

Religious Education in Pakistan
Status of Non-Formal Education in Teaching and Learning
Process of Madaris

Habibullah Khan*, Muhammad Ajmal†

Abstract

Pakistan grew with three types of education systems at the time of independence; the public sector, private and religious education institutions or *Deeni Madaris*. The first two systems introduced modern or contemporary education where the students pursue higher education to meet the needs of globalization. As far as the third system that is religious education, has been delimited, since then, to the boundaries of mosque and *Deeni Madaris* due to internal and external factors. The religious education institutions, for the last many centuries produced renowned scholars, philosophers, and scientists whose work was used as a reference by other scientists of the world. But, unfortunately, Madaris could not continue their pace of work due to internal and external factors. The *Deeni Madaris* of Pakistan are affiliated mainly with fifteen examination boards /Wafaqs governed by Itihad Tanzeemat ul Madaris Pakistan (ITMP). According to Pakistan Education Statistics 2016-17, almost three Million students are getting education in the different levels of *Dars-e-Nizami* in 31,326 *Deeni Madaris*. Global changes and emerging technologies in the world drew *Deeni Madaris* and their education to the negotiation table; discussions were made at all levels wherein the governments intended different efforts of reforms in Madaris. In 2019, the Government of Pakistan signed an agreement ITMP to mainstream *Deeni Madaris* and integrate modern education with religious education. However, Madaris introduce contemporary education in non-formal means to ensure reforms. Both types of education are essential to be extended along with well-equipped facilities and resources in *Deeni Madaris*. This will enable students of *Deeni Madaris* to pursue further study to eliminate disparity and differences in thought and will curb the menace of intolerance.

Keywords: Mutawassit, Aama. Aalia, Aalamiya, Fiqh, Hijrat, Hadith, Ilm/Uloom, Khasa, Madrasa, Wafaq ul Madaris

Introduction

Religious education is one of the components of the overall education system in the world. The Madaris' role in this system bears a long history and was considered as the symbol of Muslim identity (Al-Hasani, 2017). Madaris whose singular is Madrasa is an Arabic word that means "place or places for imparting education", where people are familiarized with Islamic knowledge, values, and taught. The Prophet Muhammad (خاتم النبيين صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم) during his life emphasized and encouraged the rise of education to spread the message of the Holy Qur'an. The first Madrasa in the history of Islam known as "Darul Arkam" was established by Prophet Muhammad

* M. Phil Scholar DNFCE Allama Iqbal Open University Islamabad

† Chairman department of NFE Allama Iqbal Open University

(خاتم النبيّن صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) in Makkah and after the migration (hijrah) “Jamia Suffa” was established in Madina where the companion of the Holy Prophet learned the revealed knowledge with explanation and conveying to other people. Since then, the education system in Islam remained alive and Madaris continued imparting education to humanity. In this connection the Muslims sending their children to Madaris for getting religious education to familiarize their kids with Islamic values and teaching.

The foundation of the first Madrasa building outside the state of Madina, was laid down by the Fatimid Caliphs in 1005. Teachers were appointed for different subjects, and learning materials like ink, papers were provided free. It was amazing that in 1045 the catalogue of the Madrasa was compiled that was comprised of 6500 volumes (Barazangi, 2009) included astronomy, philosophy, science, and architecture. The Madrasa initially was based on the Shia sect of Islam, later on, when the Sunni Muslims invaded Baghdad in 1067, Nizam-ul-Mulk al-Tusi renewed this Madrasa with Sunni Maslak. Nizam-ul-Mulk Tusi introduced spiritual education to produce religious scholars and contemporary education to create the employees for the government. He introduced science, philosophy, medicine, and public administration. He wrote a book on Government administration namely “Syasat Nama” (Haqqani, 2002). The scholars of the Madrasa worked on science, philosophy, translation and distributed their discoveries, innovations, and experiments to the west. They also worked on the Arabic system and concept of decimal, promoted the knowledge of hospitals, hygiene, and nutrition to Europe the work of Avicenna in medicine was used for centuries (Al-Attas, 1980). Religious education in the sub-continent was introduced during the period 636-637 century when Arabs arrived and established the foundation of Islamic civilization which continued for more than a thousand years (Anzar, 2003).

