

RECONSTRUCTING THE CURRICULUM AND EDUCATIONAL FRAMEWORK OF MADRASSA BOARDS IN PAKISTAN

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Abstract

Purpose of the study: This study highlighted the Islamic Madarsa's role in the modern education system.

Methodology: It was library research in which books and Journals are the primary sources of content collection. Interpretation of Philosophies of Islamic Scholars has been made from qualitative analysis.

Main findings: The study reveals that Islamic Madarsas play a very positive role in spreading Education according to the needs of hours. Islamic Madarsa education system is handy in achieving the goals. They have a very positive impact on students' learning.

Application of the Study: This study will help out the new researchers to think and conduct more studies on the various factors of the Islamic Madarsas education system.

Novelty/ originality of the study: Earlier, Madarsa education focused more on traditional learning but in this study focus is more on correlating them with the current situation. There is a need to bring these successful experiments into book form, set rules and regulations so that others can benefit from them, and formulate such a framework based on the results obtained.

Keywords: Madarsa, Reconstruction of Curriculum, Educational Framework, Islamic Madarsas Education System.

INTRODUCTION

The beginning of the establishment of madrassas is attributed to the end of the fourth century AH, but the fact is that the process of arranging religious Education among the Muslims began in the time of the Prophet. The existence of Education and training in Dararqam, Dargah Masjid Qaba, Masjid Nabavi, and the students of Safa are clear proof of this. Well-known religious schools of the 4th and 5th centuries AH include Azhar University in Egypt, Abu Bakr Al-Isfahani Madrasa in Isfahan, Abu Al-Ishaq Al-Israfaini Madrasa in Nishapur, and Nizamiya Madrasa in Baghdad, were the jewels of Muslim Empire of the time (Supriadi, Romli, Islamy, Parhan, & Budiyaniti, 2021). It is understood that the history of the madrassas dates back to the time of the Prophet and the chain of transmission of the books of hadith taught in the madrassas reaches the Holy Prophet (PBUH). The establishment of mosques and religious Education in the colonies of Arab merchants in the coastal areas of southern India (Malabar) began in the seventh century AD, but the establishment of madrassas in the subcontinent took place in the second century AH, the eighth century AD. As far as the setting up of madrassas in northern India is concerned, it started during the conquests of the Turks, but when the Muslim government was established in Delhi in 1206 AD, there were a large number of schools and madrassas in cities and towns other than Delhi already established (Ramdane & Souad, 2020). A noble progression initiated by Shah Waliullah led to the famous set up of Farangimahal. The present day curriculum of all madrasa boards in Indo-Pak find its tracing in Farangimahal (Salam & Parvaiz, 2019).

The curriculum prevailed in the time of Famous Farangimahal madrasa

- ❖ Interpretation of the Qur'an
- ❖ Hadith
- ❖ Jurisprudence
- ❖ Principles of jurisprudence
- ❖ Theology
- ❖ Cashing
- ❖ Syntax
- ❖ Logic
- ❖ Wisdom and philosophy
- ❖ Mathematics
- ❖ Rhetoric

The Farangimahal's teaching style¹ was traditional and classic, emphasizing the ability to understand and solve the book's text, footnotes, and other details of the book itself rather than the subject matter. The teacher and the student paid more attention to it. The usefulness of this teaching method was that it gave deep understanding of subject matter and increased the ability to memories and deduce (Zaidi, 2021).

Allama Muhammad Anwar Shah Kashmiri used to teach in Darul Uloom Deoband. Maulana Nomani writes in his autobiography that the year of graduation, Hazrat Shah Sahib gave his farewell speech to the graduates and advised them on numerous issues wisely, the most important of which was that if you want to do the work of dawah² and preaching properly, it is necessary to learn English. About a century is passed since this event, but our madrassas are still uncertain about English language³, whether it is needed at all or not (Sheikh, 2019).

