

**MAINSTREAMING MADRASSA EDUCATION: A CRITICAL
EXAMINATION ON TRADITIONAL CURRICULUM OF
MADRASSAS IN KARNATAKA AND WAYS TO ALIGN THE
ISNTITUTIONS ALONG THE MAIN STREAM EDUCATION
SYSTEM**

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Introduction:

That Muslims in India are educationally backward is now a fairly known and established fact. Several committees and commissions set up by the Union and State governments have amply demonstrated that unless some special measures are initiated, the community cannot attain parity in matters of social and economic development with mainstream population. Concern to this effect began to surface during the era of Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi when she announced the 15-point programme for the upliftment of minorities. Later, she had set up a committee to report the situation of the community headed by Dr. Gopal Singh. Still later, she had addressed a special letter to the chief ministers of the states to improve the state of waqf properties and draw plans for their development on commercial lines in order to make them a source of financial support for the ameliorative measures for Muslims.

The Sachar Committee appointed by the Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh statistically highlighted the educational and economic deprivation suffered by the Muslims in its voluminous report submitted in 2006. What stood out clearly was that illiteracy among general Muslims and deficient attainments among those who are fortunate to receive education, leave the community individuals without the requisite qualifications and skills to gain access to the sources of empowerment in an India on the road to modernisation, urbanisation and industrialisation. It was pointed out that much of the welfare schemes fail to benefit the community. For instance, nearly 95% rural Muslim families designated as Below Poverty Line (BPL), do not get free ration from the Public Distribution System (PDS). As many as 60% of urban Muslims never attend schools (though many receive education at home or informal educational

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institutions). The proportion of graduates among the rural Muslims was found to be 0.8% and the same for urban Muslims was 3.1%. The representation in Public Sector Undertakings stood at around 6% while in more elite jobs such as banks, universities and research institutions it hovered between two to three percent.

The Report brought forth the sad reality that nearly one-third of the villages across the country with large concentration of Muslims were without schools. It not only effectively debunked the myth of appeasement of Muslims by the secular dispensation but etched to relief the fact that the community was nowhere proportionately represented in institutions of power, profit and privilege. It was also pointed out that not more than four per cent Muslim students were enrolled in madrassas thereby negating any excessive hold of religion or influence of clerics on the community, even though India hosted some of the world's most renowned Islamic seminaries. The Committee had recommended steps like setting up schools that could impart quality education to students of minority communities, special schools for Muslim girls studying from 9th to 12th standard, boarding houses for such students in taluka and district headquarters and appointment of more women teachers in order that education is easily accessible and affordable for minorities.

The madrassas to some extent fill up this gap in areas where government facilities are not available. They operate out of small towns and villages and slum areas in the Cities. Women's madrassas provide a safe and secure environment for Muslim girls.

Madrassas are centres for imparting Islamic theological education. Though nothing in the term 'Madrassa' confines it to Islamic theological education, in post-Mughal period, it has come to imply the same. However, madrassas have been imparting some rudimentary knowledge of mathematics, English and other regional languages but the reading of the Quran and Hadith and other theological

subject occupies priority. Mostly children from extremely poor families seek admission there as they take care of their food, stay, clothings and other basic needs during their prime years of physical growth. Curiously, in West Bengal and Assam, the madrassa system has retained its original characteristics of teaching even secular subjects. Known as High Madrassa (just as High Schools elsewhere), these admit even Hindu students and teach all secular subjects, employ non-Muslim teachers and receive Government grants and in some case even the infrastructure is maintained at the cost of official exchequer.

Except the larger madrassas which may have certain waqf lands or rent-yielding properties dedicated by philanthropists, most madrassas are funded by charities collected by fund-collectors who are ever on the job. Not all Islamic theological schools are madrassas. The part-time ones that operate out of mosque premises are *maktabs*, which function during pre- or post-school hours and teach the kids the basic skill of reading the Quran and impart elementary knowledge of Islamic precepts and practices such as *Namaz*, *Roza* (fasting), *Zakat* (charity) and *Hajj* (pilgrimage to Makkah) and norms to maintain cleanliness and hygiene. These children otherwise attend regular schools during the day time.

Much against the theories by Islamophobes that madrassas radicalise the children, it is felt that the curriculum does not even equip them with basic knowledge of the modern society, and economy where they could get to know their basic rights, their accessibility and skills to earn a decent livelihood. To expect them to use arms, develop any understanding of current political discourse and harbour any geopolitical designs is simply too much to ask.

This paper seeks to look into the history of madrassas, evolution of theological education, their pattern of management, sources of funding, pedagogic style and the infrastructure etc with particular reference to Karnataka.

Madrassas are centres of Islamic theology. Once upon a time they imparted the knowledge of all disciplines that were relevant to that time and helped people earn their livelihood. Besides teaching the holy text of Islam {Quran, Hadith (sayings of the Holy Prophet), *Fiqh* (jurisprudence), Arabic language and literature etc}, they even included vocational training such as carpet weaving, book binding, Unani medicine (*Unani Tibb*), and included sciences such as astronomy (*Ilmul Falkiyat*), chemistry (*Ilmul Kimiya*), Mathematics (*Riyazi*), Geometry (*Aqleedus*) etc.

As time passed and sun set over Muslim rule in Spain (1492 AD) and Mughal era ended in the Indian subcontinent (1857), power shifted to the British colonial administration which brought in new languages and sciences such as Sociology, Psychology, Political Science, modern Law, besides Natural and Physical Sciences. Society underwent total transformation with traditional occupations being replaced with new techniques and disciplines. Technology replaced the manual labour and computerisation took away routine jobs from human hands and assigned them to machines. Empires broke and yielded place to nation-states. Monarchs were deposed and State apparatuses took their place. Former subjects became citizens in the new nation-states. People owed allegiance to the Constitution rather than the loyalty to the presiding sovereign.

The modern Western higher education was introduced in India during the British rule. It started with the establishment of universities in the cities of Calcutta, Bombay and Madras in 1857, a year during which the mutiny broke out from Meerut cantonment. As is evident from the famed Lord Macaulay's Minutes on Education (1835), the British educational system was designed 'to produce Indian elite to work as clerks in the management of state affairs. They were not meant to produce intellectuals, scholars, scientists or administrators'. The first to ridicule them were the British administrators themselves, showing their contempt

by calling them 'babbling babus', if they raised their voice in support for liberal policies opposing British attitudes.

