

Islamic School System: Its Challenges, Best Practices and Vision for Future

Memoona Saeed Lodhi¹, Jawaid Ahmed Siddiqui²

¹Hamdard Institute of Education and Social Science, Hamdard University Karachi,

²Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Hamdard University Karachi,
PAKISTAN.

¹memmona.saeed@hamdard.edu.pk

ABSTRACT

According to Quran introduction of Prophet Muhammad (PBH) has been described as, Ateacher who educates about his look and knowledge (Hikmat). Thus achievement of religious knowledge is essential for every Muslim. In this perspective education in Islam have been every important. Islam has inducted that educational revolution which has resulted as the acquiring education for every Muslim. Starting from educationist to different school of thought in the form of Madersa's to proper education is a bright aspect in the tradition of Muslim history. Religious institutions have continued this tradition which has kept the tradition of deen alive. However with the global change and speed of time has created a big challengefor religious institutions. To face this challenge is the need of time. This challenged Madersa's, their curriculum, methodology depend on basic principles on which Islamic education system has been constructed. In this article in the historical background tradition of Muslim history has been analyzed and with these important challenges have been pointed out which the modern education system is facing along with it solutions of some problems have also been suggested.

Keywords: Islamic system of Education, According to Islamic rule and regulation (Quran & Sunna), Madar's Relegious, Religious institutions, Dars-e-Nezamee, Methodology

INTRODUCTION

Meaning Importance of Education in Quran and Hadith

In the Informal from education is defined as the transfer of knowledge, teaching, and given knowledge to someone. This word is used in Quran with the same meaning. Allah Tala say's!

*"His almighty Allah has the Learning of Quran"*¹

*"He gave the knowledge to the human being which he did not know."*²

According to Holy Prophet when his designation has been described at four places in Quran that Holy Prophet (BPUH) teach the people by his book (Quran) and wisdom.

"Amongst the illiterate people a Prophet emerged from them who used recite the Ayat's of Allah andeducate the people according to book and knowledge."

Prophet Muhammad described his status as he has been appointed as teacher. In another quotation

"Amongst you is the best who learns and teachers Al- Quran."

With the help of Quran these Ayat's and Hadiths we come to know that this knowledge is to educate, teach and transfer of education. We also learn that in the eyes of Allah and Prophet all teaching is based on *"Wahe and Quran"*.

In Islam getting education has been described as very important. To witness this fact we can observe that in *Hera cave* the first *Wahi* came with the word "*Iqra*" which means *Read*. The concept of *Nazul of Quran* started from learning and teaching of knowledge. According to Prophet Muhammad (PBH) "*One who set out to seek the knowledge remains in the way of God till he return back.*" In this way he also stated that it is the duty of every Muslim men and women to achieve education. Due to the importance of education in Islam's Muslims have always tried to achieve and spread education with traditional and nontraditional methods.

ROLE OF MUSLIMS IN SPREADING EDUCATION

Relation b/w education and student is very old. However, before Islam there was no tendency of getting education. Waheed-ud- deen khan in his article about religious institutions wrote about *Encyclopedia Britannica (1984)* that there are many periods in the history of education. The first period is of tribal culture. In which education is the name of informal method for transferring of education this education was given oral and to only youngster of upper class. Its aim was to train *Sardar's and religious leaders* were exempted from this action. *The second period is called classical culture.* In this period was given *informal methods* along to higher class. But this education also belonged to higher class. The Aims was to prepare such people from higher class level to designate them on political high power and to fulfill Religious relations or Rituals. Common man was out of circle and was only informed to be faith full with state.

In that period of thousand years common people were kept working for education and the society was divided into upper and lower class and it was the right of higher class to get education and the lower class was always kept away from this action so that they may remain in low status and slave (Gulam). According to *Encyclopedia Britannica* above mentioned paper change came after the Islam. After Islam, education spread in large number of institutions. In the beginning, from education circle to schools and then regular *Madersas* were founded in every mosque. After this permanent *madarsa* were established. In the *Abbasid's* period when culture of Muslims was at the top many institutions were established. The prominent examples were *nezameya* and *mustansir*.

