What are the key terms and their definitions?</li> </ul>
Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ What should be the curriculum of education, and what is its criterion?</li> <li>■ Who holds the power to decide and regulate curriculum?</li> </ul>
Methods of teaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ What is the specific pedagogy suggested by them?</li> <li>■ What are the critical issues of the current methodology?</li> </ul>
Evaluation Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ How is evaluation imagined by both these educationists?</li> <li>■ Is evaluation in the current education system desirable and advisable?</li> <li>■ How to re-imagine a new mode of evaluation?</li> </ul>
Role of learner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ What are the characteristics of a learner?</li> <li>■ - What role learner ideally plays in the learning system?</li> </ul>
Role of teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ What are the qualities of a teacher?</li> <li>■ What role teacher plays in the learning process?</li> </ul>
Decolonial Aspects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ How colonialism and education are interconnected and what is wrong with this connection?</li> <li>■ How to use decolonial tools in educational settings?</li> <li>■ What is the historical setting of the thought – colonial / western hegemonic / modern etc.</li> </ul>

## PROCEDURE EMPLOYED FOR THE STUDY

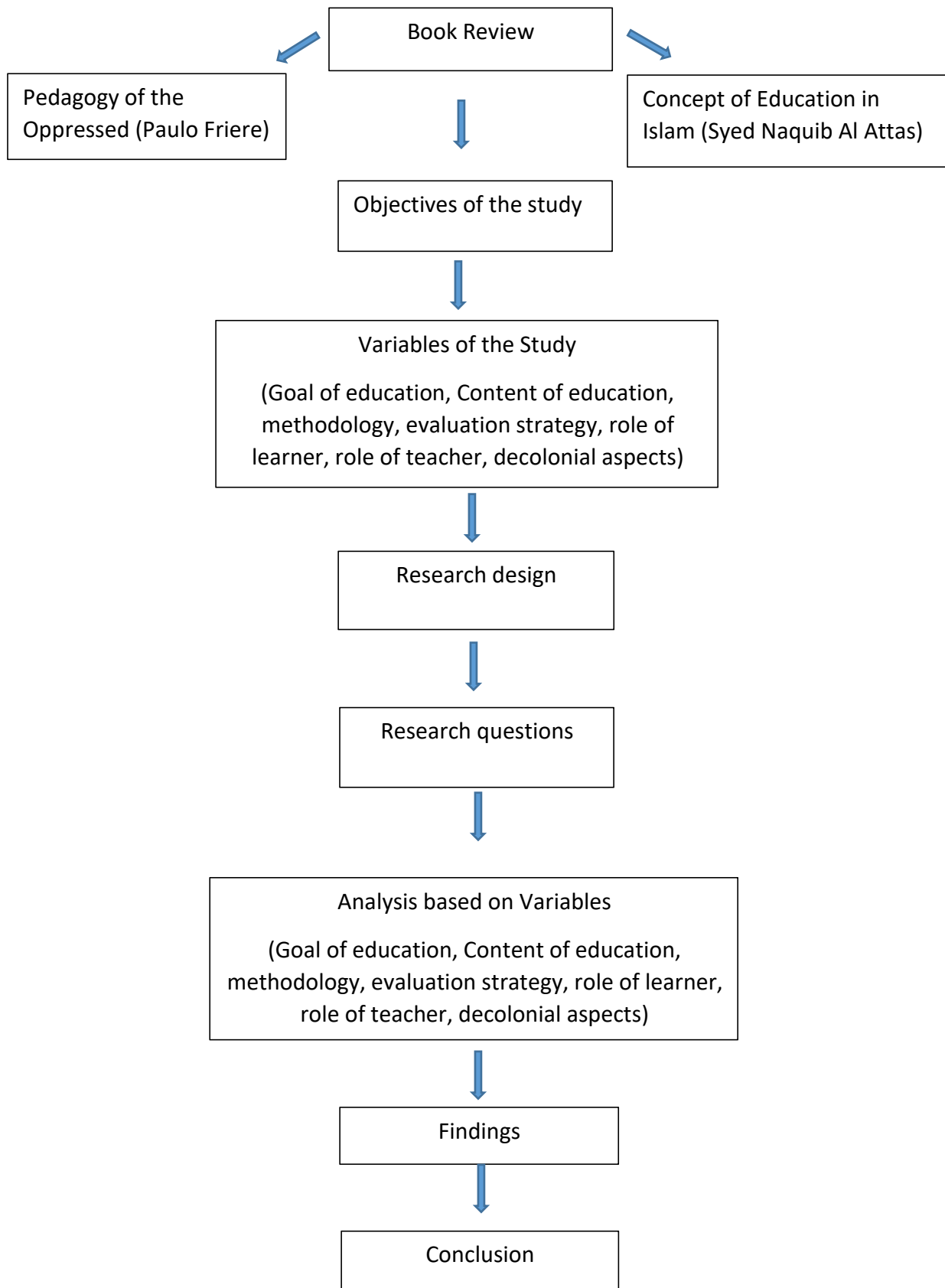
This study is qualitative in nature and scientific content analysis is being employed to meet the objectives of the research. The investigator selected *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* by Paulo Friere and *The Concept of Education in Islam* by Syed Naquib Al Attas to examine the educational philosophy of respective authors. This has been done in a broad decolonial perspective. Both these influential philosophers have strongly critiqued the contemporary educational system and the variables for analysing their model of an alternative system used in this study are the goals of education, curriculum, methods of teaching, evaluation strategy, role of learner, role of teacher and decolonial aspects. Based on the research objectives, a detailed questionnaire has been prepared, by making use of the variables. They are pertaining to the major concepts, issues and players in the field of education in a theoretical and practical sense.

This investigation being a comparative critical analysis of two educationists, the investigator selected the system of referring books and qualitative content analysis based on research questions and tools stated in the Objectives. Several books and studies already published on both the thinkers were reviewed in order to set a strong background for the study and find secondary data. The statistical technique employed was by using descriptive statistic that The procedure employed for the study was a systematic analysis of the seminal works of Paulo Friere and Syed Naquib Al Attas in order to reach the conclusions. It was a critical approach based on qualitative content analysis and comparative study based on the research questions formed from the Objectives. The analysis engaged with the research questions critically. The tools used was a set of detailed questionnaire to find how Paulo Friere and Syed Naquib Al Attas addressed the vital aspects of education in their radical rethinking of the philosophy and process of education. A flow chart has been prepared to represent the procedure followed in the methodology of content analysis. First, two texts were closely reviewed based on the objectives of the study and variables were identified. A research design was formed following a set of research questions towards systematically analysing the content and to reach findings. See figure 3.1



Figure 3.1

Flow Chart on the content analysis methodology



## **TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES**

The research questions of this study demands a qualitative approach in finding and analysing data. This study closely investigates how the variables work in the writings of the two educationists studied. This is qualitative in nature and uses content analysis, as a means to understand the seminal works of the authors – ‘Pedagogy of the Oppressed’ and ‘The Concept of Education in Islam: A Framework for an Islamic Philosophy of Education’, mainly along with other titles they have produced. The tools used for the effective and academically acceptable content analysis are listed below.

A schedule prepared by Ms. Rasheeda and the supervising teacher for the purpose of this analytical study includes the following areas of common questions that are examined in the texts of both Friere and Al Attas.

They were a set of common questions that are examined in the texts of both Friere and Al Attas, under different categories.

1. What is the concept of education, according to them?
2. What are the goals of education?
3. How can the goals of education be achieved?
4. What are the key terms and their definitions?
5. What should be the curriculum of education, and what is its criterion?
6. Who holds the power to decide and regulate curriculum?
7. What are the characteristics of a learner?
8. What role learner ideally plays in the learning system?
9. What are the qualities of a teacher?
10. What role teacher plays in the learning process?
11. How is evaluation imagined by both these educationists?
12. Is evaluation in the current education system desirable and advisable?
13. How to re-imagine a new mode of evaluation?
14. How colonialism and education are interconnected and what is wrong with this connection?
15. What is the historical setting of the thought – colonial / western hegemonic / modern etc.

16. How to use decolonial tools in educational settings?
17. What is the Conceptual Framework?
18. What are the suggested remedies?