The realization of reforms in madrassa boards by the elders of Madrassahs in united India

Sir Syed Ahmad Khan was the first madrassa person who not only proposed the reforms but went one step further to materialize it in the shape of Aligarh university, but these reforms did not will to constitute in the madrassas, they took a totally different tour in the favor of prevalent secular education system set up by the British occupants (Ahmed & Amin, 2021).

Hakim-ul-Ummah Hazrat Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanawi also added a lot on this issue, but his voice also proved to be a voice in the desert. The same problem is stated several times; some excerpts are being quoted here to show the sentiments of great scholars on the need for change in the syllabus and system of religious schools and the mental and intellectual rigidity of its management (Saeed, Ahmad & Nasir, 2021). Hazrat Thanwi, while discussing the prevailing style of teaching the Holy Qur'an, said:

The style of the Quran is not restricted by grammatical immaculateness and idiomatic constraints; it is the common man's language, targeting common sense; thus, from my point of view, The Quranic teaching must be with simple and necessary regulations of grammar. Mastering the grammar and heavy terms becomes a hazard in understanding Quran directly, as it sets a mind on a particular course. That does not go with commonness easily, sometimes. I am not cutting the need for arts (funoon al Quran) out, but it must be afterwards or separately, as it modifies the thought process into a shariah-required shape (M. Shah, 2019).

The teaching style of the Quran should be changed like some texts are taught without commentary. For example, I recommend teaching one-quarter of a juz without Tafseer Jalalain, and at the end, the Tafseer should be taught, or the teacher should keep referring to the Jalain or just keep the Tafseer Jalalain as the teacher's resource book, consequently, students would be trained to understand Quran and learn it by self-studying (Zarkasyi, 2020).

Following is the instructions of Hazrat Thanvi, in regards to necessary additions in the syllabus: "I am of the opinion since long but no one pays attention, and I am disappointed from repeating it over and over, that the law clauses of "Ta'azeerat e Hind"⁴, and the regulations of Railway and post office should be the part of syllabus".⁵

Significance and importance of madrassah reforms

After the glorious days of the Islamic empire past, Muslims are facing the challenge of maintaining their religious identity in all walks of life. The situation is that only 15,000 female scholars and 23,000 male scholars from one Madrassa Board are graduating this year. Of course, this is a huge human resource. If such a large human resource had been adapted to its time and aligned with the psychology and needs of its time, it would have been enough to close the growing gap between religion and society. As for male scholars, some manage to emerge at the national level through personal hard work and study, but not among the 22,000 scholars. However, there is a great need to connect women with religion in the present age. The waste of such human resources occurs just because of the lack of grooming and updation (Jahangir, Sheikh, & Shaukat, 2022).

Similarly, restructuring the Islamic curriculum in schools has been an important topic for Muslim thinkers and educators, nationally and internationally, on which valuable recommendations have been made, incorporating the important and effective learning methods of successful educational models of the heyday of Islam. Attempts have been made to adapt to modern research and methods. The focus in these curricula is on the accuracy and corrective directions of mind as well as character building and grooming. The intellectual work of making recommendations has been completed to a great extent. At present, efforts and experiments are being made to put these recommendations into practice. The most important task is to help acquire the skills required to achieve the goals. And that is aligned with the guidance of Hazrat Thanvi, and Hazrat Kashmiri mentioned above (Mahmut, 2019).

¹ Under the patronage of Allama Muhammad Anwar Shah Kashmiri and Molana Khalil Ahmad Ahmad Saharanpuri (RA)

² Invitation to Islam and preaching the good manners of Iman

³ Syed Shabir Bukhari, Mechaley awr nizam e Ta'leem (Lahore; Taleem Makhdoum Jahanian adademy. 1986_ P:35-60

⁴ British law, in occupied subcontinent

⁵ Al Adhafat ul Yaumiah, V⁷⁶, p:435

The Ministries of Education in representative Islamic countries, such as Malaysia, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia, have developed these curricula and a framework for achieving the right goals. Especially incorporating madrassah genius and intelligence in mainstream Education, this move has raised the need for madrasa reforms even more than ever in terms of materializing the shariah goals on a cognitive level ([Mas'ud, Fuad, & Zaini, 2019](#)).

