

Prospects of Contemporary Religious Educational Institutions (*Madāris*) of Kashmir

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ABSTRACT

The *madāris* of South Asia and Kashmir face many challenges, particularly with regard to their curricula, textbooks, role in society, social work, financial matters, administration, intellectual development, and education of women. The curriculum of the *madāris*, despite being very extensive and sound, needs some reform and modification in the context of the present age. In fact, many academics from the Indo-Pak subcontinent, Africa, and the Arab world have worked hard in this direction. It is in this backdrop that the present paper makes an effort to highlight the main contribution of the *madāris*, particularly in terms of advancing a society that embodies spirituality and high moral and intellectual standards. The paper also covers a wide range of topics related to the relevance of the *madāris* in today's modern world in fostering a peaceful, amicable, and prosperous society. The paper goes into great detail about the curriculum of the *madāris* and the reforms and modifications that must be made in light of the modern era, as well as the adoption of contemporary tools and technology in their educational system.

Key Words: *Madāris*, Education System, Women Education, *Madāris* curriculum.

1. Introduction

Irrespective of many issues and challenges, the *madāris* of South Asia and Kashmir thrive in producing men of rare caliber in the light of Islamic teachings. These virtuous and pious men have contributed much in the various aspects of religious

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sciences. This contribution in the Muslim world has made these seminaries the centres of learning and a tool for the reconstruction of an ideal society. These unique seminaries present the Islamic values in the changing narrative of human society in reconciliation with modern developments. The seminaries of this pattern and thought provide both modern and religious education instantly (though very few) in Kashmir.

To reform the curriculum of these seminaries according to the present demands is neither old nor undesirable. Subjects like English, computer education, history, social sciences and other auxiliary sciences are taught in the seminaries of Kashmir. This trend is rising in these seminaries positively, but the question remains that what will be the standard of *madrrasah* curriculum wherein the religious sciences and religious values maintain their specification. These *madāris* may enable their graduates to efficiently contribute in present era. This needs the collective get together of the prominent stalwarts of all *madāris* (schools of thought), educationists, intellectuals, teachers/scholars, men with broader vision and knowledge in the form of committees. This work of re-structuring religious educational system demands modification with continuity, moderation and consciously in an expedient manner.

The challenges of educational, financial, social, political, moral or spiritual or training perspective may have different manifestations but for the endeavor of community (*Ummah*) it is mandatory to revive and strengthen the sacred purpose of these *madāris* in Kashmir. To explore and introspect the past, demands planning for the reconstruction of prospects like the flow of present age, the social issues of community, what sort of reforms are needed and which suitable model and pattern (*Manhaj*) may be employed for *madāris* to accomplish the mission of social reform by them. Considering these means, resources and demands call for further exertions, insights, forethought, universality, permissiveness, acceptance and aptness. To all these concerns, the *madāris*, their scholars and graduates despite their efforts, are still unable to respond precisely and professionally. This situation adds more responsibility to the people affiliated with *madāris* (scholars and graduates) to refresh their preparedness; realize modern challenges, acquaintance with new

questions and terminologies. To opt for the presentation of Islamic teachings in modern idiom and harmony ably, the scholars/graduates of these seminaries may perform social transformation that has been their historical distinctiveness.

In view of the challenges to the *madrasah* education across the globe and in particular to the *madāris* of Kashmir, it is mandatory to develop a comprehensive response. Reconstructing the entire educational system on the new and innovative lines will ensure a prospect to revive this sanctified system.

While planning curricular reform, the educational principles put forth by the educationists of different educational systems might be recognized. These acknowledged principles include: (a) Utilization of the experiences and the insights of experts of different domains of knowledge, (b) Curriculum must have work / research / skill type orientation, (c) It must be very precise (d) There should be a progression of constant pruning, gradation and the recognition of linguistic differences and tastes.

