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Madrasah Education in India: A Need for Reformation

ABSTRACT: Since time immemorial, the Muslim youth who obtained Madrasah education are in doldrums in a modern world. It's accepted phenomenon that Madrasah had played a vital role in preaching the gospels of the great faith Islam. In the meanwhile, they dodged to keep their level with the modern education due to certain vincible hitches. At the threshold of the Islamic education, Muslim youth of Madrasahs are unable to have modern education because of which they become peregrinators. In addition, Madrasah people are following the age old syllabi, whereas they abstain themselves to opt for modern syllabi. Moreover, it's a right time for the learned Muslims to ferret out the loopholes and pitfalls in the Madrasah education system whereby reformation and rejuvenation could be done. In order to bolster the Muslim youth to go for modern education, Madrasah people have to jettison the prejudices towards modern education and reckon the scientific education with the Islamic education. The assessment and assertion of this study is that Muslims should come forward to juxtapose Islamic education with modern education.

KEY WORD: Madrasah education, modern education, Muslim society, India nation-state, and reform in education.

IKHTISAR: Sudah sejak lama, para pemuda Muslim yang mendapatkan pendidikan Madrasah menjadi lesu di dunia modern. Adalah fenomena yang tak terbantahkan bahwa Madrasah memainkan peran yang sangat penting dalam mengajarkan keyakinan Islam. Sementara itu, mereka mengelak untuk mempertahankan level mereka dengan pendidikan modern dikarenakan rintangan tertentu. Pada awal pendidikan Islam, para pemuda Muslim dari Madrasah ini tidak mampu memiliki pendidikan modern dikarenakan mereka merupakan para musafir. Selain itu, orang-orang dari Madrasah ini mengikuti silabus lama, sementara mereka tidak mau memilih silabus modern. Maka, inilah waktu yang tepat bagi para Muslim yang belajar untuk menemukan jalan keluar dan perangkap dalam sistem pendidikan Madrasah dimana pembaharuan dan peremajaan dapat dilakukan. Untuk mendukung para pemuda Muslim melalui pendidikan modern, orang-orang Madrasah ini harus melepaskan prasangka terhadap pendidikan modern dan menggabungkan pendidikan ilmiah dengan pendidikan Islam. Penilaian dan penegasan dalam studi ini adalah bahwa Muslim harus maju untuk mensejajarkan pendidikan Islam dengan pendidikan modern.

KATA KUNCI: Pendidikan madrasah, pendidikan modern, masyarakat Muslim, negara India, dan pembaharuan dalam pendidikan.

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INTRODUCTION

The word *Madrasah* is derived from the tri-consonantal Semitic root “D-R-S” which means “to learn, study”. Therefore, *Madrasah* literally means “a place where learning and studying are done”. In the Arabic language, the word *Madrasah* simply means the same as school does in the English language, whether that is private, public, or parochial school as well as for any primary or secondary school whether Muslim, non-Muslim, or secular. However, in English, the term *Madrasah* usually refers to the specifically Islamic institutions (Ahmad, 1981).

Following the birth of Islam, the Prophet Muhammad SAW (*Salallahu ‘Alaihi Wassalam* or peace be upon him) himself actively undertook the promotion of education. In *Darul Arkam* (house of Arkam), at the base of the Saafa Mountain, the Prophet himself established and taught in the first *Madrasah*. The first students of the very first educational institute established under Islam were Abu Bakr RA (*Radiallahu Anh* or hopefully God bless him), Omar ibn Khattab RA, Ustman ibn Affan RA, Ali ibn Abu Thalib RA, and the other *Sahabis* (Prophet’s companions).

Later, the Prophet handed over the responsibility of teaching to Hazrat ibn Umme Maktum and Mas Aab bin Umayr and migrated to Madinah to spread the word of Islam. As part of the Muslim initiatives to expand education, he brought over 60-70 prisoners of war from the battle of Badr and in exchange for *Fediya* entrusted them with the responsibility of teaching 10 children each. When he arrived in Madinah, the Prophet established an educational institute in a place near the Nabubi mosque. This was named the *Madrasah-e-Soffa* (Alam, 2002).

Following the death of the Prophet, during the time of the *Kholafaye Rashedin* (Caliph of Islam), education expanded further. All new Muslims embarked in spreading the words of the Prophet. Paying for teaching was not customary at that time. The motivation evoked by the Prophets words, “*Deliver to them at least one verse in my name*”, encouraged the new converts. As teachers in that period did not accept payment for their services, similarly students were not required to pay for their tuition. In addition to all education related expenditures, scholarships were arranged for the personal expenses of meritorious students. All these expenditures were made out of the money collected through *zakat* or tithe.¹

The second phase of the Islamic education began with the reign of Hazrat

¹*Zakka* which means “to purify” and also means “make something grow and develop”. It is commonly known that *al-Zakat* is “alms giving”. It’s the third pillar of Islam.