Recently made suggestions and steps taken by the Current Leadership of madrassas

Maulana Syed Muhammad Yusuf Banuri (may Allah have mercy on him) has discussed this issue the most in our time. In dozens of articles, he has highlighted the importance of changing the curriculum and teaching style according to the requirements of the time. He said that three types of curriculum changes are needed:

- ❖ Reduction: The heavy curriculum should be made a little lighter, and instead of teaching dozens of books separately of the same discipline, three or four important and more useful books should be taught.
- ❖ Taiseer: Instead of cramming long material and confusing the students' minds in irrelevant discussions, the understanding of the book itself and the subject matter should be given priority.
- ❖ Keeping and Removing: i.e. new and useful sciences should be added by eliminating unnecessary parts. In this regard, Hazrat Banuri has emphasized the need to include new sciences in the curriculum, including;

- (1) History of Islam,
- (2) Seerat of the Prophet pbuh,
- (3) Modern Arabic Literature and Insha,
- (4) Modern Theology.
- (5) Mathematics
- (6) Economics are particularly noteworthy.

The genius of the time, Moulana Abu al Kalam Azad has also discussed this issue. On 22Feb, 1947, while presiding over one joint meeting on the Curriculum of Arabi madares, in Lukhnow, he said,

Gentlemen! Accept my apologies, but our boys study for 6 to 8 years and can't write ten lines with Arabic proficiency. And if they dare to write, it will be an Arabic that no Arab will be able to recognize. So this is a big mistake that is made in India. There is a need to re-establish Arabic Education. The best books, the best material, and books can be counted among the miracles of Arabic literature.

He further said in the same speech,

"I have studied the same books, sitting on the torn mats, I could never disgrace them, but my heart is sad. It is like we gave importance to something one hundred years before, but then time passed and time demanded change. If we could not bring a change one hundred years before, we should have brought it 50 years now, but what we are teaching in our madares in the name of Logic, in 1947. Today's world has moved on; we do not need them now".

This speech of him is a vivid analysis of the situation; one concerned person should study it again and again. This speech is published in "Khutbat e Azad" by the publication Idara Nashriat Islam Urdu Bazar Lahore. It is also published in Mahnamah AShariah, in November 1993. We cannot encompass all its aspects here, but these excerpts have been quoted here so that our ignorance and indifference to the needs and requirements of the time can be gauged.

Reformers worldwide, including Islamic schools, are working hard to make Islamic schooling streamlined - and these efforts are drawing the attention of experts - and are being appreciated. There is a need to bring these successful experiments into book form, and to set rules and regulations so that others can benefit from them, and formulate such a framework based on the results obtained with which not only the quality should be reviewed, but also the gradual process of development should be continued in an orderly manner ([Khan, 2021](#)).

Modern tools (technology) and trends (latest methodology) should be incorporated into the educational process in such a way that educational progress is not only fast but also excellent in quality. This model should be included in your recommendations only after passing the test and trial stages. The views of educators, parents, students and thinkers should also be included in the educational process and should be supported by the parents, students and educators. The madrassas and Islamic schools need such solid frameworks to materialize, sincerely thought off and carefully constructed by eminent Muslim educationists of the Past and Present ([Kamran, 2019](#)).

The main purpose of the establishment of madrassas is to create leaders who can maintain this noble continuity, as well as a peaceful human society, with the teaching and learning of the Qur'an and Sunnah with relevant sciences and arts derived from them ([Saif, 2020](#)).