The prescribed texts (books) within the curriculum of *madāris* form the essential component of religious educational system. These books are to be necessitated in proportion to the intellectual, psychological and moral standard of the learners. These texts must be eye-catching, qualitative and should maintain the higher standards of publication. The use of diagrams, pictures, charts, colors may provide magnificent and positive results from such text books in the learners. There should be an emphatic approach, hard work and least negligence on the part of the teachers. So the teachers must make best use of standard texts of the specific pedagogy that will enrich the learners with their best ability. In order to create educational standard and quality among the learners, the teachers are needed to be of the higher mark itself. Rewards and scholarships for the toppers and meritorious students with books as the best rewards from the annual budget may be specified. We need a new *Ijtihād* especially in the *madāris* because whatever is produced in an age can't be the final word and this absoluteness only specifies to the revelation. So the present age needs capable men to change the course of history with much in-depth reflection to view and investigate the diverse, comprehensive and all-embracing perspectives of *madrasah* education.¹

The teacher should have the knowledge about the different methods, principles and approaches in education (*Usūl al ta'lim*) particularly educational psychology. He must be well versed in the subject with profound knowledge especially in the themes or topics which he has to deliberate upon.²

2. Curricular Prospects: *'Ulum al-Qur'an* (Quranic Sciences)

2.1 Prospects in the Primary Quranic Education

Being the basis of higher levels of education, the primary education of Quran (*Hifz, Tajwid, Qirā't*) needs exclusive care to be in accordance with requirement.

- It has to be imparted collectively as the learners get acquainted and learn quickly in the group/congregation.
- It needs a virtuous and capable teacher, with best and an attractive script, continuous practice and repetition by the learners.
- It demands the use of modern electronic tools/aids like LCD projectors, microphones, colored electronic boards and other equipments.³
- This level of education requires proper time management to impart lessons within specified duration.
- To maintain a break for a day or more in a week so as to relax the mind, body and the soul of learners.⁴
- Memorization of Quran should be gradual with calmness as attested by the Quran itself as:

Those who reject faith say: Why is not the Quran revealed to him all at once? Thus (is it revealed), that We may strengthen thy heart thereby, and We have rehearsed it to thee in slow, well-arranged stages, gradually.⁵

- There are many pragmatic ways to make the process of memorization much conducive, which may include: (a) use of the best script of Quran in size, print. (b) Best location, where the learners feel calm and attentive, at Mosque. (c) Psychological preparation. (d) Warm up (e) Focus (f) Recur (g) Fusion.

After observing all these steps the outcome will be Strong memorization. Scholars have manifested many other prerequisites for memorization of the Quran as:

(a) Age: Best age for the memorization of the Holy Quran is the age of Childhood. Famous Muslim educational Psychologist Dr 'Atiyah al Abrashi opines in the following words that “*The example of learning in childhood is like engraving on a stone and learning while being an adult is like writing on water.*”⁶

(b) Moderate Content. (c) Domestic environment. (d) Capability. (e) Boarding or Hostel environment. (f) System of the seminary. (g) Principle of graduality. (h) Time limit for the memorization (2-3 years). (i) Suitable time for the Hifz. (j) Non-compulsion in memorization.⁷

2.2 Prospects in *Tarjumah tul Quran* (ترجمة القرآن)

The science of Quranic translation is most prominent before the Arabs as well as non-Arabs in terms of its literal explanation. The translation of Quran (*tarjumah*) requires acquaintance with the Arabic language with profound ability. The Quran makes use of the syncretic idioms from daily life and every idiom has its specific usage, so subscribing this idiomatic essence requires reconciliatory approach. Thus the science of *Tarjuma tul Quran* needs following provisions for further endeavor.

- The science of *tarjumah* needs to be incorporated in the curriculum as a special pedagogy.
- The linguistic and literary tastes in *tarjumah* are to be considered.
- *Tarjumah* has to be imparted beyond specific mindsets and the sectarian approach to be eliminated.
- The use of modern and classical translations (*tarājim*) together will balance the pedagogy.
- The involvement of learners while having construction of words and literal meanings through exercises may give better results in this science.

2.3 Prospects in *Usūl al Tafīr*

In response to the challenges posed to this science we must analyze the texts produced by the Muslim scholars from the early Islamic period till modern period.

In most of the cases there are only extensions of the classical texts and nothing more. But in the modern era scholars from Arabian and African countries have contributed profoundly in the domain of *Usūl al Tafsīr*, so in this regard we may have following provisions for observance:

1. The texts that converse upon the history and development of *usul al-tafsir* and evaluate its themes extensively are to be incorporated in the curriculum.
2. The provisions for contextualizing such principles to Quranic verses in the light of new developments ought to be corroborated.
3. Textual and pedagogical advancements in the other parts of the Muslim world must be put to cognizance and utility (both classical and modern).
4. The deviations and escapism from the methodology and principles under the blanket of Quranic studies in the contemporary times requires deliberation.
5. It is indispensable for *Usūl al-Tafsīr* as a separate realm to have its thematic perspective decided.