Umar bin Abdul Aziz the eighth *Khalifa* of the Umayyad lineage. During this time, state proclamations were made throughout the country and wages and allowances for teachers and scholarships for students were arranged. Separate learning rooms for students and teachers were established in the mosques during this period as well. The whole of Arabia and Iran was transformed into Muslim centers of learning, knowledge, and research. The arrival of the Arabs through Bin Qasim's conquest of the Indus had a similar influence on the Indian localities as well.

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF *MADRASAH* IN INDIA CONTINENT

However, the Muslim conquest of India did not succeed in presenting a superior educational system to the Indian subcontinent. Instead, following the traditional Indian educational institutions teaching religion and Sanskrit, they established *Maktabs* and *Madrasahs*. The exodus of the Arabs to the Indian subcontinent began in the sixth century in Western India and the twelfth-thirteenth century in Eastern India (Engineer, 2001). Initiatives undertaken by the recently arrived Muslims, alongside the increase in the Muslim population resulted in the growth and expansion of the *Madrrasah* education system in the major cities like Delhi, Lucknow, Rampur, Agra, Madras, Dhaka, and other major cities of the Western region of India.

According to the *Tarikh-e-Fereshta*, the first *Madrrasah* was established in the Multan province of Western India. It was probably in the sixth century that Nasiruddin Kabacha built the *Madrrasah* Firuzi building for Maulana Kutubuddin Kasani. It is believed that this was the first formally approved *Madrrasah* in the subcontinent. According to another source, Muslim religious education in India – the establishment of *Maktabs* and *Madrrasahs* – occurred in the twelfth century (Hamid, 1987). Shahabuddin Muhammad Ghuri established a number of *Madrrasahs* in Ajmir, where slaves he had brought to India with him and the local converted Muslims received education.

It was in 1203, following the establishment of Muslim rule with Ikhtiaruddin Muhammad bin Bakhtiar Khilji's conquest of Bengal and Bihar, that Islamic education spread widely throughout this land. A number of Mosques, *Madrrasahs*, and *Khankas* were established. However, trade relations existed between Arabia and India long before the establishment of Muslim rule here and a large number of holy men, and teachers arrived with the traders. These holy men established Mosques, *Madrrasahs*, *Khankas*, and *Chillakhana*s here and remained.

Muslim rule continued in India right up to the establishment of British

colonial rule after the fiasco in the fields of Palashi. Abul Hasnat Nadabi compiled a listing of Islamic centers of learning established during the long Muslim rule from historical relics and artifacts; it mentions *Madrasahs* established in Multan, Ucha, Ajmir, Delhi, Punjab, Agra, Ayodh, Bihar, the Daccan, Malab, Kashmir, Gujrat, Surat, and Bengal. In the Bengal, section it reports that ancient *Madrasahs* were found in Rangpur, Dhaka, Murshidabad, Laxmanabati, Gour, Asthipur, Ghorasheed Mahalla, Shilapur, and among other towns (http://www.ccsindia.org/ccsindia/interns2010/devna-soni_muslim-education.pdf, 10/11/2012).

Although *Makhtabs* and *Madrasahs* did exist during the reign of the emperor Akbar, state control over them had lessened. Abul Fazal writes in *Ain-i-Akbari* that during Akbar's rule, merely learning the Arabic language or the Qur'an was not considered to be higher or even complete education (<http://www.deccanherald.com/content/46514/modernisation-madrasas-crucial-muslims-progress.html>, 10/11/2012). The education policy of his day was completely secular and the education was relevant to the practicality of daily living. All students had to study ethics, mathematics, the times tables, agriculture, weighing and measurements, calendar and time measurement, household science, state policy, medicine, logic, theology, the natural sciences, and history (<http://www.milligazette.com/Archives/2005/16-28febo5-Print-Edition/162802200553.htm>, 10/11/2012). Students learning Sanskrit had to study Grammar, Logic, Vedanta, and *Patangali* philosophy.

Following the British colonization of India, there was a gradual decline in the *Makhtabs* of Bengal. On the other hand, for completely political reasons, in accordance with the Oriental School of Educational Policy, the British themselves patronized this religion-based mode of education in the then India. In 1782, the establishment of a *Madrasah* in Kolkata by Warren Hastings was merely a reflection of this policy. The objective of Warren Hastings' establishing a *Madrasah* becomes clear from the following: in a report he prepared prior to leaving India, Warren Hastings wrote that the Muslims needed to be engaged by the criminal courts, the police, and other departments.

