



# ROLE OF MADRASAS IN EDUCATION: A STUDY FROM THE SOCIAL WORK PERSPECTIVE

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## ABSTRACT:

This paper is an effort to evaluate various activities done by madrasas in North Karnataka to enhance and promote education and societal well being. Madrasa in Arabic means school. Saudi Arabia and in Arab countries school is termed as Madrasa. According to a Karnataka Government assessment there are more than 960 Madrasas in our State. In this survey probably Maktabs (Madrasa meant for small children) are also included. And Pallidars attached to Masjids might not be included in those surveys. In this study, various facilities provided by Madrasas such as infrastructure and community participation, teaching environment, innovative activities, faculty, integration of secular and religious education, infrastructure like water, good food, playing ground, residential facility, the availability of teaching and non-teaching facility, clean environment, sports equipments, library, computer education and first aid facilities, having innovative activities, expert faculty, language training, physical education and well ordained campus are being considered.

**Key words:** Madrasaa, social responsibility, social work, community participation, civilization.

## INTRODUCTION

Madrasa was the cradle of new inventions nay new civilization during the middle ages. In our country too, the contribution of Madrasa towards educational and political revival cannot be denied. It was the springboard of freedom movement. It was the abode of intellectuals, poets, writers and revolutionaries. Every education system has its own history. The history is a sort of mirror for it. AS such it is felt to throw light on the path

trodden by madrasa over the period. Lots of similarities could be traced in Indian gurukul system and madrasa education system.

Madrasas achieved revolution in educational domain which the modern universities would not think of! Its impact was felt in India and especially in Karnataka. It was the Madrasas from which many of the Kings of India acquired education. In the educational reforms in Karnataka the contribution of KhuliKutub shah of Bahmani Kingdom, Adil shah of Bijapur sultanate is quite immense. In fact the Islamic university established by Gawaans of Bidar and its spacious library is world renowned. Thus madrasas were the centers of scientific innovations and acted as laboratories for scientific subjects. It was a center of exchange of scholarship and renowned scholars from across the world. It also remained an inspiration for many of the world renowned architectural buildings.

While the Madrasa initiated the new renewal and harbinger of inventions it is regrettable for having secluded the institutions today as the mere provider of religious teachings. It wouldn't be an exaggeration if we say that it has lost its pristine glory and its true status!

### **ROLE OF MADRASAS**

Education has been widely recognized as a powerful tool for integration, especially in a religiously, culturally and linguistically plural society like ours. The current educational backwardness of Muslims portends a double loss. Members of the community lose out in terms of the emerging, unprecedented opportunities of a globalizing world. The country loses in terms of the inability of a substantial segment of its population to participate gainfully in its forward march to greater prosperity and quality of life. Madrasas are centers of free education. They are also citadels of social service, where knowledge of humanism and universal brotherhood, which is

one of the basic tenets of Islam, is imparted and human values are taught. They are the nucleus of the cultural and educational life of Muslims. These Madrasas, as an invaluable instrument of traditional education, have played a vital role in spreading literacy among the down-trodden segments of the Muslim society. Madrasa education is, hence, an emotive issue of deep resonance for Muslims. They are found even in the remotest rural areas, where often no other educational facilities exist.

On the other hand these Madrasas, in spite of playing key roles in the field of literacy especially for Muslim community, have been running in unfavourably circumstanced condition since long period of time, because of lack of infrastructure, shortage of teaching and non-teaching staffs, scarcity of finance and dearth of its resources. Hence, the moot question is who will take the responsibility to improve the condition of these Madrasas? Who should come forward for this task? Why these Madrasas are in such condition in spite of playing key roles in the field of education for Muslim community? Having these questions in the mind some scholars, educationists, sincere officers, ministers, and leader across the community came forward and brought a bill called Central Madrasa Education Board Act in 2009. Looking into the matter

from other perspective we can say that it is their compulsion and obligation morally and through 86<sup>th</sup> amendment of the constitution. RTE may be considered the rolling stone and key factor for this act.