The books of the modern period like: *Al Tibiyān fi ‘Ulūm al Qurān* (التبيين في علوم القرآن) by Sabūnī, *Qawā'id al Tadabbur al Amthāl* (قواعد التدبر الامثال) by ‘Abdur Rahman Hasan al Maydani, *Qawā'id al Tafsīr-* (قواعد التفسير) by Khalid bin ‘Uthman al Sabṭ, *Usūl al Tafsīr wa Qawa'iduh* (أصول التفسير و قواعده) by Khalid bin ‘Abdur Rahman al ‘Akkah, *Fusūl fi Usūl al Tafsīr* (فصول في أصول التفسير) Musā'id bin Sulaiman al Tayyar and other prominent modern works may be incorporated.

2.4 Prospects in *Tafsīr*

Realizing the challenges to the science of Quranic exegesis (*Tafsīr al Qurān*) in the religious seminaries (*madāris*) of Kashmir, the following recommendations in this regard be put forth prospectively.

- The teaching methodology of Quranic exegesis demands modification and has to be in reconciliation with the modern urgency.
- The inculcation of the Quranic attitude, its objective study, and focus on the key concerns among the teachers and learners will let this science to flourish.

- The curriculum demands addition of texts and commentaries beyond *Jalalayn* and *Baidhawi*, especially commentaries from modern era.
- The critical, unbiased and comparative study of different exegesis (*Tafsīr*) demands support with focus on different structural schools and approaches (*Manāhij*).
- The exegesis of Quran has to be accomplished in puritical essence, not making it *Fiqh*, *Hadīth* or *Kalam* or literal constructions of Arabic grammar.
- Stipulating much time for *Tafsīr* within curriculum from early phase of course in a gradual perspective with consistency needs anticipation.
- The concrete provisions for analyzing and responding to the misconceptions about Quranic text, interpretation and other aspects before modern mind and scholarship needs consideration.

2.5 Prospects in *Usūl al Hadīth*

Usūl al Hadīth is a key branch of knowledge in Islamic sciences, but there are many flaws within the curriculum that have led to the decline of its scholarship. So in order to develop this science the following insights are proposed:

- Introduction of comprehensive, lucid and basic texts (classical/modern) in the domain of *Usūl al Hadīth* might ensure progression.
- To have consideration of thematic diversity about the history, development and the compilation of *Hadīth* sciences in the new texts.
- This science has to be taught to the learners with the commencement of course (*Dars-i-Nizami*) as against concluding years which are prevalent currently.
- This science has to be integrated with the ample measures to respond to the suspicions created by orientalist, *Hadīth* rejecters and other conflicting narratives.
- Recognition of different standpoints in the terminological and interpretative dimensions among various structural schools of *Usul al Hadīth*.

2.6 Prospects in Science of *Hadīth*

Carving out experts in the field of *Hadīth* depends upon the teaching methodology, quantity of the content, in-depth study, the access to primary sources and the principle of gradation from primary level to the level of specialization. The approach as prevalent in our seminaries is akin that when a tradition pertaining to dogmatic and juristic variations come to pass, weeks are devoted and when the *Hadīth* concerning essence of Islam, morality, justice, economy or the civilization, a brief overview is attributed. So the science of *Hadīth* requires many appropriate guidelines in the contemporary era within the *madāris* of Kashmir as given below:

- There has to be consideration of the psychological or mental ability of the learners while instructing *Hadīth*, as directed in the statement of ‘Ali:

قال علي: حدثوا الناس، بما يعرفون أتحبون أن يكذب، الله ورسوله

‘Ali (R.A) said; *Conversate with the people with what they are aware of, do you want Allah and His Messenger to be rejected...*⁸

There is always a need for the cognition of the intellectual level before that will make science of *Hadīth* to increase their faith and trust, as against confusion.

- The literal/conflicting reflections among Traditions (*Ahadīth*) are to be replaced with reconciliation and harmony on priority in a proper context.⁹
- There is urgency for the utility from the modern research and contribution, their in-depth study to foster concord in the science of *Hadīth*.¹⁰
- There must be gradual consideration of the themes pertaining to social sciences like that of individual, state, rights, economy. This may facilitate the *madrasah* scholar/graduate to maintain efficacy in modern society.
- The system of *Dawrah Hadīth* has to be rectified from conventional textual execution to the collective study of Prophetic Traditions. The major part of these Traditions relate to the practical life, so ascertaining the reconciliation, may be attached and explained with this life.