The questions 1-4 come under the goals of education; questions 5 and 6 related to curriculum; questions 7 and 8 are about the role of learner; questions 9 and 10 about the role of teacher; questions 11 - 13 regarding evaluation strategy; and questions 14 - 18 are on decolonial aspects. The conceptual and theoretical framework of this study will make use of the answers given to these questions as its data and test the hypothesis in a social science research background.

### **STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES USED**

This study is qualitative in nature and method, and hence uses the primary data obtained from the seminal texts, based on an analytical investigation of the specific research questions. This study makes use of descriptive statistics to find the answers to the research questions. Descriptive statistics are used to describe the basic features of the data in a study. They provide simple summaries about the sample and the measures. Descriptive statistics simply describes what the data shows and helps to simplify large amounts of data in a sensible way. Each descriptive statistic reduces lots of data into a simpler summary.

Chapter IV

**ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

## ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the analysis of data collected by the investigator followed by the task of drawing inferences from these in order to realize the various objectives prescribed in the study. The key objective of the present study is to find out the educational philosophy of Brazilian educationist Paulo Friere and Malaysian educationist Syed Naquib Al Attas in a decolonial and emancipatory framework. Based on a set of tools, the content of their seminal works have been analysed to know how they perceived the fundamental aspects of education. The analysis is done in accordance with the major objectives of the study.

This study critically analyses the educational philosophy on the pedagogical visions and approaches of two great third world educationists of the 20<sup>th</sup> century – Paulo Friere from Brazil and Syed Naquib al-Attas from Malaysia.

Paulo Friere, highly influential educator and philosopher from twentieth century Brazil, penned the seminal work titled *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, in which he advocated critical pedagogy. His work and philosophy was to liberate the people from former colonies where they suffered from illiteracy, oppression and injustice. He also connected pedagogy and education with power and political oppression. In short, Paulo Friere's philosophy leads to critical pedagogy and a profound freedom in knowing and questioning the dynamics of oppression – eventually leading to an equal bargain with the power and thus ameliorating oppression and violence.

Syed Naquib Al Attas Attas is a prominent contemporary Muslim philosopher and thinker from Malaysia. He is one of the few contemporary scholars who is thoroughly rooted in the traditional Islamic science and who is equally competent in theology. He made path breaking contribution in the field of education deeply influenced the Muslim world and led to the project of Islamisation of education. In the process, they philosophically shakes the foundations of western modernity and argues for a rearrangement of values, in terms of imagining and practicing civilization. Through individual and communitarian ethics in theorem and praxis, education plays a significant role in reorienting the mindscape of the “post-secular” humans.

Based on the seminal, ground-breaking works written by both these educationists, this study investigates the issues of education in a decolonial context and perspective. ‘Pedagogy of the Oppressed’ by Paulo Friere advocates Critical Pedagogy, his work and philosophy was to a profound exploration of the pathology of the current educational system and a call to rework on it in a liberation perspective. Syed Naquib al-Attas, in his seminal work titled ‘The Concept of Education in Islam: A Framework for an Islamic Philosophy of Education’, proposed the revolutionary idea of *Islamization of Education*, with radically new philosophical imagination of ‘ta’dib’ in education, instead of the traditionally understood ‘taalim’, with many takers across the Muslims world.

As both these influential projects reshaped the educational scenes of the world in different ways, this study attempts to understand their basics. The different aspects of education are considered as the variables: including educational goals, curriculum, methods of teaching, role of learner, role of teacher and decolonial aspects. As stated objective, this study investigates the philosophical framework of Paulo Friere and Syed Naquib Al Attas, by analyzing important aspects of education in different cultural settings in the framework of Paulo Friere and Al Attas.

The methodology of the research in the present study is content analysis; a qualitative analysis of the two above-mentioned books are being carried out by using a set of tools, based on a broad common theoretical framework of decoloniality.

The goals of the study are:

(1) To investigate the philosophical framework of Paulo Friere and Syed Naquib Al Attas

(2) To analyse the essential aspects of education in the framework of Paulo Friere and Al Attas.

(3) To investigate the decolonial aspects of their perspectives in the context of reforms in the third world.

These aspects or tools for investigations were identified in seven major areas such as:

- a) Goals of education
- b) Curriculum
- c) Methods of teaching
- d) Evaluation strategy
- e) Role of learner
- f) Role of teacher

g) Decolonial aspects

The research questions of this study demanded a qualitative approach in finding and analysing data. There were certain tools used for the effective and academically acceptable content analysis. They were a set of common questions that are examined in the texts of both Friere and Al Attas, under different categories.

1. What is the concept of education, according to them?
2. What are the goals of education?
3. How can the goals of education be achieved?
4. What are the key terms and their definitions?
5. What should be the content of education, and what is its criterion?
6. Who holds the power to decide and regulate curriculum?
7. What are the characteristics of a learner?
8. What role learner ideally plays in the learning system?
9. What are the qualities of a teacher?
10. What role teacher plays in the learning process?
11. How is evaluation imagined by both these educationists?
12. Is evaluation in the current education system desirable and advisable?
13. How to re-imagine a new mode of evaluation?
14. How colonialism and education are interconnected and what is wrong with this connection?
15. What is the historical setting of the thought – colonial / western hegemonic / modern etc.
16. How to use decolonial tools in educational settings?
17. What is the Conceptual Framework?
18. What are the suggested remedies?

The table below shows the seven major areas of the present study and a set of research questions related to each variable. In order to conduct the qualitative analysis of Paulo Friere and Syed Naquib Al Attas, a detailed questionnaire has been created and they belong to seven set of major areas that the current study focuses, which is presented in Table 4.1

**Table 4.1**  
**Variables and Research Questions**

Major Areas	Research Questions
Goals of Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ What is the concept of education, according to them?</li> <li>■ What are the goals of education?</li> <li>■ How can the goals of education be achieved?</li> <li>■ What are the key terms and their definitions?</li> </ul>
Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ What should be the content of education, and what is its criterion?</li> <li>■ Who holds the power to decide and regulate curriculum?</li> </ul>
Methods of teaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ What is the specific pedagogy suggested by them?</li> <li>■ What are the critical issues of the current methodology?</li> </ul>
Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ How is evaluation imagined by both these educationists?</li> <li>■ Is evaluation in the current education system desirable and advisable?</li> <li>■ How to re-imagine a new mode of evaluation?</li> </ul>
Role of learner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ What are the characteristics of a learner?</li> <li>■ What role learner ideally plays in the learning system?</li> </ul>
Role of teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ What are the qualities of a teacher?</li> <li>■ What role teacher plays in the learning process?</li> </ul>
Decolonial Aspects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ How colonialism and education are interconnected and what is wrong with this connection?</li> <li>■ How to use decolonial tools in educational settings?</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ What is the historical setting of the thought – colonial / western hegemonic / modern etc.</li> </ul>
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Based on the major areas and research questions in the table, the analysis on the educational philosophy of Friere and Al Attas is made.

The book ‘Pedagogy of the Oppressed’ became an international classic and game-changer in the educational sector. Friere defined education as freedom and critiqued that traditional teaching styles kept the poor powerless by treating them as passive, silent recipients of knowledge. On the other hand, he advocated to learn and unlearn through co-operation, dialogue and critical thinking, inevitably helping the people to identify their source of oppression. The major concepts he discussed are critical thinking, oppression, banking system of education, problem posing education etc. He promoted the liberation of working classes through a cooperative teacher student model.

Syed Naquib Al Attas wrote his highly influential work ‘The Concept of Education in Islam: A Framework for an Islamic Philosophy of Education’, followed by further elaborations and reflections and it radically re-defined education, on a very philosophical ground, across the Muslim world. This book argues that the aim of education should be for the cultivation of desirable behaviour than the accumulation of knowledge. According to him human beings are rationale and spiritual. Another major concept in this path-breaking book is that the goals of education is to understand the creator and his creation, in a deeper and holistic sense and thus grasp the proper place of every object in the system. The hierarchy of knowledge is another fundamental notion of Al Attas and his school.

A detailed analysis of Paulo Friere and Syed Naquib Al Attas based on the previously stated research questions are as follows. Although their thinking and practice occur from extremely diverse backgrounds - Paulo Friere from a Christianised Marxist humanism in Brazil and Syed Naquib Al Attas from a classical Islamic philosophy in Malaysia - there are several aspects that overlap deeply in their theorem and praxis.

