

Madrasahs In Pakistan

[Untill: 2005]

Main Topic:

Madrasah Reforms and State Power in Pakistan

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Taxila Studies of Asian Civilizations

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

*Thanks to **ALLAH**, the Omnipotent, the Omniscient, Who is so kind to mankind and Who enabled me to successfully complete this study, and all the respects for His last and **Holy Prophet Muhammad** (Peace be upon Him) for enlightening me with the essence of faith in **ALLAH** and for all prophets for guiding mankind to the true path of life.*

*It was indeed a great honor for me, to have **Prof. Dr. Hugh Van Skyhawk**, Professor of Comparative Religion, Taxila Institute of Asian Civilization, as my supervisor. Without his deep interest and proper guidance this work would have been impossible. He proved to be very cooperative and kind and unswerving in his commitment to see this manuscript through the press. In addition, the Higher Education Commission (HEC) deserves my special thanks because it provided financial assistance to me for this study.*

I offer special thanks to all the staff members of Taxila Institute of Asian Civilization for their full cooperation during my research work and the staff of National Institute of Pakistan Studies library and library of Shiekh Zyed Islamic Center Peshawar University.

I am also thankful to the staff of the Press Information Department for the help they provided me whenever I visited the department in connection with this study.

I am greatly indebted to my friends, especially, Irfan Ullah, Yousaf Zaman, Ismail Khan, Iftikhar Ahmad, and Jamshed Iqbal for their moral support and for helping me because of my weak computer knowledge.

I am also very grateful to all my friends, relatives and well wishers, whose prayers enabled me to complete my research successfully.

Sultan Ali

ACRONYMS

CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CII	Council of Islamic Ideology
CZA	Central Zakat Administration
DMs	<i>Dīn-i-Madāris*</i> دين المدارس
ECPAK	Euro Consultant Pakistan
ESRA	Education Sector Reform Assistance
FATA	Federally Administered Tribal Area
ICRD	International Centre for Religion and
Diplomacy	
IRI	Islamic Research Institute
ISI	Inter-Services Intelligence
ITDM	<i>Ittehad-i-Tanzīmat Madāris-e-Dīniya*</i> اتحادتنظیمتِ مدارس دینیا
JUI	<i>Jamiat-i-Ulamai Islam*</i> جمعیت علماء اسلام
M.A.	Master of Arts
M.phil.	Master of Philosophy
ME	Middle East
MEPI	Middle East Partnership Initiative
MMA	<i>Muttahida Majlis-i-Amal*</i> متحدہ مجلس
عمل	
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MPA	Member of Provincial Assembly
MRD	Movement for Restoration of
Democracy	
MRP	Madrasah Reforms Project
NGO	Non-Government Organization
NIDMP	National Institute of <i>Dīn-i-Madāris</i>
NOC	No Objection Certificate
NRDF	National Research and Development Foundation
NWFP	North West Frontier Province
PATA	Provincially Administered Tribal Area
PMEBO	Pakistan Madrasah Education Board
Ordinance	
PNA	Pakistan National Alliance
PPP	Pakistan People's Party
PZA	Provincial Zakat Administration
RTI	Research Triangle Institute
SDPI	Sustainable Development Policy
Institute	
SRO	Societies Registration Ordinance
TIUQ	<i>Tanzeem-i-Ittehad-e Ulama-i-Qabail*</i> تنظیم اتحاد علماء قبائل

TNSM
Mohammadi

شریعتِ محمدی

UGC

USA

USAID

United States Agency for International Development

Tehreek-i-Nifazi-i-Shariati-i-

تحریکِ نفاظِ *

University Grants Commission

United States of America

Introduction

The concept of strict division of knowledge between the religious and the non-religious has been a topic of debate throughout the history of Pakistan. But this concept is rarely noted in the history of Islam before colonial rule in the Subcontinent, *Madrasahs* in the medieval Muslim world produced a considerable number of distinguished scholars and philosophers, who contributed to worldly knowledge as well. *Ijtihad* or independent thinking was a notable feature of these institutions. However, under colonial rule in the Subcontinent the sphere of *madrasah* education was restricted to the study of strictly religious disciplines, especially *fiqh* or Islamic jurisprudence. Pakistan inherited this dichotomy in the education system from colonial India. However, the educational planners and policy makers have been unable to resolve this problem, which is the core of all evil.

Madrasah education has been a subject of critique in learned circles, and calls to reform regularly come from scholars, academics, and public policy makers and even from the *ulema* themselves. The issue has assumed far greater importance in the light of greater assertion of powers of *madrasah* leaders in state policy matters. *Madrasahs* assumed greater importance at the international level also because of their alleged involvement in violence and militancy. The 9/11 tragedy in New York strengthened the global perception that *madrasahs* produce extremists and breed terrorism.

However, my interest in the subject is as old as my close association with religious leaders and teachers of traditional religious *madrasahs* since my school days. I have the credit of having studied some of the preliminary books of *madrasah* curriculum at that time and enjoy relatively good intimacy with them.

Statement of the Problem

Madrasah education is becoming increasingly redundant. It has strayed from its purely educational role and become involved in activities contrary to the manifest objectives. *Madrasah* reforms are widely believed to be the only remedy to overcome this problem.

Objectives of this Study

The government plan to reform *madrasah* education is not new. However, the increasing interest of government in the issue is aimed at bringing *madrasahs* into the mainstream, in addition to diluting the negative perception of the international community regarding the *raison d'être* of *madrasahs*. The *madrasahs* and the *ulema*, however, have always expressed serious reservations regarding the sincerity of government in this matter. While no one, including the *ulema*, is against the idea of reforms, there are, however, wide differences between the government and the *ulema* in its practical implementation. The present study is aimed at an impartial analysis of the present situation in historical perspective and in the light of the perceptions of the different actors involved. This study will help to understand the problem in a realistic way by addressing the following questions:

1. What reforms mean for different actors?
2. Why are reforms necessary in *din-i-madaris*?

3. How far are government and the *madrasahs* justified in their approaches?

4. To what extent are the prospects of reforms only rhetoric?

Reforming *madrasahs* and, of course, the whole education system has assumed greater importance in the current modern plural society. As a vital sector of the educational system of Pakistan, *madrasahs* have great potential for making positive contributions to Muslim society and can play important roles in bringing peace and prosperity to the country. *Madrasahs* have deep rooted relationship with Muslim society and enjoy the great respect of the common man. *Madrasahs* and religious elites influence public opinion on different issues of religious and socio-political importance.

In view of the vital role of *madrasahs* in Pakistani society their importance cannot be simply ignored in state policy matters. Therefore, reforming *madrasahs* in Pakistan actually means reforming the entire society

Review of Literature

While debate regarding *madrasahs* is not a new phenomenon, what is new is the great significance and intensity it has received because of the changed priorities of the super powers in South Asia, in particular, and the world over. The government has been trying since the 1960s to reform *madrasah* education and bring it into the mainstream. Different types of studies including books, journals, and articles in newspapers, official documents, and literature published by these *madrasahs* are the sources of information for this study.

Jamal Malik, University of Erfurt, has carried out in-depth study of *madrasahs* and government initiatives during the era of the Ayub Khan and Zia-ul-Haq's regimes. This is perhaps the first comprehensive study on the subject, which has always remained controversial because of the mutually opposed points of view of *madrasah* leaders and the government. In addition, Malik's study reveals that the *ulema* of different schools lack a unanimous approach toward this issue, and that these differences are deeply rooted in society because students and teachers of *madrasahs* represent different segments of society. Moreover, Malik thinks that some *madaris* preach militant views and are openly involved in politics contrary to their purely educational roles.¹

The Institute of Policy Studies (IPS), an Islamabad-based organization, has several publications to its credit regarding the issue of *madrasah* reforms. One such study, *Din-i-Madaris may Taalim* (Urdu) by Saleem Mansoor Khalid, offers the in-depth information on the *din-i-madaris* in Pakistan together with an impartial analysis of various reform initiatives. The study contains details of problems faced by *din-i-madaris* and honest suggestions to address them.² Several other publications and seminars organized by the IPS are aimed at creating motivation among scholars, intellectuals, and *ulema* for reforming religious education.