2.7 Prospects in Jurisprudence (*Usul wa Qawā'id*)

The science of jurisprudence (*fiqh*) has always been key subject in the domain of religious knowledge to have clear-cut understanding and inferences. So the *fiqh* (its *Usūl*, *Qawā'id* and *Ahkām*) must be given due consideration as a living and relevant pedagogy within the ambit of religious sciences. Following prospective suggestions are provided with respect to the challenges in this science.

- The way of teaching *Usūl* and *Qawā'id al Fiqh* shall include: (a) Use of reconciliatory approach, (b) Practice of fundamentals and rules (c) The study of *Usūl al Fiqh* as a living and practical science. All this will foster competency and efficiency among students.¹¹
- These principles (*Usūl* and *Qawā'id*) are to be studied in a simple language or in local/mother tongue/ Urdu, to enable the learner to embrace the vital themes in *Fiqh*.
- The curriculum for *Usūl al Fiqh wa Qawā'id* needs reorganization so as to enable the learner with most of themes (*Mabāhith*) to guide the community in new issues and share opinions competently.
- The literary contribution of the contemporary Muslim Scholars and academies of *Fiqh* across the globe may be considered, as much work has been done by them in this regard.
- In the higher classes we must introduce the books based on the combination of the both Shafī and Hanafi methodology (*Jam'a Bayn al Tariqayn*). It may include most of the themes on *Usūl* and all the prominent principles of each school of thought of *Ahl al Sunnah*.
- The preparation of the text books in *Usūl al Fiqh* demand modern pattern in the light of previous scholarship (efforts/results) and may assist *madāris* in many ways.
- The taste for in-depth study in the memorization of *Qawā'id*, their practice, exercise and deduction must be inculcated in the learners by the teachers.
- There may be the introduction of the books of contemporary scholars like those of Abu Zuhrah (*Usul al fiqh*), Shaikh Khallāf (*ʿIlm Usul al fiqh*), Shaikh Wahbah al Zuhailī, Dr 'Abdul Karīm Zaidān (*Al Wajīz fi Usūl al Fiqh*), Dr

Husain Hamid (*Usūl al Fiqh*), Khalid Saifullah Rahmani's (*Āsān Usūl Fiqh*), 'Ubaidullah Asadi's (*Tashīl Usūl al Fiqh*), and other good writings of this era.¹²

2.8 Prospects in Fiqh Studies

Fiqh has been the major subject of study in the *madāris* of South Asia in general and Kashmir in particular as it directly links the life with society profoundly. In the contemporary era, the study of general *Fiqh* has been debated by the jurists through different parameters to guide the *Ummah* in the modern trends and new challenges. In this regard the following suggestions may be observed to address the challenges that have crept into the science of jurisprudence.

- There should be balance in the study of the chapters (*Abwāb*), as some of them are repeated while other chapters are left unexplored. This type of disproportion must be tackled and amended.
- There is always the need for the comparative, unbiased and indepth study of jurisprudence. This will create broader vision in thought and action among the learners and graduates.
- The introduction of the social sciences or fundamentals of economy, polity, general science, geography, law in the curriculum of *fiqh*, will augment relevance and compatibility to their scholars in society.
- The study of objectives of Islamic law/*Shari'ah* in the curriculum especially in the higher education like of *takhassus*, *Iftā'* and *Qadā'* will foster objectivity, moderation and dynamism within the ambit of Islamic jurisprudence.¹³
- The preparation of novel texts in *fiqh* from the very beginning by dividing them into lessons, exercises, questions, notes, and explanations, will enable the learners to grasp *fiqh* and gather juristic efficiency.
- The learners should be encouraged to study juristic issues from the modern perspectives to have understanding of themes like bank interest, insurance, money and its value, currency notes and other financial issues. With this vigilant marrow and diligence, *madāris* might produce scholars capable in deciphering contemporary challenges.

- The science of *fiqh* should be taught by experienced and talented teachers to infuse in the learners the excellence in pedagogy.
- The valuable contribution of contemporary Fiqh academies of Muslim world and different Juristic encyclopedias compiled by the scholars must be given consideration by our *madāris*.
- There must be ample provisions for the study of contemporary modern law (State/International Laws) at par with Islamic law.¹⁴

2.9 Prospects in Arabic Sciences

In view of the fundamental nature of the *Quran*, *Hadīth*, *Fiqh* and other religious sciences, the importance of Arabic language and literature in the curricular framework of *madāris* seems foremost. It is complicated to have the cognition of these sources and the issues, if we lack competence over Arabic language and literature.