The educational framework was developed with the formation of educational circles at mosque, which traced back to the period of Mohammed (PBUH), who imparted directions and clarification to revelations (Nakosteen, 1964). This surrounded or Halqha guidance, later on, laid down the foundation of mosque schools. It was not preposterous, how the mosques turned into the focal point of guidance parallel as the place for worship. It was so popular that in the tenth century 3000 mosque schools were working in Baghdad where the students were taught the Quran with understanding, ethics, and values of social life. With the popularity and rapid expansion of mosque schools, to ensure the sanctity of the mosque separate places were

arranged for teaching and learning Quran and Hadith known as Madrasa. (Shah, S. U. 2014).

During 1800 the British in the sub-continent introduced a new system known as Modern education and emphasized western language as a medium of instruction instead of Arabic and Persian. The role of Madaris was deliberately and gradually restricted to the boundaries of Masque. This system of education was further divided into public and private sector institutions where the students pursue higher education in the field of science and technology. The religious seminaries where religious education was imparted with the curriculum of Quran, Hadith, Fiqh, and Arabic grammar. This curriculum was known as Dars-i-Nizami developed by Mulana Nizam-u-din Sehavi in 1787 a curriculum expert in India. Initially, these Madaris produced judges, lawyers, and administrators. The University Grants Commission of Pakistan, during 1982, issued equalization of the sanad of Shahadat ul Aalamiya fil Uloom el Islamia with an MA Degree while the lower grades equivalence was not provided. (Islam, F. 2010).

Contribution of Madaris Toward Education in Pakistan

Pakistan acquired around 200 Madaris at the time of independence (Force, 2002). According to the BBC report the number has now expanded to more than 25000 (Force, 2002). The exact number of Madaris in Pakistan is yet to be defined, according to Education Statistics 2017-18 issued by NEMIS AEPAM, almost three Million students in 32,272 Madaris are getting an education in the different levels of Darsi-Nizami. After independence, most of the Ulama migrated from India started the establishment of Madaris (Sikand, 2004). The Pakistani Madaris is the inheritance of the renaissance of Islam during the late nineteenth century in India, starting with the foundation of the Darul Uloom Deoband in 1867 (S. T. H. Shah, 2006). From that time, the madrassa structure has assumed a significant job by protecting the standard convention of Islam in the wake of the destruction of Muslim political power; by preparing Islamic researchers and functionaries. Practically all Sunni madrassas, regardless of whether they are of the Deobandi sect, Barelvi sect, or Ahl-i-Hadith sect influence, adhere to a similar standard Darsi Nizami course received from the Deoband madrasa in eighteen hundred (1867). The total Nizami educational program keeps running from seven to nine years after the consummation of the elementary level. The whole framework has been generally bolstered by the network through trusts, beneficent gifts, and zakat commitments. Not exclusively do the students not pay any educational cost, they are given reading material, board and holding up, and an unassuming stipend

too” (Ahmad, 2004). The Religious Education (Deeni Madaris) is autonomous in its administration and are affiliated mainly with five exam Boards (wafaqs) however, keeping in view the increasing number of Madaris and their enrolled students and the demand of the religious scholars, ten more exam boards (Wafaqs) have been notified by the Government of Pakistan during 2020-21. Similarly, the government awarded the independent status of degree awarding institute to four more Madaris with existing five Madaris. Regardless of the low number, Madaris in Pakistan played a pivotal role in the social change and the fortification of the culture of religion Islam in the country and have a great contribution towards coping the children in its education system (Malik, 1996).

Religious Education in Perspectives of Pakistan National Education Policies

National Education Policy 1972-80

The Education Policy 1972-80 was a milestone report that affirmed that 'the norm will be kept up concerning organizations giving only religious guidance, for example, Maktab and Madaris, and so forth., run by Muslims, and comparable institutions run by some other religious sect. This way all such religious institutions (both Muslim and non-Muslim) command to work under the government rules as private institutions. The policy devised the improvement and appropriate religious behaviours of the guardians and home guidance. By proposing the utilization of media to transmit Quran with interpretation, it demonstrated the need to teach the Quran to the majority, who depended essentially on the perusing and recitation in Arabic, with no comprehension of its genuine substance or importance. Unluckily, the streamlining of the private religious institutions to institutionalize the various streams of the education system, which was tenderly required, was not included in the policy.