The British education was meant to produce workers for their mills, salesmen to promote those goods, clerks for their ports and railways which moved factory produced goods to the interiors of the country and procured the raw material from farms and mines. So axe also fell upon traditional crafts and cottage industry. The colonial administration bought the raw material like cotton at cheaper price and flooded the Indian markets with textile produced in the textiles mills of Manchester. Thus the educational system the British were putting in place had underpinnings of an economy that they envisioned to benefit them rather than the Indians. The gulf between social and cultural values of the Muslim society and those coming up equipped with degrees in science, technology, commerce and humanities was widening. Several ulema became apprehensive of the British design to transform the education to serve their ends and perceived the harm it would do to the traditional Islamic education. It led to opposition to modern education, principally teaching of English and reinforcing the traditional curriculum.

Around 1860s much intellectual churning was taking place among Muslims. This resulted in Maulana Qasim Nanotvi setting up Darul Uloom at Deoband in Uttar Pradesh, the most known traditional seat of Islamic learning to date in India. On the other end, Sir Syed Ahmed Khan who served as a civil servant in the British Indian administration felt that if Muslim could borrow Western scientific and technical knowledge while remaining true to their religious traditions, all their problems could be solved. He set up the Muslim Anglo Arabic (MAO) College at Aligarh in 1876 after deeply contemplating over the decline of Mughal empire and the failure of Indians at the hands of the superior force of the colonialists. He was influenced in his thoughts by Mufti Muhammad Abduh of Egypt. Even down

south in Kerala Vakkom Abdul Khadir Moulvi was propagating similar concept of education whereby socio-economic aspects of modern education could take an upperhand without sacrificing the moral aspects of the religious education.

Whatever may be the differences in approaches, the dawn of the new era had imparted a new axis for educational policies, i.e., to organizing the people into nation-states and to introduce market economy based on relentless exploitation of natural resources and increased consumption. Morality and religion were largely marginalized, and if indeed to be taught, they were meant to explain the past and its legacies for the society. There was also a distinct shift in the explanation of morality i.e., from religion to Constitution. This brought in a sea change in the concept of education. Yet something remained static, i.e., the madrassa education. The convulsions of time could not shake its foundations in any significant manner. Rather, the loss of power resulted in Muslims betraying a fierce sense of guarding the old system of education, lest their identity be diluted in the wake of new changes in the society. Modernity was an anathema for the clerics. The opposition to the British rule also spawned hatred towards the English language which resulted in a large section of Muslims getting deprived of all the new sciences and vocations that came in the wake of British takeover of India and thereby losing a world of benefits that could accrue through it.

It took nearly a century for the loss to sink in among the clerics. Reformers like Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, Shibli Noamani, Dr. Zakir Hussain, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, educationist K. G. Syedain etc kept on urging the community to shun its aversion to English. While some of them pleaded for switchover to modern education, a few like Shibli Noamani pleaded for reform in Madrassa syllabus and pedagogy. Yet not much could be achieved. The madrassas affiliated to or the ones following the curriculum of Darul Uloom, Deoband in Uttar Pradesh (set up in 1866) firmly rejected the pleas for change and reform. They

still form the largest chunk of Islamic theological schools in the length and breadth of India. The graduates turned out of this seminary run several hundreds of madrassas in the length and breadth of the country. Besides the traditional theological sciences, their curriculum includes very rudimentary exposure to Mathematics, English and local languages.

Scholars and leaders such as Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, Shibli Noamani, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad etc had a keen perception of deficiencies of the Madrassa education. They pointed out that the factors behind the backwardness of Muslims had more to be found internally rather than externally. Sir Syed Ahmed Khan had his hand on the pulse of the community. He wrote: “Muslims lag behind the Western nations in matters of civilizational development and this leads to their victimisation at the hands of Western imperialism. Madrassa curriculum must be overhauled and reframed. Any system of education that does not fulfill the urges of the time in which people live, is irrelevant. Muslims are learning all those traditional sciences that do not benefit them in any measure. This is the reason behind their poverty, crisis of thought and stagnation.”¹

The latest plea to modernize the madrassas comes from the Sachar Committee Report. The Report presented to the Prime Minister on November 17, 2006 had recommended that ways should be devised to link the madrassas to a Higher Secondary School Board in order that those graduates who would like to enter the mainstream education, should be able to enroll themselves in such schools or appear for these examinations and thereby acquire the eligibility to proceed in the mainstream. Going further, it said there should be scope for madrassa degrees to be treated on par with mainstream schools. It also called for the madrassa graduates to be considered eligible to appear for civil services exams, banking services recruitment exams and for Defence Services. It even referred to an exercise undertaken in the past (i.e., in 1990) in this regard which due to some flaws could not achieve much progress.^{1A}

While Deobandi madrassas continue to stick to the old pattern, those affiliated to other schools of Islamic thought such as Salafi or Jamaate Islami, etc have in recent years experimented with a modified curriculum where CBSE syllabus is integrated with conventional theological sciences. A string of such schools have come up in almost all the big cities. However, the curricula of the Islamic theological schools leans heavily towards imparting Islamic theology and does not encourage (nay discourages) free spirit of inquiry.

Madrassas in Karnataka

The region of the Old Mysore did not have any large madrassas till Independence (1947). But kingdoms of Adilshahis and Bahamani sultans in the present northern Karnataka had set up some very renowned madrassas such as Jamia Mahmood Gawan (Mahmood Gawan University) in Bidar, Madrassa e Aaliya, Madrassa Alwiya Bijapur and Madrassa Mohammadiya, all three in Bijapur etc. The Mahmood Gawan University was founded in 887 AH by Khawja Mahmood Gawan, who had arrived from Khurasan in Iran. It functioned for 221 year till the grand edifice (its magnificent ruins still exist) collapsed in 1108 AH after being struck by lightning, killing many of its teachers and students^{1B}. However none of these madrassas exist today. There does not seem to be any organic link between these institutions of the medieval kingdom to the present madrassas that have come up in erstwhile seats of southern kingdoms of Kalburgi (formerly Gulbarga), Bidar and Bijapur.

The clerics working in the mosques of Old Mysore state were generally migrant maulvis from states of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. Only large sized mosques could afford appointing maulvis trained in Hyderabad, Deoband, Lucknow, Saharanpur or Bareilly. The smaller mosques in taluka towns contented themselves with locally trained *Hafiz* (those who memorize the Quran). They had

just rudimentary knowledge of the Islamic theology. It was only around early 1960s that Madrassa Sabeelur Rashad was set up by Maulana Abu Saud Ahmed who arrived here from Vrinjipuram in neighbouring Tamil Nadu. It continues to be the major Islamic seminary in the State. Though no system of formal association exists among madrassas, an informal affiliation gets established through adoption of a common syllabus and induction of a few Alims from renowned madrassas. Going by this yardstick, Sabeelur Rashad is a madrassa of Deobandi genre which is known for its following of Hanafi school of jurisprudence. A similar madrassa, namely Darul Uloom Siddiqia was set up in Mysore some 30 years ago under the patronage of Sabeelur Rashad in late 1970s.