With the fall of the Muslim rule, their situation had become almost that of beggars. They were so badly off that they could not afford to send their children to schools to obtain an education that would get them government jobs. This is the context in which the *Madrasahs* were created so that Muslim students can get an education and qualify for government jobs. This interest in establishing *Madrasahs* did not stem from any love for Islam or from any idea that this was a superior mode of education. It was

simply a political decision, the long-term goals of which were by necessity limited to ensure peaceful governing (Leirvik, 2004).

From the very dawn of the nineteenth century, there arose a heated debate regarding the aims, methods, and medium of education in India. However, this debate was primarily limited to the British and the upper class Hindus. The Muslims were more or less silent on this matter. Apart from a few exceptions, for the most part they were in favor of the conservative tradition. Instead of modern education, they were satisfied with learning Arabic/Persian languages in *Maktabas* and *Madrasahs*. Still, after many debates, it was decided to introduce English classes in the Kolkata *Madrasah* in 1824 and in the Kolkata Sanskrit College in 1827.

The 1813 Charter, which was based on the 1792 document by Charles Grant, *Observation of the State of Society among the Asiatic Subjects of Great Britain*, and later on the famous 1835 Education Policy developed by Lord Macaulay gradually heightened the importance of an English education and a Western knowledge base. Lord Macaulay recommended closure of the Kolkata *Madrasah* and the Sanskrit College and discontinuing financial support to publications in Arabic, Persian, and Sanskrit (Mehdy, 2003).

Although Lord Macaulay first recommendation was not accepted, his second recommendation was considered. It was in this continuity that in 1907-1908, the famed Earl Committee under the leadership of the then Director of Mass Education, Archdale Earl, and the Nathan Committee formed in 1914 made recommendations for massive reformation of the *Madrasah* education system. The new-scheme system for *Madrasahs* was initiated from April 1, 1915. The major characteristic of this scheme was to discard Persian and make English compulsory.

During this time Bangla, mathematics, geography, history, English, drawing, handicrafts, and drills were included in the syllabus. A large number of students enrolled within the first three days when the General Committee for Education established the Mohsin College in Hoogli with funding from the Mohsin Fund in 1836. However, surprisingly, among 1,200 students enrolled in English and 300 in the Oriental Studies Department there were only 31 and 81 Muslim students respectively. Grabbing the opportunity provided by the low numbers of Muslims, the alleged friend of Muslims, Mr. Hunter proposed that instead of spending the available resources on the Mohsin College, the money should be spent in establishing *Madrasahs* in Hoogli, Dhaka, and Chittagong (Saxena, 1983).

With the partition in 1947, the Kolkata Aaliyah *Madrasah* was transferred to Dhaka. Since then until 1971, although the active endorsement of the Pakistani government increased the number of *Madrasahs* in existence,

they did not reach such high numbers as they had in Bangladesh. The *Madrasahs* and the *Maktabas* were run under the private sector even in the Pakistani period. In fact, it was not unheard of for *Madrasah* students to collect donations for running the *Madrasah* with collection pot in hand like mendicants in trains or buses (Vastanvi, 2011).

Although Bangladesh took its first steps as an independent country and as a secular nation, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman did not close any *Madrasahs*. With the changes in political reality in 1975, up to the rule of Khaleda Zia, was the period most favorable to the *Madrasah* education system. The government in power today that claims to be secular is also trying to present itself as a friend of *Madrasah* education – an attempt reflected in various acts of the government. The emergence of the institution of the *Madrasah* as a centre for religious learning, and of the *Ulama* as a class of religious specialists, coincided with the spread of Islam outside the Arabian peninsulas in the years after the death of the Prophet. Today, the *Madrasah* system of education is prevalent in large parts of West, Central, and South Asia (Zaman, 1999).

The number of *Madrasahs* in India is estimated to be between thirty to forty thousands. According to the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, there are 721 *Madrasahs* catering to over 120,000 children in Assam; 1,825 *Madrasahs* catering to over 120,000 children in Gujarat; 961 for 84,864 children in Karnataka; 9,975 for 738,000 children in Kerala; 6,000 for over 400,000 children to Madhya Pradesh; and some 1,780 catering to over 25,000 children in Rajasthan. In Uttar Pradesh, the number of *Maktabas* is more than 15,000 and *Madrasahs* over 10,000; and there are 3,500 *Madrasahs* in Bihar (Bandyopadhyay, 2002).