The reason for this basic change after Islam was that there was no concept of class and all men are treated equal. Thus everybody had equal right to get education in Islam. The basic concept in education in Islam was to learn *deen* (religion) because without getting education nobody can be a true Muslim. Where as to be a true Muslim means to obey *Towheed*, *Resalt* and *Akhrat*.

HISTORY OF ISLAMIC EDUCATION

In Muslims informal education was to learn Quran in their prayers. Many *Sahaba* were Hafiz of the whole Quran. These people used to *write Wahi* and were called *wahi writers*. Later on *hadith* were also started writing. Whereas governments letters and orders and letters by Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was also supposed to be written.

With this view of Official and religious need it was necessary that the people be taught regularly for reading and writing. In those days in Arab there was a little tendency of reading and writing and the people used to depend on their memory to save knowledge. During the period of *Hazrat Omar* only 17th people knew reading and writing. In this way the system of inquiring knowledge started amongst the Muslim. For example the incident of *Jang-e-Badar* when *Kuffar* of *Macca* were arrested and they did not have money to pay for compensation. They were asked to teach ten Muslim children for their freedoms. Only this event indicates that how much importance was given to education right from the beginning. Certainly it was

a school in which all the teachers were the non-Muslim and the prisoners, but education was so important that Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) let the Muslim children learn from those teachers who were non-Muslim.

With this background of reading and writing tradition for education spread all over the Muslim territory. According to western thinkers!

“Idea for 100% education for the world was given by Muslim for the very first time.”

With the discovery of Islamic state and expansion, the education centers of Muslims were increasing. Mecca, Medina, Koffa, Basra, Baghdad, Damascus and beside this Hired, Neshapur, Bukhara, Faras and each village of Andalus had these institutions. Basic education was given in these institutions where as for average and higher education court yards of Mosques, Hujras of shrines and houses of ulmas.

Education system of that time was like lecture system of today. Expert teacher of any discipline used to sit at the top or chair and explain the topic. Number of students was in and with pen and ink pot sit to copy the lecture. Students from over countries came for an achievement of knowledge. With this proper education institute were established. Amongst them Nezeameya and Mustanser are very famous. In 1865 Nezeameya Madersa of Baghdad was established on the order of minister of education Al-Mulk Tutsi in 1065. Scholar like Imam Gazali was patron in this institution in Baghdad. Mustansariawas established on the order of Mustanser Billa, even today it is present in the form of Mustenseria university.

In India these institutes are now called Deeni Maadaris. The curriculum taught here is called Dars-e-Nezamia after the name of Mullanizam-ud-deen (1748/ 1161 century), Nowadays some different topics are taught in this Maadaris which have been described by Shebly in the following manners.

1. One or two books of each subject have been taken
2. For brief discussion some of the parts of books have been taken
3. Difficult books of each subject have been taken to teach so that the student may read other books easily
4. In addition to religious old subjects like philosophy, logic have been included

Leadership Style of Islamic Madaris: (Institution)

Leadership plays a very important role in the development of a nation and civilization. Commonly political leadership the people even if they are outside the political and practical life. For example in our history we can quote the example of great philosopher and poet Sir Dr. Muhammad Iqbal who presented his views and ideas in the form of poetry and inspired the life of hardly dead Muslim nation. This is the thought full leadership which serves as builder and trainer of the Nation. Besides this thought full leadership, religious leadership also plays a role in the betterment of ethical values, Education and training.

People from Islamic background guide the society in both aspects. As a result the scholars of religion are very much effective in Muslim society. As a result the scholars of religious background get very well accepted, respected and honor in the society. In normal conditions this leadership style is limited to save the society from violence and disturbance and if the time and condition permits. This style also affects other aspects of the society including politics. In our history the best example is of Hazrat Mujaddid-Alf-Sani whose efforts stopped Akbar-e-Azam from adopting Deen-e-Elahi. In the same way is the case of Shah

WaliUllahwho invited by Ahmad Shah Abdali to India to break the power of Marathas' in the "Pani Pat War."