An Account of Opinions for and Against Changes in the Madrassah System

It would be interesting to mention various opinions in favour or against Madrassah reforms. There are generally three positions for changing the syllabus in madrassas:

- There is a position of those people who consider this syllabus useless in the present times, such people think that there is a need for a major change in the syllabus of madrassas in which modern sciences should be included to such an extent that madrassas get involved step by step with the graduates of the colleges and universities and strive to move ahead of each other in this worldly life. These are usually people who have neither received formal Education in madrassas nor are well acquainted with the syllabus of madrassas. These intellectuals are concerned about the secular Education of one or two per cent of the students of madrassas but they do not care about the religious Education and grooming of 3 or 4 per cent of the students in the fields of modern Education.
- A group does not want to see even the slightest change in the curriculum and is not ready to pay attention to the opinion of those who suggest changes.
- A moderate point of view is actually a middle way between two extremes. The Islamic Madares should retain their current system that is based on the fundamentals of Shariah, and obviously, the books Quran and Hadeeth cannot be changed, but the books of Tafseer of Quran and the commentary of Hadeeth and Fiqh (Jurisprudence) aligned with modern trends of learning, moreover, the books of Arabic Sarf w Nahw and communication should be simplified. The heavy books of Philosophy and Logic should be replaced with the English language, Arithmetic and Computer Science. Thus the main fundamental structure of madrassah Education would stay intact about which Allama Iqbal said, let these madrassahs be the same, and let the poor be benefitted by them lest, the traces of Islamic identity are scratched off from Cordoba, Granada and Alhamraa, despite Muslim rule of 800 years in Andalusia. The subcontinent would lose traces of Muslim legacy except for the Taj Mehal of Agra or the Lal Qila of Dehli.
- The same thoughts were expressed by Syed Suleman Nadvi, when he said, "When people would be busy after position, status and civil designations, these "crazy mullas" would be alert like always to safeguard the foundation and center of Muslim nation in subcontinent. So these madares are the responsibility of us all.

The need of an Effective Framework for reformed Madrassa Curriculum- another Challenge

In the 21st century, where the pace of development has surpassed every period of history, the field of Education is also facing great challenges. There is no more effective way to bring about a revolution than through the educational process ([Mandela, 2022](#))."

But the fields of Social Sciences are fiercely challenged by the achievement of smart goals as it was expected. The reason is that these Sciences were given very little importance due to the race for industrial development; compared to other professional sciences, the standards and goals of these social sciences have been very superficial. However, these sciences are crucial in behavior shaping and character building ([Ali, Mukhtar, Mansoor, & Butt, 2021](#)).

Compared to the traditional education system (India, Singapore and, China, Pakistan), the modern education system, which is based on successful experiments in Finland, Norway, is successfully experimenting to achieve better goals. Introducing revolutionary methods that have made the educational process simpler, easier and more efficient gives the student a more active status in the Finnish Education style. The role of the teacher is more active in traditional teaching methods. While this is comparatively passive in the Finnish system, Students are given more active roles. Teachers must be equipped with teaching skills more than subject mastering. This requisition requires a lot of educational psychology training and experience ([Alkuwari, 2021](#)).

Disregard Madrassah education or college Education, our current system lacks in following;

The flaws in our education system can be described in the following points.

1. Obscurity of goals and vision.
2. The curriculum does not meet the requirements of society.
3. First is the accumulation of unnecessary information in the curriculum and then the failure to meet the needs in society.
4. Not being able to be self-sufficient from an early age, despite obtaining a degree and certification.
5. Covid-19 has unfolded another issue in the post-covid-world: we are badly unacquainted with smart learning ways.

In Pakistan, even mathematics and science standards are far lower than the standard of the best education systems.

This challenge is even more significant in the Department of Islamic Studies and madrassas. Despite studying great books and obtaining impressive degrees, the primary academic standard is deficient, whether it is public relations, business, or academic competition, with the most disappointing results in character building and personality grooming ([Hoodbhoy, 2021](#)).