### a) CONTENT ANALYSIS BASED ON GOALS OF EDUCATION

The goals of education have been analysed based on the four questions stated below:

- What is the concept of education, according to them?
- What are the goals of education?
- How can the goals of education be achieved?
- What are the key terms and their definitions?

What should be the goals of education in an emancipatory setting, according to Paulo Friere and Syed Naquib Al Attas, is presented in Table 4.2:

**Table 4.2**

**Goals of Education in the philosophy of Paulo Friere and Syed Naquib Al Attas**

<b>Paulo Friere</b>	<b>Syed Naquib Al Attas</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ To enable the learner to understand oppression and injustice in the system through ‘conscientization’.</li> <li>■ To give tools and tactics to challenge and question injustice and oppression, instead of ‘banking education’.</li> <li>■ To create a critical consciousness in a learner</li> <li>■ To empower the liberation of working class people</li> <li>■ To recognize dehumanization in the system and make efforts to rehumanise.</li> <li>■ To enable critically addressing the social, cultural, political and economic conditions and challenges of the society in a justice perspective.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ To cultivate ‘adab’ and understand the meaning and original place of every object in the cosmological system or the divine hierarchy of things.</li> <li>■ To know the creator, the harmonious nature of His creation and sustenance and contribute to its rhythm and do not violently disrupt its flow. In other words, understand the ecological and spiritual ethos of life.</li> <li>■ To nurture the language of the heart, to lead towards ‘adab’.</li> <li>■ To inculcate ‘Adab’ in the lives of human beings and let them internalize it.</li> <li>■ To learn systems of mutual connections and understand interconnected meanings.</li> </ul>

While we consider the first point of analytical investigation, the goals of education, for Paulo Friere, is to enable the learner to understand oppression and injustice in the system. He argued that the goal of the education system in current oppressive societies is to prepare people to passively adapt to oppressive social structures, and he wanted to have a system that enables each individual to understand oppression and equip herself with challenging it. He also suggested that education is supposed to give tools and tactics to challenge and question injustice and oppression. This process is ‘conscientization’, which is against the concept of ‘banking education’. It should thus create a critical consciousness in learner and empower the working class people towards liberation. Friere believed that one of the major purposes of education is to recognize dehumanization in the socio-political system and there should be efforts to rehumanise. He also advocated to enable critically addressing the social, cultural, political and economic conditions and challenges of the society in a justice perspective.

While working on the primary investigation point of the goal of education, Al Attas brings forth idea of *adab*, and places it in the center stage of the educational process. Traditionally, across the Muslim world, the understanding has been that education is all about *ilm* (knowledge) rather than *adab*. He defined *adab* and elaborated it in a deeply philosophical and cosmological sense. In Arabic lexicon, *adab* has two typical meanings: proper manners and literature. However, Attas went far beyond this notion and argued *adab* encompasses the divine just order of the things in the universe. Knowing and respecting this hierarchy was *adab*, for him. Education’s purpose was to cultivate ‘*adab*’ and understand the meaning and original place of every object in the cosmological system or the divine hierarchy of things. Attas rechristened the word used in Arabic and across the Muslim world, from *Taalim* to *Ta’dib*. Or from imparting knowledge to inculcating and internalising *adab*. Thus, the aim of education is to know the creator, the harmonious nature of His creation and sustenance and contribute to its rhythm and do not violently disrupt its flow. In other words, understand the ecological and spiritual ethos of life and practice it. Other goals of education, for Attas were, to nurture the language of the heart in order to lead towards *adab*. He argued that having *adab* is also about learning systems of mutual connections and understand interconnected meanings of the divine universe.

In short, conscientisation or adab - respectively by Friere and Al Attas - are the goal of education for these two educationists. Equipping learners with critical consciousness, Friere believed and argued, through courageous conversations and making each one aware of the modus operandi and source of oppression, is the conceptual framework Paulo Friere sets for education. The goals are achieved only when the learner is self-sufficient in an active conscientisation-supported resistance to oppression. At the same time, Al Attas brought the word adab and taadib to the center of the discourse on education in the Muslim world. Instead of the traditionally proclaimed ilm (knowledge), he advocated adab, the divine hierarchical order of things and values in the universe. Such an education would lead to a harmonious and peaceful living, he professed.

## b) CONTENT ANALYSIS BASED ON THE CONTENT OF EDUCATION

The second variable the present study investigates is the curriculum or content of education. Two questions have been used to analyse this; they are:

- What should be the content of education, and what is its criterion?
- Who holds the power to decide and regulate curriculum?

In any attempt to re-imagine education, the content is vitally significant and by using this analytical tool, this study investigates how Friere and Al Attas envisioned the content of education, which is presented in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3

### Curriculum of education as perceived by Friere and Al Attas

Paulo Friere	Syed Naquib Al Attas
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The content should enable the pupils recognize oppression and challenge it effectively, towards 'conscientization'.</li> <li>■ Opposed 'banking education' and 'narration sickness'.</li> <li>■ Encouraged problem posing.</li> <li>■ Education is a practice of freedom, it should oppose the practice of</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Knowledge has a hierarchy; all knowledge and disciplines cannot be equated.</li> <li>■ Revealed knowledge and acquired knowledge to be distinguished.</li> <li>■ Certain knowledge are prioritized over others.</li> <li>■ Revealed knowledge has to be the basis for acquired knowledge so that</li> </ul>

<p>domination.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Praxis, theory and practical aspects needed in the curriculum.</li> <li>■ The content or curriculum must not be imposed undemocratically upon the community.</li> </ul>	<p>humans are able to grasp the natural order – adab – of the universe and act without zulm.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ A pious and knowledgeable body of educationists must prepare the content.</li> </ul>
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The concept that Paulo Friere brought forward regarding the content of education is of vital importance. As his theoretical framework generally goes, education is a practice of freedom, and it should oppose the practice of domination. He emphasised that praxis, theory and practical aspects are needed in the curriculum. Hence the content should enable the pupils recognise oppression and challenge it effectively, which leads towards conscientization. He was against the teacher-student relationship being a subject-object relationship and opposed ‘banking education’ that suffers from ‘narration sickness’. He promoted problem posing rather. He professed a joint endeavour of cooperation and co-creation and opposed the dominance of teacher upon student. Also, Friere believed that the content should not be imposed upon the local community without their being consulted of their needs and issues.

Al Attas has a comparatively philosophical notion of the content of education. Attasian epistemology draws heavily from the classical knowledge traditions of Islamic civilization and categorically says there are two kinds of knowledge, in the general sense - revealed knowledge and acquired knowledge. The first category is the direct revelation from God, the holy scriptures. All other knowledge that humans acquire through means of senses, experiences, explorations et al should be based on the spirit of revelation, or divinely notified wisdom, in whichever tradition. The only way to grasp the natural order - adab - of things in the world and to act and live without zulm (disorder or injustice or violence) is to have the acquired knowledge based upon the revealed knowledge. In short, all knowledge and disciplines cannot be equated and certain knowledge are prioritized over other branches of knowledge. To reach adab in thought and practice, one needs to understand the hierarchy of knowledge, so the system of education should take this into consideration while designing the structure and format of the content. Attas further said that the process of

education should be done with a thorough understanding of the fact that it is not about merely imparting ilm (knowledge) but instilling adab (sense of order). In effect, a knowledgeable body of scholars who are aware of the adab can only prepare content.

To conclude this part of the discussion, one could say that the content of education should be designed towards a manifestation of freedom from oppression and violence (for Friere), and a pro-active, non-interventionist appreciation of the divine, just order in the universe, (for Al Attas). The criterion for Attas was a division of revealed and acquired knowledge and their symbiotic relationships. The agency to decide and regulate curriculum should not be blindly left to governments as both thinkers said. The people - including teachers, parents and teachers - and learners should have a stake.

### c) CONTENT ANALYSIS BASED ON METHODOLOGY OF EDUCATION

In order to implement an educational concept effectively, the pedagogical or methodological side of instruction is important. There are two important questions used to analyse this area:

- What is the specific pedagogy suggested by Friere and Attas?
- What are the critical issues of the current methodology?