Dr. Tariq Rehman in his book *Denizens of an Alien World: A Study in Education Inequality and Polarization in Pakistan* opines that the present curriculum of *din-i-madaris* is mostly based on a centuries-old syllabus known as the *Dars-i-Nizami*. He writes that *madrasahs* belonging to

different schools of thought teach books which refute each other's beliefs. This promotes sectarianism in the society. He believes that rising militancy in *madaris* is the result of the Afghan war. The book also contains information regarding the socio-economic background of students of *din-i-madaris*.³

Mohammad Qasim Zaman in his book *The Ulema in Contemporary Islam*, has discussed the reform plans and their failures also. He argued that opposition to the government agenda of reforms exists to varying degrees among the *ulema*. The study contains the dissenting views regarding the issue and the motives behind them.⁴

A leading book on the subject in India by Yoginder Sikand is an invaluable contribution and perhaps unrivalled among the contemporary works. In his book *Bastions of Believers: Madrasah and Islamic Education in India*, he has discussed *madrasah* reforms in historical perspective. This study has valuable information regarding different aspects of reforms. It also carries the detail of reformed *madrasahs* in India that can serve as guidance for *madrasahs* in the entire region.⁵ The article "Religious Education and Violence in Pakistan" is highly informative about the role of *madrasahs* in the socio-political life of Pakistan. The author believes that a section of the *ulema* also favors reforms in order to adjust themselves to modern needs. He advises that the religious and social services of the *madrasahs* should be recognized by the government and they may be assigned due role to ensure peace in the society.⁶

Other contributions by the same author on the same topic can be found in Robert M. Hathaway's recent anthology. They contain details of recent government initiatives of reforming Islamic education. These writings make valuable suggestions for policy makers in this regard.⁷ Several articles by the eminent scholar Mumtaz Ahmad are to be consulted on the topic under study and have been explored for the said purpose.

The reports published by various NGOs, e.g. National Research and Development Foundation (NRDF)⁸, International Center for Religion and Diplomacy (ICRD)⁹ and Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) are also sources of information for the present study.

The publications of the Zakir Hussain Institute, New Dehli, are of great importance on this topic. They contain valuable studies of the relevance of *madrasah* education in the modern world and proposals for reforming this vital sector according to current realities.¹⁰

The recent study of Saleem H. Ali, *Islam and Education: Conflict and Conformity in Pakistan's madrasahs*, is one of the latest works on *madrasahs* in Pakistan. The author has discussed the various aspects of *madrasah* education, i.e the socio-economic background of *madrasah* students and violence and relevance of this sector in the modern world. The book also carries the detail of *madrasahs* in other countries including India, Bangladesh, Malaysia, and Indonesia. It contains certain recommendations for *madrasah* reforms in Pakistan in the light of successful experiments in these countries in reforming their *madrasahs*.¹¹

C. Christine Fair's recent book, *The Madrasah Challenge: Militancy and Religious Education in Pakistan*, traces the root causes of militancy in

madrasahs and suggests various measures to overcome this problem. The study also discusses the government point of view for reforming *madrasahs* and also the *madrasah* approach to the issue.¹²

Madrasahs are actors in the present study and their points of view are essential for understanding the issue in its real perspective. The monthly Journal *Muhhadis* of the Islamic Research Council is an authentic source of information for understanding the view points of *madrasahs* regarding government reform initiatives. It carries interviews and comments of leading *ulema* on the issue and the response to the government agenda of reforms.¹³ The monthly *Wafaq-ul-madaris*, a journal of *Wafaq-ul-madaris al-Arabia*¹⁴ and *Al Haq*, a monthly journal of the *Darul Uloom Haqqaniya Akora Khattak*,¹⁵ are valuable for understanding the *madrasah* viewpoint on the subject.

Research Methodology

In this study both historical and descriptive methods have been used. For collection of data primary sources, e.g. field survey, interviews, and official documents have been used. In addition, secondary sources, e.g. books, journals, and articles in newspapers and magazines have been consulted.

Organization of Study

The present research study has been organized into the following five chapters in addition to the introduction and conclusion.

1. *Madrasah* Education: an Historical Evolution

This chapter contains the evolution of *madrasahs* from the middle ages to the partition of the Subcontinent.

2. *Madrasahs* in Pakistan: a Profile

This chapter contains the growth of *madrasahs* and the wider role they play in Pakistani society.

3. State and *Madrasahs* Relations: 1947-1999

In chapter 3 the detail of *madrasah* reforms from 1947 to 1999 has been given. The causes of the failure of these efforts are also discussed.

4. Agenda of Reforms since 2000: An Action against the Status Quo.

This chapter consists of the details of government efforts to reform *madrasahs* and their implications since 2000. The role of NGOs has also been mentioned in this connection.

5. Response of *madrasahs* to the State Sponsored Agenda and Prospects of Reforms: Rebellion against State Power.

This chapter is devoted to the viewpoint of the ulema and religious leaders and the causes responsible for their uncompromising stand. Prospects of reforms have also been discussed here.

The final assessment has been given at the end.

1- Madrasah Education: A Historical Evolution

Introduction

The acquisition and imparting of knowledge is central to Islam. The first revelation in *sura* in *Alaq* stressed reading and writing in the following words:

Read: In the name of thy Lord who createth,
createth man from a clot.

Read: And thy Lord is the most bounteous, Who teacheth by the pen.
Teacheth man that which he knows not.

According to the Holy *Qur'an* the human being is exalted over all other creatures of God because of his knowledge. The superiority of Adam (A.S.)¹⁶ over the angels was on the very basis of his knowledge of nature. The *Qur'an* abhors ignorance and illiteracy and calls knowledge as the light and blessing of God. The *Qur'an* frequently stresses the acquisition of knowledge to overcome and exploit natural resources that have great potential for the welfare of human beings and the need for exploration and exploitation. Besides the Holy *Qur'an*, the Prophet of God (PBUH) has also emphasized the acquisition of knowledge. A large number of *hadiths* are found that highlight the importance of the acquisition and imparting of knowledge.

Muhammad (PBUH) declared that the seeking of knowledge is the duty of every Muslim man and women. Muhammad (PBUH) is said to have declared: "The ink of the scholar is more holy than the blood of a martyr". In another tradition the seeker of knowledge is regarded as the one who strives in the path of God. Insisting on the need of acquisition of knowledge for all Muslims, the Prophet is reported to have said: "Valueless is the Muslim who is not a teacher or a student". These and many other traditions reveal that the acquisition and imparting of knowledge is a sacred duty for all Muslims.