Similar are the figures for the other States of India. Except in some parts of Kerala, these *Madrasahs* cater strictly to Muslim children. Ever since their emergence, the *Madrasahs* have persisted with a curriculum that has seen few changes. The fact that literally *lakhs* of Muslim children acquire their primary, and perhaps their only formal education, in these *Madrasahs* where only literature and Islamic studies with a cursory knowledge of social sciences thrown in, should be a matter of concern not only to their parents but also to anybody concerned with education in any manner.

So, the objectives of the paper are: (1) to describe the historicity and evolution of *Madrasah* education; (2) critical analysis of *Madrasah* education, particularly mentioning the challenges and constraints; (3) to provide a frame work where Muslim fraternity could juxtapose the Islamic education with scientific education; and (4) assessment and assertions for reformation and removing the main loopholes and hindrances.

MADRASAH IN INDIA: AIMS, CHALLENGES, AND CONSTRAINTS

From the very outset, it was the objective of the *Madrasah* system to teach Islamic subjects, for instance the education of the Holy Qur'an, *Hadith*, Islamic Jurisprudence, Arabic Literature, and Islamic History. *Madrasah* created thousands of the Muslim youth who were having strong knowledge about the gospels of Islam. The one of the main aim of the *Madrasah* was to produce such youth who after garnering the education of Qur'an and *Hadith* thereby to preach this among the people. Indeed, it is accepted notion that these *Madrasah* products played a very vital role in our society. They emphasized that there is no way-out but Islam. They strongly believe that Islam is the way of salvation in this world as well as at the Day of Judgment. In addition, *Madrasahs* and the product of these institutions are the real guardians, custodians, and real harbingers of our Muslim society. This Islamic educational set up wants to create a society based on justice, peace, tolerance, world brotherhood, equality, and egalitarianism. There is no difference between the one man and other, but if one is having more spirituality or is nearer to God because of his pious activities (http://ncmei.gov.in/writereaddata/filelinks/29b36b9a_Output.pdf, 10/11/2012).

There would be no exaggeration in mentioning this truth that if Islam and Muslim civilization is alive across the globe, it's because of these *Madrasahs* and its products. These *Madrasahs* are the main tools which transmit and transfer the Prophets teaching to the present generations and posterity. These institutions are the main channels of *Da'wah* (preaching in Islam). Another main aim is to lay the foundation stone of that society where nobody's rule is acceptable, except the sovereignty of the Allah. This whole society which will be guided by the principles of the Holy Qur'an and *Hadith* is called Muslim society (*Ummah Muslim*). As the world belongs to Allah, so the rule should be also by Him.

Madrasahs have for centuries served as centers of Islamic education. They have played a key role in the development of Islamic thought and in the formation and progress of Muslim communities. It would not be wrong to say that there is no aspect of Muslim life and society that has remained outside their purview. For centuries, *Madrasahs* were the centre of thought and intellectualism in Muslim communities, and influenced all sections of society. *Madrasahs* produced religious scholars and guides as well as leaders in various "secular" or "worldly" fields, including traders, administrators, judges, and so on (Bakht, 2012).

There is no doubt in saying that *Madrasah* students are getting a

catena of information regarding the Islam, but it's also a reality that found themselves in quagmire and doldrums situations when they came out from these institutions towards universities or colleges where they face numerous problems because of having very less insight about the modern subjects. Though these new universities and colleges change their outlook by providing them worldly knowledge but they are not in a better position to grasp up the worldly subjects as other students are grasping. Not only this but their real hindrances and challenges are coming when they wants to participate in national level tests, they are not at in position to crack these tests due to lack of modern subjects such as the science, mathematics, and other computer knowledge which they should already read, but its irony that did not get such avenues in *Madrasahs* where they would have been taught.

This is the major hindrances of the *Madrasahs* system which are prevalent in India or outside India. In a very few *Madrasahs*, there are modern subjects majority of the *Madrasahs* lacks modern subjects. This caused a frustration among the products of *Madrasahs*. A prosperous Muslim could bolster Islam more than that who are not prosperous. When the students who are coming out from these *Madrasahs*, they are not getting good jobs, this badly affects career. It's very important to mention here that without having a modern outlook and insight, these *Madrasah* products become the so called peregrinators (Soni, 2010).

Another problem which *Madrasah* are facing is governmental recognition. This is very important to point out here that if these *Madrasah* institutions will be recognized, they will get a lot of funds whereby they can have a good infrastructure. *Madrasahs* infrastructure is not good even they don't have the sophisticated and well build class rooms. They don't have the good teachers to whom they can have for teaching due to lack of funding. So, when the *Madrasah* system will have recognition with the government of India, then, these institutions will not have any problem as far as the maintenance and infrastructure problem is concerned. For this purpose, the Muslim learned society should be ready to change their attitude and mentality for the betterment of their community. They have to dodged their traditional attitude and think about benefits which other communities are seeking from the globalization and through modernity (Faheemudin, 2004).