By mid-1980s, when Bengaluru came onto the broadgauge map of Indian Railways and direct access to the northern cities was established, the city began to witness an influx of people from the north Indian states. Several madrassas came to be established thereafter. Notable among them are Madrassa Masihul Uloom in Hegdenagar, Bengaluru, Madrassa Shah Waliullah in Tannery Road, Madrassa Rahmaniya, Kambipur (near Bidadi) etc. The *Millath Pages Karnataka*, an annual directory of Muslim institution in Karnataka, records names of 321 madrassas in its 2015-16 edition². Of these, 139 are located in Bengaluru alone. A survey by Students Islamic Organisation (SIO), Karnataka zone conducted during 2015 puts the number of madrassas listed with the Directorate of Urdu and other Minority Languages under the Department of Public Instructions of the Govt of Karnataka at 323 but considers it to be a less than the actual number operating in the State.^{2A} A list of 63 madrassas could be compiled after a careful scrutiny of admission notices issued by these institutions in and around Bengaluru in Urdu *Daily Salar* this year (i.e., 2016).

After the mid-1990s, there was a mushrooming growth of madrassas in Bengaluru and its environs. Several clerics who arrived from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar to work as imams in the mosques, also set up madrassas in eastern and

southern parts of the city inasmuch a survey by the Centre for Contemporary Studies, Koramangala could compile a list of nearly 180 of them in 2011. However, a preponderant majority of them were small set-ups with facility for preparing Hafiz (memorizers of the Holy Quran) which does not involve more than three or four years for a teenager. Still later, some madrassas of Salafi orientation too came up in the city. Among them Jamia Mohammediya Mansoorah in Hegdenagar is a school-cum-madrassa combining religious as well as secular syllabus of CBSE. (More about it later in this study.)

A telephonic survey reveals that a majority of children in madrassas in and around Bengaluru are from outside the State, mainly from poorer states such as Bihar and Bengal. A host of these madrassas too have been set up by clerics from UP and Bihar.

Admission pattern

Normally these madrassas admit children aged between 10 and 12. Education upto 5th standard with fluency in reading Urdu and the Quran is a requisite qualification for eligibility. Almost the entire education is free and barely anyone pays to study. Most students are drawn from lower-middle class families. All large sized madrassas provide free food and stay facilities which are of very ordinary standard. Frugality is the general norm in matters of accommodation and food. On an average, a student takes eight years to complete the basic Alimiyat course after which he is eligible for the position of Imam (prayer leader) in a mosque. Academic sessions normally start a week after Eidul Fitr which marks the end of the holy month of Ramazan. Lunar year (basis of Islamic calendar) is ten or eleven days shorter than the solar year (basis of Gregorian calendar). Hence, the academic years of madrassas and mainstream schools do not synchronise with Gregorian calendar or seasons. Both operate independent of each other. However, the madrassas that impart secular curriculum and are affiliated to

CBSE or other Boards of Examinations, align their academic schedule with the mainstream schools and follow Gregorian calendar.

The SIO survey later published in a research journal notes: “When we look at Madarasas in Karnataka, there are lots of students pursuing BA (alimiyath) courses. But those pursuing MA Arabic are rare. One or two are appearing for MA (Arabic) of Madras University. It is really sorry state of affairs to know that there aren’t any facilities to pursue post graduation in Arabic or Alimiyath since most of the universities do not recognize the BA (Alimiyath)! There is no arrangement to teach Arabic at these Universities. As such, there is an immediate need to commence BA (Arabic or Alimiyath) courses in our universities (i.e., in Karnataka) in line with universities in Kerala. At the same time, arrangements should be made to commence post graduation courses too”.^{2B}

A curriculum leading to the award of Alimiyat certificate involves study of 14 different sciences. These include 1- Quran *Nazira* wo Tajweed (general ability to read, and the skill to recite Quran with intonation), 2-*Tafseer* (commentary of the Quran) and *Usoolul Tafseer* (principles of exegesis), 3- Hadith or the traditions from the Holy Prophet and *Usoolul Hadith* (principle of Hadith), 4-*Fiqh* or Jurisprudence and *Usoolul Fiqh* (principles of jurisprudence), 5- *Mantiq* (Logic), 6- *Sarf wo Nahw* (Arabic Grammar), 7- *Fasaahat wo Balaaghat* (Eloquence), 8- Indian History, 9- Mathematics, 10- English language, 11- *Seeratun Nabi* (Biography of the Holy Prophet), 12- *Hayathus Sahaba* (Biographies of the companions of the Holy Prophet), 13- *Tashreehul Aflaak* (Astronomy), and 14- Persian.

The students are supposed to have Islamic attire of kurta, pyjama and a cap. The food is served on *dastarkhan* (dining mat) and has to be eaten while squatting on the floor. Some madrassas wake up the senior students (aged 15 and above) for *Tahajjud* prayers (pre-dawn optional prayers) thereby disrupting the sleep. Some

madrassas do not even have blackboards. Children generally learn by rote and there is little effort on comprehension. Subjects such as *Mantiq* (Logic) and *Sarf wa Nahw* (parts of Arabic grammar) are irrelevant today. Corporal punishment for disciplining the kids is the general norm. Madrassas considered to be affiliated to Deobandi curriculum do not even provide access to Urdu newspapers.

Financial Condition

Madrassas mainly subsist on charities which come through *zakath* (annual levy on accumulated wealth (which include bank deposits, gold and silver ornaments, rent proceeds etc) which is taken out at the rate of 2.5% on total value of the money which has been with a religiously observant Muslim); *Sadaqa* or occasional charity; *Ush'r* (tithe or religious levy on agricultural produce at the rate of 10% of the value of the produce) etc. During Eidul Azha (Eid of Sacrifice), the sacrificial skins (*Charm-e-Qurbani*) are also collected by these institutions which they sell and utilize the proceeds. It is quite normal for Muslims to donate their charities to a madrassa located within their locality or in its environs if they are familiar with the people running the set-up. Larger madrassas like Sabeelur Rashad or Masihul Uloom or Jamia Mohammediya Mansoorah have vast campuses with several philanthropists having constructed classrooms, library, hostel, convention halls, playground, mosque etc. These madrassas are run by boards or bodies with eminent people and renowned members of the society being on their boards. But most smaller set-ups run by a single Alim can neither afford large campuses nor infrastructure.