In Islamic tradition acquisition of knowledge is not regarded as an end in itself. Rather, its aim is to understand the will of God and lead one's life according to it. So it is clear that the Islamic concept of knowledge aims at self-actualization. A self-actualizing person is one who becomes all that he is capable of being.¹⁷ According to Maslow¹⁸, self actualization means the full use of human talent and capabilities. It means actualizing all of God's bounties to the person. The individual has to put in a lot of effort to use these bounties in the right way and at the right time so that it will lead to self-fortification. Self-fortification refers to the strong fort built within the person that makes him competent, willing, and aware. He can avoid doing wrong things and face successfully the challenges of life¹⁹. It is worthy to be noted that the Holy Prophet (PBUH) made no distinctions in acquisition of knowledge. The acquisition of all sorts of knowledge was highly appreciated as he said: "A word of wisdom is the lost property of the true believer. Whenever he finds it, he takes it."²⁰

In view of the great importance attached to the acquisition and spreading of knowledge, efforts were undertaken to evolve a system of education during early Muslim rule. The system of *maktab* and *madrasah* was

established for this purpose in the Muslim empire and a network of *madrasahs* expanded with the spread of Islam.

Education during the Time of the Holy Prophet (PBUH)

During the *Meccan* period, Muhammad (PBUH) was persecuted by his opponents, and hurdles were created to stop him from preaching the religion of Islam. The Prophet, however, carried on his mission despite stiff opposition. In such a situation the *Dar-e-Arqam* proved to be the very first place where the companions of the Prophet (PBUH) gathered and listened to the instructions of the Prophet (PBUH) and got religious training. Similarly, *Shabe-e-Abi Talib* where the family of the Prophet (PBUH) and his companions were secluded for three years due to the boycott of the Quraish tribe served as a place of teaching and learning for the inmates.

After the migration to Madina, the *Masjid-i-Nabavi* was the seat of religious education and moral training of the companions of the Prophet (PBUH). Various measures were adopted to make Muslims literate. The release of the prisoners of *Badr* in return for making the Muslims literate is unique in history. Encouraging the learning of foreign languages and subjects such as mathematics and medicine by the Prophet (PBUH) was really commendable because such measures were unknown among the Arabs in pre-Islamic times.

About 600 Muslims are believed to have been made literate by the prisoners of *Badr*. It is said that there were only seventeen literate people in *Macca* before the Prophet (PBUH).²¹ Since the Prophet (PBUH) equally emphasized the education of men and women, he arranged to teach women in the mosque and allotted them separate time for this purpose. Some of the wives of the Prophet (PBUH) were literate and the Muslim women visited them to learn from them. The Prophet (PBUH) is said to have appointed a teacher for *Hafsa*, one of his wives, to learn the art of writing.²² Similarly, *Ayesha*, another wife of the Prophet (PBUH), memorized a large number of *hadiths* and the *sahaba* (companions of the Prophet) sought her help in resolving religious matters after the demise of the Holy Prophet (PBUH).

Education during the Time of the Rightly Guided Caliphs

During the period of the Rightly Guided Caliphs²³ education was given due attention. The learned among the *sahaba* were facilitated to promote education among the Muslims. During the time of Abu Bakr (632-634A.D.) Hazrat Ayesha, Hazrat Zaid bin Tabeth, Hazrat Abu Hurara and Abdulla bin Umar were among the great scholars who imparted education to the people.

Hazrat Umar (634-644A.D) encouraged learning and allocated funds from the state treasury for the promotion of education. He also deputed learned men to the newly conquered territories to promote education among the local people. He issued special instructions to his governors for the promotion of education among the people. He used to say that it was the responsibility of the Islamic state to make all subjects literate²⁴. Hazrat Usman (644-656 A.D) also gave due attention towards the promotion of knowledge. The Holy *Qur'an* was edited in a single Arabic script during the caliphate of Hazrat Usman, which prevented dissensions among the different tribes of Arabs. He also patronized centers of learning that had been established by Hazrat Umar.

Ali, the fourth caliph (656-661A.D), was himself a great scholar and remained chief *qazi* during the rule of the previous caliphs. Although great political disturbances did not allow him to make systematic efforts for the promotion of education, he framed the principles of Arabic grammar to facilitate non-Arabs to learn the Arabic language.²⁵

The Birth of fiqh and the Emergence of the ulema as a Professional Class

During the lifetime of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) his interpretation of the *Qur'an* was final. But after the demise of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) and pious caliphs this duty was assumed by *imams*²⁶. These *imams* made *ijtihad* and interpreted the *Qur'an* and *sunnah* according to their own understanding, each *imam* having his own followers. Thus, different schools of thought called *mazahib* came into being. The followers of each *mazhab* made efforts to propagate their thoughts, which highly contributed to Muslim education. The followers of each *mazhab* established *madrasahs* to teach their own *fiqh*²⁷, or Islamic jurisprudence.

Local conditions played an important role in the development of different *fiqh* schools because Islam had spread from Madina to Syria, Egypt, Iran and Iraq, and to Africa. The social conditions and political needs of these areas were totally different from those of the egalitarian tribal society of Arabia. Therefore, local socio-political features are reflected in the *fiqh* developed in their respective regions. Rules of these *fiqh* continued to be taught in the *madrasahs* in India up to the present day.²⁸

In earlier times, anyone who possessed knowledge in any field or subject was considered to be an *alim* or scholar. Until the third Islamic century the *ulema* were not clearly identified as a distinct social group because there were no systematic rules relating to the profession of scholarship. In the third century a distinct class of professional *ulema* emerged, who earned their livelihood from teaching and scholarship. This must be seen in the wider context of the development of rival schools of *fiqh* with elaborate rules governing inclusions and membership and complex linguistic skills and sartorial codes separating the *fuqaha* or religious scholar from the common mass of Muslims. The nexus between the *fuqaha* and ruling elites further strengthened the notion of a separate class of religious specialists.

The founders of *fiqh* schools were very flexible in their approaches, never claimed to be infallible, and warned their disciples not to blindly accept their rulings. Instead, they should follow the instruction of the divine text in matters in which their opinions might inadvertently violate the *Qur'an* and *sunnah*. The immediate followers of the founder of each *mazhab* followed these principles and some of the early *fuqaha* did not hesitate to overrule the opinions of their own teachers if they found them not to be in accordance with the *Qur'an* and *hadith*.

However, this tradition did not last for long. The gradual codification of *fiqh* leads to the contracting of possibilities of *ijtehad*. It rendered Islamic jurisprudence unable to meet the demands of changing conditions. This codified form of *fiqh* is a part of the curriculum of Indian and Pakistani *madrasahs* even today. The stress on the centrality of *fiqh* went along with the crystallization of a class of *fuqaha*, specializing in the details of jurisprudence. Quranic verses exhorting believers to seek the opinion of the knowledgeable were interpreted to suggest the need for Muslims to consult experts in *fiqh* on every matter, an insistence that is repeated by *ulema* of *madrasahs* even today. *Fiqh* thus came to be regarded as the highest form of knowledge while the rest came to be neglected or degraded. This helped

bolster the claims of *fuqaha*, experts in Islamic jurisprudence, as representative of what they claimed to be authentic Islamic tradition.²⁹

The Birth of Traditional *madrasahs*

As was the practice from the days of Prophet (PBUH), mosques served as the centers of Muslim education for almost three centuries. It was during the Abbassid period that the need for a more organized educational system was felt because of the rapid expansion of knowledge and to meet the administrative needs of the empire. This gave birth to the *madrasah* as a separate institution.

Madrasah, plural *madaris*, is the Arabic word for any type of school, secular or religious. It is variously transliterated as, *madrasa*, *modresa*, *madraza*, etc. The word *madrasah* is derived regularly from the triconsonantal root (*d-r-s*) which relates to learning or teaching through the *wazn maf al*, meaning “a place where x is done”.