The Salient features of such a Framework

We need to ascertain the following;

- Whether the goals and objectives of the religious books are evident before the teacher and learner, both
- According to Smart Goals, how can scientific thinking and research activities be promoted among the students of Islamic sciences, and how can their standards be brought in line with the internationally accepted methodology.
- How can the traditional teaching methods of teachers be brought up to the standard of "Visible Learning"? How can they be mentally and practically prepared for the stages and procedures of practical training?
- What will be the strategy for acquiring the required skills, and how will this strategy be tested.

To set KPIs, we need to shift our angle of thinking

Firstly on Excellence. Excellence should be constituted as the top priority, considering it a part of religious duty by the Hadeeth *ان الله يحب احدكم اذا عمل عملا ان يتقنه* "Allah his servant when he brings excellence in his work.

Secondly, analysis of the intellectual and practical structure of successful modern education systems and identify the usable factors among them. By reviewing the successful educational systems of the Muslim heyday (Abbasid and Mughal periods), an attempt should be made to harmonize their effective and prominent methods with modern educational methods.

Thirdly, to develop a model based on these recommendations, compile results by going through the test and try stages in active classrooms. The views of academics, parents and students should be sought on these results, and an action plan should be formulated according to these views

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

METHODS

Qualitative

SOURCES

Books

ANALYSIS

Interpretation of Philosophies of Islamic Scholars

The researchers aimed to comment on the system of Islamic Madras in Education. So, the researchers chose a qualitative study to achieve their research objectives. The researchers used different books to analyze the data. So, the researchers' source of data was secondary. The chosen data was keenly analyzed and interpreted to simplify the other scholar's viewpoints about the role of Islamic Madarsas in the modern education system.

References to the Useful Material available

All over the world, especially in the religious schools of Pakistan and the United Kingdom, practical work is being done daily with new experiences. Islamic schools worldwide are also engaged in the struggle to make the Islamic curriculum streamlined. Our focus is on reconstruction and application. We want to make this dissertation a basis for covering successful experiences (practices) as a framework (training course) and quality enhancement. It should also be used in the preparation of the Quality Enhancement Framework. All recommendations should be tested to meet the standards of academics. Theoretical work has been done in this regard. The work of Dr Muhammad Amin Hafizullah is precious. Below is an overview of his important work on this subject ([P. Shah & Khurshid, 2019](#)).

1. Madrasa Discourses Study and Analysis by Dr. Amin (Publisher: Maktab Al-Burhan Lahore)

Some time ago, a program called Madrasa Discourses was launched in Pakistan. Notre Dame, the largest Catholic university in the United States, is the driving force behind the program in the US state of Indiana. Ibrahim Musa, a professor at a university subsidiary who is originally from South Africa, has been made responsible for madrasa discourses. The other accountable for this program is Professor Mahan Mirza. Introducing the program on the University of Notre Dame website, it said, "This program aims to equip scholars with pluralism, modern science and modern philosophy".

This book is a collection of important articles written by various writers on madrasa discourses. These include Dr Muhammad Amin's two articles, "The Encouragement of Scholars and the Reason for Weakness of Knowledge" and "Proponents of Madrasa Discourses are Promoting Indirect Modernity." According to Dr. Sahib, the scholars of Madrasa Discourses interpret religion's accepted beliefs and concepts in such a way that it follows the Western secular thought and culture because the thoughts of the Sunni masses are wrong and stagnant in his view. A few other scholarly articles on the same subject have also been included in the book ([Ilias, 2022](#)).

2. Educational Institutions and Character Building by Dr Amin (Publisher: Aziz Book Depot Urdu Bazaar Lahore)

Education is that which includes character building training and creative research. Unfortunately, in our educational institutions, information is given, but a Muslim and a useful servant is not ready. Dr. Muhammad Amin with the same feeling, he authored a book, Educational Institutions and Character Building.

In it, he sheds light on a few practical principles and measures for training children and topics such as the treatment and training curriculum for spoiled children, etc. Become a Muslim and a productive person. Principles of modern curriculum development, and Islamic teachings, Review of Pakistan's Secondary Level Curriculum by Khadija Akbar (Research Paper - PhD - Department of Islamic Studies - The University of Lahore).