The SIO survey provides some inkling about the status of Infrastructure and teaching facilities in 55 madrassas. It found 22% of them to be having libraries; 13% maintaining first aid kits; 73% providing drinking water facilities; 83% housed in their own buildings; 18% having computer learning; 61% having integrated furniture; 24% had sports equipment. As for learning facilities 9%

applied innovative learning; 18% taught Mathematics, Science and Social Studies; 11% had an appointed Physical Education Instructor and 44% were teaching English^{2c}.

While madrassas of yore used to be run by a panels of divines, the ones currently known to be prominent betray inbreeding and lack of democratic functioning. Generally the rectors (*Mohtamim* or the person heading the madrassa) occupy the post for the lifetime. And as is generally observed, they are getting dynastic in nature with either the eldest son or someone closely related to the ex-Mohtamim, taking over the reins of the madrassa upon death of the incumbent.³

Big madrassas do not advertise their services. Students get attracted towards them due to their reputation as well as the facilities offered by them. Normally, they would have representatives in larger cities in the State and outside who would recommend some students for admissions. It has become an established norm for graduates from renowned madrassas to suffix their names with their alma mater. For instance, those who have passed out of Darul Uloom Deoband would have Qasimi at the end of their names. (This is a kind of a tribute to the spirit of its founder Maulana Mohammad Qasim Nanotvi). Similarly graduates from Sabeelur Rashad would suffix their names with ‘Rashadi’ and those who studied at the Jamia Darussalam Omerabad (in Tamil Nadu) have ‘Umri’ as the final part of their name. Suffixes such as Miftahi, Islahi, Mazahiri, Falahi, Baqvi, Latifi, Rahmani etc are other such suffixes that denote relationship of the Alim with a particular seminary where he attained his degree. Indeed these suffixes have attained a status of honorific appellations for the graduates from these seminaries and help widen the reputation of the madrassas as well as create a pining for admissions in these reputed seminaries.

Smaller set-ups publicise the admission season through Urdu newspapers or announce it by way of posters which are pasted on mosque notice boards. Post-

Friday congregation announcement too are a known medium for publicizing the academic session. A survey in Bengaluru reveals that profusion of the madrassas in and around Bengaluru and stiff competition to attract new students on their rolls is affecting their viability in recent years. Local Muslims have increasingly become aware of the intimate relationship between modern education and skills with jobs available in the knowledge economy ever since India opted for liberalization of the economy⁴. Aware of the limited usefulness of the madrassa education, they prefer to admit their children in schools imparting modern education. Hence, most of these medium and small set-ups have to look for new entrants from distant states like Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal and Assam. In fact, one of the large madrassas rejected 210 applications for admission from those who said they hailed from Bihar and West Bengal during the recent admission season. These children are transported over long distances from places like Manipur, Guwahati, Patna, Ranchi, Gorakhpur, Bahraich, and as far as from even Nepal to Bengaluru and other places to madrassas in South India⁵.

Syllabus and Curriculum

The major deficiency in the syllabus i.e., Darse Nizami, followed by these madrassas is that it is not able to strike a balance between the knowledge transferred from the past and the urges of the modern age. Darse Nizami is based on the mindset that “the primitive knowledge was virtuous” (i.e., *Qadeem Salih*) and “the contemporary knowledge is beneficial” (*Jadeed Nafe*). This approach suffers from basic flaws and is based on a distorted history as madrassas of yore taught theology as well as the secular sciences. It may be noted that Sheikh Ahmed Sirhindi, a jurist of the Mughal period, Sadullah Khan, minister under Shah Jehan and Ahmed Memaar Lahori, the architect of Taj Mahal were products of the same madrassas.

That Dars e Nizami has become irrelevant for the current times is an old debate. Countless theologians have argued for its amendment, modification and major dissection. Maulana Sayeed Akbarabadi (former teacher of Islamic Theology, Aligarh Muslim University, editor of 'Burhan' and author of several books) writes: "The books that are taught under *Ilmul Kalam* need to be extricated from the madrassa curriculum." India's first Education Minister Maulana Abul Kalam Azad had observed : "One cannot deny the fact that a student even after having studied in the madrassas for 16 years cannot write and speak Arabic. It is because the children instead of being taught the basic grammar, learns the philosophy of the grammar."* Even the Arabic taught to these graduates is of classical nature which may enable them to access the meaning and implications of the holy scriptures or Prophetic traditions, but does not help in communication through the modern media such as writing commercial and legal documents, or sending corporate e-mails or writing use manuals for the modern gadgets and appliances for Arab clientele.

Identity Factor

The problems faced by the Muslims in India are commonly categorized under three heads i.e., Security, Identity and Development. It is argued that while the Government should take care of the security issues, the community should be proactive in preserving the elements of its identity. The Constitution of India guarantees freedom to profess and practice one's faith, preserve and promote the language, script and culture and establish and run educational institutions of their choice. By declaring secularism, social and democracy to be the credo of the nation, the Constitution has created ample space for the minorities to safeguard and remain assured of the continuity of their identity. The general Muslim masses perceive madrassas to be the training centres for personnel for institutions where religious instructions are imparted, legal opinion (fatwas) are issued for settlement of marital and household disputes in accordance with the Sharia (the Islamic law),

Arabic (the language of the holy text) is taught, necessary arrangements are made for observance of Islamic rituals for birth, death and marriages, facilities such as masjids, eidgahs, graveyards etc are managed.

Any talk of Government aiding these institutions breeds suspicion and more often gets interpreted as an attempt to intervene into their affairs which becomes a cause célèbre for communal mobilization. Given the edginess of the community and fearing political repercussions, the secular parties have generally desisted from broaching the issue. As could be learnt from the agitation on Shah Bano's alimony (1986), identity demands exclusion while equity urges inclusion of communities. Governments in India have generally avoided pursuing the policy of coercing the minorities (or for that matter, any culturally distinct groups) to surrender their cultural identity to avail of equality in citizenship entitlements. Governments have remained committed to inclusive growth and have been trying to deal with contrary pressures in their treatment of minorities with sharpened sensitivities in matters of identity.

