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A STUDY OF MADRSA EDUCATION AND MADRSA REFORMS IN PAKISTAN

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ABSTRACT

Islam has the rich history of propagation and pursuance of knowledge. Knowledge forms the bedrock of Islamic knowledge. For the propagation of knowledge and Islamic education, Madrsa evolved through various phases of history to preach and propagate Islamic education and knowledge. With the passage of time and with the advent of modern educational system, madrsa education has remained under severe strain of reforms. Due to modern institution, students passing out from madrsa got limited to mosques and their role to perform bread winning jobs was deprived. This paper is a historical study pertaining to evolution of madrsa education muslim world particularly in context of Pakistan. Further, historical literature review is made to explore various components and outcomes of madrsa education. The main objective of current study is to understand the problems regarding Madrassa reform through realistic approach by addressing main question what are the challenges in developing alternative narrative on Madrassa reforms and its implications. Further, this paper analyzes various events and challenges to reform the madrsa education so as to make the out come of these madrsas market compatible and meet the needs of current job market trends.

Keywords: *Islamic education, madrsa education, madrsa reform, extremism, historical evolution*

INTRODUCTION

Seeking knowledge has been an inalienable part of the Islamic Tradition. Religious learning and its transfer is at the core of Muslim's identity. It has been the history that Madrasa have achieved this goal as vital social institution in Muslim countries. In the beginning, the Quranic verses were memorized by heart. As Islam reached different shores of the world conserving the great knowledge, these verses were categorized into chapters. The categorized version was known as, the Quran.

Since the inception, Islam stressed two kinds of knowledge, manifest and terrestrial; divine knowledge that comes from God and terrestrial knowledge mankind explore themselves. Islam deems both streams of knowledge mandatory for all Muslims.

After the Prophet's departure, when Muslims faced situations for which there was no answer in the knowledge revealed in the Qur'an and the Prophet was not there to guide them, Muslim scholars Asked for answers in words and practical life. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) developed the traditions of following the Sunnah, the deeds and hadeeth of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), and

the sayings of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him).

When the Prophet P .BU.H left the world, Muslims looked for guidance but there was no Prophet to guide them. Therefore, Muslim scholars found the answers in sayings and doings of Holy Prophet P.B.U.H.. The deeds of Prophet PBUH were called Sunnah and sayings of Prophet PBUH were called Hadith.

However, as Islam propagated to other areas and came in touch with other regional traditions and linguistics, it was needed to form a pool of scholars who would expound jurisprudence- Islamic Jurisprudence, Sunnah- the sayings of the Prophet and compile volumes of books. To suffice the needs of Islamic knowledge of non Arab Muslims commentaries and interpretation of Prophet's Hadith was extremely needed. Thus, came the concept of madrassa a place for learning which aimed at preserving and propagating religious education.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The first world famous seminary was founded in Egypt in 1005 AD by the Fatimids caliphs. Shia education was taught in the MAdrassa at first but Sunni Muslims invaded Egypt, they converted the Shia version of Islamic teachings into Sunni Version. Books were transported to Baghdad where Nizam al Mulk Hassan ibn al-Tusi (d.1092) the Sljuk vizier, founded the first systematic Madrassa in 1067.

The seminary founded by Nizam-ul-Mulk offered two kinds of education; Theology to produce spiritual leaders and ground knowledge to train Govt: personnnel who would serve in different regions and provinces of Islamic Caliphate. Later,NizamulMulk founded many seminaries which along with Islamic education offered wprldly knowledge in the science, pholosopphy and public administration. He is known as father of Islamic public education system.Nizamiya Academy in Baghdad is also named after him which is acclaimed for producing sages like Abu Hamid al –Ghazali.Zangid leader Noor udinZangi and Ayubi commander Slahudin Ibn Ayub were the eminent supporters of seminaries in Syria and Egypt.