Therefore, *madrasah* literally means “a place where learning / teaching is done. The word is also present as a loan word with the same meaning in many Arabic influenced languages such as, *Urdu*, *Hindi*, *Marathi*, *Persian*, *Turkish*, etc. In the Arabic language the word *madrasah* implies no sense other than that which the word school represents in the English language, whether religious or secular.³⁰

It is believed that the first *madrasah* in the Muslim world was established in the ninth century in the city of *Fas (Fez)* in Morocco and was known as *Jamiat al-Qarawiyyin*. It was founded by Fatima al Fihri, the daughter of a wealthy merchant named Mohammad Al Fihri.

During the late Abassid period the Suljuk vizier Nizam-ul-mulk³¹ created the first major official academic institution known in history as *Madrasah Nizamiyya* at Nishapur. Nizam Al Mulk, who would later be murdered by the Assassins (*Hashashin*), created a system of state-sponsored *madrasahs* in various cities of the Abbasid empire towards the end of the 11th century of the common era. The syllabi of these *madrasahs* included the teaching of the *Qur'an* and *hadith* with increasing emphasis on *fiqh* with the passage of time. The emphasis on *fiqh* was aimed at providing trained people for the imperial courts. The subjects of mathematics, astronomy, and other human sciences were also taught in these *madrasahs*.

George Makdesi contends that these early *madrasahs* were relatively autonomous. But other scholars disagree and claim that they played crucial political roles by providing legitimacy to the rulers in the face of stiff opposition. The administrative staff of the state, including judges (*qazis*), legal specialists (*muftis*) and censors of public morals (*mustahbibs*) was made up of the graduates of these *madrasah*³²s. The most famous among the *Nizamia madrasahs* was established in Baghdad in 1067A.D. It was sponsored by the rulers and sizeable funds were allotted for it. About 6000 students were enrolled in this *madrasah* and it functioned until the fall of Baghdad in 1257. Since *Madrasah Nizamia* was propagating the *Shaafi mazhab*, the followers of the Hanafi school of thought also established their own *madrasahs*.

The Muslims rulers, nobles and wealthy traders established *madrasahs* in different lands and provided liberal financial supports for earning the blessings of God as they considered it a pious deed. Some of the *ulema* were

directly linked with the rulers, while others avoided rulers but enjoyed great respect among the people.

Education in *madrassahs* was free of cost and students were drawn from far-off regions. They helped in the expansion of Islamic civilization by creating a class of *ulema* who were linked by their common approach in the light of Islamic jurisprudence. In medieval *madrassahs* there were no rigid rules of admission, examination system, or age requirements. The personality of the teacher was more important than the institution itself. Piety, expertise, and scholarship were decisive factors for the student to be attracted towards a particular teacher. In addition to the transmitted sciences (*ulum-al-naqaliya*) such as *Qur'an*, *hadith*, and *fiqh*, rational sciences (*Ulum-al-naqliya*) i.e. grammar, poetry, and philosophy, mathematics and astronomy were also taught in medieval *madrassahs*. However, there was no rigid distinction between religious and secular education.³³

This system of Muslim education spread elsewhere in the Muslim world and Turkish rulers brought it to India when they consolidated their rule there. This leads to religious and socio-political transformation on Indian soil afterwards.

Madrasahs in the Indian Subcontinent

Missionary activities had been started with the advent of Muslims traders in the Subcontinent long before the Muslims conquests. However, the consolidation of the Muslim empire facilitated the establishment of an organized educational system elsewhere in the Subcontinent. Royal patronage was always available for this purpose. After the fall of Baghdad in 1257 A.D, a large number of scholars were attracted towards India. They also brought with them the syllabus and traditional methods of teaching which were adopted in Indian *madrassahs*. The courts of the Dehli sultans were flooded with scholars and intellectuals from Central Asia. Some of the Sufis and scientists also migrated from Central Asia. They started preaching and teaching on their own without seeking royal patronage. They contributed to the conversion of large numbers of people to Islam.³⁴ The traditional *madrassahs* in India mostly taught *Hanafi fiqh* and *Ashrafia*, the descendants of Central Asian *ulema* were preferred for teaching. The rulers sought advice (*fatwa*) of those scholars on certain matters but did not always act upon them because of the peculiar conditions of India and personal expediency. Especially *fatawa* relating to the status of minorities in India were always ignored by most of the rulers.³⁵

In the time of the Dehli sultans (1206-1525 A.D.) promotion of education was highly encouraged. However, no restriction was imposed in this regard by them. The rulers provided financial support and helped the teachers and students to carry on educational activities in a free environment. Teachers were free to manage their institutions, frame courses and syllabus, and decide the aims, nature, and methods of their teaching. These institutions taught specially prescribed courses which were not too rigid. Changes were introduced at different times, and, in some places, certain subjects were given more importance than others. But these changes were not affected in consequence of official interference. Endowments attached to large numbers of schools were monetary sources for these institutions. In addition to those

teachers who got salaries, there was a class of teachers who were not taking salaries and worked on a voluntary basis, considering it a religious obligation and a source of gaining eternal salvation.

Every teacher was free in the selection of his place of teaching. The state facilitated him through monetary aid to devote himself exclusively to seeking knowledge and imparting instruction.³⁶ The in-charge of religious endowments arranged for grants of tax free lands to *imams*, *qazis*, and other religious groups who provided education, particularly, in Islamic subjects. The main subjects were *tafsir*, *hadiths*, and *fiqh*. For the study of *hadith* the favorite text book was *Masharriq-ul-Anwar* and in *fiqh*, *Hidaya* held the field. In the Deccan, where contact with Iran was maintained, scientific subjects also got due attention. In northern India, literature, history and mysticism were taught along with religious subjects. The promotion of learning in the Deccan was largely the work of Persian statesmen and scholars whom the rulers had attracted from Iran.³⁷

In the time of the early Mughals rational sciences such as logic, mathematics, literature, and philosophy got more attention because these subjects were considered essential for aspiring civil servants. The Persian Shia scholar Mir Fatehullah Sherazi in the court of emperor Akbar, the Great Mughal, introduced books on ethics, mathematics, astronomy, medicine, logic, history, and theology. Interesting inventions such as the portable cannon, an instrument for cleaning gun barrels and self-driven corn mills, apart from organization of Mughal land revenue policy are attributed to the genius of Sherazi. During Akbar's reign Muslims and sizeable numbers of Hindus studied Sanskrit grammar and the books of Vedanta were introduced for Hindu children at the same places. The reaction of orthodox elements against Akbar was probably due to the increasing influence of the Shia and of rational sciences during his reign.³⁸

Dars-i-Nizami of Mullah Nizamuddin

Although Muslim rulers liberally spent on education, there was no separate education department, no regular examination system and no uniform standard to be maintained by authority. It was during the reign of Aurangzeb Alamgir that a man of religious learning Mulla Qutab-ud-Din, was encouraged to promote education among the Muslims of the Subcontinent. One of his descendants, Mulla Nizammuddin prepared a syllabus of studies in 1748, and introduced it in his *madrasah* at Farangi Mahal.³⁹ The scheme of studies introduced by Mulla Nizammuddin was known as *Dars-i-Nizami*. Even the present-day religious *madrasahs* in South Asia follow the pattern of the *Dars-i-Nizami* in their scheme of studies with certain modifications.