So in the backdrop of challenges to the Arabic language and literature within the seminaries, it is mandatory for the *madrasah* authorities that they should make proper provisions and attention in this regard. We make the following recommendations in the Arabic language and literature:

1. The whole arena and the environment of the *madāris* should be improved wherein Arabic is well ingrained and configured.
2. From the very primary level, rules (*Qawā'id*) must be learned/practised alongside with exercises and illustrations.¹⁵
3. The teachers shouldn't adhere only to the examples prescribed in texts but also from *Quran* and *Hadīth* with relevance and context.
4. The use of commentaries, translation guides and irrelevant discussions in Arabic language/literature during the lessons must be abandoned. This will create focus and more comprehension.
5. The use of teaching aids/tools in Arabic language may yield better outcome in writing, reading and the speaking of Arabic.

6. All the official announcements, examination papers, results in *madāris* ought to be done in Arabic language. This will promote the milieu of *madāris* gradually into the fold of Arabic.¹⁶
7. The conversation between the teachers, students, administration and among each other should be in Arabic.
8. There is need to organize the programmes and congregations where in the teachers/students may deliver speech and present papers in Arabic language.
9. There must be the prioritization of the Arabic language over the Arabic literature, as language comes first and then literature.
10. There is an urgent need that language has to be studied with focus, attention and without taking the help of translations.

3. Social Prospects

The challenges of varied aspects ensue in a globalized society which in turn is to be responded through attitude, concern, specialization, division of labor and other organized efforts. The world wherein Muslims reside, needs visualization of its sensitivities, ideas, necessities and its concerns. The Quran clearly directs it as:

إن الله لا يغير ما بقوم حتى يغيروا ما بأنفسهم

*Verily never will Allah change the condition of a people until they change what is within themselves.*¹⁷

And this principle of change in turn has been substantiated by another principle as:

خذ ما صفا ودع ما كدر

*Take that which is clear and leave that which appears murky*¹⁸

Prominent Muslim thinker, Maulana Taqi Amini advocated that the social reconstruction/orientation in the Muslim society has to be natural and according to the historical taste that shall suit to its body and soul. It must be superior in its virtues and ideals with apparatus from modern age. Its organization must be pious like of our predecessors, scholars and Şūfis, otherwise the alluring appeal towards it may derail our objective. So the social reconstruction must be directed by the men having vision and expertise in different fields.¹⁹ With deep investigation, the

stalwarts of *madāris* have to re-think and act, so as to have the full reorganization of the vast needs and may proceed to train their disciples for the social necessities of the community. It is the dire need of the hour that our *madrasah* must think about the future by considering their standing in past and taking note of the present circumstances to remain relevant socially.²⁰

Famous Muslim thinker and educationist, Dr. Mahmud Ahmad Ghazi (d. 2010) views that the time demands religion to relate with the matters of life to re-locate its position in the society. To attain this objective, the requirement is the scholarly expertise with ideal and critical knowledge about the world/society where they have to perform such role. So our 'Ulamā' need to take keen note of this change as majority of the people enquire about the Islamic society and its distinctiveness.²¹ The broader outlook and role of socio-religious institutions like the *madāris*, *masajid* and other centers of collective activism demands:

1. That resurgence of socio-religious character of *madāris* in the eastern society has primarily the religious orientation.
2. *Madāris* must neutralize the sectarian attitude towards other schools of thought that are based on the superficial denominations in the Muslim society.
3. There should be healthy discussions, seminars, workshops in the Muslim society between its different components in collaboration with the religious fraternity.
4. To have the affirmative and constructive use of all types of media and means of communication especially social media.
5. The *madrasah* stalwarts must have realization and flexibility in social milieu to create men of rational caliber who may respond to the contemporary socio-religious challenges in compatible idiom with *ijtihad* and freedom of thought.²²

Besides the preceding insights, there can be two fold responses to such social concerns: (a) Long term programme, (b) Short term programme.

Long term programme may include: (a) Abolishing duality in education (in modern and religious education) (b) Broad based education upto 12 years has to be incorporated (c) Establishment of Institutions for higher education in religious sciences to foster religious professionalism (d) Consideration of public opinion from diverse intellectual and societal classes.