Whenever there is debate or dialogue going to happen or anything will be written for the purpose of reformation and rejuvenation of the *Madrasah* system, it creates euphoria among the intellectual classes of the Muslim society but, in the meanwhile, it creates a backlash among the

orthodox Muslims. Why don't people change their attitude? Although, by reforming their system neither, it's going to harm neither them nor they will lose their credibility but through the process of reform their backward conditions can be enhanced and ameliorated.

Ignorance among the Muslim society is one of the major hindrances which prevent Muslims to follow age old syllabi and forget about the modern and scientific subjects. The whole Muslim *Ummah* is in grim situations. Somehow and somewhere the community is responsible of their marginalization and deprivation. Its looks very easy to malign the image of the others, but why don't Muslim civil society those are well educated, for instance, *Ulemas* of *Madrasahs* and other educated persons among the Muslim community take any step to stabilize themselves.

This age is the post modern world but Muslims are still living in dark ages. It was the best quality of our Prophet Muhammad SAW (*Salallahu 'Alaihi Wassalam* or peace be upon him) who allowed Muslims to receive knowledge if they have to visit China. But it's regretful that so called Muslims forgot the teaching of Prophet. It's illusion that if one will claim that "*I will do nothing and God will be my sole protector*" (Prabhu, 2006).

Positive change is always fruitful for any societies that want to remove their pathetic conditions and are ready to see their bright future. To be agnostic or atheist is not going to sort out our problems but a positive change is needed in *Madrasahs*, where Muslim subaltern children's who are economically backward are enrolled. A major section of Muslims are there. So, only religious education is not going to sort out the problems of Muslims, but the combination of both is the real panacea of their problems. The need of us is freedom from morass and plight in which the whole Muslim *Ummah* is living.

NEED FOR REFORMATION BASED ON THE SCHOLARLY ASSESSMENT AND ASSERTION

The format of education imparted to the students of *Madrasahs* ought to be modified keeping in view the shifting demands of the employers – a concern which can no longer be under-played. And this is perfectly possible without an erosion of the cultural and religious identity. *Madrasahs* need to recognize that the world has undergone a transformation. Employers have specialized needs which the current educational is unable to meet. Global and private competition, not to mention financial constraints, is not likely to disappear in the foreseeable future. Forwarding more of what they are currently doing is not the solution to these problems. To

survive present and future challenges, the *Madrasahs* must find new ways to extend contemporary education to their students.

Developing suitable answers for today's dilemmas requires an examination of the essentials of education. Education involves transference to others, of knowledge and values accumulated by mankind. Even though schools and teachers have been part of the process of education for hundreds or even thousands of years, it is the spirit of enquiry that has enriched mankind with knowledge. We learn through reading, experience, by watching others, and by observing the world in general. Inculcating a spirit of scientific enquiry in students will perhaps be the best manner of propelling them on the path of learning (Choudhury, 2011).

In this context, it becomes necessary to stress that science education, coupled with modern technology, if put to proper use in *Madrasahs*, could probably make education more meaningful. In modern times, there has been a paradigm shift in the business of education from "teaching" to "learning". It is a demonstrated fact that much learning can happen if the student is left to himself in the proper environment, with the proper resources, tools, and, most of all, with proper guidance. Fundamental changes in the educational system may be possible and indeed essential. Even though this may be the general agreement, it is a fact that in this country particularly, whenever an attempt is made to institute any profound change, a resistance begins to act from its very inception.

Authorities in charge of evolving a new direction may believe it necessary to continue whatever is being done if it has an extensive history. They flinch at the vision of a *Madrasah* system where science education would jettison religious knowledge and make education "worldly" and "impersonal". Scrutiny of basics, however, will provide a foundation for a thorough reorientation and show what may, of necessity, be incorporated and what must be retained. It is a matter of satisfaction to note that of late, some *Madrasahs*, having realized the significance of science education, have introduced science teaching in their curricula, but have not been able to bring about any noticeable improvement in the quality of education they impart to their students.

It is often argued that if science education is so sensational, why hasn't it brought any notable improvement to education in the few *Madrasahs* that have adopted it? One simple reason why science teaching has not bettered the condition of *Madrasah* education appreciably is immediately apparent. In spite of science education being imparted, thousands of *Madrasahs* don't have a well-formulated curriculum, and/or couldn't implement it even if they wanted to. They don't have sufficiently trained staff.