National Education Policy 1979:

Implementation Program of 1979 policy reasserted the role of mosque schools. It pushed the requirement for understanding Arabic as a language, to make the significance of the Quran to the educated population. The foundation of Arabic Language Centres was observed in different urban communities with funding assured from 'friendly Muslim nations' (GoP, 1979, p. 49) for the centres and the instructional materials. This policy exposed the unconsciousness of the Ulema and members of the Council of Islamic ideology towards the changes in the curriculum, which united the Ulema of different sects. As a result, the condition of Madaris was improved and equivalence of degrees

was also established, especially for higher levels, such as Master's Degree

National Education Policy 1992

The Education policy consist of different chapters on religious and Moral Education showed the emphasis on Islamic education and the significance ascribed to it in imparting morals and virtues (GoP, 1992, p. 13). It was the first government policy documents that created disappointment with the religious perspective communicated in the realm of science and technology, passing judgment on it to be deficient for the full learned and moral advancement of youngsters. It declared that Islam was the best way to create a democratic Muslim society. The policy did not call for a disregard of the 'other' philosophies and the exclusive promotion of Islamic education. The policy defines a concurrent focus on informal modes of education, i.e., use of media, TV, electronic media and its role outside the classrooms to emphasize character building, high moral values, and societal development based on injunctions of the Quran and Sunnah

National Education Policy 1998-2010

This policy clearly shows and insists on Islamic ideology as compared to other ideologies. Simultaneously, it utilizes the verses of the Quran to show a learned and basic perspective with delicacy, kindness, and responsiveness (GoP, 1998, p. 11). This policy additionally focuses on the requirement for integration of religious schools and contemporary schools. This was a significant step and it was concluded that a separate Board ought to establish to coordinate every willing institution into the standard government education system. Incentives of funds, the printing of course books, capacity building of teachers, opportunities for advanced education, the equivalence of degrees, and facilities and concessions to students, and so on were offered to the subsidiary institution.

National Education Policy 2009

The 2009 national education policy endorsed the importance of Islamic education and referred it to the articles related to the principle of policy in the Constitution of Pakistan 1973. The policy envisages that Pakistani students shall be strong in faith and Islamic teaching that shall be reflected in their attitude. The NEP 2009 stated that all the governments that are Federal, provincial, and Area shall sit with the Madaris administration and within their consultation introduce formal subjects in Deeni Madaris to enable the children of Madaris t to pursue further education and to avail themselves the job

opportunities. It was also shown that authority shall be established by the Ministry of the interior for Madaris to pinpoint the services provided by the Madaris to the nation, enhance financial support for the students of Deeni Madaris, equip them with technical and vocational training to avail themselves the opportunities in the job market

Efforts of the Government for Educational Reforms in Madaris

The Government of Pakistan had made efforts at a different time to reform the educational system of Madaris. Unlikely, the gap had increased between religious and Modern education (Zaman, 1999). During the partition of India, the sentiment of religion Islam was used in the creation of the new country, but the Madaris education remained as autonomous and run by the imam masjid or maulvi on charity and zakat and as they desire.

Establishment of Auqaf department during Ayub Khan government, during the General Ayub Khan regime 1958-69, a modernized and liberal type of Islam through education was presented, which was reflected as controversies, where the term "science" referred to an essential and long overdue evolution in Muslim philosophy while the others turned it the change the basic beliefs of Islam. Auqaf Department at each provincial level was established to regulate & control Madrasas. But in response, the Madaris established their Wafaqs (Federations). During the Ayub regime, the Commission on National Education-1959 recommended the inclusion of Science, Math, and social subjects in Madrasa curricula, in addition to the religious subjects. Madrasas were provided in terms of equivalence their degree/certificates.