#### Areas of work :

- For the standardization of the non-theological aspects of Madrasa system education and its comprehensive, systematic and integrated development.
- To promote education in non-theological subjects without interfering in any manner in the theological content of Madrasa education
- To promote and popularize the education of Muslim girls so as to eradicate gender-based educational disparity
- To give scholarships to Madrasa students.
- To maintain a register of madrasas.
- Evaluation of the curriculum framework once in five years so as to make the Madrasa system of education a fit and effective tool for the educational empowerment of Muslims.
- Recommend introduction of modern text books on any subject, other than religious texts, as extra reading to complement students' knowledge of such subject and enhance overall modern scholarship.
- Preparation, publication or sale of text-books and books, other than books on theology or religious texts, for use in affiliated Madrasas.
- Provide, by regulations, after considering the recommendations of the Syllabus Committee, if any, the curriculum, the syllabus, the courses of studies to be followed and books to be studied in affiliated Madrasas for examinations instituted by the Board.
- Teachers training. Conceptualize and initiate programme for the consolidation of the inclusive society, marked by religious and cultural diversity, through proper interfaith understanding in society.
- Adoption of a non-polemical approach to other religions and non-sectarian institutions, in a state of fidelity to the Islamic spiritual tradition.
- Review the infrastructure requirements, including faculty position and to evaluate the academic health of the Madrasa and to make appropriate recommendations to the Madrasa concerned.
- Annual report of the Board shall be presented in the Parliament.

## LIMITATIONS :

1. There is absence of basic infrastructure facilities in many of the Madarasas.
2. There is low self-esteem found among many of those pursuing studies including the faculty. After learning in such Madarasas they felt that they may have to serve in Masjids and Madarasas where they may be paid lesser honorariums. As they keep away from the public domain they are cut off from the social mainstream.
3. The negative image created by the media regarding Madarasas has infused a state of fear and concern among students. The enigma remaining behind these Madarasas are portrayed to create an atmosphere of fear or terror! By relaying misconceptions round the clock people are brainwashed to hate these poor souls! When our representatives visited a prestigious Madarasa in Hubli, the principal confided a sad event before them. Every week the personnel from Intelligence Bureau and Police Department visit to inspect the attendance rolls and examine the class rooms. As the police visit often, the students who come to the Madarasa come with a feeling of apprehension and fear! Due to this constant intimidation, there is not only significant reduction in student admission; even the parents are hesitant to visit the Madarasa for the fear of social standing!
4. There is no encouragement for physical sports. Most of the Madarasas lack suitable playgrounds. Even few of those having are not being used. Or there are no physical education teachers to train them. Thus, community leaders have to deliberate over this matter and promote sports among Madarasa students.
5. There is lack of residential facilities in many Madarasas. For example, when 20 pupils are housed for sleep in a small room it reflects the sorry state of affairs.

## CONCLUSION:

The brief recommendations for enabling madrasas in India to respond to the needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

1. Standardise the system of madrasa education: The issue of 'standardisation' is contentious. In an interview conducted by the authors of this brief with Justice M S A Siddiqui, former chairperson of the National Council for Minority Educational Institutions (NCMEI), he insisted that there was a near consensus on the standardisation of madrasa system and mainstreaming madrasa education to create an inclusive atmosphere, promote social justice, tolerance and economic development. Justice Siddiqui acknowledged that there were procedural and legal hurdles, but he said those could be overcome in a "spirit of consensus and accommodation." The National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) can play a pivotal role in integrating madrasa education and cater to the needs of learners up to pre-degree level. Modern subjects should be integrated into the madrasa system. Begin the standardisation of madrasa education in a specific state as a pilot, before eventually scaling.

2. Improve teacher quality: Any system of education is only as good as its teachers. The present conditions of most teachers in madrasas is pitiable: their salaries are irregular, they have no pay-scales or avenues for career advancement. The central government should allocate money for teacher capacity-building through the CMB for different schemes like SPQEM, MOMS, IDMI. Teaching orientation programmes for madrasa teachers are imperative to usher in modernisation. Madrasa teachers need wider exposure to current discourses in public life and geo-political trends, and must learn advanced teaching methods, as well as other skills like counselling.
3. Rationalise faculty: The proposed CMB and the state madrasa boards can consider setting up a centralised faculty of social sciences to teach subjects like economics, history, political science, and broader trends in foreign policy. Separate faculties in educational technology, mass communication, computer education and orientation centres should also be set up to have distinctive programmes and a character of their own. Collaborations with various educational centres of excellence should be conducted.
4. Help madrasas assimilate their 'Indian' identity: The government of India would do well to help madrasas use their institutions in teaching Indian Muslims to assimilate their identity as 'Indian' and 'Muslim', together—on the basis of a shared sense of history, culture and language. This can be along the lines of Singapore's deradicalisation programme. After all, the foundations of a nation-state having broad religious, cultural and linguistic diversity should not be built on religious nationalism.

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