This has been a ticklish issue with Muslim minority which is unwilling to compromise on identity issues even while being aware of the cost it had to bear in matters of equity. This leads to a whole range of discussion as to how could individuals from a minority be enabled to participate in the basic political, economic and social functioning of the society. It is in this context that madrassas are desired to accommodate such secular sciences that would equip their students to be aware of their civil rights and strive to secure their share of national resources and welfare allocations. Madrassa managements are therefore called upon to review their syllabi and bring in a curriculum that would be in tune with a democratic state and inclusive growth. Entwining the secular and religious would be the ideal solution. But it is still not on the horizon of even the managements of the modestly modern madrassas. All that could be conceived now is to persuade the madrassa managements in teaching the subjects like Mathematics, Sciences,

English and regional languages alongside the religious subjects. Deeper engagement between issues of identity and modernity has remained the stuff of writings of reformists like Dr. Asghar Ali Engineer. Even highly modernized madrassas are averse to touching them with a barge pole for fear of their being stigmatized within the community.

Economic Hardships

For an average Islamic theologian, objective of the madrassa education continues to be reinforcement of the foundations of religion (i.e., of course Islam) in the Muslim society, moral rearmament of the masses and promotion of Islam across the world. Earning a livelihood is neither mentioned nor is on the mental horizon of those getting their wards admitted into the madrassas. But realities that stare into their face and the major question and concern that haunts the graduates coming out of the portals of these institutions is how to sustain themselves through their life as the economic prospects for them stand foredoomed due to total disconnection between the knowledge they would have attained and the education, degrees, and skills required by the employment market. A madrassa degree attained after 10-12 years of study of theological syllabus—unrecognised and carrying no credibility with employers as it is—offers limited job prospects in mosques and madrassas which barely yield enough to keep the soul and body together. Even a very well-paid Alim who works as an imam in a mosque in large sized cities, receives wages less than even a category III Government employee. There are no additional allowances, nor any pension or retirement benefits. They have no bargaining power either. Such is the oversupply of madrassa graduates that the mosque managements can readily hire new recruits for lesser wages in case of demand for enhancement of wages. Employment prospects being bleak, several of them look back at the madrassas to revert to them for teaching. It is not a choice, but a compulsion. They transfer to the fresh entrants the same knowledge that fetched them a measly livelihood incapable of improving the

quality of life. Summing up the gloomy situation, a veteran teacher in a Bengaluru madrassa commented: “I have five children and have decided never to subject my children to an educational system that does not endow them with any skills and art that would ensure them a decent livelihood and a life of dignity.”⁶

This distressing picture has prompted leading theologians and Muslim academics to urge changes in madrassa curriculum. Economist Dr. Nejatullah Siddiqui has commented in the following words: “It is not proper for an educational institution to turn out graduates who cannot earn their bread and have to be dependent on charitable institutions for their livelihood despite having earned their degrees after 16 years of studies. Today we have a society where an individual can earn his livelihood in lieu of goods and services he can deliver to some clientele. Only one who can give something can demand a price or remuneration for it. Only such individuals would have confidence and would walk with their head held high. Those who are bereft of self-respect and self-confidence can neither provide moral nor religious leadership to the society.”⁷

An even more caustic remark comes from Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, the greatest modernizer the Muslim world had produced in the Indian subcontinent: It is utterly futile to expect that those who study at these madrassas will be beneficial to themselves. They have acquired no art or skill that could fetch them their bread and butter. How could they be useful to themselves? It will be ridiculous if one expected them to develop devotion to God.”⁸

This seriously robs them of the spirit of dedication and commitment. Since they have no alternative skills, they have no option other than remaining tethered to their existing job for most years of life. It is therefore imperative that madrassas impart skills that could make their students earn their livelihood, integrate them to

the mainstream of social and economic life of the nation, and empower them with knowledge that could reflect through their words and deeds.

It will be in order to find out as to who and which category of people opt for madrassa education for their children. In the words of Maulana Salim Qasimi, a leading theologian from Deoband and Rector of Darul Uloom (Waqf) Deoband (another leading seminary from the famed town in Uttar Pradesh which split out of the Darul Uloom Deoband)), 7-10% of the students enrolled in these madrassas are those interested in completing some Arabic course. Next, 25-30% are those who are sent there due to fulfill their parents' interest in religious education. In large sized rural Muslim families, the parents consider it virtuous and rewarding in the Hereafter to send at least one son for theological education. Finally, 50-60 % of the students are those whose parents have no other option for education of their children due to economic hardships.⁹

Modernization of Syllabus

Pleas to modernize the madrassa syllabus evoke both cynicism as well as criticism, although voices for modification in the syllabus have been getting shrill over the years. Prof. M. A. Ataula, Director of Darul Umoor, an institution established by a Bengaluru-based business tycoon at Srirangapatnam (near Mysuru), says the call and attempt to integrate (rather than modifying) modern sciences with existing madrassa curriculum has met with subliminal hostility from the heads of the major seminaries. Darul Umoor was set up in 2001 to bring in 22 fresh graduates every year from madrassas across India and impart to them modern sciences and languages through a one-year Diploma course. According to him, the students come with stagnant minds and it takes several cathartic sessions of counselling to wean them from the frozen mindset. He says, their overestimation of self and underestimation of others meets a rude shock as they come face to face with modern intellectuals teaching them English, Sociology,

Political Science, Economics, Comparative Religion, Management, Natural Sciences, Physics, Psychology and Management techniques. “Most of them often come without even the rudimentary knowledge of mathematics, yet they have an obsessive fondness for learning English and Computers, which in their perception are keys to jobs in the today’s employment market.”

While advocating for some central authority where madrassas could be registered or affiliated, Mr. Ataulla says a pragmatic approach should be made towards syllabi. He says a relook at Dars e Nizami is though inevitable, it should be continued together with introduction of basic sciences and English and other regional languages. Dr. Zaheer Ahmed Baqvi, a former teacher of Madrassa Bakhiathus Salihat, Vellore, opines that change would come only if students are taught to question the prevailing wisdom. “The Springs of reasons would not become functional until the spirit of inquiry remains bridled. It would be better not to fiddle with big madrassas which are averse to change. The middle level madrassas should be persuaded to introduce modern sciences. Once these students come up in the field as qualitatively superior professionals, they will positively impact the people”, he adds.

But opposition and resistance to change is palpable. The three major points on which the plea to include modern sciences is opposed by the madrassa managements are: 1- The religious education would be affected and the objectives of madrassa education will be defeated. 2- The current syllabus of madrassas (read Dar se Nizami) is in itself a very exhaustive one and cannot take any new subjects. They will neither have expertise of an Alim, nor would they have usefulness in the modern job market as professionals. 3- The graduates being turned out of such institutions will develop lust for material objects and worldly pleasures and will be devoid of spiritual essence.