Short term programme may include: (a) Teaching of social sciences, humanities and linguistics like English language besides computer education to *madrrasah* students/graduates (b) Connecting *madāris* (teachers, students) with the regional, national or international universities (also with the universities of Muslim world) (c) Benefiting from their socio-religious experiences to avoid confinement and isolation (d) Constructive use of media especially social media, ICT and civil society.²³

3.1 *Madāris* and Social Work

In the present era the stand of *madāris* remains relevant with respect to different social issues in the context of globalization, pluralistic societies or Muslims as majority/minority. *Madāris* need to develop collective social conscience, broaden their sphere of activity beyond four walls and to work for social and collective welfare. This change in their outlook will let them focus at the following main areas:

- Identifying the contemporary social issues on priority like relations with non-Muslims, guidelines to have interaction in their festivals, ceremonies, exchange of gifts.
- Utilization of the jurisprudence of minorities (*Fiqh al 'Aqalliyat*) as we may have sound understanding of current social issues and possible solutions.²⁴
- The spirit of human felicitation with respect to common masses may benefit them from such provisions. This may lend a helping hand in their missionary zeal and assignments even in non-Muslims and down-trodden sections of the society.
- The active participation of the *madrrasah* scholars, graduates and students in social work during the natural calamities and disasters will provide them socio-religious relevance.²⁵

3.2 *Madāris* and *Da'wah*

The present age discourse believes in dialogue, interaction and mutual understanding between the civilizations, world religions and among the inter-religious communities or schools of thought. So the narrative to maintain hegemony and supremacy over others in thought and idea holds least significance except to have recognition and consideration at par. With respect to the role of *madāris* in preaching the message of Islam in a better way, following observations may assist *madāris* to arrive at rational outcome:

- These *madāris*, their '*ulamā*' and graduates must fully recognize their obligations and responsibilities with respect to the *da'wah* in the community.
- In *da'wah* they should pursue the policy of broadmindedness, inclusiveness (*tawassu'*) and consider the standpoint of other schools of thought in an intellectual and studious way.
- To incorporate the well-matched books on *da'wah*, ethics of disagreement in madrasah curriculum and to start the courses of specialization in *da'wah* (*Takhassus fi da'wah*).
- To foster the courses on comparative jurisprudence to understand and address the exact nature of difference between juristic schools of thought.
- There must be institutions, organizations and research academies of joint venture including the scholars/graduates from various schools of thought with proper representation. This may lend a hand to curb sectarian/social escalations and replace them with unity and harmony.
- There should be adequate provisions for the study of comparative religion (*Taqabul al Adiyān*) as in our state there are different religious communities like Hindus, Christians, Sikhs and Buddhists.

4. Economic Prospects

The rising disgrace towards religious tradition and its organizers (of *madāris*) in economic perspective has pulled them out from their real mission and objectivity. It is the dire need of the hour to have the cognizance of the economic perspective in our religious educational seminaries. There are diverse perspectives of the problem

that require in-depth study and investigation. For the *madāris* of higher level imparting specialized education *takhassus* and *takmilah*, with much bigger budget, there may be the inculcation of vocational and skill development orientation to courses and the departments (*Dār us Sina'ah*) of calligraphy. In this regard the Prophetic Traditions guide us instantly as the Prophet (ﷺ) was a successful trader and businessman, so were many of his companions. Muslim tradition is filled with these examples. It is reported on the authority of Miqdām (RA), the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “No food is better to man than that which he earns through his manual work. Dawūd, the Prophet of Allah, ate only out of his earnings from his manual work.”²⁶

So the best earnings and livelihood for a person is that what he earns through his personal efforts without losing dignity and self-respect. There were many medieval and modern scholars titled as Tailor (*Khiyāt*), spiker (*Ziyāt*), blacksmith (*Haddād*), Baker (*Khabbāz*), joiner (*Najjār*) and sutor (*Khasāf*). All these labels to their surname infer us about their profession besides the repute and prestige of scholar and learned.

4.1 Financial Reforms

The foremost objectives of Islamic *Sharī'ah* (*Al-Maqāsid*) pertain to secure human honor and dignity. Based upon this objective, in our religious seminaries there must be concrete provisions, as the economic and financial challenges have put this vital human element at stake. So modern Muslim scholars especially those specialized in Islamic economy and finance have come up with following suggestions in this regard as:

- There must be a barrier in subscriptions between the donors/sponsors and the receivers, *madrasah* teachers and students, as the contributors always demean them under their obligation.
- There should be a consultative organizational pattern in financial matters (federal system of finances) for *madāris*, wherein all donations, funds, charities, state grants are collected.
- The financial system must be free from the percentage or commission for envoys except through an honorary settlement.²⁷