In his scheme of study Mulla Nizammuddin added certain subjects of *maaqulat* to the existing texts. Subjects like Arabic grammar, logic, philosophy, mathematics, and rhetoric were given more weight as compared to the study of the *Qur'an* and *hadith*. The intended syllabus was mainly aimed at producing *qazis*, *muftis*, and legal officials required by Muslim courts. Persian was the medium of instruction. Transmitted sciences were given less importance as only two books of *hadith*, *Mashariqul Anwar* and *Mishkat*, and two books of *Quranic* commentary, *Jalalayn* and *Bezavi*, were

included in the syllabus. However, the Farangi Mahalis produced renowned scholars and intellectuals in the field of both rational and transmitted sciences. The Farangi Mahal attracted both *Sunni* and *Shias* from across India. Farangi Mahalis also fostered the tradition of combining scholarly and mystic learning. Thus, Sufis were attracted to the Farangi Mahal to study law that was considered to be the exclusive domain of the *ulema*⁴⁰. The proximity to the courts was a special feature of the Farangi Mahlis *ulema*, a tradition which continued in the nineteenth century. The princes also encouraged this arrangement and took pride in entertaining the highest number of scholars and intellectuals. The later rulers did not keep this tradition alive. Although demand for the *ulema* of Farangi Mahal declined at courts, yet Farangi Mahalis earned fame and respect all over India because of their independent efforts to maintain intellectual standards and keeping the mystic tradition alive to guard the intellectual heritage of Indian Muslims.⁴¹

Shah Waliullah

Shah Waliullah was born in 1703 towards the end of the reign of Aurangzeb. His father, Shah Abdur Rahim, was a leading *alim* of transmitted sciences and was the patron of *Madrasah Rahimiya* known after his name. After completing his education he made efforts for reforms, educational, social, and political. Under educational reforms he preferred the study of *hadith* to that of rational subjects. He preached against social evils and un-Islamic practices among Muslims. Under his social reforms programme, he tried to minimize Shia-Sunni differences. He stressed the need of *ijtihad*. Instead of strict adherence to a certain school of thought he preferred to follow the one best suited to the needs of time.⁴²

Shah Waliullah sought a balanced relationship between the rulers and religious elites instead of accepting an advisory role for the *ulema* in the affairs of the state. He proposed that Muslim rulers should be guided by the religious leadership. The role he proposed for the *ulema* was contrasted with that of the Farangi Mahali *ulema*. He himself avoided the role set up by the Farangi Mahali regarding the relationship between the *ulema* and the rulers of the time. However, he constantly contacted Muslim rulers to remind them of their obligation in the light of the *Qur'an* and *sunnah* as he considered it his religious duty. Shah Waliullah denied the importance of the study of *maaqulat*, calling it as a source of confusion. He emphasized the study of *manqulat* or traditional subjects for every Muslim. He translated the *Holy Qur'an* into Persian to be understood by the common Muslim. Before this the study and interpretation of the *Qur'an* was considered the exclusively domain of the *ulema*. Therefore, he faced tough resistance in this regard from the *ulema* of the time. However, he considered *ijtihad* as the exclusive domain of the learned scholars. In fact, his personality was the symbol of tolerance, patience, compromise and forbearance in Indian Islam.⁴³

Both Shah Waliullah and the *ulema* of Farangi Mahal created stimulation among the *ulema* to fulfill their historic role of preserving the cultural heritage of the community in times of political uncertainty. The tradition of writing among indigenous *ulema* started with the impetus given by Shah

Waliullah and the Farangi Mahali simultaneously. This gave an increasing role to the *ulema* of the eighteenth century in Muslim society in India.

Madrasahs under Colonial Rule

In the eighteenth century modern education was rapidly introduced by the Europeans in the Subcontinent when the decline of Muslim political power had already begun. In the changed` context of socio-political life in the Subcontinent with the establishment of British rule the *ulema*'s role was also to be seen from a different context. Under Muslim rule the *ulema* had enjoyed special privileges. With the collapse of Muslim political authority this source of patronage, which strengthened their claim as representatives and leaders of the community, was lost. In the changed political context the ordinary Muslim also became more conscious about the survival of his faith. The study of *fiqh* and *fatwas* of the *ulema* assumed more importance for the Muslim to ascertain their role in the new environment. Therefore, a new relationship between the *ulema* and the common Muslim was established under which the source of strength for the *ulema* were common Muslims instead of the rulers of the time. Most of the reformist movements during the eighteenth century and early nineteenth century were led by *ulema* drawing support from ordinary Muslims. These movements were influenced by the thoughts of Shah Waliullah and inspired by the teaching of his son Shah Abdul Aziz. In 1803 Shah Abdul Aziz issued a *fatwa* declaring India to be a *Dar-ul-Harb* (an abode of war), exhorting the Muslims to fight for the emancipation of their religion. He was known as the most excellent teacher of the *Madrasahs Rahimiya*. His *fatawa* carried great importance in the daily life of the common Muslims of India.

The administrative and legal changes brought about by the British rulers brought new challenges for the Muslims of India. The response to these challenges further increased the importance of the *fatawa* or religious decrees for ordinary Muslims. In the Muslim state, *fatawa* were the prerogative of the *mufti* given for the guidance of judges. In colonial India *fatawa* were directly addressed to the believers who welcomed them as a form of guidance in the changed circumstances. Ordinary Muslims got detailed guidance in minute matters concerning everyday life in the form of these *fatawa* under alien rule.

Though the *fatawa* relating to the political status of India were always ambiguous and lacked consensus among the *ulema*, yet the contention of Shah Abdul Aziz that the organization of the Indian state was no longer in Muslim hands was shared by everyone. In the prevailing situation, when the state could no longer arrange to administer Muslim law, only the *ulema* could shoulder this responsibility. They could not force the compliance to the law but they could offer direction to the faithful on issues of civil behavior such as trade, inheritance, family relations and other religious matters.

In post-Mughal India with the need of the community and the facility of the printing press for publication, *fatwa* became important tools for teaching adherence to the law, and Muslims felt that Muslim religious and political life could be fostered through such adherence.⁴⁴ Shah Waliullah's followers not only made great contributions in the intellectual sphere but a class

among them, believed in re-establishing Muslim political power through *ijtihad*. The reform movement started by Syed Ahmad Barelvi and Shah Ismael was aimed at reforming social life along with practical *jihad* for the establishment of an Islamic state. It was inspired by the teachings of Shah Waliullah and his sons Shah Abdul Aziz and Shah Abdul Qadir. This movement gathered support from the Muslims of central and northern India. They stressed *tauheed* or oneness of God and denounced those practices which would compromise that most fundamental tenet of Islam.

The views of Syed Ahmad and Shah Ismael regarding Sufism and the position of the Prophet led to sharp differences among the *ulema*. Those differences finally resulted in the division within the Sunni community which gave birth to *Ahl-e-Hadith* who are bitterly opposed to Sufism and *taqlid* (following a particular *imam*). The other group which drew inspiration from *mujahidin* organized themselves in the form of the Deoband school, who believed in *taqlid* and also did not oppose Sufism completely. Yet another group led by Ahmad Raza Khan of Bareilly emerged, who opposed both *Ahl-e-Hadith* and *Deobandis* and strongly insisted on the centrality of Sufism in Islam. They branded both the groups as *Wahhabis* and the agents of infidels. Each of these three groups runs a chain of *madrasahs* in Pakistan and India even today, propagating their own points of view.

British Approach towards Muslim Education

The Muslim education system suffered because of the educational and administrative policies of the British in the Subcontinent. Deliberate attempts were made to ruin the Muslim educational system in India under colonial rule.