Madrasa Education Reforms during Bhutto's Regime

During the Bhutto regime in the early 1970s, although all private educational institutions were nationalized, the autonomy of Madrasas was respected and their independent status was retained. Instead, the Bhutto government gave incentives to Madrasas by granting equivalence of the Madrasa certificates to the mainstream education, with the condition of passing the bachelor's level English paper. In 1971, During Bhutto's regime, the educational reforms included Article 37 (2) a & b in the 1973 constitution, but nothing has made in the reform of religious institution as Article 37 of the constitution centralized the role of religion through the introduction of the subject namely Pakistan studies (Group, 2004).

Madaris Reforms during Zia ul Haq Era

In 1977, General Zia-ul-Haq being the head of the state paid attention to the Madaris and introduced his Islamization to enforce Islamic laws (Lall, 2008). During the Afghan-Russia war, the Madaris played a very crucial role in the downfall of the Soviet Union (Metcalf, 2002) National Education Policy-1979 and Halepota Report recommended Madaris education reforms while keeping their autonomy intact. After surveying about 8000 Madaris in the 1980s, some steps were taken like Equivalence of final Sanad (degree) of Madrasa with that of Master Degree (MA), Introduction of formal subjects at Primary level in 507 Madrasas, Introduction of English, Economics, Pakistan Studies, and Mathematics at Secondary level in 140 Madrasas, Introduction of English, Economics, and Computer Science at Higher Secondary level in 373 Madaris, Introduction of Dars-e-Nizami group at SSC & HSSC level, which was removed from the scheme of studies in 2006, Training of 1500 teachers through workshops and supply of 2000 sets of 24 Islamic books to about 1200 Madrasas

Madaris Reforms during Benazir Bhutto Government

During the government of Benazir Bhutto in 1997, steps were taken towards the reformation of the educational system of Madaris. During her Government the Arab students' admission into Pakistani Madrasas was banned, NOC was made a requirement for foreign students to seek admission into Pakistani Madrasas, Madrasas were scrutinized before granting any financial assistance. Registration of Madaris under Reg. Act-1860 with Registrar of Firms, Small Industries in the provinces/areas was banned.

Madaris Reforms during General Musharraf Government

The Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony was assigned the task of Madaris reforms during General Musharraf's regime when he promulgated the Pakistan Madrasa Education Board Ordinance in 2001. As the ordinance was not consulted with the religious scholars so it could not be implemented properly. The Madaris institutions came under the limelight in the post-event of 9/11. Hundreds of articles and research papers have discussed the role of the Madrasas in promoting violence and militancy. It was argued that the best path for contesting militancy in Madaris is creating better alternatives to Madrasa education through state-run schools. Similarly, Madaris's curriculum was also made debatable. After experiencing the significant writing/material and connecting with

Madaris individuals, a few inadequacies were found in Madaris, the Madrassa boards or Wafaq were doing tremendous work. However, they were ought to in any event concur on some basic standards. It was supposed that Etihad Tanzeemat tul Madaris Pakistan (ITMP) will support Government to easily and successfully manage issues of regular worry to themselves and the network on the loose. The declaration of the PMEBO and Societies Registration Amendment Act had no huge effect, as an extraordinary number of Madaris did not apply for registration. In 2005 and 2006, the Government of Pakistan arranged a foreign tour for ITMP representatives to observe the examination system of the United Kingdom and the United States and could meet with the local education experts and policymakers whose report was not published after the visit. Both the Musharraf Government and ITMP were going to consent to an arrangement but the law enforcement agency operational activity on Lal Masjid Islamabad in 2007 caused a halt which proceeded till the fall of General Musharraf's government.