This part of the study analyses the specific vision on pedagogy that both Friere and Al Attas shared in their books, which is given in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4

#### Methodology of education in the perspective of Friere and Attas

Paulo Friere	Syed Naquib Al Attas
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Co-operative teacher-student educational model; a joint endeavor and no domination of the teacher. Both grow in the process.</li> <li>■ Dialogical and problem posing education in order to unveil realities</li> <li>■ True revolution is possible through courageous dialogues.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The process should be done with a thorough understanding of the fact that it is not about merely imparting ilm (knowledge), but instilling adab (sense of order).</li> <li>■ Acquired knowledge must be passed on to those whose revealed knowledge is deep and vast.</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The process is to maximize the creative power of students</li> <li>■ Build a critical conscience</li> <li>■ Humanization is not possible by injustice, exploitation, oppression and violence of the oppressors.</li> <li>■ Praxis is needed to transform the world.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The hierarchy of knowledge has to be respectfully kept in place.</li> </ul>
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About the important part of the methodology of teaching or rather the pedagogy, Paulo Friere stood for dialogical and problem posing methods, in order to unveil realities. It is true and genuine dialogues that help us evolve to have critical consciousness. He even said that revolution is possible through courageous dialogue process. Here, not only students, but teachers also evolve, grow and transform. This process leads to maximise the creative power of students by building a critical consciousness. As Friere theorised that the educational process should aim at re-humanizing people, as they go through a dehumanization process, he also argued re-humanizing is not possible in an atmosphere of injustice, exploitation and violence. Such a praxis of courageous and critical pedagogy has the potential to transform the world. He was unambiguously against the “banking” concept of education. He famously said, the current education system is suffering from “narration sickness” as it presupposes teacher as knowing everything and student as knowing nothing.

Syed Naquib Al Attas talks about the methodology of education on a minimal level. For him, it is taken for granted that if the teacher and learner are both prepared to reframe their approach to education in a ta’dib way, instead of the conventional taalim way, that in itself reveals the methodology. As Al Attas was a committed Sufi mystic in his own way, and as a scholar whose works have delved into the aspects of Sufism in Islamic ontology, one can argue that his methodology of teaching modeled after a contextual adaptation of the Master-Disciple relationship of purification of the heart in Sufi mystical schools. However, he argues in the book that the educational process should be done with a thorough understanding of the fact that it is not about merely imparting ilm (knowledge), but instilling adab (sense of order). Acquired

knowledge must be passed on to those whose revealed knowledge is deep and vast and the hierarchy of knowledge has to be respectfully kept in place.

In nutshell, Friere suggested a specific pedagogy which was dialogical and not based on banking education that did not suffer from narration sickness. This helps student to learn, think and act freely, and guides towards locating and resisting oppression. Similarly, Al Attas advocated a more intellectual, metaphysical method of imbibing adab, rather than knowing the names of things but comprehending the deep ontological and linguistic values of it.

#### **d) CONTENT ANALYSIS BASED ON EVALUATION STRATEGY**

In modern education settings, evaluation is very vital. This part critically examines how the philosophies of Friere and Al Attas looked into that aspect. There are three questions used to investigate this vital and practical concern:

- How is evaluation imagined by both these educationists?
- Is evaluation in the current education system desirable and advisable?
- How to re-imagine a new mode of evaluation?

The evaluation strategies and perspectives devised by Friere and Attas are presented in table 4.5

**Table 4.5**

**Perspectives on Evaluation strategy by Friere and Attas**

<b>Paulo Friere</b>	<b>Syed Naquib Al Attas</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Assessment of critical consciousness and problem posing skills.</li> <li>■ Evaluation is a critical act of conscientization of one's gender, class, race privileges.</li> <li>■ Checking if theoretical and practical capability to critically engage with the forces of hegemony is acquired.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Assessment of a deep awareness of adab or divine hierarchy of things.</li> <li>■ Capability to re-imagine hierarchically problematic orders or priorities of increasingly urbanised living.</li> </ul>



The most important thing about the question of evaluation is that both Friere and Al Attas do not directly speak about or endorse the prevalent idea of structured and formal evaluation that is dominating in the modern educational system. They both are against the judgmental, memory-checking, examination based approach of evaluation as their educational philosophy is fundamentally against the modern way of evaluating the complex and multi-layered learning processes. However, from what Paulo Friere formulated, one can argue that the assessment of critical consciousness and problem posing skills could be aimed in his adaptation. Friere believed that everyone needs to be able to evaluate, as a critical act of conscientization, one's gender, class and race privileges. Also, one could check if theoretical and practical capability to critically engage with the forces of hegemony is acquired.

Similarly, Syed Naquib Al Attas also does not openly endorse the current approach of evaluation systems. He aims at a different system of learning, which is more about metaphysical growth and emotional transformations, which is beyond objective measurement strategies. From what he suggested, one can argue that the assessment of a deep awareness of adab or divine hierarchy of things could be done. Capability to re-imagine hierarchically problematic orders or priorities of increasingly urbanised living is another aspect of evaluation in the philosophy of Al Attas.

In short, both these educationists are highly critical of the current approaches to evaluation in a philosophical perspective. They believe it is too modernist and hence as a result doesn't take into account learner as a full human being, with the potential to learn, think and act on her own. The current evaluation criterion gives importance to bookish knowledge and tests learner for employability, mostly. This negates the full potential of creative, emotional and intellectual growth of diverse skills in both political and spiritual realms.

#### **e) CONTENT ANALYSIS BASED ON UNDERSTANDING THE LEARNER**

This part of the study tries to answer how these educationists defined the central player of education, the learner. Two questions are used for this analysis:

- What are the characteristics of a learner?
- What role learner ideally plays in the learning system?

By using these two questions as analytical tools, Friere and Attas are examined and the result is given in Table 4.6

Table 4.6

Role of Learner in the educational framework of Friere and Attas

Paulo Friere	Syed Naquib Al Attas
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Learner has the potential to locate her position in the system and struggle for social justice</li> <li>■ Not a passive recipient of “banking education”</li> <li>■ Free being, freedom may not be gifted, but to be attained by conquest</li> <li>■ Humans are not abstract, isolated, independent and attached to the world.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Meaningful human being / the God-given meaning is not only rational, but also spiritual.</li> <li>■ A being with language and sense of beauty</li> <li>■ Has the capacity to recognize the order of things in a grand hierarchy</li> <li>■ Physical being with spirit/soul</li> </ul>

The second analytical tool of this study is to examine how Friere and Attas defined or understood learner, the key player in the process. Here, it could be argued that Paulo Friere seems to have a deeply philosophical and even metaphysically inclined perspective about human beings in a holistic way. He wrote that humans are not abstract, isolated, independent beings and attached to the world. For him, humans are free beings and freedom need not be gifted, but to be attained by conquest. He said the learner has the potential to recognise the oppression in the system and to locate its sources and hence she should be able to struggle for inner justice and social justice.

For Al Attas, defining a learner is defining human beings. It is not just natural, but understanding the nature of humans is the essential core of educating her. Attas understood and preached that humans are meaningful beings and the meaning is not only rational, but also divine, or God-given. In other words, there is a strong Islamic spiritual and metaphysical realms to his fundamentals of education. Attas states that humans are creatures with language and sense of beauty. And they are blessed with a natural capacity to almost precisely recognise the natural or divinely ordained order of things in the grand schematic hierarchy. To cut short a long argument, which is

inescapably against the western, secular understanding of humans, Attas emphasises on the human spirit - humans are physical beings with spirits, he said.

This study finds that clearly defining and understanding learner is vital in re-imagining a critical education system. Friere demanded the learner to treat as an independent and active being capable of her own freedom and agency, defying passive and dominant “banking” upon her. Attas gave the learner many positive characteristics as she is a spiritual being capable of growing to the depths and vastness of the universe provided they are given a right chance to comprehend and practice the divine hierarchy of things in the world. In both cases, learner is capable of an active role of growth and discoveries, unlike the passive system of reception in the current system. In other words, they are referring to a positive level of learner autonomy in their own ways.

#### **f) CONTENT ANALYSIS BASED ON ROLE OF TEACHER**

Critically understanding the role of teacher is the next analytical tool that this study employs in investigating the educational philosophy of Friere and Al Attas. There are two questions that is used to analyse this area:

- What are the qualities of a teacher?
- What role teacher plays in the learning process?

The table 4.7 describes the way Friere and Attas imagined the role of teacher in an educational system.