The worst steps towards this end were replacing Persian as court language by English and the confiscation of the free land or trusts by the East India Company. These lands were endowed by the Muslim nobles and rulers to give financial support to a large number of *madrasahs*.⁴⁵

When the British got power in Bengal there was a very large number of *muafis*, which is a tax-free grant of land. Many of these were personal but most were in the shape of endowments for educational institutions. A vast number of elementary schools of the old type subsisted on them as well as some institutions of higher education. The East India Company was anxious to make money rapidly in order to pay dividends to its shareholders in England. A deliberate policy was therefore adapted to resume and confiscate these *muafi* lands. Strict proofs were demanded of the original grants. But the old *sanad* and papers had long been lost or eaten up by termites. So, the *muafis* were resumed and the old holders were ejected and the schools and colleges lost their endowments. Huge areas were resumed in this way and many old families were ruined. The educational establishments, which had been supported by these *muafis*, ceased to function and vast numbers of teachers and others connected with them were thrown out of jobs.⁴⁶ Thus, with economic dislocation, the Muslim education system was also to be wiped out. The attitude of the British towards Muslim educational schools in Bengal has been described by W.W. Hunter, a British official, in the following words:

At an outlay 800000 pounds upon resumption proceedings additional revenue of 300000 pounds a year was permanently gained by the state, representing a capital at five percent of six million sterling. A large part of this sum was derived from land held rent-free by *Musalman* or by Mohammadan foundations. The panic and hatred which ensued have stamped themselves for ever on the rural records. Hundreds of ancient families were ruined and the education system of the *Musalman*s, which was almost entirely maintained by rent-free grants, received its death blow. The scholastic classes of the Muhammadans emerged from eighteen years of harrying absolutely ruined.⁴⁷

Thus, Muslims were the target of discriminatory policies in every sphere of life. They were socially disgraced and economically deprived. Describing the plight of Indian Muslims in the middle of the nineteenth century because of the discriminatory policy of British, Hunter says:

I have seldom read anything more piteous than the private letters and newspaper articles of Bengal *Musalman*s. The Calcutta Persian paper some time ago wrote thus: all sort of employments, great and small are being gradually snatched away from the Muhammadans and bestowed on men of other races, particularly the Hindus. The Government is bound to look upon all classes of its subjects with an equal eye, yet the time has now come when it publicly singles out the Muhammadans in its gazettes for exclusion from official posts. Recently, when several vacancies occurred in the office of the Sunderbans Commission, that official in advertising them in the government gazette stated that the appointment would be given to none but Hindus.⁴⁸

Several other British officials acknowledged their culpability in seriously undermining indigenous institutions of education. Ludlow, an early nineteenth century colonial officer, remarked that before the arrival of the British most Indian children could read and write. But in Bengal the extension of British rule had resulted in the almost total destruction of the indigenous system of education.

Changes in the legal system towards the end of the eighteenth century further curtailed the role of *ulema* as most of the legal matters concerning Muslims began to be administered by British judges, while the realm of the *ulema* was confined to the personal affairs of Muslims such as marriage, divorce, inheritance etc, and even in these matters, the non-Muslims judges could decide the cases. With this, the opportunities for the *ulema* in government services were considerably reduced. The replacement of Persian as official language by English totally isolated *madrasah* students from government employment. Consequently, two streams of education came into being in colonial India, one representing the traditional *madrasah* system, confined to the study of only religious subjects, while the other system came to be known as secular education under which rational and modern sciences were to be studied. This rigid separation between religious and secular education was introduced by the colonial masters. The concept was alien to Islam itself. Such distinction could not be found before this in the Muslim world. This is why the early *madrasah*s taught both types of subjects, i.e. rational as well as traditional.

With limiting *madrasah* education to only religious subjects, the sphere of influence and role of *ulema* was restricted to matters relating to private lives of individual Muslims. With the passage of time the traditional *ulema* behaved in such manner as to be content with the role they had been given by the colonial rulers as was reflected in their teaching, in their writing, and the contents of *fatwas* that they issued, which were concerned with personal piety and conduct, ignoring the issues of state and polity. Consequently, *madrasahs* of the colonial period geared up to protect the private sphere of Muslim lives from outside interference. Their focus and role were different from that of the earlier *madrasahs*.⁴⁹

Madrasahs and the Role of the ulema after 1857

The War of 1857 was fought in the name of protection of religion and Indian culture. Therefore, Muslims and Hindus both participated in this war and the *ulema* led the revolt in various places. These *ulema* had been inspired by the teachings of Shah Waliullah. Practical *jihad* had already been started long before the famous *fatwa* of Shah Abdul Aziz in which he had declared India a *Darul Harb*.⁵⁰ In the events of 1857 a large number of *ulema* issued *fatwa* declaring *jihad* against the infidel foreigners. The *Wahhabis*⁵¹ remained at the forefront of uprising and faced tremendous hardships at the hands of the rulers after the war. A large number of *ulema* were executed and many of them were exiled to the islands of Andaman for long spells of imprisonment at the end of the war.⁵²

The followers of Shah Waliullah fully participated in the War of Independence in 1857. The founders of the Deoband School were among those who fought against the British in 1857, though this claim has been contested by some sources.⁵³ However, the results of the war of 1857 convinced every one of the futilities of armed struggle under the prevailing circumstances. Therefore, a major shift took place from armed *jihad* towards educational *jihad* among the Muslims of the Subcontinent. During this period the concern of *ulema* remained focused on reforming the individual lives of Muslims for preserving religious and cultural life through educational *jihad*. For this purpose, the *ulema* turned their attention to establishing educational institutions and training men to teach and guide Muslims of all backgrounds and classes in the society.

Dar-ul-Ulum- Deoband

Dar-ul-Ulum Deoband was founded in Deoband, a small town in the district of Saharanpur (UP) in 1867. Moulana Muhammad Qasim Nanotawi and Moulana Rashid Ahmad Gangohi were the founders of *Dar-ul-Ulum Deoband*. The establishment of *Dar-ul-Ulum* was aimed at securing independence and freedom of Muslim religion and culture through peaceful means. This was the first private educational enterprise completely independent of official interference. Loyalty to *mazhab* remained the tradition of *Deobandis*, which they claimed to be the traditions of Shah Waliullah.⁵⁴ The principle framed by the founders of the Madrasah embodied complete independence and collective decisions for running the affairs of *Dar-ul-Ulum*. It also rejected the possibilities of government interference. In a short span of time *Dar-ul-Ulum Deoband* became a great

seat of learning in the Subcontinent, attracting students from all over India and even from outside. A network of *madrasahs* also opened all over India on this pattern preserving and preaching the ideals of *Dar-ul-Ulum Deoband*.

The curriculum adopted for *madrasahs* was largely based on *Dars-i-Nizami* with slight modifications. The founders of *Deoband* laid emphasis on the study of *Qur'an* and *hadiths* and other transmitted sciences on the pattern of the syllabus adopted by Shah Waliullah in the *Madrasah Rahimiya*.

In 1869 the period of study was reduced from ten years to six years. Although not rejecting outright the study of rational sciences or modern subjects, *Deobandis* were unable to arrange for teaching of modern subjects inside *Dar-ul-Ulum Deoband*. The behavior of *ulema* in *Deoband* also did not encourage the trend of studying modern subjects as they considered the student of religious studies superior to their counterparts in secular institutions. Yet there were a large number of *fatwas* justifying the study of modern subjects. This drawback in the curriculum of *madrasahs* always earned criticism from outside, and sometimes, from inside these *madrasahs*.⁵⁵ Although training in crafts and trades had been initially included in the curriculum of *Deoband*, they got scant attention of the students. However, two kinds of vocational training such as calligraphy and *tibb* (medical science) drew great interest from the students. The study of these subjects was in close conformity with the activities of the *ulema* and their study enhanced the influence of *ulema* in the society.⁵⁶ Since the syllabus in *Deoband* was loaded with study of traditional religious subjects, the students could not give attendance to modern subjects according to modern needs.