What to cut? And

What to Add?

The above arguments and objections are not without substance. But the remedy does not lie in retaining the entire syllabus. The current Dars e Nizami syllabus is an amalgam of oddities, several of which need to be critically examined. Waris Mazhari, who now teaches at the Department of Islamic Studies at Jamia Millia Islamia, (himself a product of Darul Uloom Deoband and who also headed the Alumni Association of Deoband), regards the overemphasis on logic and philosophy as its weakest feature. He says earlier 40 books were taught in the category of Logic. Gradually they were cut down to only four. But even those have become redundant due to prevalence of the Modern Science. Maulana Aslam Qasimi pleads for shortening the Arabic Grammar. Pro-changers are unanimous in insisting upon introduction of English from the beginning and adoption of modern pedagogic method where periodic evaluation of the outcome of learning is conducted in order to ensure sustained improvement.

Lateral Assistance

The Union Government's Ministry for Human Resource Development had envisaged a new scheme known as Scheme to Provide Quality Education in Madrassas (SQPEM) in 2013-14 by providing salaries for teachers to teach Mathematics, Languages, Sciences and English to students in madrassas. This was meant to laterally introduce the national curriculum in madrassas and enable the students to get their studies upto 5th, 8th, 10th and 12th standard certified and get linked to National Institute for Open Schooling (NIOS). Some centres were accredited under the scheme and advised to recruit graduate teachers for Mathematics, Sciences, English and Kannada¹⁰.

A survey of these accredited madrassas in Karnataka reveals that the scheme has though taken off and even benefitted the students, is marred by delays and

defaults. For instance, the madrassas that appointed graduate and post-graduate teachers under the scheme have so far received the payment only once (i.e., in February-March 2016) towards six months of work during 2013. As a result, several of them have discontinued the services of the teachers. In some cases where the madrassas can afford, they are being paid out of the reserved funds with the madrassas themselves and in yet other cases the teachers are continuing to work in hope of receiving the payment in near future. In some cases, the madrassas that could not submit utilization certificates for the grants were disqualified for the continuance of the grants. The Minority Welfare Departments of the State Governments were the nodal agencies. Under the scheme the madrassas were to be given computers, teaching aids and library grants. Karnataka was sanctioned Rs. 1.62 crore in December 2014 from the Union HRD Ministry towards salaries (Rs. 6,000 for each teacher per month). Madrassa office bearers also informed that they received three computers and library grant under the scheme once during the last three years. All that could be concluded is that the implementation is half-hearted and not backed by a serious mechanism for issuance of funds on time nor is there any mechanism for monitoring the outcome. The scheme if pursued seriously, can result in enhancement of the academic standards of madrassas.

New Trend

While reforming or modifying the madrassa syllabus is considered a tall order—given the strident opposition from the well-entrenched madrassas—some madrassas have shown the willingness to incorporate the modern sciences together with the traditional curriculum. This trend has been in evidence during the last three to four decades. It stems from the realisation that large number of madrassa graduates remain on the margins of the society due to absence of any useful skills and deficient knowledge of languages that could help them improve

their quality of life and endow them with degrees or certificates related with modern professions.

New Civilizational Idiom

Interactions with the management of these schools reveal that they came up in the wake of realisation that products of the traditional madrassas were not able to provide the required quality of professionals and leadership to the community due to the deficient understanding of the current civilizational idiom. Yet these schools are averse to totally giving up the entire theological curriculum which forms part of the conventional madrassas. Aware of the fact that they need to produce professionals with credibility in a Muslim society steeped in orthodoxy, they have opted for blending of the traditional and modern curriculums. For instance, the Jamia Mohammedia Mansoorah, a residential school in Hegdenagar in Bengaluru (established in 1989 and imparts instructions from 4th to 10th standard) follows a curriculum that has Arabic language, Fiqh, Hadith, Quranic commentaries together with subjects studied under the Karnataka State Secondary Board syllabus. The school admits students in 4th standard and is affiliated to Salafi Maslak (a sect officially patronised by the Saudi Government and known for its advocacy of puritanism) and a central organisation with headquarters in Malegaon in Maharashtra. According to Mr. Khalid Musharraf, secretary of the School, the child learns all the languages relevant to the administration and the market and acquires computing skills as well as develops such proficiency in English that allows him or her to continue higher and professional education.

Islamia Arabic College at Alur, 10 kms south of Hassan town on the Bangalore-Mangalore National Highway, is yet another experiment of the genre. Affiliated to the Karnataka State Secondary Board, the school integrates the State Board syllabus and the traditional theological curriculum. Students while studying the Arabic language, *Tafseer* (commentary of the Quran), Islamic history, Hadith

and Fiqh (jurisprudence), are also taught Mathematics, English, Urdu, Hindi, Kannada, Science, and Social Studies. Set up by Jamaate Islami in 1984, Islamia Arabic College has currently 380 students on its rolls with around 300 residing as inmates in its hostel.

Though the efforts by these institutions appear to be remarkable in breaking away from the traditional pattern and introducing modern subjects, there is an unmistakable impression that the mixing of the two curricula often proves burdensome for the kids. Consequently, it is observed that most such schools have to be residential in character where children have to undergo a strict rigmarole of attending classes from 8 am till 8 pm intervened by at least three prayers, a period for games, food and a resting hour.

Concern for retaining credibility among the Muslim masses who attach much devotion to the ulema trained at Deoband or its affiliates, they still teach the same traditional *tafseers* (commentaries) of the Quran like *Jalalain* and *Baidawi*. Though the overall effort to induct the modern sciences speaks about their keenness to change, it also exhibits their inability to completely break or challenge the traditional mould. Compromises are sought through a variety of means as the old and religiously sanctioned theories clash with modernity. Mathematics teachers are asked to inform the students about the prohibition on Interest while dealing with the chapter on Interest. Similarly, Islamic theory of Creation of human beings (which is common to all religions of Semitic origin) has to be externally added while teaching the Darwinian theory of Evolution under Biology curriculum. Dilemmas even dog them while dealing with issues of gender. While religious norms emphasise segregation, modernity stresses liberty. Most such schools are either unisex or maintain strict segregation of the classrooms for boys and girls. Similarly, while religions demand exclusivity (people especially women, marrying within the fold of the faith; conversion away from the faith

being frowned upon while into the religion being welcomed), the secular curriculum extols diversity and inclusion.

