

প্রতিধ্বনি the Echo

An Online Journal of Humanities & Social Science

Published by: Dept. of Bengali

Karimganj College, Karimganj, Assam, India.

Website: www.thecho.in

Status of Islamic Studies & Madrasa Education in India: An Over View

A.H. Monjurul Haque

Research Scholar, Dept. of Arabic, Assam University, Silchar

Email- a.h.m.haque786@gmail.com

Abstract

Madrasas in India, even after Independence of the country, have rendered invaluable services to the development of the community and the country. They have played a silent but significant role in educating millions of Muslim population of the country. The services of Madrasas are not limited to spreading literacy; but also encompass social, political and academic fields. Infact the educational development of Muslim community can't be imagined without the Madrasas and maktabs. Ulema produced by these Madrasas provide leadership not only in religious matters but also in social & political spheres as well. Starting from Shah Waliullah to the great Ulema like Moulana Abul A'la Maududi, Moulana Quasim Nanatwi, Moulana Abul Kalam Azad and Moulana Syed Abul Hasan Ali al-Nadwi have been the most prominent personalities among Muslim leaders. They were basically the products of Madrasas and they had a close affinity with the Madrasa education. Even then the system as it is prevalent in India is not free from drawbacks and shortcomings. In this brief research paper efforts have been made to highlight the status of Islamic studies and Madrasa education in India alongside pointing out its major drawbacks and some remedial measures as well.

As per the present status of Muslim education is concerned, undoubtedly, it is an important dimension in the realm of Muslim educational system in India; which requires urgent attention. The new challenges of the 21st century (the century of Knowledge) can not be encountered without considering the problems of Muslim education in India, because Muslims are the biggest minority community of this nation comprising 13.4 Percent of its population. And Madrasa education is a significant part of the History of Muslim education and Islamic studies in India.

The history of Madrasa education in India starts since the arrival of Muslims in India and it began in the 10th century C.E. with the establishment of *Maktabs* and Madrasas in the towns of Sind, Dabel, Mansura, Multan by the Arab traders and settlers. After the passage of time, this system was gradually developed and hundreds of mosques during this period were flourished. Oudh, Multan, Lahore, Khairabad, Patna, Surat, Delhi, Agra, were the main centers of Madrasa education and Islamic studies. And the number of Madrasas and *Maktabs* were multiplied during the period of Muhammad Ghouri, Iltutmish,

Allauddin Khilji, Tughloq and Sikandar Lodhi. The Mughal period starting from Babar to Aurangzeb and other emperors was the glorious period of Madrasa education. The structures of various mosques; forts and Madrasas found even today remind us the past of Madrasa education during the time of Mughal period. Sir syeed Ahmed Khan in his famous book *Asar us-sanadid* writes “that there was a network of Madrasas and *Maktabs* through out the country during the Mughal period. He further writes, “The downfall of Mughal Empire started during the period of Aurangzeb but the establishment of Madrasas and their assistance continued till the last Mughal King.”

The British period is generally considered a period of strong set back to Indian education system. But at the same time; Madrasa education also continued, flourished and saved Indian Muslims from being affected by the western culture. It was during this period the several well-known seminaries were established. They include Durul-Ul-Ulum Deobond (1866) Nadwat-Ul-Ulema Lucknow (1894) and even Jamia Arabia Islamia Nagpur (1938).

After independence; India became a democratic and secular country. There are many persons who believe that due to the influence of secularism in India, the religious educational institutions have lost their relevance. But, in fact; the Madrasa education system is still strong in their own position and has been increasing and progressing by leaps and bounds in the country. Mr. Madhavrao Scindhia, the then Minister of Human Resources Development (HRD) while addressing a muslim education conference held in Delhi on May 7, 1995, stated that there were 125000 Madrassas in India during the time of Mughal reign in India. The report of all India survey by Hamdarad education society published in the June 1996 confirmed the said figure.

Besides the figures, the contribution of Madrasa education in India has been so important that there can't be imagined the educational development of Muslim community by neglecting the Madrasas and *Maktabs*. *Ulema* produced by these Madrasas provide leadership not only in religious matters but also in social & political spheres as well. Starting from Shah Waliullah to the graet *Ulema* Like Moulana Abul A'la Maududi, Moulana Quasim Nanutawi, Moulana Abul Kalam Azad and Moulana Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi have been the most prominent personalities among Muslim leaders. They were basically the products of Madrasas and they had a close affinity with Madrasa. education.