Madrasa Education Reforms during Imran Khan Government

During the present government, the renowned Ulema (Religious scholars) were engaged in the dialogue process but the focused deliberations were carried out with ITMP, as they affiliated the majority of the Madaris of various Boards. Several meetings of ITMP were held with the Prime Minister, Chief of the Army Staff, and Federal Minister for Education. After three meetings between ITMP and the Ministry, the Final Agreement was signed on August 29, 2019, which included

- i. All Deeni Madaris to be registered with the Ministry of Education and the Ministry to collect all information and data and extend facilitation and administrative support to Deeni Madaris
- ii. Unregistered Deeni Madaris will not be allowed to operate. In violation of terms and conditions, the registered Madaris will also be liable for cancellation.
- iii. Compulsory subjects will gradually be introduced in Deeni Madaris through Madaris sub-committees at SSC and HSSC levels in the next (05) five years.
- iv. After grade VIII children that join religious schools will study compulsory subjects of the National Curriculum apart from religious subjects
- v. Examination of compulsory subjects of National Curriculum for SSC and HSSC will be conducted by FBISE / Regional Boards and the examination of religious subjects will be conducted by the ITMP

- vi. Deeni Madaris already registered under the society act will be accepted by State Institutions till implementation of a new registration process under the Ministry of Federal Education

To implement the agreed points of agreement, the Directorate General of Religious Education was established in Islamabad along with its regional offices at sixteen locations of the country. The existing human resources were utilized. Till the end of June 2021 around 6000 Madaris were registered and the others are in the process. Approximately 600 visas are issued to foreign students for admission and continuation of their studies. The present government is interested to implement all the agreed points of the agreement made with ITMP.

Issues and Challenges of Madaris

The issues and challenges of the Madaris, keeping in view the Social and educational role of Madaris, biased and prejudice views and unfound criticism against Madaris needs to be expelled. Secondly, no valid, reliable, or authentic data regarding Madaris exists in the country. Different sources give different figures about the number of Madaris. There has been a lack of trust between different stakeholders, Wafaqs, ITMP, and the Government. The final degree of Madaris “shahadah Aalamiya” is equated with MA (Arabic/Islamiyah) only for teaching jobs, but no equivalence at BA, HSSC, SSC level is notified. Madaris is demanding the equivalence of other degrees/certificates. Foreign students facing difficulties in getting NOCs for seeking admission in Pakistani Madaris, that’s why foreign students are turning to India. The Madaris students lacking opportunities for higher studies within the country. There is a lack of proper employment opportunities for Madrasas graduates in the job market. The Madaris introduced contemporary education on their own behalf which no resources.

Conclusions

The Religious Education in Madaris transformed the course comprising Holy Quran, Hadith, Fiqh, and Arabic grammar which was known as Dars-i-Nizami. There are different grades of Madaris education that is Ibtidai, Mutawassit, Sanavia Aama, Sanavia Khassa, Shahadatul Aalia, and Shahadatul Aalamiya. The University Grants Commission of Pakistan, during 1982, issued equalization of Shahadatul Aalamiya with an MA Degree while the lower grades equivalence was not provided. At the global level where the Madaris came into the limelight and it was presumed that terrorists are produced in the Madaris. The government of Pakistan at different levels tried to implement the Madaris education reforms, but not fully succeeded due to different reasons. The Madaris also incorporated

some new initiatives of non-Formal education in Madaris and showed it as a reformation in the Madaris. The findings of the study reveal that formal contemporary and non-Formal education remained an important aspect to supplement the knowledge of teachers as well as of students in Madaris. The Non-Formal education activities for teachers enhance the capacity of a teacher through engagement and preparation for co-curricular activities. Linkages developed between the Madrasa teachers and other educational institutions. The teachers pursued further education in their life where the doors of education are always remained open. The teachers came out from the boundaries of Madaris and understood the ideas of laymen. Enhance efficiencies of teachers. Both types of education are essential with well-equipped facilities and resources in *Deeni Madaris*. that will enable students of *Deeni Madaris* to pursue further study to eliminate disparity and differences in thought and will curb the menace of intolerance.

Recommendations

1. The activities of contemporary education in the shape of formal or non-Formal education may be enhanced in Madaris and regular contemporary education may be provided.
2. Exposure visits may be arranged for students to other institutions Formal and Non-formal.
3. Teachers may be provided training in the non-Formal education field.
4. The services of Allama Iqbal Open University may be availed in teacher training.
5. Social Media may be involved in showing a positive image of Madaris.
6. The government may provide patronage, sufficient funds and mainstream the Madaris with general education

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