Due to the above traditions of Ulma's the British dominance in India was resisted. In 1823 Shah Abdul Aziz s/o Wale Allah gave Fatwa that India started struggle against dominance Britishers. The prominent example of this struggle is Syed Ahmed Shaheed and sham they had to fight with Sigh and 1841 they were defeated at BalaKot. Same is the case of war of freedom of 1857 in which ullama's participated with all emotions and spirit.

However Muslims were defeated in this war. After this the Britishers were in powered in India and conditions started changing. Govt. supported institutions were deprived of government funds and other Muslims and ulmas were also affected.

This was the time when net of the Islamic institution spread all over the sub-continent. While in 150 years societal situation were completely change. In Islamic institutions Dars-e-Nezamy ion system but s a part of education system but inwardly knowledge/subjects, especially English language and social sciences which are directly related to economy were strange in these religious madders. This is the reason that madaris could not supply leadership to a society as in past although they were good in numbers. Platform of mosques (Masajid) was their but every week million of people came to listen to Muslim scholars thus there was a gap between madarisand the scholars were on one side the society was others. Perhaps this is a great challenge faced by the modern religious education with replying which the system came produce opposition and produce leader of the society.

Reply of Challenges Faced by Madares

The challenges face by this system of madaris in Islamic education is not only this nature that society is changing but also that they are not brining changing curriculum and principle. We observe international relations and atmosphere from the angle that western national lie and conspiracy. Their attitude is dependent on injusticebiasedand hatred (anaad). The fact is that during the last four or five decade the world has made tremendous progress in the field of education. This progress in education s not only in the field of science of technology but also in the field of social science like philosophy, economics, sociology, politics and psychology are the basic subject s which change to the views of man and society of the past. Whatever is in western civilization and whatever it expresses on the basis of science and technology, more then that the social science has changed the life style, human thought and social values.

The person and society are the topic of religion. The duty of research scholar is that it may represent the religious orders, to the new world, new society and the new person in such a way that it should be completely acceptable and implementable. This does not mean that religion should be change to cope with the time. But where ever found necessary modern view will be criticized and the mistake will be pointed out. But to criticize it is necessary that thereshould be awareness with the subject. This is the reason that the expert of this department have already criticized on many mistakes. By using these criticism and scholar can give evidences on truth of religion, compliance of order and on their implementation.

One more problem with this reference is the problem of language which cannot be avoided. Islamic education institutions declare Arabic as their basic language where as practically and in the modern age English has become the language of coordination in higher society and most of the work in social sciences has been done in English thus no one can answer these challenges of modern age without having command over English one of the example is of moulanaWaheeduddeen 's book challenges of modern education which is written by one of the learned students of madrasa by directly getting expertise in English language to reply these challenges.

Third problem with the reference is the need of thinking and understanding the subject of religion. In our religious institutions following the teacher is one principle. Obviously this principle is not applicable with the global changes. However, if this principle be accepted where as this is followed for Allah and his Prophet. It is necessary that Quran should be the center and focus to understand religion. It may be noticed that Quran should be taught because Quran is after all taught in Islamic education system. I mean to say that it should be made basis to analyze every thought every opinion and every suggestions to present it as religion.

METHODOLOGY/ STRATEGY

Unfortunately we always talk of improvement and rectification of Islamic education system without understanding the problem and challenges completely. As a result the prescribed curriculum and methodology remains at its place and computer education is introduced. This is quite useful but it is not the solution of the problem. In few madaris modern education is introduced. In some of the institution youngster are given religious education.

Thus the old education and new education are being mixed but the Holy Quran is not given that status which it deserves. As stated above teaching of Quran is not enough but obeying its superior status its necessary, that it is the word of God al mighty and the most authentic thing with reference to prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is with us. Therefore, everything should be analyzed in the light of Quran. In this connection the very first important and basic work be done is that:

1. There should be an arrangement for the training of the teacher.
2. Old religious teacher should be introduced with modern short courses,
3. It should be noted that modern knowledge education, doesn't means social subject which are directly related to religion, society and Individual. In this regard
4. Lecture by subject specialist is a must.
5. English language is also supposed to be a part of English curriculum. Without command over English or at least basic capability of understanding it is not possible to understand the modern society and dialogue with it.
6. How a dialog is established in modern civilization how we can understand other's point of view and how other points of view can be understand without imposing over own view. This is also one of the method s. without is tanning religious system of education cannot play effective role in the society.