Though, major chunk of seminaries retained as centers for Islamic knowledge, a great number of them produced world famous scholar and thinkers who also contributed to worldly knowledge. Ijtehad free rationale was important trait of these madrassas. It is evident in Spain where Islamic government for 800 years is known as Golden age of Islamic progress in science, technology and philosophy.It was here where Muslims produced erudites who along with spiritual and worldly knowledge contributed to the conservation of Greek and European knowledge whci was at the brink of extinction.From Ibn Masara of Cardoba (883-931), man was famous for his own history.

Ibn Hazm of Cordoba (994-1064) was a founding father in the comparative history of religions. And the major work of IbnGabriel of Malaga (1020-1070) was the combination of Jewish faith and modern philosophy. Muslim scholars produced the knowledge of rational sciences, mathematics and medicine. Many of these scholars in theWest are known with the Latin names such as the philosopher Evros (Ibn Rushd), the mathematicians Arzakhel (Al-Zarqali) and Alptragios (El Batroji), and the physician Evanszwar (Ibn Zuhr)to name a few. Owing to defeats from Crusades and political and sectarian divide within muslims paved the way for the decline these days of learning and scholarship.

RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

The main objective of current study is to understand the problems regarding Madrassa reform through realistic approach by addressing main question what are the challenges in developing alternative narrative on Madrassa reforms and its implications? Beside this, we have three driving questions for the main query. These are the following;

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What Madrassa reform mean in point of view of various stakeholders?
2. What are main hindrances in the process of reform?
3. What are skepticisms about reform?

Literature Review

It is popular proverb which are associated with Holy Prophet)ﷺ (that "Seek knowledge though you may have to travel to china" (Hadith-eZaeeef). By focusing on this premise, in the period of Muhammad)ﷺ (and rightly guided caliphs, mosques were used to be hub of gaining scientific, public policy and religious knowledge. Most of public policy and administrative issues were discussed and solved in mosques in those glorious regimes. After the passing of Muhammad)ﷺ) and His pious caliphs, religious education system was controlled and managed by Imams (founders of new school of thought) and interpretation of various religious matters was done by Independent thinking (Ijtihad).(1) The followers of each Imam established their own schools to spread their respective Imam's Fiqah (sectarian views). The founders of these schools were very flexible in their views and approaches for the interpretation of Islamic thoughts and never claimed to beperfect.(2) The concept of first Madrassa in the history of Islam was driven in 11th century in the regime of Nizam-ud-din and known as Madrassa Nizamia.(3) The syllabus of first Madrassa was designed in that time which pertained translation and interpretation of teaching of Quran and Hadith with more focusing on Fiqahi

Issues and teachings.(4) The syllabus of Madrassa Nizamia also pertain the need-based and market oriented subjects such as mathematics, astronomy and other social sciences subjects. Similarly, in sub-continent syllabus of religious education was designed in 17th century by MullaNiazmiddinSehalvi which is known as Dars-e-Nizami.(5) It focuses on two aspects such as "revealed sciences" (wahhi) and "rational sciences"(ma'qulat).(6) The revealed sciences revolve around the translation and interpretation of Holy Quran, Hadith, and Islamic jurisprudence; whereas the rational sciences cover Arabic Persian basic linguistic,literature and grammar issues like, logic, rhetoric, and philosophy.

In the eighteenth century after the independence war in 1857, East India Company got full power in sub-continent; they introduced modern secular education in English language. They replaced Persian as official language by English and also changed the legal system of the country from Islamic to British. Before this,most of administrative works and legal matters were settled by clerics and Qazi (religious scholars).(7) In the consequences of all premises, leading Ulema established first recognized Madrassa in 1867 in sub-continent known as Dar-ul-UlumDeoband and after passage of time, it become one school of thought known as Deobandi. Dars-e-Nizami after slight changes was adopted as proper course in Darul-Ulum.(1) The main objective of establishing Dar-ul-Ulum Deoband was to secure Islamic heritage, education, teaching and freedom of Muslims thoughts through peaceful movement. After that, two types of education were being followed in sub-continent; one was secular education and second was Madrassa education. Secular education was administered by British government and Madrassa was run by Islamic scholars on the basis of Muslims donations and charity.