- The establishment of consultancy/institutions based on *Shari'ah* guidance in financial affairs, marital issues and many other socio-legal perspectives will create better economic opportunities for the *madrasah* graduates and scholars.
- In changing circumstances the vibrant and intrinsic model for procuring financial resources other than public charity, foreign funding or official grants should be prepared.
- For fund raising, teachers and students must be exempted from collection at local level as it degrades their value and respect. There should be separate staff for this activity to secure the dignity of teachers and students.
- The *madāris* must have proper maintenance of register, receipts, records and strict audit for funds, financial transparency with utmost care in expenditures.
- The students from well off families must be obliged to pay fees as there are many institutions in Kashmir that receive full fee from the parents of their wards.²⁸
- The *madrasah* teachers must be remunerated well to have the better outcome in teaching that may make the fraternity feel honored and dignified.
- There should be a system for the consultation of great minds, intellectuals and experienced educationists in financial concerns of these seminaries.²⁹

5. Administrative Prospects

The appropriate management of *madāris* requires consideration of objectives within the ambit of administrative perspectives. So there are numerous objectives within the administration and management which include:

(a) Division of labor (b) Responsibility (c) Organization (d) Discipline (e) Unity and continuity in leadership (e) Centrality (f) Planning (g) Forecasting priorities (h) Identifying resources (i) Supervision (j) Evaluation and (k) Introspection.³⁰

It is obligatory to elevate the administrative standard and organizational essence of *madāris*. To these challenges of administrative and management realm, there may be

diverse responses if they are recognized timely and properly. With consideration of the emotions and sensitivities. The Quran clearly attests this fact as:

It is part of the Mercy of Allah that thou dost deal gently with them. Wert thou severe or harsh hearted, they would have broken away from about thee: so pass over (their faults), and ask for (Allah's) forgiveness for them; and consult them in affairs (of moment).³¹

So the humble and gentle nature of the best administrator, teacher, organizer and the mercy must be reflected in the attitude and behavior of the *madrasah* administration. In this regard the following recommendations might serve the purpose.

- The administration must restrict their intervention in the personal affairs of the teaching learning fraternity.
- The selection of teaching faculty should prevail on the basis of merit, legal procedures, capability, efficiency and other qualities. Therefore, the malice of favoritism must be discarded.
- The spirit of consultation and association should be encouraged in these seminaries as against the nepotism and partiality in administrative affairs.
- To foster the spirit of team work and prepare them administratively demands vigorous participation of both teachers, administration, students and other staff in the collective affairs of *madāris*.
- The *madāris* administration must take serious note of the concerns related to the teaching-learning fraternity like better salaries, increments, promotions and other developmental strategies.
- The self-styled voluntarily rectors/administrators must be replaced with responsible, competent and permanent office bearers. They should be provided best facilities with predetermined remuneration.
- The rector/administrator should remain present within the *madrasah* most of his time beyond his staff with the sense of responsibility so that there is always a reflection of his ideal personality before the learners, staff and other faculty members.³²

- The affiliation of these seminaries with the state/national universities and institutes has provided for the new hope to catch better options ahead in higher education for the graduates of these seminaries.
- There must be a complete scrutiny of the learners during admission through verifying documents, checking records, ability of the learners on the basis of merit with appraisal.

6. Intellectual Prospects

Realizing the moral, spiritual, physical and intellectual crisis within the Muslim community across the globe suggests the reformatory role of *madāris* in the contemporary world. In the past these seminaries were the centres for the all-round development (mind, body and soul) but unfortunately under the shade of modern developments, such mission has been abandoned. The following recommendations in this context might be suitable.

- The curriculum and the training system of *madrasah* must be assessed, evaluated and replaced by the comprehensive/inspiring system.
- The training of the teachers (*Tadrīb al-Mu'allimīn*) in different pedagogies pertaining to human development and excellence has to be ensured.
- There is a pressing need to inculcate in the learners the consciousness about knowledge objectivity.
- The *madāris* should ensure comparative study of the prevalent ideologies/philosophies with Islam.
- It must be realized that the books of ethics and spirituality are incorporated in *madrasah* curriculum.