One more important task is to introduce modern technology which can be help full in making teaching methodology better and effective. The very first use of modern instrument projector, computer system is to make the learning method easy and make memorizing process simple. The other usefulness of this technology is to give idea of the age and provide in which the student is living, where the period is moving ahead. This is very important and useful but in religious education system its importance becomes double because it is more important to understand time period for these students as compared to other student.

IMPLEMENTATIONS FOR POLICY/ PRACTICE

Begging with Common Education

Religious institutions were traditionally common institutions. After entrance of Britishers new education system came into existence. In 1834 Lord Macaulay came to India and gave a different system of education them the existing system of education. In this system of

education, old languages of Muslims i.e. Persian and then Arabic were replaced by English with the dominance of Britishers this education system became the common system in the subcontinent. After the war of independence in 1857, those madaris established by Ullmas became the religious institution as a result tradition of double system of education came into existence.

In this tradition the whole society is on one side where a child may achieve any sort of education and before entering into professional education he completes twelve years (intermediate) and then he enters into medical, engineering, law, pilot, Architect, teaching, philosophy, scientist, etc. But everyone has basic twelve year education (that is undergraduate).

These people getting education in professional institutions are a part of the same education system. The more important thing in this common education is that during this first twelve years education process student learns the introduction or initial part of these subjects like, science, religion, poetry, fiction, some mathematics like addition, subtraction and the social studies. So after passing out from an intermediate exam phase he has developed some of his tendency and interest towards a particular field. Now he can switch onto his/ her favorite profession.

On the other hand in religious institution a child is admitted on the very first day to get religious education. Nature has selected him or he is born to become a doctor, artist or scientist, but he is never asked as to what he intends to be and neither he is aware of that. A child opens his eyes where he has to face discussion about *Fiqh and Lughat (dictionary)* reads old philosophy and debates of logics whereas may be that his interest is in becoming a poet, tendency of becoming a doctor but this stage never comes.

The other harm to him is that since he has not passed through common education, his thinking and ideas are quite different from the society. When he enters into practical life he comes to know that he is a ruler in *masjid* or *madarasa* but on the other side people of the rest world are quite different. Thus a student of *madarasa* and a student of normal education both become individual of separate world. In normal condition this difference of religious tendency is not very prominent but when differences arise it seems clear that none of the two have basic point to debate. As a result the religious scholar and his relation with the society is not of compromising or question answer but of individual and *Fatwa*.

There is a great challenge faced by the society and the answer to this challenge is that religious institution be changed to higher education institutions. A student should be allowed to enter into religious institution after twelve years of education (intermediate) in the same way as a student enters into professional institutions. As a result a student having some idea regarding future career will come into being but will also present the case of religion in a better way because of being well aware of the society and having basic knowledge of twelve years of education.

CONCLUSION

Muslims are deeply related to their religion. A scholar is one who conveys the invitation of Islam to a common Muslim and answers all those questions arising in their mind and guides them too about deen (religion). In this way he is a leader as well as a teacher. Hence society is responsible for the betterment and improvement of these institutions. Historically Muslims not only spread education but also established institutions for best education. However, after the entry of Britishers in the subcontinent the religious institutions went separate from the total stream of their society and were forced to keep their identity separate. Beside the

Muslim society, in these two century shifted agriculture period to industrial period and then to information age period.

As result the Islamic scholars and common man, religious followers, people their leaders had not only communication gap but also could not stand on deen confidently religion as the deen demanded from them. For this purpose it is necessary that religious institution should be stream line with the society. To maintain the role of madarasa. The modern knowledge especially social sciences should be introduced. Modern resources of communication, Modern, Methodology and along with Arabic command over English are also required. Focus on Quran as a center should be made very important book of religious curriculum. Dual education system should be abolished and one should keep in mind that in near future a student should come up with proper education of twelve years had decided to become Islamic scholar due to his own choice and not force fully. Then and then it will be possible for people to keep that relation with ulmas which had been the inheritance of Muslim in the past.

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