Replacement of Persian as official language by English isolated the Muslims from governmental jobs and change in legal system also restricted Islamic religious scholar from public policy and administrative issues of country. Realizing this fact, Sir Syed Ahmed khan established modern educational institute known as Aligarh College. The main objectives of this institute were to deliver contemporary knowledge to Muslims students and bring them into mainstream professions by involving them in existing infrastructure of that time. The idea of modern education was severely opposed by traditional Ulema by criticizing them that they are doing advocacy of British government and want to impart ideology of west in mind of Muslim society. He was also declared the enemy of Muslim heritage and Islamic thoughts. However, it disclosed the avenues for Muslim students, opportunities and chances to take part in administrative issues of country and public policy processes. Realizing the importance of contemporary education, in 1891, Muhammad Ali Mungri established the institute named as Nadvat-ul-Ulema. Its primary focus was to

establish bridge between secular and religious education system but this institute could not realize the importance of integration and coordination of both educational system. Based on Modern education, Muslim learnt English and successfully carried out freedom struggle for an independent Muslim State.

After the independence in 1947, Pakistan was blessed by two diversified type of educational system in heritage such as secular education and Madrassa education. After the few years, government of Pakistan established Auqaf department under the ministry of religious affairs, to engage the clergy in public policy and integrate with other conventional education system. By and large, clergy was excluded from public policy processes and restricted to only religious thoughts (sectarian education) after the passage of time. In fact, the main reasons of their isolation and divergence were; out-dated sect specific curricula, widely use of Fatwa at every public issue which cause violence in society and inflexibility in religious thoughts.

First attempt after the independence about the Madrassa education reform was made in the regime of general Ayub Khan in 1961. For this purpose, committee for the revision of curricula of Madrassas was formed under the supervision of ministry of education. The main objective of that committee was to; bring them in mainstream education and get control on financial and administrative issues of Madrassa under government supervision. The committee proposed that contemporary and need-based subjects should be included in curricula of Madrassas along with religious subjects to meet the challenges of growing and emerging trends of market. Due to lack of sincerity, fear about loss of control and political objectives of clergy, initiative of reform could not gain the fruitful results. This attempt was declared as conspiracy of government to weaken the strength and influence of religious political forces in country. After the Ayub Khan, first elected government of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto took initiative of Madrassa reform in 1975. Likewise, pervious attempt, the result of this initiative was unfruitful and government of Z.A Bhutto was replaced by Martial law of general Zia with help of clergy in the result of Pakistan National Alliance (PNA).

In 1978, General Zia ordered the ministry of religious affairs to prepare the report on Madrassa that how to reform it and engage the clergy in mainstream education. In this report, ministry informed general Zia that all previous efforts to unite and reform Madrassa had failed due to skepticisms about reform that it is an effort to dilute the intention of religious sector from core Islamic values like Jihad,(1) preach and religious education toward secular education and western way of life. In previous initiatives of reform, strongest opposition came from Deobandi school of thought's Ulema and they want to maintain status quo since they came into force. In this report, participants also suggested to; bring them into mainstream education by including need-based and market oriented subject and integrate them with mainstream profession by providing jobs opportunities in conventional schools, colleges and universities. They also proposed to establish National institute of Dini-Madaris for the better communication and coordination of various schools of thought.

Methodology

Since the objective of the paper is to study the evolution and establishment of madrsa education in Pakistan and need for reforming the Madrsa education with respect to modern educational trends, methods applied for that reason is exploratory and historical literature review to come up with conclusions and recommendations to reform madrsa education.