7. Prospects in Women's Education

In the contemporary era there is an exigency to determine the role of women under the fabric of Islamic teachings. There has been no conscious development or the preparation on such model by the Muslim governments, or from the social, political or religious leadership within Muslim societies. Though the family system within the Muslim society is still secure compared to the West but due to the non-observance of Islamic regulations, the perversions are piercing continuously. Under

these circumstances it is binding upon the Muslims to ensure ample rejoinder to the disintegration of family system. The Muslim women continue to progress in the sphere of education and have established their specialized contribution in many modern fields. Even though their due participation in the socio-economic activities are not against Islam but still it is conditioned with the social norms of Islam.³³

The foremost obligation that women have to perform, pertain to civilize the humanity in the building of virtuous and dignified human personality. Considering the real challenges to this folk in modern times, there might be diverse response to such concerns. The way out to such issues lies within the human intellect while transforming the attitude, as for this change the social institutions that shape the minds and form attitudes have primary role. These social institutions/structures include: (a) Media and communication (b) Educational system (c) *Masājid* (d) National laws (e) Organizations making public opinions (f) Social elite (role model or trend setters) (g) Family members. So considering all these socio-religious structures in view, the following submissions may follow.

- The inculcation of broad based education for the women folk in the contemporary (female) *madāris* of Kashmir should be objective and reasonable.
- The establishment of separate educational institutions (schools and colleges) that may offer religious, scientific and contemporary sciences to Muslim women instantly.
- Restructuring the educational curriculum (syllabus, standard and system) of female educational institutions that may consider their unique personality, psychology and behavior.
- The critical appraisal of slogan of women empowerment, gender equality, their role in domicile affairs with conscience and comprehension besides basic medical education.³⁴
- These female seminaries require acquaintance of modern trends and sciences (social, material as well as religious sciences) so as to endeavor themselves within natural domain.³⁵

- The women education system deserves timely suggestions from the educational experts (on women education) and their experiences and observations to endeavor accordingly.
- The approach and methodology of teaching to female learners should be improved to offer learning activity interesting and comprehensible.
- The taste for pedagogy and sciences should be inculcated through better textual and thematic study with more focus on the sciences than on text books. This indepth and extensive reflection through lectures will enable the learners to get absorbed in sciences for study.³⁶
- The teachers and students of these female seminaries should be provided better facilities to have better educational outcome.
- The Muslim society must modify its perception and attitude (collective as well individual) about the women education.
- The teachers in these female seminaries should be provided better salaries as per the legal norms.
- The teachers in these seminaries should be given training through the refresher/orientation courses, conferences and seminars.

8. Prospects in Higher Education

The courses and level of specialization in *madāris* across the globe and in Kashmir relate to the acquisition of sciences, pedagogy, research and investigation to cater the rising necessities and guide the Muslim community. These seminaries across the state perform their work with excellence and create a sense of endeavor in this regard. However, the main objectives of higher education should be producing experts in the respective branches of knowledge like *Quran*, *Hadīth*, *Fiqh*, theology, *da'wah* and other domains. To promote these specialized sciences and specific objectives, following deliberations might be kept in view.

- The preparation of capable experts (teachers and trainers) for the teaching of advanced sciences, to train the learners in *madāris* about the current challenges and critical situations.

- The creation of proficient teachers for these *madāris*, universities and other institutions of higher education to have best impetus and guidance in Islamic sciences.
- To promote specialists/scholars who may refute the propaganda, counter the allegations directed against religious sciences and may respond to them with convincing answers.
- To produce scholars of caliber in religious sciences whose expertise might critically look into the modern western concepts and thought in the light of Islamic *Shari'ah*.
- Re-structuring the curriculum of specialization (*takhassus*) via utilizing the experiences of Muslim world on modern lines might generate better outcome at this level.
- The selection should be restricted to the intelligent and capable learners for specialization (*takhassus*) who possess inquisitive taste and interest for it.
- To have the specialization of qualitative/objective nature demands the reform in primary and secondary education in religious sciences.
- The madrasah authorities should extend the scope of specialization from Fiqh to the other sciences like *takhassus fil Quran*, *takhassus fil Hadīth*, *takhassus fil iqtisad* (Economics and Finance), *takhassus fil Tibb* (Medical and Health), *takhassus fil Siyasah* (Polity), *takhassus fil Adiyān* (Comparative religion), *takhassus fi Adab al 'Arabi* (Arabic Language and Literature), and so on.
- There should be a balanced time schedule for the specialization minimum 2-3 years against one year.
- The learners at the stage of specialization must be obliged to write the dissertations or the thesis pertaining to their theme of specialization in a systematic and research oriented manner.³⁷

9. Conclusion

So in the light of these observations, it is imperative that there should be more exertion in the specialization of religious sciences with seriousness, devotion and priority. As the communication gap shrinks because of globalization, the emerging

concerns are to be sorted in the light of Islamic sources. This key mission is to be performed by the men with talent, spirit and who qualify for such task in the age of dynamism and universalism.

References and End Notes

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