**Table 4.7**  
Role of teacher as imagined by Friere and Attas

<b>Paulo Friere</b>	<b>Syed Naquib Al Attas</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Democratic and unoppressive and non-dominating.</li> <li>■ Works against “banking” and is not addicted to “narration sickness”.</li> <li>■ Encourages dialogue and is prepared to co-learn with the learner.</li> <li>■ Helps learner to think critically, to</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Teacher is someone who understands the epistemological difference between revealed knowledge and acquired knowledge.</li> <li>■ Knows ilm and adab and takes wholehearted effort to inculcate it.</li> <li>■ Understands the need for liberation</li> </ul>

<p>become creative and imaginative.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Comprehends the human nature and fights the dehumanization process in the oppressive system.</li> </ul>	<p>and the use of language in the process.</p>
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As it has already been described, Paulo Friere has elaborately reflected upon the role of teacher, in his philosophy. Fundamentally, a teacher should have comprehended the human nature of freedom and the nature of justice in the earth. So, the teacher is essentially equipped to fight the dehumanization process in the oppressive system. Teacher typically should help learner to think critically, to become genuinely creative, imaginative and courageous. Also, he suggested the teacher must ideally be trained to be democratic and non-dominating, and must be prepared to learn from/with the learner in the environment. Also, the teacher is away from the typical “banking education” and devoid of “narration sickness”.

When it comes to Al Attas, defining and understanding teacher is again deeply philosophical. Attas believes that teacher is someone who understands the epistemological and ontological difference between revealed knowledge and acquired knowledge. She must be able to comprehend the true nature of human being and respect its needs and potentials. A teacher in the framework of Attar discretely knows ilm and adab and takes wholehearted effort to inculcate it. The teachers also understand the need for liberation and the use of language in the process.

Unlike in the current, prevalent modern education system, both these thinkers give hugely significant role to play for teachers in an effective system of emancipatory learning process. First of all, teaching requires certain philosophical aptitude towards learning and co-learning on a continuous basis. Friere asked teachers not to be oppressive and dominant and facilitate the co-learning through a dialogical process. This demands immense confidence and indepth knowledge from the part of teachers, along with a thorough understanding of the modus operandi and sources of oppression in the political system. Al Attas asks the teacher to be learned individuals who have a clear and deep understanding of the divine hierarchy - adab - and is committed to practice it respectfully in epistemological and sociological realms.

### g) CONTENT ANALYSIS BASED ON DECOLONIAL ASPECTS

In post-colonial times, removing the colonial burdens and hang-overs of the western imperial and intellectual hegemony is a vital concern, among third world thinkers and educational practitioners. This part of the study deals with how Friere and Al Attas looked into this significant aspect of education in their works, by asking three central questions listed below:

- How colonialism and education are interconnected and what is wrong with this connection?
- How to use decolonial tools in educational settings?
- What is the historical setting of the thought – colonial / western hegemonic / modern etc.

The analysis on the decolonial aspects of education in the thoughts of Friere and Attas based on the above questions are presented in table 4.8

Table 4.8

#### Decolonial aspects of education in the framework of Friere and Attas

Paulo Friere	Syed Naquib Al Attas
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Systemic oppression has its roots in colonialism in modern times.</li> <li>■ Colonial masters are replaced by local oppressors in most of the third world, but the injustice and violence continues.</li> <li>■ Education system was introduced in colonies as a tool of controlling its subjects, as a continuation of oppression.</li> <li>■ Colonial system of education doesn't help understanding the source of oppression and learners need to be equipped for a dialogue with power.</li> <li>■ Education should be a practice of</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Strong critique of western modernity and Euro-centric approaches in education</li> <li>■ Secular philosophy is central to European idea of conquest and it is antithetical to harmonious living, ordained in the religious traditions of the East, particularly Islam.</li> <li>■ Decolonizing the mind and worldviews is vital to educate a holistically healthy and happy society.</li> <li>■ Colonisation is inhuman and blasphemous and its continuity through education leads to a more</li> </ul>

<p>freedom and educational settings should be devoid of fear and imposed disciplines.</p>	<p>violent epistemological imbalance in third world.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Traditional knowledge systems should be respected and maintained for generations to come.</li> </ul>
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The de-colonial aspect of education is the final analytical enquiry in this study. Friere, like many other post-colonial thinkers of his times, believed that the systemic oppression in the modern times has its roots in colonialism. Even though colonialism has ended in the historic sense, he thought the local oppressors have replaced the colonial masters and the unjust violence continues unabated. Education, hence, should enable individuals to reassess the colonised epistemological burdens of the society they live in. He also argued that the colonial system of education doesn't help understanding the source of oppression and learners need to be equipped for a dialogue with power. The reform projects undertaken by independent governments in the third world countries were not radically aware of the issues of colonial conquest. Hence it remained a space of control and fear rather than providing a space of fearlessness and courage. Education should be a practice of freedom and educational settings should be devoid of fear and imposed disciplines.

Al Attas has been a very strong critic of western modernity and Eurocentric approaches in education. In this particular work and classic argumentation like 'Islam and Secularism', he has virulently attacked European secularism in a decolonial spirit. He was convinced that the secular philosophy is central to European idea of conquest and it is antithetical to harmonious living, ordained in the religious traditions of the East, particularly Islam. In essence, decolonizing the mind and worldviews is vital to educate a just and jovial society. He argued that colonisation is an inhuman and blasphemous project of conquest, racist enslaving of people and plunder of resources. As history has so much of evidence of its arrogance and cruelties, he said its continuity through education would only lead to a more violent epistemological imbalance in third world. Attas suggested that the traditional knowledge systems should be respected and maintained for generations to come.

Invariably, these two educationists from the third world believed that the current educational system is a byproduct of modernity and colonialism. This historic indebtedness of education to colonialism is deeply problematic in a post-colonial world. Education should be a tool of decolonial emancipation for both of them, albeit in different ways, to challenge and come out of western hegemony over the third world cultures.

## Discussion

To conclude the qualitative analysis, a quick comparison and contrasting will be of good help. Paulo Friere and Syed Naquib Al Attas belonged to two different worlds and cultures. The former in Brazil and the latter in Malaysia. Their worldviews, contexts and approaches were different though they both worked in relatively same decades in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and both were focused in education in their own ways. Both were deeply skeptical and radically critical of the modern education system. They did not believe it could be reformed, rather they thought the modern system of education should be dismantled and reimaged. They invested considerable time and efforts of their lives to concretely redefine the principal concepts, philosophical framework and pedagogical methods of education.

Both aimed at liberation: Friere in a strictly political and socio-economic sense and Attas in cultural, political and spiritual sense. Which was more profound is just a matter of debate. Both had very noble intentions towards saving and serving humanity. Friere, from his impoverished childhood itself, witnessed institutionalized poverty and exploitation all his life, and wanted to put a profound halt on it. That was how he devised a specific pedagogy of the oppressed people with an aim to equip them fight back oppression. On the other hand, Attas was deeply disturbed by the chaotic disintegration of humans into compartmentalised blocks of living and thus losing the sense of natural order in the universe and hence contributing to injustice and oppression. Here, unlike Friere, Attas is not only thinking or talking about the political oppression prevalent, but also about unjust orders and disorders within individual souls itself.

In the cases of the content, Friere fought against banking system of education and advocated for freedom. His aim was to enable people locate the source of content and equip them to have courageous conversations so that change is more likely to come.

Here, he was apparently viewing a better society and individuals with better freedom and sense of justice. For Attas, content was more about understanding the distinct and divine hierarchy of knowledge. He relied on the power of revelation as received and revered in different religious traditions.

While Friere was against teaching student as empty and passive, Attas was about respecting the child towards self-discovery, of body and soul. A level of integrity and integration could be felt in both. To conclude this, the decolonial angle is the strongest. Friere challenged the capitalist logic of profit and exploitation and formulated a way of co-creating spaces where co-learning authentically takes place.



Chapter V

**SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS**

## **SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS**

This chapter gives a summary of procedures, major findings of the study, educational implications and suggestions for further research in this area. This study is titled **DECOLONIAL EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY IN THIRD WORLD: AN ANALYTICAL STUDY ON PAULO FRIERE AND SYED NAQUIB AL ATTAS**.

### **THE STUDY IN RETROSPECT**

While one concludes the qualitative content analysis of the seminal works of Paulo Friere and Syed Naquib Al Attas, there are parallels and differences. The most striking aspect about them is the fact that they both are against the modern educational system, that has its historic origin in the western colonial project. However, their disagreements with the system have different arguments and contexts, but deep inside their philosophical frame resemble each other. Arguably, as every student of history knows, the western educational system and its paradigms, structure and formats spread across the globe through colonialism. Only in a few places, either indigenous knowledge exchange systems survived or non-western ways were evolved.