The author has tried to prove in her PhD dissertation that the responsibility for the decline of students lies with our education system, which undoubtedly involves the in competition of teachers. It is not possible to remain silent on these shortcomings, and Education needs to be painted in an Islamic color with the right mindset and so that they can become sensible and responsible citizens ([Hudzaifah, Ulfah, & Pamungkas, 2021](#)).

3. A study of the impact of the global tradition of Education and values on the Pakistani education system (By Tahira Batool Bukhari, PhD thesis)

In this article, the author discusses in detail the visible effects of the relationship between Education and values on the Pakistani system. In this regard, special emphasis has been laid on the effects of an education system which ignores values and focuses only on Education, on society (Tahira Batool Bukhari).

4. The Impact of the Curriculum of Islamic Studies on Character Building of Students at Secondary and Higher Secondary Level in Punjab: A Survey Study

(By Muhammad Ayaz - PhD dissertation - University of Bahawalpur)

The author has sought to examine these effects on an objective basis, to what extent Islamic studies should have an effect on the character, and what the real effects are in the Punjab Educational institutes. In light of this review, what changes are required in this curriculum?

1. Islam and Education in Turkey: Their Roles in National Development

HOWARD A. REED-Turkish Studies Association Bulletin (Published By: Indiana University Press)

This article examines the changes taking place in Turkey's education system with a one-sided approach, saying that this is the beginning of a new era, the pillars of which are rooted in Islamic fundamentalism. But the article provides valuable information that has formed the basis of revolutionary trends in the field of Education in modern Turkey, especially in Islamic studies.

2. Visible learning (By John Hattie)

This unique and historical book is the result of 15 years of research and more than 800 meta-analyses on the effects on school-going students' achievement. It tells a whole story about teachers' strengths, impressions, and models of learning and understanding. Her research involves millions of students and represents the largest evidence-based study ever to help improve learning in schools. Selected areas include the impact of student, home, school, curriculum, teacher, and teaching strategies. A model of teaching and learning has been developed based on the concept of Visible Learning. This book guides to the major message, what works best for students is similar to what works best for teachers - focus on setting challenging learning intentions, being clear about the meaning of success criteria. , And what teachers and students know - focus on learning strategies to promote conceptual understanding of it (Rømer, 2019).

3. Islamic Education in Malaysia

(By Ahmad Fauzi Abdul Hamid - Universiti Sains Malaysia)

The book covers efforts in Malaysia to complete the Islamization of Education in the face of secular tendencies. After these experiences, today, Malaysia is an attractive and important place for the study of Islamic sciences.

الواقع الفكري الإسلامي لطلاب المرحلة الجامعية في باكستان – حافظ عبد المنان الزابدي - انتر نيشنل يونيورسٹی آف اسلام آباد۔

4. The Reality of Islamic Ideological Studies in Pakistan - Hafiz Abdul Manan Al-Zahidi. International University of Islamabad

The author examines the religious implications of Education. He has focused on university students.

CONCLUSION

This study was carried out to simplify the different scholars' viewpoints and philosophies about Islamic Madarsas' role in the modern Education of the subcontinent. Islamic Madarsas have modified their teachings according to the modern

teachings and the need of the hour. Through this study, one can learn the Islamic Madarsas teaching approach. Madarsas Education doesn't just teach students about Islamic theory and concepts but also tries to meet the international education systems. So, it would not be wrong to say that Islamic Madarsas education is far good institution than any other organization.

This study was carried out with the help of some Islamic scholars' books. The authors could not cover all Islamic philosophies on Education. In this way, many things were left for the new researchers. The new researchers may use this study to explore Subcontinent' Madarsa' system.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION DETAILS

All the authors have contributed equally to achieve their research objectives. The whole study is the result of their mutual cooperation and contribution.

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