Some amount of discomfiture is also observable in matters of dealing with languages. While jobs in State or Union Administration urge proficiency in English, Hindi and official languages of the relevant States, the theological curriculum places undue emphasis on classical Arabic which does not bear even much relevance for jobs in the Gulf countries currently. According to Munawar Basha, Principal of the Hassan school, level of Arabic learnt by these students is just about making them capable of simple translation of the Quranic verses or expressing themselves while talking to an Arab launderer, cab driver, shopkeeper, or persons manning the immigration desk. Asked if these students could send an email in Arabic, or prepare a manual for a car from the manufacturers of Nissan or Lexus vehicles, or writing a billboard message for an advertisement for a toilet soap or a shaving cream or even draft a petition for the court in Arabic, the reply is a simple 'No'. The burden of the syllabus leaves them little time to do extra reading in English or the mother tongue/vernacular language whereby they could imbibe insight from extracurricular books and expand the frontiers of their knowledge. These genre of madrassas also avoid profound engagement with issues that are dilemmatic for the modern society such as Banking interest, gender equality, stem cells, surrogate motherhood, organ donation, posthumous in-vitro fertilization, pluralism, secularism, etc.

Forward Linkage

A distinct benefit accruing them is in the form of forward linkages. Some of these schools and curriculum seem to be supremely helpful as several of their alumni have pursued courses in Medicine, Engineering, Commerce and Computer science and have been able to earn a decent livelihood. But the success remains limited to these professions alone. Fewer among them were able to take up

journalism, mass communication, law, banking or careers such as Economists, Political or Social Scientist or even as writers, filmmakers, cartoonists. Rather they feel an element of inhibition in taking up such careers, especially in humanities, as a direct clash is perceived with certain beliefs in doctrinaire Islam such as cinematography, videography, drawing of sketches of living beings, composition of music and interest based transactions (banking) are involved or reporting and critiquing society's failures and political ongoing. According to Khalid Musharraf, 70% of the boys passing out of his school, head for modern education in colleges while 80% of girls continue in the theological stream in his madrassa. Some boys also pursue higher level theological studies at Jamia Islamia (Islamic University) in Madinah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia which affiliates several Salafi madrassas in India.

Not much enthusiasm is seen among these graduates in opting for traditional clerical positions in mosques, seminaries or madrassas. In fact, shying away from the traditional theological assignments (such as positions of imams, sermon-givers, muezzins in mosques or teachers in madrassas) is cited in proof of these graduates not feeling inclined 'to serve the cause of Islam' and looking for material benefit and craving for worldly pleasures. This tendency lends some credence to the charge from the proponents of traditional Deobandi curriculum that modernisation of madrassas is fraught with risks of sucking away students from mainline theological education and diverting them to secular professions. But the truth lies somewhere between the two viewpoints. The graduates from these schools prefer the modern professional careers for their promise of social respect, better marital prospects, upward mobility, newer and innovative ideas, access to sources of latest knowledge, and wider acceptability in the middle class. Their aversion to the clerical profession and positions stems mainly from the insistence on conformism in matters of ideas and concepts, a dress code that sets them apart in the obtaining social milieu, suppression of reason and rational

discussion, overriding emphasis on primitivity and sanctity of ideas, rejection of innovativeness, and extremely limited career options.

Syed Tanweer Ahmed, member of the management of Islamia Arabic College at Hassan admits that these graduates are yet to gain acceptability as authentic religious personalities, hence the reluctance to appoint them to positions within mosques and madrassas. Even slight deviation from the traditional interpretation is considered an incipient revolt from the faith. The general air of conformism is seen to be the major factor dissuading them from taking up such careers.

In the light of the above discussion, it becomes evident that the madrassas in the State are turning out the run-of-the-mill products that have no relevance in the job market. Unless they possess knowledge, skills and high degree of articulation, they may remain on the margins of the society and may even remain deprived of adequate livelihood for themselves. Mainstreaming of madrassas, affiliation of these schools with boards or some authority, developing some mechanism to monitor their outcome of learning, linking them with institutions of higher learning etc become sine qua non. But at the same time, one must remain aware of the touch-me-not stance of the prominent madrassas in the country which have some credibility in some foreign countries. Moreover, the Constitution of India guarantees the right to establish and administer their institutions as they would like to wish. This leaves the State the only choice of providing incentives to persuade some of the madrassas to modernize their curriculum. Some of the recommendations in this regards could be:

- 1- There is a need to formulate a comprehensive policy regarding madrassas in order to rejuvenate and revitalize them as education imparting centres, a role they have been serving for centuries. Though the madrassas and Vedic Pathsalas have been exempted from the ambit of the Right To Education (RTE), there is a need to relook at it. Secular education cannot be dispensed with in a democratic and secular country like India where every single

individual needs to be aware of the primary structure and legal framework of the nation.

- 2- Middle level madrassas where children stay for education from six to eight years may be selected for incorporate
- 3- on into SPQEM Scheme. They should be assured of non-interference in their internal affairs.
- 4- The State Government should chip into the SPQEM scheme and allocate funds to enhance the monthly salaries on par with Government teachers and apply the same service rules. The years spent as teachers in the scheme should be counted towards / as experience of teaching in a government school and preference should be given to such candidates while going for recruitment of regular teachers. They may be given textbooks, workbooks and teaching aids along with teachers to engage children in each of the class for three periods imparting them lessons in English, Kannada, Mathematics and Sciences.
- 5- The Union Government's HRD Ministry should be requested to streamline disbursement of funds for the scheme and timely payments should be ensured.
- 6- The madrassas should however be asked to streamline the procedure of recruiting the graduates for teaching these subjects, pay their salaries through cheques and maintain the accounts in a transparent manner.
- 7- Salary disbursement should be on time, say within 5th of every month. Delays and defaults would not sustain the interest.
- 8- There should be an annual training session for teachers taken under SPQEM who could be trained in inculcating spirit of free inquiry among the children during periods assigned to them. It could be entrusted to the Directorate of Urdu and Minority Languages. The Union Government scheme envisages it, but there has been no implementation.
- 9- Special provision should be made for admission into Morarji Desai Residential Schools (run by the Directorate of Minorities in Karnataka) at 8th standard level of children who have studied in SPQEM-aided madrassas.
- 10- The State Government can think of initiating a programme whereby the ulema teaching in traditional madrassas could be imparted a course for learning English, Kannada, Humanities, Constitution of India and basic Sciences. These may be started in principal cities like Bengaluru, Mysuru, Kalburgi, Belgaavi, Vijayapura, and Hubli-Dharwar. Classes may be held at some place for three hours on Saturdays and Sunday. They should be provided

a stipend of Rs. 1,000 per month to cover their conveyance and stationery. They should be free to pose any query.¹¹ This group of teachers should be invited to a State Seminar once a year in order to suggest changes in curriculum of madrassas. The papers presented in the seminar can be documented and published. This effort might crystallize into a group that would be open to preparing a new curriculum.