ANALYSIS OF EXISTING SITUATION OF MADRSA EDUCATION IN PAKISTAN

Evans (2008) highlights the need for research that explores the function of increasing madrassa literacy in society. It is well known that the madrassa provides absolutely free education, in fact many students even pay for boarding and accommodation. Evans wrote that "Even if madrassas do more than normal thousands of young people who would in other case not be able to read and write, it is an academic achievement." Ghazi(2011, pp. 91, 256, 258) even claims that the

literacy rate in Pakistan has enhanced distinctly through madrassas because the situation in government school is not good enough to achieve this goal. In addition, Ghazi (2011, p. 89) also reported that out of 2.1 million students in 15 registered madrassas across the country, 0.9 million are women. If this is true, then it is enough to refute the claims of discrimination in women's education by religious circles. Presently, 39.3% of the country's madrassas are for men, 14.3% for women and 46.4% for both sexes (men and women). The highest ratio of male and female students in joint madrassas is in Azad Jammu and Kashmir where both madrassas are for men and women. FATA has the highest number of female madrassas in the country, at 22%. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has the highest proportion of male madrassas at 81%. According to an analysis of Pakistan Education Statistics for 2016-17, 40.4% of Pakistan's religious madaris are in Punjab, Sindh has 29.4%, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has 13.7%,Baluchistan has 8.7%, Azad Jammu and Kashmir has 4.1%, FATA 2.2%, Islamabad has 1% and Gilgit-Baltistan has 0.4% madaris. The highest increase in the number of madrassas in the country during the last decade from 2006-07 to 2016-17 was in Islamabad where it increased to 471%. The second significant increase was 439% in Sindh. Baluchistan came third with an increase of 333% and Punjab came fourth with an increase of 154%. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa increased by 78%, Gilgit-Baltistan by 58%, FATA by 53% and Azad Jammu and Kashmir by 19%. At the Pakistani level, the increase was 174%. Only 3% of the country's madaris are run by govt aids and 97% run by the private sectors through various donations of people and NGO's.

Funds for madrassas come mostly from religious decrees. There are also dedicated boards that provide some financial support. At present, there is no institutional procedure to transfer charitable funds such as zakat and charity to madrassas. Madrassas affiliated with religious sects or madrassas such as DarulUloom Deoband, NadwatUlema, Jamaat-e-Islami, or JamiatUlema-e-Islam are generally able to manage their institutions financially.

An important issue is that a large number of madrassas in India belong to the unorganized sector which depends on the charities of the Muslim community. Funding for these volunteer sector madrassas is nominal and selective, with more reliable funding coming only during the month of Ramadan. As a result, the lack of adequate funding results in a shortage of basic necessities to run the school. For example, in these low-funded madrassas, many students did not even have proper clothing. Teachers are also not being sufficiently compensated. Complicating the situation is the lack of fairness in both the donations received and the expenses received.

A GOVT. REPORT:

As part of a plan to curb extremist networks, the government has decided to introduce major reforms to the curriculum of 30,000 Islamic schools or madrassas on the country's scene. Madrasa nowadays working under the reforms of government in your day by day produce such kind of reforms that the Mother's Azad Institute of the Government and they are also working very harmonized Band the heading and where is calculus is going to be out and data out circular is out from their curriculum bodies same the curriculum of Madrasa be changed in the modern education was also given importance in his mother stars and the admission of the mother size colour on the behalf of matriculation as well as intermediate and after getting intermediate they will be in admitted their students for the post graduate degrees

The reforms include prohibiting hate speech and introducing modern subjects such as science, proficiency and English language into the curriculum.

"The government will take up the financial burden of introducing major reforms in madrassas, which are a major means of education for poor children," said a senior education ministry official in Islamabad.

He said that religious leaders and stakeholders of these institutions would be taken on board and included in the curriculum review process.

"These reforms will help madrassa students to graduate with modern skills. The move will also open up for them a wide range of career opportunities equal to those of college and university graduates."

According to the plan, still in the early stages, the government is preparing to depute teachers in madrassasto teach English, science subjects and skills. Besides, madrassas will be equipped with science laboratories.