A critical analysis of Paulo Friere and Syed Naquib Al Attas shows that both of them saw humans - learners - in their holistic integrity, beyond their mere economic potential and productivity of the capitalist economic logic. In effect, the aim of education for both of them is not to make “productive citizens”, in the conventional practical sense. Paulo Friere’s focus is on the binary of oppression and liberation in the system and hence he believes education should enable learners to recognise the oppression and the source of oppression. The abstraction and independence of humans are a point to note in the way Paulo Friere defines learner. Similarly, Syed Naquib Al Attas is very convinced of and even advocates the metaphysical and spiritual essence of humans. He brings in the sense of meaning and beauty that humans are endowed with and connects it with knowing and practicing the natural order of things (adab) in the universe. The oppression Friere talking about originates from the lack of adab for Attas, in an attempt to connect both visions. So, when one realises the depth and breadth of oppression (zulm, in Attar’s jargon) as a system, the remedy lies in internalising the adab.

It is interesting to note that what Paulo Friere calls as oppression is ‘zulum’ for Attas, though their definitions are different on the surface. But in a deeper introspection, both are the same. And it is the antonym of adab, or the divine order of things in the universe. Paulo Friere believes that education should lead to freedom and as a practice, it should be freedom in itself. Syed Naquib Al Attas, similarly, believes that education should lead to a thorough understanding of adab as a universal principle and an internalisation of it in thought and action.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The objectives of the study are the following.

- I) To investigate the philosophical framework of Paulo Friere and Syed Naquib Al Attas.
- II) To analyse the following aspects of education in different cultural settings in the framework of Paulo Friere and Syed Naquib Al Attas.
  - g) Goals of education
  - h) Curriculum
  - i) Methods of teaching
  - j) Evaluation strategy
  - k) Role of learner
  - l) Role of teacher
- III) To compare the decolonial elements of pedagogy in Brazilian and Malay settings in the thoughts of Paulo Friere and Syed Naquib Al Attas.

### **METHODOLOGY**

The research questions of this study demands a qualitative approach in finding and analysing data. This study closely investigates how the variables work in the writings of the two educationists studied. This is qualitative in nature and uses content analysis, as a means to understand the seminal works of the authors – ‘Pedagogy of the Oppressed’ and ‘The Concept of Education in Islam: A Framework for an Islamic Philosophy of Education’, mainly along with other titles they have produced. The tools used for the effective and academically acceptable content analysis are listed below.

## RESEARCH DESIGN

This research used the data obtained from the seminal texts of Paulo Friere and Syed Naquib Al Attas, based on the specific research questions, as primary data to analyse the objectives. As both educationalists have been towering intellectuals of their times, there are several studies on their books and contributions. This study used such analysis as secondary data to build the original argument based on them. In short, this study not only compares and contrasts their critical perspectives, by using descriptive statistics derived from their own works and previous studies, draws suggestions and recommendations for policy reforms or creative changes in the educational field. A schedule prepared by Ms. Rasheeda and the supervising teacher for the purpose of this analytical study includes the following areas of common questions that are examined in the texts of both Friere and Al Attas.

The research design was followed by a set of research questions that are commonly used to examine the texts of both Friere and Al Attas, under different categories.

1. What is the concept of education, according to them?
2. What are the goals of education?
3. How can the goals of education be achieved?
4. What are the key terms and their definitions?
5. What should be the curriculum of education, and what is its criterion?
6. Who holds the power to decide and regulate curriculum?
7. What are the characteristics of a learner?
8. What role learner ideally plays in the learning system?
9. What are the qualities of a teacher?
10. What role teacher plays in the learning process?
11. How is evaluation imagined by both these educationists?
12. Is evaluation in the current education system desirable and advisable?
13. How to re-imagine a new mode of evaluation?
14. How colonialism and education are interconnected and what is wrong with this connection?
15. What is the historical setting of the thought – colonial / western hegemonic / modern etc.

16. How to use decolonial tools in educational settings?
17. What is the Conceptual Framework?
18. What are the suggested remedies?

The questions 1-4 come under the goals of education; questions 5 and 6 related to curriculum; questions 7 and 8 are about the role of learner; questions 9 and 10 about the role of teacher; questions 11 - 13 regarding evaluation strategy; and questions 14 - 18 are on decolonial aspects. The conceptual and theoretical framework of this study will make use of the answers given to these questions as its data and test the hypothesis in a social science research background.

### **PROCEDURE EMPLOYED FOR THE STUDY**

This study is qualitative in nature and scientific content analysis is being employed to meet the objectives of the research. The investigator selected *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* by Paulo Friere and *The Concept of Education in Islam* by Syed Naquib Al Attas to examine the educational philosophy of respective authors. This has been done in a broad decolonial perspective. Both these influential philosophers have strongly critiqued the contemporary educational system and the variables for analysing their model of an alternative system used in this study are the goals of education, curriculum, methods of teaching, evaluation strategy, role of learner, role of teacher and decolonial aspects. Based on the research objectives, a detailed questionnaire has been prepared, by making use of the variables. They are pertaining to the major concepts, issues and players in the field of education in a theoretical and practical sense.

This investigation being a comparative critical analysis of two educationists, the investigator selected the system of referring books and qualitative content analysis based on research questions and tools stated in the Objectives. Several books and studies already published on both the thinkers were reviewed in order to set a strong background for the study and find secondary data. The statistical technique employed was by using descriptive statistic that The procedure employed for the study was a systematic analysis of the seminal works of Paulo Friere and Syed Naquib Al Attas in order to reach the conclusions. It was a critical approach based on qualitative content analysis and comparative study based on the research questions formed from the Objectives. The analysis engaged with the research questions critically. The tools used was a set of detailed questionnaire to find how Paulo Friere and Syed Naquib Al Attas addressed the vital aspects of education in their radical rethinking of the philosophy and process of education.

## MAJOR FINDINGS

1. The philosophical frameworks of Paulo Friere and Syed Naquib Al Attas pose serious and radical critique to western, modern education system and find its roots in oppressive and exploitative coloniality. Paulo Friere, from a Christianised Marxian analysis and Syed Naquib Al Attas from a classical Islamic value system, reject the western methodological and epistemological onslaught upon the minds of the third world. and say it is not beneficial to the benefits and progress of the third world. They have independently devised their own systems of education which equips learners to locate and sources of oppression and fight for liberation, spiritually and politically.
2. Goals of education for Paulo Friere is conscientisation or enabling learners to have critical consciousness so that they are able to recognise the oppression in the social structure and critically engage with it. Paulo Friere said education is a practice of freedom and liberation through courageous conversations is its central objective, and everything the learner acquires through critical pedagogy should contribute towards this goal.
3. Goals of education for Syed Naquib Al Attas is to attain adab and education is not the conventional 'ta'lim' but a more profound 'ta'dib'. Tadib is a philosophical idea, rooted in Islamic spirituality, which is about recognising and respecting the divine hierarchical order of creation through learning and practising the ma'ana (genuine meaning) of things.
4. The curriculum of education, according to Paulo Friere, should be about developing critical consciousness and recognising the oppression in the social structure through dialogue and problem-posing.
5. The current educational system is incapable of producing critically conscious learners as it follows 'banking education' and suffers from 'narration sickness'.
6. Syed Naquib Al Attas says that the content of education is to be based on a deep awareness of the epistemological difference between revealed knowledge and acquired knowledge. The divinely ordained hierarchy (just order in the Creation of Nature) of things in the world should be respectfully taught.
7. The strongest area of Friere is pedagogy and he offers strong pedagogical tools to make education a practise of freedom. Method of teaching must be cooperative, non-dominating and dialogical, through courageous and critical conversations based on problem-posing towards conscientisation.

