

Evolution Of The Madrassah Education System And Current Challenges

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ABSTRACT

Because it is related with religious education, the madrassah education system has a distinct place in Pakistani society. This educational system works concurrently with the other educational systems. Madrassahs have their origins in the early days of Islam, when mosques were used as

learning institutions for the Muslim community. Following the 9/11 attacks, Pakistan's madrassahs came under fire. The international society has chastised madrassahs for their engagement in militant activities, which, according to popular belief, is the primary cause of terrorism. Following 9/11, Pakistan began reforming madrassahs and revising their curricula.

Keywords: Madrassah Education, Extremism, Terrorism, Pakistan, Sectarianism.

Introduction:

Sectarianism, radicalism, extremism, and bloodshed have all afflicted Pakistan. This is the primary source of terrorism, which has become a major problem for both Pakistan and the world community. Terrorism is inextricably tied to sectarianism, which exacerbates Pakistan's current position. In Pakistan, which is primarily Sunni dominated, the split of the population according to sectarian views is particularly sharp. The Shia sect accounts for only 20% of the population, whereas the Sunni group accounts for 77% of the entire population. The Sunni community is divided into sub-sects and has several strands. The core cause of extremism and intolerance in society is this separation, which is founded on distinct sectarian beliefs (Ahmar, 2007). The Madrassah education system is linked to radicalism in the international community. They believe that the madrassah education system teaches kids harsh sectarian beliefs, thereby increasing the core cause of extremism and, in the end, exploiting those young minds for their own gain. The madrassah system of education is not a new one in the society. Its origins can be traced back to Hazrat Muhammad's period (PBUH). Madrassahs are Islamic schools that provide religious education to persons who would be able to serve as Islamic scholars and execute societal tasks. The name Madrassah literally means 'learning centre.' Students in the madrassah education system are frequently given with free boarding and housing as part of their education. As a result, madrassahs are known as impoverished people's schools. The divide of society based on class also breeds radical impulses in young people (Azam, 2014). The madrassah education system is organised on sects. There are various wafaqs, each of which is founded on a particular sect and operates madrassahs of that sect. Shia, Sunni, Ahl e Hadith, Barelvi, and Salfi are the different sects. Each sect's administrative body is in charge of managing and developing the madrassahs linked with that sect. As a result, the content taught in madrassahs of various sects differs. Madrassahs teach curriculum that conforms to their values and views, emphasising the society's sectarianism (Khushi, 2018). After the 9/11 attacks, the public's perception of madrassahs shifted. The fight against terrorism was undertaken by the major superpowers, and madrassahs became a focal point of the conflict. The curriculum of madrassahs has been condemned by world powers as breeding extremism and radicalism in society. The Pakistani government initiated the reform process. During President Musharraf's tenure, slogans like "enlightened moderation" and "reformation" were employed to display the world Pakistan's new face. In regards to madrassahs, the Pakistani government has made a significant adjustment in policy. Pakistan stopped supporting madrassahs and began modifying the madrassah curriculum (Pakistan: Madrasas, Extremism and the Military, 2002).

During British rule, the Madrassah was used as a school:

When the British took control of the country, they overhauled the educational system. They established a secular education system in the country and declared English as the language of instruction rather than Persian. Lord Macaulay established an educational system that served the British objectives. The ancient education system of Madrassahs was severely harmed as a result of the British authorities' attitude. They shunned the new school system, causing the Muslim community to fall behind the rest of society. They were unable to compete with the Hindus while retaining their distinct identities. As a result of these events, Muslim Ulemas and leaders felt compelled to reform their educational system (S. N. U. H. Hashmi, Hashmi, Khan, & Malik, 2021). Maulana Muhammad Qasim Nanautvi established Darul Uloom in Deoband to meet the needs of Muslims. This institution was created to achieve the following goals:

- To disseminate Quranic, Hadith, Tafseer, and Belief information.
 - To provide students with comprehensive religious knowledge and awareness, as well as to instill Islamic virtues in them.
 - To protect and preach Islam in any way possible; •
- To preserve the institution free of government interference; and To provide freedom of thought and information.
- To establish madrassahs throughout the country in order to disseminate Islamic values.