It is because of this prominent role of Madrasas, the common masses and particularly the intellectual groups call the Madrasas as the castle of Islam and pay respect and honour to these institutions.

Even after accepting and appreciating the hall mark achievements of madrasa education in India; the system is till today not completely free from some hindrances and shortcomings. Some major and important shortcomings of madrasa education system are stated as below:-

1. Absence of definite aims and objectives, though they may be present in the mind of authorities of madrasa education, but they are never clearly spelt out.
2. Unscientific approaches of some of the curricula of Madrasas.
3. Lack of basic facilities like proper building, classroom and especially furniture, black board and other TLM and equipments in some of the Madrasas.
4. Outdated traditional methods and technique of teaching and learning.
5. Isolation from modern developments in the area of natural sciences and social sciences and over emphasis on the

- traditional subjects, with a negative outlook towards modern subjects.
6. Lack of coordination among various Madrasas and *Maktabs*.
 7. Defective system of examination & evaluation.
 8. Poor quality of planning and administration.
 9. Poor financial condition and management.
 10. Low status of teacher in the society.
 11. Lack of innovations, experimentation and researches.

Having presented the shortcomings, some remedial measure may be placed to overcome the drawbacks and shortcomings:-

First of all, the aims and objectives of Madrasa education in this country should be specifically well-defined.

In the light of well-defined objectives for Madrasa education there must be a common curriculum for Madrasa education. It will be however necessary to specify the

objectives at various stages of Madrasa education like Alim, Fazil and Kamil i.e. intermediate, graduation, post-graduation and honours level. Differences among various groups & sects of the Muslim community may prove to be a bottleneck in framing a common curriculum. But the community has to come on a common platform to perform this prominent task as it has done in the case of its personal law by forming All India Muslim Personal Law Board, representing all sects and schools of thoughts. There can be an “All India Madrasa Education Board” to shoulder the responsibilities of Madrasa education. The curriculum must include some basics of modern subjects so as to enable the learners to play a dynamic role in the modern society. But at the same time proper care should be taken to see that.

1. The main zeal or character of Madrasa education is not to be affected at any circumstances.
2. The students should not be overburdened.

There should be a provision of teachers training programme for the teachers who wish to associate with Madrasa education. They should be either accommodated in existing training institutes affiliated with the universities, or there should be a separate system of training for them. A linkage may be established between the Madrasa authorities and the Training Institute of Maulana Azad National Urdu University, Hyderabad. The advantage of separate training institutes will be that the teaching methodologies suitable to teach various subjects of Madrasa education may be taught with due emphasis. Almost 99 percent of teachers associated with Madrasa education are professionally untrained. The training on modern lines may equip them with modern methods; techniques and strategies of teaching learning and evaluation.

Madrasa education seems to be working on old traditional pattern as there is no emphasis on any research. Therefore research projects should be undertaken on various aspects of madrasa education. Scholars associated with Madrasas and *Jamias* as well as with modern Universities should be encouraged to work meaningfully in the area of Madrasa education.

The proposed common platform may act as a coordinating body for various Madrasas and *Maktabs* spread throughout the country.

The above mentioned action plan may not be effectively implemented without raising required funds. The Muslim community should continue patronizing Madrasa education. At the same time it is the responsibilities of the Union and state Government to provide adequate grants for

these Madrasas and *Maktabas* without interfering in their academic & administrative mainstreams, as it has been proposed by Gopal Singh high power panel

(1980) and Sachar Committee Report on the Status of Indian Muslims. (2006)

References :

1. Ali, K.: A Study of Islamic History *Idara-i-Adabiyat-i-Delhi*, 1950.
2. Yusuf, Prof. S.M.: Studies in Islamic History and culture, Delhi Adam Publishers & Distributors, 1992.
3. Deshai, Ziyauddin A: Centre of Islamic Learning in India, New Delhi, 1978.
4. Sikand Yoginder : Voices for Reform in Indian Madrasas, New Delhi, 1976.
5. Encyclopedia Britannica.
6. Ahmed, Dr. Hafiz Sayeed; A Comparative Study of Arabic Teaching in Madrasas and Other Educational Institutions of Assam with Special Reference to Problems and Prospects.(An un-published Thesis)