Madrassas are the only institutions in Pakistan that provide free religious education to poor children. Established in the style of boarding schools, they also offer free food and lodging.The curriculum presently being implemented in madrassas is called Dars Nizami, which was developed by Mullah Nizamuddin Suhalvi, an 18th century scholar, from the Farangi Mahal Madrassa in Lucknow, India. Most of these madrassas had the assistance of religious alms. They were rented out on free land and were present in every major city in the late 19th century. They were managed by akhund (principal), madrassas(teachers) and trustees (oppressed). Students were given free accommodation and meals. Students who did well paid tuition fees, and poor students worked for the school and received funding from the college's charitable foundation. These madrassas nourished Muslim cities with mathematics, science, medicine, culture and economics

Mufti Muneeb-ur-Rehman, a scholar at the Ottoman Madrassa, said, "We are teaching tafsir [commentary onthe Qur'an], hadith [instruction of the Prophet], Islamic law, Arabic grammar, Urdu language, memorization of the Qur'an and mathematics." - In Nowshera, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

Claiming that the madrassas themselves have brought many reforms to the system, he said that English,science and other social subjects are now taught in his madrassas.

Critics of the madrassa education system have often accused children graduating from these institutions of being lack skills to handle the new world, which makes them prey to militant organizations.

"These are baseless allegations," Rehman said.

After the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the United States in 2001, researchers, analysts, and policy makers kept an eye on madrassas. The members of these Islamic educational institutions were indoctrinated. In July 2004, a report furnished by the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks on the United States (orCommission 9-11) declared madrassas as "incubators of violence." The 19 people who executed the 9/11 attacks joined to madrassas for their own education.

The following year, then-Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld announced that madrassas "train people to become suicide bombers and extremists, violent extremists." Of the 79 terrorists involved in the five worst attacks on Western democracies, [b] only 11% had a madrassa education. Madrassas in India are similarly criticized, with students being branded "terrorists". These institutions face major financial challenges and are in intense need of reform. The curriculum lacks scientific and secular subjects, and it is hard for graduates to get job. In 2018, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced, "The Government of India is leaving no stone unturned in empowering Muslim youth. We want them to have the Qur'an in one hand and a computer in the other." Institutions [10]

Teacher quality

The miser financial conditions impact the quality of teachers, as the pay scale fails to encourage who may be well qualified. Many teachers do not meet the minimum qualification for a bachelor's degree in education.

Often, teachers who may be educated and trained to teach humanities or languages deal with science and math subjects in SPQEM-run madrassas. [40] Use of teachers in learning the Qur'an and other religious texts.

There is also a need to depend on traditional methods. In addition, government-funded madrassas also face a shortage of textbooks. Most madrassas have no concept of holding social gatherings or extracurricular activities such as field trips to give students some practical education. Children are mostly admitted to

madrassas so that they can eat all day, and read the Qur'an. [42] Getting an education can help.

A recent review of Sundell et al. [9] Reviewed the literature available until 2005 and discussed five subjects who have studied the school environment. He concluded from these studies that low ventilation rates are associated with high school absenteeism and high respiratory symptoms, but stressed that very little data is available to draw conclusive conclusions. In addition, he stressed the need for further studies on the relationship between ventilation and health, especially in buildings other than offices. Since 2005, more studies have been published on the relationship between school ventilation and health, for example two articles on school ventilation rates related to student absenteeism due to illness. Both of these studies have shown that lower ventilation rates are associated with higher absences. Another study, on the effects of the implementation of new ventilation systems in schools, found that the installation reduced asthma symptoms and reduced exposure to airborne contaminants.

The aim of the madrassa education was to enable the student how to derive religious law from authentic Islamic texts. Students who went through the entire course were eligible to become judges and religious scholars, but most students already left school, became imams of mosques, or pursued secular careers with the added dignity of religious education. The method of teaching was sagacious and Socratic: intense discussion of the interpretation and problems of the standard textbook set. Students used to attend the madrassa knowing the route of the Qur'an and a lot of Arabic. The students studied basic subjects in Arabic,logic, and Islamic theology: jurisprudence (Islamic law), interpretation of the Qur'an, and hadith, prophetic sayings. The best students studied the principles of jurisprudence (jurisprudence) as well as some theology,philosophy, mathematics, astronomy and sometimes medicine.