This lack of proficiency is true not only of *Madrasah* teachers who have not studied science, but also applies to those teachers who were science students. The prime reason for the latter predicament being that technology is progressing with alacrity and even such teachers as are science graduates become redundant in due course of time unless reoriented from time to time. Thus, if the present lack of suitably trained science teachers were not a sufficient obstacle to successful implementation of science curriculum in today's *Madrasahs*, a more difficult hurdle can also be recognized – *initial teacher training is not sufficient*. Teachers require continual training as the technology changes, since new and more effective applications are developed, there is more to be learned about learning with technology. Even fresh, young teachers are faced with the prospect of learning with their students or being left on the shelf. Equipping teachers to use technology is a process *ad infinitum*! (<http://arkindia.blogspot.com/2009/01/national-seminar-on-madrasa-and.html>, 10/11/2012).

When we discuss and debate upon the subject of *Madrasah* education and the need for reorientation of such institutions according to contemporary advances in the field of modern education, our memory harks back to that one unique *Madrasah*, the *Madrasatul Uloom*, founded by Syed Ahmad Khan in 1875 at Aligarh, which had a historical and revolutionary role to play in the lives of the Indian Muslims post the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857. Syed Ahmad Khan was painfully conscious of the plight of Indian Muslims who were blissfully ignorant of the various developments in the field of Western sciences and philosophy and wallowed in a state of nostalgia about their glorious feudal past. Syed Ahmad Khan realized the need of the hour – the desperate need of the Muslims to acquire contemporary education and learn the English language, which the conservatives resisted as the language spoken by the *Mushriks* (a person who makes someone the associate or partner of Allah is called, in Islamic perspective, as *Mushrik*).

Syed Ahmad Khan launched, with a missionary zeal, to establish a *Madrasah*, a school where the Indian Muslim youth would receive definite guidelines about their future. Keeping in mind the Islamic concept of “*deen*” (Islam) balanced with “*duniya*” (world), he fought all obstacles to achieve his aim – that of establishing an institution which combined the best of both the Orient and the Occident – religious teaching combined with scientific education. He vigorously attacked the social conservatism which rejected any advance or change and in turn received brickbats for his so-called radical views. According to Syed Ahmad Khan, the prime requisite of the Indian Muslims at that time was the acquisition of knowledge not only of Islamic thought but also of logic and natural philosophy; and he

firmly believed that there was no conflict between Islamic thought and these branches of knowledge. Earlier, he had also established the Scientific Society in 1864 at Ghazipur with the purpose of familiarizing the Muslims with Western sciences (<http://edunetmedia.com/is-madrasa-education-truly-path-reform/>, 10/11/2012).

The *Madrasatul Uloom*, for which Syed Ahmad Khan gave his life blood, now stands as one of the most well-known and premier Central Universities of India with an international standing, attracting students from far and wide. Syed Ahmad Khan's concept of continuity in change paid rich dividends for the Indian Muslims who benefited from this institution, which grew to become the AMU (Aligarh Muslim University) in 1920. Students who have benefited from this institution stand distinguished in the world today. The *Madrasatul Uloom* experiment, which should have served as a paradigm, remains unique even today. Unfortunately not many *Madrasahs* followed suit.

The Indian Muslim minority is quite backward in science education and its representation and participation in the scientific activity of the country is woefully low. This situation, if allowed to persist for long, would certainly hinder the growth/health of the progress of the country. In these days of fast expanding frontiers of scientific knowledge and its multiplying technological spin-offs, no nation can afford to have a sizable chunk of its population illiterate in science, and no community can hope for a respectable place in the national stream without equipping itself with science education.

In its own small way, the Centre for Promotion of Science AMU (Aligarh Muslim University) has made its main objective to promote science teaching in *Deeni Madrasahs* and uphold the cause of high quality science education in Muslim Managed Educational Institutions (MMEIs) and Urdu Medium Schools. In consonance with this objective, the Centre Organizes Refresher Courses, Workshops, Instructional Conferences, etc. on all India as well as regional basis for science teachers from MMEIs under the Science Education Quality Improvement Programs. Apart from these activities, which are aimed at promoting science education, the Centre for Promotion of Science has been organizing Orientation Programmes for teachers for the last few years with the intention of imparting to them the basic skills required for using computers as teaching aids, a beginning in the use of technology in education.

One important factor of the educational backwardness of Muslims in India is the system of *Madrasah* education, which has its own advantages and disadvantages. Most of the students socially, economically, and

educationally backward sections of the Muslim community begin their education from these *Madrasahs* and *Maktabas*, where education is relatively cheap and in some cases free. The students and teachers of these *Madrasahs* also get an euphoric feeling that they are performing their religious duties by learning Qur'an by heart, no matter whether they understand it or not.