Darul Uloom offered Arabic, Persian, Quranic memorization, theology, calligraphy, medicine, handicrafts such as leather work, Quranic research, dar al-ifta, and tabligh. The syllabus, which was largely based on Dars-i-Nizami, included subjects like language, etymology, syntax, rhetoric, Arabic, literature, history, strah, munazarah, logic, philosophy, arithmetic, astronomy, tib, kalam, fiqh, usul-i Fiqh, farai'd, Hadith, Usul-i Hadith, Tafsir, and Usul- The key point was that they enhanced the Dars e Nizami syllabus and added more books in many topics (Karamat, Muzaffar, & Shah, 2019). As the madrassah officials clashed over the syllabus and language, a group of Ulema led by Qari Muhammad Tayyeb founded Darul Uloom Deoband in 1982. The old conventional madrassahs were essentially non-existent at this time. The development of such an academy was a significant contribution to the preservation of Muslim culture and Islamic principles. This madrassah did not teach English, which posed a significant barrier to students' and academics' growth (Yaseen & Naveed, 2018). Sir Syed Ahmad Khan went forth at this juncture, emphasising the importance of knowing English in order to preserve Muslim identity and compete with other communities. At Aligarh, he founded the Madrassah tul Uloom. This was built on a new educational system with several modifications. With the passage of time, it was initially renamed Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College, and subsequently Aligarh Muslim University (Looney, 2003). In the sphere of education, there were two opposed strands among Muslims at the time: one was Deoband's conservative approach, and the other was Aligarh's liberal approach. Nadwa tul Ulema was founded in response to both of them. This was the outcome of conferences held in Lucknow, which drew many eminent intellectuals and Ulemas from around the Subcontinent. Maulana Shibli was the most active participant in these meetings. He attacked

the previous curriculum and stressed the importance of reforming and upgrading it to meet the needs of the times. On November 2, 1982, the official organisation took place in Lucknow (Bashir & Haq, 2019).

After Independence, the Madrasah Educational System:

The educational system in Pakistan is complex and fragmented. In Pakistan, there are multiple educational systems. Government schools, private schools, and Deeni madrassahs are the three prominent educational systems in Pakistan. The nature, characteristics, and, most crucially, curriculum of all three strands of education are distinct. Government schools mostly teach students from low-income households who cannot afford to send their children to a private school. Government schools offer instruction at a low cost, and the stationary is also provided for free. This is especially beneficial to those in the lower middle class who cannot afford the high costs of books and other expenses associated with private educational institutions. In Pakistan, the standard of education in government schools is not up to mark. In Pakistan, private schools give an expensive education. Their curriculum and pricing structure are out of reach for the lowest classes. The madrassah school system offered a more affordable religious education. Because madrassah education is free, it is preferred by poor families. These madrassahs also provide boarding and accommodation for students from other parts of the country. (Inamullah, Hifazatullah, Sarwar, Khan, & Sultan, 2010). Madrassahs grew like mushrooms when the country gained independence in 1947. The demand for madrassahs grew since they provided a less expensive form of education. The state and the general public began to support the madrassah education system. Pakistan annexed the muslim-majority areas. Many madrassahs already existed in these places, and their faculty gravitated towards Deoband's established lines. Following the partition of India, several illustrious ulemas fled to Pakistan and built madrassahs. Mufti Muhammad Hassan's Jamia Ashrafia, Mufti Muhammad Shafi's Dar-ul-Aloom Malir, Maulana Muhammad Yousaf Banori's Dar-ul-Aloom Islamia Banori Town, Moulana Khair Muhammad Jalandhri's Jamia Khair-ul Madaris in Multan, and Moulana Muhammad Chirag's Jamia Arbia in Gujran. Because these Ulemas were Deoband graduates, they ran their madrassahs using the same system and curriculum (Fair, 2015). The madrassah system coexisted with Pakistan's formal education system. During the reign of Zia ul Haq, the number of madrassahs grew as he encouraged the expansion of religious institutions. In the territory now known as Pakistan, there were 245 madrassahs after the split of the Subcontinent, which climbed to 10,000 in 2002 and 40,000 in 2008. For political reasons, General Zia ul Haq favoured the expansion of madrassahs. The militant inclination in the madrassahs was not introduced under the Zia era; it stemmed from the Ulemas' principles of resistance to the British overlords in the Subcontinent. The madrassahs were so involved in political concerns during the colonial era that they continued their activities even after partition (Basit et al., 2021; Education, n.d.). Historically, madrassahs in Pakistan were established to provide religious education and generate scholars and ulemas for future generations. Lower-class students prefer madrassahs because they provide free education, boarding, and lodging, as well as a stipend to support their families (Mahsood, 2017).

In Pakistan, the madrassah system of education is used:

The madrassah system of education, which is still used in Pakistan today, was developed in the nineteenth century. The majority of madrassahs in Pakistan followed the Dars e Nizami curriculum. The madrassah education curriculum included logic, philosophy, rhetoric, dialectic reasoning, mathematics, traditional medicine, and Persian and Arabic grammar and literature. At the primary level, these madrassahs taught Quran, and at the advanced level, they taught the entire curriculum based on the Dars e Nizami syllabus. The recital of the Quran in its original language, i.e. Arabic, is one of the primary foundations of madrassah curriculum (Puri, 2010). A thorough understanding of hadith and Sunnah. Historically, madrassahs were seen as educational institutions for people who wanted to be leaders in the Islamic world. The importance of law and fiqh was highlighted in the curriculum. Madrassahs are also seen as institutions for the underprivileged and needy. Madrassah education is preferred by poor and lower-class households for two reasons: Madrassah education is less expensive than government and private education. The majority of madrassahs grant stipends to impoverished and needy students to help support their families. They also provide free food, lodging, and clothing to students. Poor families prefer madrassah instruction for their children for this reason (Ahmar, 2007; Riedel, 2008). Pakistani society, like religious education, is divided into many sects. Different boards control madrassahs in Pakistan, each of which is based on a sect and promotes the doctrine of that sect. They reflect the country's five prominent schools of thought. There are five Wafaqs, or boards, that are based on distinct schools (Fiqhs) that manage madrassahs according to sects. The Wafaqs' main responsibilities are to keep track of student registration in each wafaq and to coordinate all madrassahs that are registered with that wafaq. Their responsibilities also include developing a standardised curriculum that must be followed by all registered madrassahs with that board, as well as conducting senior level examinations within the madrassahs (Azam, 2014; Education, n.d.; Rabbi, 2012). The Ittehad Tanzeemat Madaaris Deenia (ITMD), the governing body of madrassahs in Pakistan, has all five Wafaqs as members. It was founded in 2003. Following the completion of the required syllabus, the wafaqs administer exams and evaluate pupils in order to assess their talents and issue certificates. Religious education is on par with formal education in terms of levels.

- The primary level of schooling is Abtadaya/Amma.
- The secondary level of schooling is known as Khassa.

The bachelor's degree is Aliya, and the master's degree is Almiya.

The Madrassah education system is designed to give all four levels of education within a single institution (Hassan, 2014).

The Madrassah Education System Faces a Number of Obstacles:

Following the horrific events of 9/11, madrassahs in Pakistan became the centre of attention. Following the Twin Towers attack, the world began to associate these educational institutions with religious militancy and radicalism. The madrassahs were thus depicted as factories for the generation of militants and radicals. Extensive research was conducted on all aspects of madrassahs, and several problems in the madrassah education system were identified (Azam, 2014;

S. N. U. Hashmi et al., 2021). The following are some of the obstacles that the madrassah education system has faced:

Financial Concerns:

Madrassahs are educational institutions centred on self-help ideologies. To suit their needs, they rely on a variety of sources. The madrassah's authorities rely on the society's upper crust to fund the institution. They make regular fund-raising pleas in various journals, booklets, and other available resources. Some madrassahs have the state as a financial agency. In exchange for donations, the state exploited the madrassahs for its own goals by assisting them financially (Baqai, 2011). Due to financial constraints, the state used to propagate its own version of events and deploy Ulemas to sway public opinion. Madrassahs also serve as social service organisations. The Madrassahs saw themselves as non-governmental organisations (NGOs), doing whatever they can to help the needy and eradicate poverty. Religious leaders and groups are, in fact, more dependable in delivering social services than government officials. Madrassahs are regarded by philanthropists as worthy recipients of their donations. In recent years, there has been a trend to see huge Madrassahs dabble in real estate, education, and other lucrative economic ventures.

Language Barriers:

The madrassah education system uses Urdu or Arabic as the primary medium of instruction. The study of the Quran and Hadith is prioritised in madrassah education, and Arabic is the preferred language. The madrassah education system's curriculum is designed in such a way that no emphasis is placed on the teaching of modern languages and disciplines. The modern language and education were completely ignored. Only religious education is provided at madrassah schools, and current educational and curriculum trends are neglected. As a result, madrassah students were unable to compete in the world after completing their education. They were unable to find suitable employment, and as a result, they were a drain on the economy (Khalid & Roy, 2016).

Curriculum that is no longer relevant:

The curriculum in use before to the revisions was out of date. Only religious subjects were covered in the curriculum. Computers, modern sciences, the value of technology, and other contemporary themes were simply neglected. The Ulemas agreed to revise the curriculum, although they were hesitant to include modern and technology subjects. The majority of madrassahs do not teach their kids the basic language, math, science, or even critical thinking abilities that all young people should learn in school. The madrassah educational system suffered a huge setback as a result of this. These modern studies, according to the Ulemas, solely train students for this worldly life. The topics are purely materialistic. This approach makes it difficult for the madrassah education system to thrive (Ahmed, Yousaf, & Zeb, 2018).

Conclusion:

As an educational institution, the madrassah plays an essential role in society. Its history as an institution may be traced back many years. It plays a critical role in the Subcontinent's society. The nature and aim of madrassah education have changed over time, yet it continues to play an important part in society in every way. Despite its failure to adapt to the needs of the time, it remains relevant and plays a significant role in educational matters. As a result, in order to make a madrassah an effective institution, a specific plan of reforms is required to acquaint this educational institution with modern trends in order to obtain maximum profit.

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