Students were examined at the end of finishing each book. The students were fairly examined and if one failed a certain book he had to repeat that particular book and not others. The medium of instruction was Urdu. Great emphasis was laid on the moral standard of students. Piety and respect for teachers were highly valued for students. For guidance of Muslims in their daily life, a separate department *Dar-ul-Ifta* (Center of Religious Verdicts) was setup at *Dar-ul-Ulum Deoband*.

Contrary to the founders of *Dar-ul-Ulum Deoband* some Muslim leaders believed that the interests of Muslims of the Subcontinent could not be protected only through traditional religious education. The most fervent supporter of this idea was Sir Syed Ahmad Khan. He was convinced that without modern education the emancipation of Muslims in the Subcontinent would not be possible. Sir Syed sought drastic reforms in the educational system that was pursued by traditional *ulema* as well as their approach towards scientific knowledge. The views of Sir Syed earned wrath from the traditional religious leaders. His idea of modern education was opposed and his religious views were strongly condemned. He was declared apostate and an enemy of Islam because of his outlook.⁵⁷

Sir Syed, however, established a modern Muslim educational college to realize his objectives. In Aligarh College religious subjects were also taught in the Department of Theology which was usually headed by a Deobandi

scholar. Aligarh College proved to be more than a seat of learning. It soon became the center of political cultural and literary life of the Indian Muslims. Scientific society came into being under the patronage of Aligarh to translate the Western classics into Urdu. This opened ways for the Muslims to wider experiences of mankind in all branches of learning.⁵⁸ Efforts were also made to bring close the two seats of learning. However, the most conservative approach of Deobandis could not be reconciled with the modern Western style of Aligarh. This gave rise to two streams of educational systems. These differences also led to different socio-political trends among Indian Muslims which exist even today in both India and Pakistan.

Nadvat-ul-Ulama

Realizing the unbridgeable distance between Deoband and Aligarh, a group of Muslim moderates pondered over establishing an institution embodying a balanced approach towards traditional religious subjects and modern education simultaneously.⁵⁹

Nadvat-ul-Ulama was established in 1891 for the said purpose. Maulana Muhammad Ali Mungeri the first president of Nadwa, while introducing the organization to the *ulema* in a letter, wrote:

Because it is seen that the graduates of Arabic madrasahs have little knowledge of the affairs of the world around them and they can do little else at their age, they remain dependent on the people of the world (*Ahl-e-Dunya*) and are considered useless in the eyes of the public. They also do not possess the level of knowledge that they should. This organization seeks to bring about appropriate reforms in this regard in all Madrasahs.⁶⁰

Muhammad Ali Mongeri justified the study of English on the grounds that the religion of Islam could be easily preached to the Westerner through their language, which could serve to effectively resist the Western conspiracy against Islam.⁶¹ For the guidance of Muslims in daily life, it also established *Dar-ul-Ifta*, providing *fatwa* on matters of religious importance. The major goal of the Nadwa remained to defend Islam by building the character of individual Muslims and to spread Islam among non-believers.⁶²

The *ulema* of the Nadwa hoped to achieve respect as the champions of Islam by being powerful and intellectually distinguished. The administration of Nadwa kept close relations with the British and accepted financial grants from the government. However, the relations did not go as far as *Aligarh* in courting British support. The *madrasah* also received financial support from rulers of various Muslim princely states and donations from individual Muslim supporters.

The *Nadwa* attracted some of the leading Islamic scholars. Maulana Shibli, a noted *alim* joined the *Nadwa* in 1905. He advocated drastic reforms by introducing modern subjects in the syllabus so that Muslims could keep pace with the modern world. The views of Shibli, however, earned criticism from many *ulema* within the *Nadwa* and he had to leave the *Nadwa* in 1913 because of this opposition.

Though the main concern of the *Nadwa* was to unite all the mutually opposing Muslim groups, this objective could not be achieved because of their mutual antagonism. The *Shiah* were the first to withdraw. The

Deobandis distanced themselves from the *Nadwa* because of the modernist theology of Shibli and its close relations with the government. The *Barelvi ulema* also opposed *Nadwa* for promoting free thought and irreligion in their view. Initially, there was close relationship between Aligarh and the *Nadwa* but this relationship also remained short-lived.⁶³

The *Nadwa*, although never able to forge national leadership for the Muslims, nevertheless made substantial impact on political movements in India. Still, the real accomplishment of the *Nadwa* was its involvement in the self-conscious dissemination of Muslim beliefs and practices, the fostering of Urdu as the language of the *ulema*, and the training of more *ulema*. *Nadwi ulema* emphasized the teaching of Arabic and to some extent, theology. Their writing both at *Nadwa* and its offshoot the *Darul Musannifin* were important contributions to history, biography, and essay writing in Urdu. In this way the *Nadwa* provided a common platform to different religious groups for free and open debate.⁶⁴

Besides *Deoband* and the *Nadwa* a large number of *madrasahs* were established by *Ahl-e-Hadith* and *Barelvis* to defend their respective *maslaks*. Similarly, *Shias* also set up their own *madrasahs* whose aim was to prepare preachers and religious scholars to defend the *Shia* tradition from the onslaught of the *Sunni ulema*.

Some *ulema* were of the view that inter-*maslak* rivalries led to Muslim decline and they pleaded the revival of *ijtihad* to meet the challenges of modernity. Among these *ulema*, Allama Hamidudin Farahi established *Madrassat-ul-Islah* in 1909 near Azamgarh. Farahi envisaged the aim of this *madrasah* as to liberate the *ulema* from inter-*muslak* rivalries and strict adherence to a particular *fiqh*. He also discouraged the study of medieval *Qur'an* commentaries and exhorted the students to understand the *Qur'an* directly with the help of dictionaries. This *madrasah* also made arrangement for the teaching of mathematics, geography, English and Hindi. Several graduates of this *madrasah* later occupied senior positions in *Jammat-i-Islami*. About the main objective of the *madrasah* to liberate the Muslim from the blind imitation of *fiqh*, a graduate of the *madrasah* lamented that it promoted the *taqlid* of Farahi's own understanding of the *Qur'an*.⁶⁵

Whatever might be the kind of educational institutions, modern or traditional, the main focus remained on education and social training during the second half of the eighteenth century. The political role of educational movements started with the beginning of the twentieth century on the eve of growing anti-colonial sentiments in the Subcontinent and the world over as well.

2- Madrasahs In Pakistan

Madrasahs and the Pakistan Movement

The Aligarh Movement, which had been basically an educational movement, gradually became a political movement when Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, its founder, initiated the demand for reservation of seats for the Muslim community in elected bodies and the representation of Muslims through a separate electorate. Not satisfied with the performance of the Indian National Congress as representative of all communities of India, the supporters of the Aligarh Movement set up their own political organization, the Muslim League, with the explicit objective of protecting the rights of the Muslim community. Earlier the stand taken by Sir Syed for the defense of Urdu (when extremist Hindus tried to replace it by Hindi as official language in 1867) had determined a different course to be chosen from that of the Congress for the protection of the rights of the Muslims of the Subcontinent.⁶⁶ He had become uneasy at the Congress plan for “democratizing” India. He felt this would leave Muslims at the mercy of the numerically superior Hindus. A. Hamid quotes him in the *Aligarh Movement* in the following words:

Ours is a vast country inhibited by diverse folks deeply divided by racial and religious antagonisms. They lack homogeneity. Different sections of the population stand at varying levels of cultural development. So long as religion and caste are the chief props of the Indian social system, electoral machinery based on the Western pattern would lead neither to equality nor to fraternity. It would enable the more advanced sections of the population to hold their less fortunate countrymen in thrall. Cultural difference, caste dissensions and religious wrangling would be more pronounced than ever. Inequalities would sink deeper in the society.⁶⁷