It is sad that these *Madrasah* education system doesn't follow the message of Islam, which clearly states that one can go to China for seeking knowledge. They tend to stay local and avoid peeping to the outside world for knowledge. It is unfortunate that they limit the scope of learning and acquiring knowledge only to the religious education and that is why their knowledge about Science, Art, Engineering, Business, Administration, and even of Humanities is generally poor. *Madrasah* graduates, who can recite Qur'an by heart, mostly remain ignorant, of not only of the modern education but also of the essence of the Qur'an (Metcalf, 1978).

Madrasah education is organized sect-wise. The network is organized throughout India on these lines. It mostly depends on the contribution from the followers of their sect in different states of India and abroad. The persons going throughout the country and around the world for fund collection are called "*safeer*" which means ambassador. All contributions from India and abroad are generally not accounted for. These *safeers* generally get commissions on these collections, from a minimum of 25% up to 50%. The contributions received from India and abroad are mostly from *Zakat* fund, and hence they have to follow the restrictions in the use of these funds as per the norms of the *Zakat* (tithe). Most of the funds collected by these *safeers* from abroad violate the norms of Foreign Contributions Regulating Act (FRCA). Generally, these contributions may not be utilized for modern education as per the *Zakat* norms.

The need of the hour is to reform the *Madrasah* education system to the extent it is possible. But the strong network of sectarian *Ulemas* (religious cleric) will not allow major reform in the setup. So, the well-wishers of Muslim cause should find some way out without disturbing the *Madrasah* setup.

The above study shows the subjects which are there in *Madrasah*, in fact, these all subjects are Islamic or religious oriented subjects. It's good that *Madrasahs* should have these subjects but at the same time, they have to provide modern or scientific education to the Muslim youth; this is way by which their conditions could be bolstered and enhanced. Islam is the identity and recognition of Muslim *Ummah*, nobody have a right to criticize that element. But one should see the other dimensions of the

pathetic situations of Muslims in India, their condition become worst than *Dalits* of India. Millions of Muslims are illiterates; due to illiteracy, they are jobless; if thousands have read but due to lack of modern education, they are not in position to stabilize themselves in the modern scenario because of the complexity and the competitions of the modern world.

Table 1:
Syllabi of Major *Madrasahs* in India

Madrasah Name	Islamic Subjects	Modern Subjects
<i>Madrasah Deoband.</i>	The Holy Qur'an, <i>Hadith</i> , Arabic, Jurisprudence.	Modern education is lacking there.
<i>Madrasah Nadwatul Ulama.</i>	Arabic, the Holy Qur'an, <i>Hadith</i> , Islamic Jurisprudence.	Some Humanities subjects are there, but Science and Mathematics are lacking.
<i>Jamia tul Flah.</i>	The Holy Qur'an, <i>Hadith</i> , Islamic Jurisprudence.	Humanities and some Arts subjects are there, but Science, Mathematics, and Computer education are lacking.
<i>Madrasah Islah.</i>	Arabic, the Holy Qur'an, <i>Hadith</i> , Islamic Jurisprudence.	Humanities and Arts subjects are there. Science and Mathematics are also there. One polytechnic has also been built.

(Source: Md. Akram Nawaz, 2012).

Islam is the universal religion and its principles have a universal applicability. If one understand Islam only by confining himself to religious education, this is his misnomer and its nothing but illusion of irrationality. Islam has a broad paradigm and its emphasis is upon the universality principle not to be confined in home. Islam allows Muslim to have the plenty of information about the modern education so that they could adjust themselves at any fore. They will be not beggars but contributors to other sections of society.

After assessment of the *Madrasah* education set up, it can be said blatantly that these Muslim institutions plays a commendable role in preaching Islam towards whole humanity. It is noteworthy to mention here that if Islam is alive its credit goes to these *Madrasahs*. The products of the *Madrasahs* are the symbol of great discipline and conduct. They are truthful and honest in their activities.

It's important to mention here also that they have visionary qualities, but it's irony that these *Madrasah* products had not been taught the modern

subjects, due to this reason they are unable to adjust themselves as per the requirements of the modern world. Even their career got affected because whenever they try to sit in any national level test, they are unable to sort out the Scientific and Mathematical portions of the paper. Because of their lack of competency in modern education, they are not able to get their jobs. This is all about the *Madrasah* systems failure because in majority of the *Madrasah* teachers think that modern education is an evil; this is the reason they are not taking into consideration modern subjects.