8. Attas doesn't elaborate upon the pedagogical side in detail. However, he suggests that the focus of the method should not be in merely passing on 'ilm' or knowledge, but in imparting 'adab' or the hierarchical order of things in a metaphysical and ethical perspective.
9. Both Friere and Attas question and challenge the current ideas and methods of evaluation as western oriented and modernist. The current evaluation strategies do not help alleviate oppression or instill adab.
10. Friere promotes cooperation rather than competition and asks to assess the skill of critical engagement with oppressive social structures and one's own privileges based on different identity markers. He also promotes towards a continuous self-assessment of cultural tolerance and problem-posing dialogue across the social structure.
11. Attasian philosophy rejects assessing mere knowledge, but promotes the ability to practice adab in every field of life. He stood for assessing deep awareness of adab or divine hierarchy of things.
12. Friere defined learner (or human beings) as independent, capable and dialogical beings who can change the systemic practices of oppression and live cooperatively. Learner is not passive or empty piggy-banks to invest knowledge. Learner is able to locate the sources of oppression and would remove it whenever possible.
13. Attas understood learner in a deeply philosophical way and said learner is a spiritual being in search of meaning and beauty. Learner is innately gifted with an innate capacity to recognise the divine hierarchy of things in the Universe.
14. Both Friere and Attas place enormous pedagogical and epistemological responsibility upon teachers and their roles in any educational system.
15. Friere suggests to avoid typical banking and narration education but encourages dialogue and cooperativeness. Teachers should be democratic and undominating. They must equip learners to recognise, locate the sources of and critically engage with oppression in the process of re-humanising.
16. Attas suggests that teachers must be highly knowledgeable with deep epistemological and ontological understanding of adab. They must be able to help learners order the priorities of ethos in a chaotic world.
17. Friere's decolonial framework leads to emancipatory pedagogic tools to challenge oppression in the system. Friere says that the modern forms of

oppression are rooted in colonialism and colonial masters are only replaced by local masters, in majority third world societies. Education is conceived as a tool to govern citizens, not to liberate; this should be reverse.

18. Attasian proposal of Islamisation of education is a tool of the diverse decolonial project. Muslim societies were colonised by European powers and all aspects of life, including epistemological and spiritual arenas were affected by colonial systems of 'zulm'. Attas makes use of the 'ta'dib' principle to remove colonial imprint upon the psyche and spirit of the Muslim world through education.

## CONCLUSION

Paulo Friere and Syed Naquib Al Attas strongly advocated to re-imagine the philosophical framework of education, with their deep rooted critique on the modern education system. Although their criticisms are based on different principles, as Paulo Friere comes Latin American Christian Marxist humanism and Syed Naquib Al Attas hails from Malaysian classical Islamic intellectualism, their educational projects have overlapping areas. They both found the origin of modern education in colonialism and found it oppressive and exploitative - Friere in the political sense and Al Attas in the more metaphysical and ethical sense. An education that is primarily designed to govern "citizens", not to nurture creative spiritual human beings who are free to think and act on their own, will only serve to maintain the status quo.

What Friere calls 'critical consciousness' in socio-political system could be arguably equated with what Al Attas calls 'adab' or the divine universal hierarchy in the ethico-spiritual system. Friere's educational philosophy is outward, towards effectively locating the sources and fighting the injustice and oppression outside the learner in the social system. On the other hand, Al Attas puts the focus back on the inner world of the learner and locates from where all the injustice and oppression come from. He says zulm, oppression and injustice, is a result of the absence of adab, or the wrong understanding of priorities of value or divine hierarchical order in the universe. So, when one is able to grasp the just order, deep harmony of mind is attained and there is no question of oppressing others - education should aim at this. As Al Attas speaks of a world where oppression and injustice could be thwarted and prevented through education, Friere speaks from a world where oppression and injustice are a hard reality. In other words, Al Attas works towards establishing adab (critical consciousness) and Freire towards fighting the lack of adab (conscientisation).



An eclectic combination of both these philosophers can work wonders in the third world and even in the first world.

Methodologically, Friere speaks of collaborative and cooperative learning, based on courageous conversations. Al Attas, however, does not much elaborate on the pedagogic side as his focus is on setting a solid and reliable philosophical framework from which the methodology could independently emerge.

When critical pedagogy is employed in the educational scenario, there is no scope for competition, but there occurs a culture of cooperation. Through critical pedagogy and cooperative learning, the learner learns of the source of oppression. The eventual aim of this process is to end oppression from occurring and continuing. If this tool is used in the current system, pupils should be able to sort out many issues in their social lives.

Friere encouraged courageous dialogues. It is through words that we reach dialogue. He explains that words have two dimensions - action and reflection. To speak a true word is to transform the world. Human existence can't be silent, and it cannot be nourished through falsehood, but only true words can change it. Friere also emphasised that education is to live, not to govern. Education is a practice of freedom. At any given place where injustice, violence and oppression prevails, humanisation is not possible. As a teacher and parent the task is to create an atmosphere where students are free and courageous to be creative. The conventional narration method only leads to mechanical memorisation in effect and that doesn't serve any actual purpose in the life of learners.

One of the main issues in current education is the mediocre quality of teachers; if critical pedagogy is employed, the teacher also grows and learns as part of the process. The process, as Paulo Friere calls it a courageous dialogue, will not be monotonous and the interactive nature would lead to more participation from both sides. This will make the learning dynamic and organic without being stressful liability to anyone.

In the subject-object relationship of traditional teaching, which suffers from a "narration sickness", teacher is supposed to know everything and student nothing. It is not human nature and everyone can share what they have. Human emotions like love, respect, compassion go lacking because the system, or those who actually run it, do

not acknowledge or respect the human nature of freedom and quest for justice. It is wrong and unscientific to think that everyone has same mind growth.

Another major setback our education system has is the inhuman way it teaches learners to look at and take failure. The western modernity, as a basic characteristic, discards mistakes and failures. Human nature is to make mistakes and fail as much as to correct and want to succeed. The strong discouragement to failure and mistakes may lead to a failure of attempting. Through banking concept of education, students are taught to “adjust” with the issues of the world rather than understanding them and addressing them honestly. Those who are truly committed to liberation must reject the banking concept of education, Paulo Friere clearly stated.

Drawing parallels to Paulo Friere’s deliberations on the pitfalls of modern education system, Syed Nauib Al Attas, said that the western education is fundamentally flawed. He had no doubt that holistic development is not possible in modern education system. Attas saw men and women as conscious beings. In western concept, human beings are rational animals. For Attas, it is more than that. Human beings are also spiritual beings with uniquely sophisticated linguistic capabilities that lead to a sense of meaning and a sense of beauty. This is a profound philosophical experience and needs careful introspection. Attas promotes a learning of peaceful and just living in which the existence of other beings - plants and animals and others - should also be taken care of and their significance in the divine order of things be understood. Understanding the ‘ma’ana’, or the meaning, leads to nurturing of the adab or the language of heart. In other words, this is sacred wisdom that is praised in all traditions where a scientist can easily decide not to attempt for a harmful invention despite knowing how to create it. One of the major issues with the current civilization is its production, whether scientific inventions or mass manufacturing for different market consumption do not take into account of the actual need and consequences in a wider and longer sense. As a result, many inventions are extremely time-restricted and it inevitably fails in the long run. Excessive consumption and harmfully luxurious inventions have resulted in irreparable damages to humanity and the planet - from climate change to nuclear war.

In short, in the process of reforming the educational sector, individually or collectively, either in the minor sense of a classroom or the major context of policy

reforms, Syed Naquib Al Attas has important things to adapt from. He emphasises on the need to devise a holistic approach with a comprehensive and holistic understanding of the human being. He stresses not to compartmentalise human being and not to overlook her emotional, spiritual needs and potentials. Material and physical growth and potential are usually addressed, but beyond it not. Attas brings the idea of adab and places it above ilm (knowledge). Though acquiring knowledge is highly significant, he reminds us that there is a hierarchy of knowledge and it is divine and natural. Any attempt to alter or sabotage it would culminate in disastrous results as we have grave environmental and health issues in today's advanced world. Certain knowledge is more important because only that knowledge and its practice helps us humans to attain the much needed balance of life and peace of the earth. That is what he calls adab. Like many Arabic words, adab also has many meanings. Attas also carefully examines all of them and categorically says tadib (instilling adab) is the very process of education. Adab is conventionally understood as proper manners in social and interpersonal relationships. Same word is used to denote literature also. In Attas' extended lexical analysis, adab is also hierarchy or the divine order of things. In other words, adab is justice, adab is sublime responsibility and higher freedom. If the system is able to implement this idea, individuals and communities will benefit from it, by avoiding the multifarious potential of human wrongdoing (injustice to oneself and others). Adab makes us better human beings with more beauty and more meaning.