Conclusion

Madrassas are institutions of immense importance if looked at from the point of disseminating literacy and inculcating religious awakening among the underprivileged sections of Muslims. Generally, they have followed the old pattern of curriculum turning out the personnel who have traditionally manned the Islamic institutions. Except the few large madrassas, most of these institutions in Karnataka are small set-ups. They could be persuaded to modify syllabus and incorporate secular sciences in order to provide forward linkage to regular schools providing secular education. The SPQEM scheme needs to be streamlined and made efficient to expedite the process. A special course to teach modern Humanities and Sciences to the ulema engaged in madrassas could also be thought of. Some madrassas have sufficiently modernized the infrastructure and have aligned their annual schedule with CBSE or State Board schools. Such trends need to be encouraged through incentives.

Notes and References

The author has benefitted from personal and telephonic interactions held with following persons who were interviewed for the purpose of this paper:

Dr. Zaheer Ahmed Baqvi, former professor, Madrassa Baqiathus Salihat, Vellore, now based in Bengaluru. He is an Urdu writer and poet and has authored several books.

Abdul Muntaqim, a product of Madrassas Sabeelur Rashad, Bengaluru who later completed MA and B.Ed and is currently engaged in Arabic translation work and medical tourism industry.

Maulana Mohammad Ilyas, teacher at Jamia Masihul Uloom, Hegdenagar.

Prof. M. A. Ataulla, former General Manager of Indian Telephone Industry, former Campus Director, Al-Ameen Campus, and Director, Darul Umoor, Srirangapatnam. He has authored several books on Management, Human Resources Development and Psychology.

Khalid Musharraf: Secretary, Jamia Mohammedia mansoorah, Hegdenagar, Bengaluru

Munawar Basha, Principal, Islamia Arabic College, Alur, Hassan dist.

Dr. Waris Mazhari, Lecturer, Dept. of Islamic Studies, Jamia Millia Islamia, Delhi

1: Waris Mazhari, Dr. , Hindustani Madaris ka Talimi Nizam aur is mein Islah ki Zarurat: Ek Jayeza, Global Media Publication, New Delhi, 2014, p. 162.

1A: Report of the Prime Minister's High Level committee on Social, Economic and Educational Status of the Muslim Community of India, Cabinet Secretariat, New Delhi, November 2006, Page 244 (in Urdu version)

1B: Dr. Rahi fidai, Fountains of Religious Education in Ancient India, Al-Ansar Publications, Hyderabad, 2009

2: Millath Pages Karnataka 2015-16, Bedaar e Millath Publications, p. 153-158

2A: <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/karnataka/most-madrasas-dont-teach-science-maths-social-studies-study/article6662441.ece>

2B: http://www.ripublication.com/ijepa/ijepav5n1_06.pdf {Ismail K. P., Labeed Shafi, and M.Y. Thouseef, A Study on Madrassa Education System in Karnataka, International Journal of Educational Planning and Administration, Vol. 5, No. 1, (2015)}

2C:

3: This pattern can be seen all across India. Darul Uloom Deoband is now headed by Arshad Madni, son of former Rector Asad Madni, who was also a Rajya Sabha MP. Darul Uloom (Waqf) Deoband is now headed by Maulana Salim Qasmi, son of former rector Maulana Taiyab Qasmi. Famed Lucknow madrassa Nadwatul Ulema appointed Mr. Rabey Hasani Nadwi, nephew of its former Rector Maulana Abul Hassan Ali Nadwi passed away in 1999. Senior Nadwai was childless. In Darul Uloom Sabeelur Rashad, Mufti Ashraf Ali succeeded as Mohtamim after his father Maulana Abu Saud Ahmed Passed away.

4: There are now over 400 Muslim managed English medium high schools in Bengaluru. At least 50 of them are A grade schools where majority of the children are non-Muslims. The number of Muslim-managed schools in 1982 was just about

15. This is indicative of the great strides made by the City's Muslims in modern education.

5: Thirty seven children were intercepted at the Bengaluru's Yashwanthapur Railway Station in 2012. They were being taken from villages in Bihar to K. R. Nagar in Mandya District to a madrassa outside the town. Personal visit and investigation revealed that the only Mosque in the heart of the town had suddenly witnessed decline in the number of namazis in recent months due to opening a new mosque in the periphery of the town. Two persons who were employed as Imam and Muezzin (Azan caller) hailing from Bihar, in the mosque advised the mosque management that if a madrassa could be started by the mosque, the presence of the children would ensure sufficient number of namazis. Convinced of their plea, the duo had begun bringing children from Bihar year after year. This author and Mr. M. A. K. Tayab (IAS retd), former Secretary in Govt of India, had personally visited the madrassa and gathered the information. The local newspapers took up the issue and the Commission for Women and Child Welfare had to intervene to get the children released from the custody of police. (Ref. M. A. Siraj, Daily Salar, Bengaluru, September 12, 2015, 'Remand Home se Bachchon ki Rahayi').

6: The teacher chose not to be named.

7: Dr. Nejatullah Siddiqui, Deeni Madaris: Masail wo taqaze, p. 8.

8: Arabi Islami Madaris ka Nisab wo Nizam e Taleem aur Asri Taqaze, vol. 1 p. 88

9: Maulana Salim Qasimi, Monthly *Nawa e Hadi*, Kanpur, Aug-Sept. 2006, p. 41, "Madaris se ba salahiyath afrad muashaere ko kis tarah milsakte hain".

10:http://mhrd.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/upload_document/spqem-Karnataka.pdf

For the purpose of inquiry the following madrassas were contacted: Fathima Al-Zarha Arabic College, Harpanahalli, Davangere dist; Darul Uloom Arabic College, Muhammadpur, Chinthamani; Madrassa Darul Uloom Rahidiya, Bidar dist; Darul Uloom Sheikhul Islam, Bellary; Jamia Ahle Sunnat, Asar Mohalla, Chitradurga; Madrassa Dawatul Quran, Hyderali Block, Mysuru; Madrasathul Al-Banat Gulshan Zahra, Muneshwarnagar, Bengaluru.

11: This author has the experience of teaching some leading ulema of Bengaluru for six month under one such arrangement.