The interrelationship between Islamization and madrassa education lies in the fact that they corroborate each other. As religion is a key aspect of Pakistan's cultural heritage and identity, the education system (ofwhich the madrassa is a partial unit) is responsible for extending and confounding that heritage (Kumar,2007). One of the reasons for the spread of madrassas in Pakistan is Islamization. At the same moment, the madrassa, as an independent entity, promotes the development of Islamization through its ideology and followers.

The arrival of modern educational institutions was a major challenge for madrassas. Colonial administrators, nationalists and Islamic reformers all together declared madrassa education as outdated. Traditional sources of income have vanished. Extra ordinary students look for new opportunities in modern universities and professions. Islamic reformists have complained about the reasonable role of the traditional madrassa curriculum and its ignorance of basic religious subjects. Post-colonial governments sometimes look for to close or co-operate with madrassas, fearing that they might become centers of resistance This was the situation in Turkey, where Ataturk closed madrassas, and in Indonesia, where the government sought to minimize the influence of madrassas by controlling the curriculum, paying government salaries to teachers, and establishing competitor institutions. In many cases, education level and student numbers dropped sharply, although large institutions survived in most places.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Islam is religion of peace. The essence in his teachings is the security of all humanity reservations that he feels in different world affairs; But how to achieve it? The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said, "The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said," If you are a Muslim, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) If I want a publication and want to take my own religious status, then you also set up religious lessons like location puja and eliminate your ignorance and illuminate your children and teachings with Islam. As a result, Muslims pursued this mission and understood the establishment of Madrassas Islamia in some form by source of this platform to suffice the needs of

the Muslim, the Islamic and social requirements and their academic emotions. He tried hard to remove, whose significant impact was that today Madrassas Islamia is proving to be a integral part of Islamic Islamicity as its core.

Indeed Madrassa had great contribution in securing the crux of Islam but at the same time it also stopped to modernize and reawaken the lost identity of Muslim.(3) The religious experts associated with Madrassa claim that madrassas are producing religious professionals (clerics) as other secular institutions are producing professionals like doctors, engineering so on and so forth. They also argued that secular educational institutions are teaching curricula developed by the west.

Madrassa reform is of dire need to challenge the prevailing view point that madrassa education is producing extremists and terrorists. Therefore, madrassa reforms offer alternative narrative and bring religious section in the public policy making process.(4) For that reason, governments persuade some leading Ulemas (clerics) whereas some leading Ulemas have serious reservations over Madrassa reforms. There is lack of trust between government and religious community which shows that some leading Ulemas along with religious political parties are not convinced with the madrassa reforms. Apart from this, there is no compulsory system for the madrassas registration before establishment of madrassa.

Government always welcomes Madrassa management for voluntary registration. Therefore, Madrassa are thus neither directly operated nor directly registered with government of Pakistan. The status of registered Madrassa is enjoyed by those that have acquired formal affiliation with one of the five boards of their concerned school of thought. It is reckoned that only few percent of Madrassas are registered with their respective boards.(1) Most of the Madrassa are not registered and act autonomously. Therefore, it is difficult to know the actual number of registered and unregistered Madrassas in the country.

CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

Madrsa in Pakistan are the biggest NGO's working volunteerily to accommodate downtrodden class and play pivotal role in poverty alleviation.In the past, government made little efforts to reform Madrassa education by upgrading it to the level of formal education. Therefore, these reforms mostly focused to give equivalence of Madrassa education to the formal education like equivalence. Governments along with other actors have failed to develop narrative on the Madrassa reforms. Therefore, no serious efforts were taken to change the structure and system of Madrassa education in the country. APS incident (attack on army public school in Peshawar in December2014) spotlights the need of Madrassa reforms as well as alternative narrative in the country. Government along with all political parties have formulated national action plan to deal with extremism and terrorism in the country. Therefore, Madrassa reform is one of the points in 20 points of National Action Plan. Government of Pakistan started an initiative to reform Madrassa like structure, registration, rule and regulation as well as curricula modification.

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