To sum up and conclude this qualitative analysis, both Paulo Friere and Syed Naquib Al Attas pose genuine and critical challenges to the ongoing western education system and they reject it in principle. By using two set of tools, loosely based on the same decolonial philosophy of liberating oneself from the external oppressor and internal injustices, their framework of education enables the learner and the teacher to reimagine education on a daily basis. Both of them need to be more closely studied and utilised for building a better, freer, less oppressive and more humane society.

## EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

The current educational system practiced in the modern world is Eurocentric and colonially designed. A comprehensive re-imagination and re-shifting of epistemological and cosmological values is essential for the learners to attain socio-political, economic and spiritual autonomy and self-reliance. The thinkers in this study strongly argue for the liberation of the learner through the process.

1. Goals of education should be the political and spiritual liberation of a human being. So, educational goals should be reoriented towards enabling learners to recognise the patterns and structure of oppression in the system and to critically engage with it. It should also refocus on understanding the divine order of hierarchy so that the forces of oppression (zulm) are subverted by the forces of 'adab'.
2. The content of education should enable learners to start courageous conversations with those who are in power.
3. While the content is designed, it should be kept in mind that knowledge must lead to action and only a sense of justice leads one to wisdom. The content should also bring a constant sense of meaning and beauty to the lives of recipients.
4. One-sided, dominating pedagogic methods should be replaced by cooperative, collaborative and dialogical methods of teaching based on compassion and expertise.
5. Evaluation must be based on several factors related to inner qualities of human potential and creativity - rather than being merely testing intellectual or memorising skills.
6. The learner must be given more autonomy in the process.
7. Local community must have a say in reforming and redesigning the education that they want to give to their children. This must be done in an inclusive, democratic way. The state intervention should be minimal.
8. Educational ministries, bodies and organisations in the third world must take up the project of decolonising education in philosophy, structure, content, pedagogical measures and evaluation strategies.
9. Collaborative and cooperative teaching practices should be actively encouraged and employed and teacher training centers should take this into more serious account.

10. The over focus of job market in education should be altered into creative resourcefulness and profound emotional and spiritual awakening of learners.
11. Spiritual and ethical aspects of human life should be more accommodated in an eclectic spirit and without favouring fanatic or fundamentalist sentiments.
12. Learner must be treated respectfully and their emotional and spiritual nourishment must be a central focus of education.
13. Competitions in schools and higher education centers must be replaced with collaboration and cooperation.

### **SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

1. A deeper study could be conducted on the theoretical and practical aspects of both Paulo Friere and Syed Naquib Al Attas based on their complete works.
2. Paulo Friere has served as an educational consultant of several revolutionary governments in his later years. His recommendations and interventions in those states could be investigated in the light of his books *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* and *Pedagogy of Freedom*.
3. Two international universities were founded based on Syed Naquib Al Attas's proposal of "Islamization of Education", which has been both loaded and criticised in the Muslim world. And several higher education institutions in the Muslim world adapted his educational framework. A detailed critical analysis could be conducted on their performances.

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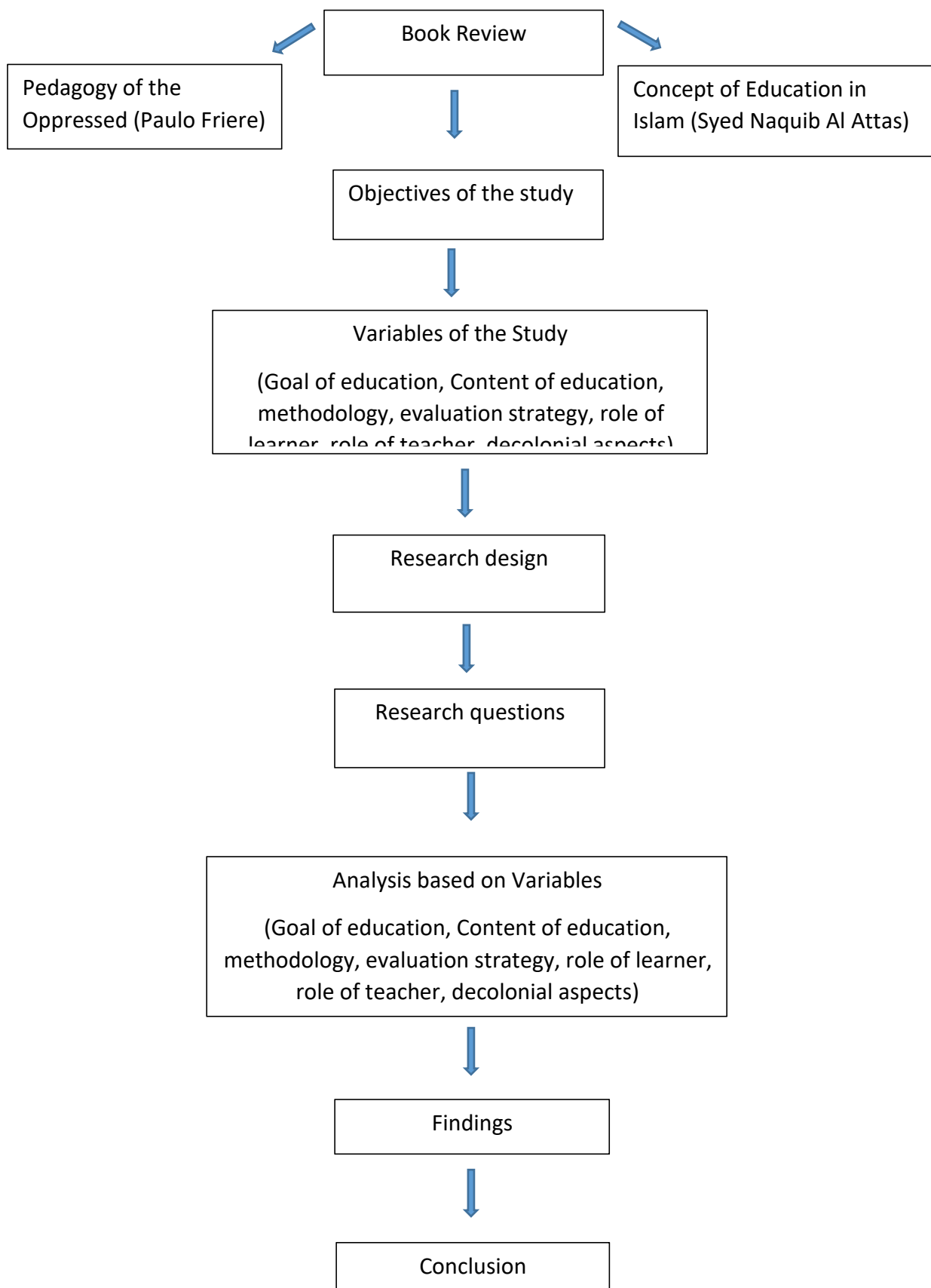
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**APPENDIX 1:****Flow Chart of Procedure Employed for Content Analysis**

## **APPENDIX 2:**

### **Research Questions to Analyse the Educational Philosophy of Paulo Friere and Syed Naquib Al Attas**

Based on the variables selected for the qualitative content analysis of the texts by Paulo Friere and Syed Naquib Al Attas, a set of research questions were formed by the investigator. They are as follows:

1. What is the concept of education, according to them?
2. What are the goals of education?
3. How can the goals of education be achieved?
4. What are the key terms and their definitions?
5. What should be the curriculum of education, and what is its criterion?
6. Who holds the power to decide and regulate curriculum?
7. What are the characteristics of a learner?
8. What role learner ideally plays in the learning system?
9. What are the qualities of a teacher?
10. What role teacher plays in the learning process?
11. How is evaluation imagined by both these educationists?
12. Is evaluation in the current education system desirable and advisable?
13. How to re-imagine a new mode of evaluation?
14. How colonialism and education are interconnected and what is wrong with this connection?
15. What is the historical setting of the thought – colonial / western hegemonic / modern etc.
16. How to use decolonial tools in educational settings?
17. What is the Conceptual Framework?
18. What are the suggested remedies?

The questions 1-4 come under the goals of education; questions 5 and 6 related to curriculum; questions 7 and 8 are about the role of learner; questions 9 and 10 about the role of teacher; questions 11-13 regarding evaluation strategy; and questions 14-18 are on decolonial aspects.