Therefore, reformation is the process or a method which Muslim learned people can go for if they want to stabilize themselves and positions of the Muslim masses. No educational system in the world is complete; every educational system needs reformation time to time so that loopholes and problems could be removed by overhauling the system by inclusion of new subjects and new courses. *Madrasahs* needs this reformation for the betterment of their Muslim community which is the second largest community in the democratic India. A positive change is always beneficial for any society. *Madrasahs* in India should have to change their old age orthodoxy and think about the largest interest of Muslim community. Inclusion of Science, Mathematics, and Computer educations could pave a way towards bright future for Muslim youth.

The assertion of this study is not that Muslim *Madrasahs* should neglect the Islamic subjects which they have from time immemorial but time has come they should go for the best choice that is combination of both Islamic and scientific education. Juxtaposition of Islamic subjects and modern subjects would create new avenues for whole Muslim fraternity. Muslims needs falcons not vultures and of course the falcons can be produced by the amalgamation of both Islamic and scientific education (http://twocircles.net/2011nov08/challenges_madrasa_education.html, 10/11/2012).

CONCLUSION

The very minimum that can be done with regard to reforming the *Madrasahs* is to work towards combining the best of the modern and the past with regard to the curriculum. The basic aim of the *Madrasahs* is the protection and promotion of knowledge of the *Deen* (Islam). Keeping this basic aim as the top priority, efforts should be made to mould the *Madrasah* curriculum at the secondary level in accordance with the demands of the time and environment in order to make it more effective.

We have to admit that a large portion of the existing *Madrasah* syllabus is now defunct and has lost its importance and usefulness. Most of the

books prescribed in the syllabus were written seven hundred or more years ago. In that intervening period of seven centuries, humanity has witnessed immense leaps in knowledge and civilization. Old perspectives have withered away and have been replaced with new ones that have produced revolutionary changes in human civilization. In particular, the significant transformations witnessed in the 19th and 20th centuries have created an entirely new world. It is important for our Islamic scholars to understand these new ideologies, the huge transformations that they have wrought, and the very significant religious, moral, social, and intellectual challenges that they now pose.

Inclusion of modern subjects, for instance Science, Mathematics, Humanities and Arts, and Basic Computer education will definitely produce the positive results. Religious subjects should be given the top priority but teaching modern education cannot be ignored. Muslim civil society has to think regarding this very pertinent issue that is immediate reformation of *Madrasahs* curriculum. Muslims could understand the world by having the glances over the modern subjects. They can garner bunch of information of Science and Humanities thereby understanding the present challenges would be easier process.

Muslims need hundreds of Sir Syeds if they want to excel themselves in the field of modern education. Sir Syed Ahmad Khan is really an ideal example who changed the deprived conditions of the Indian Muslim by laying the foundation stone of Mohammadan Anglo Oriental College in 1875 to enlighten the Indian Muslims. Muslim have to wake up now from a long sleep which be ready for the reformation.

Illiteracy caused ignorance and ignorance caused destruction. Only panacea of Muslim in India is to become the educated enough, education will cause enlightenment and prosperity. They would find them in prosperity and progress if the scientific education will be used paraphernalia. Muslim learned people should not jettison and abstain themselves from including the modern curriculum. By juxtaposing both the educations Islamic plus modern education will pave better consequences. It is very important to note here that by doing this, Muslims will not loss their credibility rather their credibility will be protected.

Some anti Islamic forces and agencies are decisively working against Islam and the Muslim world. The enemy of Islam wants to malign and blaspheme the image of the Muslim institutions. It is its belief that *Madrasahs* produce violent people and terrorists. They also believe that *Madrasahs* are the training centers for terrorists. This is totally fabrication and concoction of enemies of Islam. These *Madrasahs* produce people

who are peace loving and law abiding citizens to the global world.

Madrasahs have to change their age old curriculum such as logic, philosophy, and minimize the quantity of subjects just give the first priority to the education of the Holy Qur'an, *Hadith*, Islamic jurisprudence, and Arabic literature. But in the meanwhile, they have to include some arts subjects like Science, Mathematics, Urdu, English, Political Science, Sociology, Economic, and basic computer knowledge. By doing this reform work, *Madrasahs* will be to produce those talents which will be perfect in both Islamic education and modern education.

Madrasahs should have also affiliation with best governmental institutions in India. For this purpose, they have dialogue with other reputed universities and colleges so that these *Madrasahs* could be affiliated. Not only this but they should try to convince the government of India that to make funds available to these institutions by which they can have better infrastructure, web based class rooms, best learned faculties, and other facilities which they needed.

Another reform is needed for those people who hate modern education and consider it as a curse and hindrance. It's nothing but the nightmare of the irrationals; therefore, reformation is needed to remove this type of mentality. Until and unless reform will not done for such ill minded people till that time no transition and transformation is possible.

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