The Deobandi *ulema* were content with their socio-religious role until the end of the nineteenth century. However with the beginning of the twentieth century they made explicit their political views. The approach of the *Deoband ulema* to Indian politics differed fundamentally from its counterpart at Aligarh. They believed that geography was the ultimate determinant of nationalism in the context of India and the concept of Indian Muslim nationalism contradicted the concept of universal Muslim nationalism. On the basis of a mutually antagonistic political approach, both the educational movements chose different political platforms during the freedom struggle. While Aligarh aligned itself with the Muslim League under the leadership of Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the Deobandi supported the Congress during the freedom movement.⁶⁸

The gulf between Deoband and Aligarh had widened because Sir Syed had contributed articles to the Aligarh Institute Gazette denying the pretensions of Sultan Abdul Hamid⁶⁹ to the *khilafat* and preaching loyalty to the British rulers of India, even if they were compelled to pursue an unfriendly policy towards Turkey, while Deoband was consistent since the very beginning in its policy of friendship and alliance with the Sultan of Turkey. The Deobandi still considered India as *Dar-ul-arb*, but Aligarh saw

no sense in it. The gulf between the two Muslim institutions continued to exist and widen and divided the Muslims of India into two hostile blocks.⁷⁰

The situation changed after the First World War when the Muslims of the Subcontinent launched the *Khilafat* Movement seeking to protect the Ottoman caliphate from attack by the victorious allies and to prevent the holy cities of Mecca and Madina from falling under European control. It is worth noticing that, in the period of Muslim unrest, the Muslim middle class was in the forefront. Now for the first time Aligarh, the citadel of the Muslim middle class, was coming closer to Deoband, the center of proletarian dissatisfaction, in so far as the anti-British attitude was concerned. However, this was a brief rapprochement between the followers of both hostile camps.⁷¹

Jamiat-ul-ulama-i-Hind

The brief rapprochement between Aligarh and Deoband during the *Khilafat* Movement could not be effected at the upper level and the *ulema*, mostly *Deobandi*, set up their own organization, *Jamiat-ul-Ulama-i-Hind* in 1919 to protect the rights of Muslims and preferred to join hands with Gandhi for the realization of their objective, instead of *Jinnah's Muslim League*, whom they thought to be secular and irreligious, using Islam for secular interests.⁷²

The leaders of *Jamiat-ul-Ulama-i-Hind* claimed that it was a genuine Muslim organization to safeguard the “*Shariat*” as well as to give the Muslim community religious and political guidance according to Islamic principles and commandments. Among the foremost objectives of this organization was the protection of the Ottoman caliphate from dismemberment, the protection of the rights of the Muslims of India and the liberation of India from alien rule. The *ulema* issued a series of *fatwas* justifying seeking cooperation of non-Muslims for the achievements of these objectives.⁷³

The movement to protect the caliphate failed due to various internal and external reasons but it made the *ulema* think pragmatically about the political situation of India. The encounter between Deoband and Aligarh led to the establishment of Jamia Millia Islamia at Dehli in 1920. This institute was inaugurated by Maulana Mohamood-ul-Hasan, the rector of Deoband, and supported by activists from Aligarh. It managed to educate Muslims in both modern as well as traditional religious subjects.⁷⁴

The aims and objectives of the *Jamiat*, when analyzed, reveal its dual loyalty to Islam and Islamic countries, on the one hand, and to India, on the other. They also indicate the utmost emphasis on the “*Sharia*”, its preservation and its promulgation which concern the personal lives of Indian Muslims. The country was to be freed from the foreign yoke not only because of the democratic right of a nascent India but because of the religious duty of the Muslims to fight for the freedom of their motherland. The whole program of the *Jamiat* had to revolve around a single pivot, i.e. the *Sharia*, which was unchangeable and which could be correctly understood and interpreted only by the *ulema*, who considered themselves its custodian and, therefore, the correct leaders of Muslims could come only from them. This rigid and orthodox stand on the part of *ulema* was bound to

create a rift in the communal life of Muslims, who, in the course of time were led to depend more upon the leadership of their western educated intelligentsia. This rift was sharpened by the communal attitude of the Hindus, who being in an overwhelming majority, were considered by middle class Muslims to be a threatening force to their legitimate rights in an independent India.⁷⁵

Consequently, the *Deobandi ulema* chose to support the Congress instead of the Muslim League in the political struggle. They disputed the league's two-nation theory and repeatedly questioned the religious credentials of the League's leadership, and particularly, Jinnah. The rector of the Deoband *madrrasah*, *Maulana* Husian Ahmed Madani, argued, that in Islam nationality was determined by common homeland and not by religion, the claim strongly contested by Allama Mohammad Iqbal. Giving an example from the life of the Holy Prophet, Madani claimed that the state set up by the Holy Prophet in Madina gave equal rights to Muslims, Jews and pagan Arabs, and all of them were regarded as the members of one *ummah* or community. Therefore, according to this principle, all Muslims and Hindus of India were members of a common nation. Most of the Deobandi believed that in free and united India, Muslims would be able to lead their personal lives in accordance with the *Sharia*, while also co-operating with people of other faiths in matters of common concern.⁷⁶

The *ulema* were in favor of unconditional co-operation with the Congress so far as the cause of freedom was concerned. They claimed that once the British regime was dissolved, the Hindus would come to terms with the Muslims who formed a strong minority and could not be deprived of their legitimate rights. They also believed that it was the British Government which was chiefly responsible for the bitter communal bickering and for creating a sort of fear complex in the minds of Muslims. Its very existence in India was the cause of all ills in the Indian body politic, and it must come to an end. Moreover, their loyalty to Islam and Islamic countries also demanded the immediate end of British rule in India. They thought that the hold on rich India made it possible for the British to rule over the Muslim countries in the Middle East. The enslavement of India was the cause of British supremacy over all the lands through which the strategic line of imperial communication passed. Therefore, the independence of India meant the liberation of a vast Muslim area.⁷⁷

The free India that the pro-Congress *Deobandi* envisioned would be a federation of a number of culturally autonomous religious communities. Each community would administer its own internal affairs in accordance with its religious laws. The federal government which would have adequate Muslim representation would pass no laws that might seem injurious to the religious interests of any community.⁷⁸

In addition to the traditional *Deobandi*, a renowned reformist *alim*, Shibli Nu'mani, an ardent supporter of pan-Islamism also welcomed the Congress and its demand for broad-based unity among the various religious communities in India. He was critical of the Muslim league for its narrowly conceived political base and won over the support of other *Nadvi ulama* to the Congress. One of the Shibli's students, Syed Sulaiman Nadvi, declared

that the liberation of India from the British is more important than any other religious obligation of Indian Muslims.⁷⁹ The western-educated intelligentsia, particularly the league leadership, in turn believed that the *ulema* were not capable of giving correct leadership in politics to the Muslims. Their plea was that, the *ulema* because of their exclusively traditional education and complete ignorance of the complexities of modern life did not understand the nature of politics as such in the twentieth century. Their sphere of activity was religious and to that end they were expected to confine themselves. Commenting on the role of Muslim League, Jinnah is reported to have said to Aligarh in 1937:

What the league has done is to set you free from the reactionary elements of Muslims and to create the opinion that those who play their selfish game are traitors. It has certainly freed you from those undesirable elements of *Maulvis* and *Maulanas*. I am not speaking of *Mualavis* as a whole class. There are some of them who are as patriotic and sincere as any others but there is a section of them which is undesirable.⁸⁰

Thus, there were apparent reasons why the *Jamiat* and the League could not be united. Both, although sincere towards the welfare of the Muslim community, had different approaches to this idea. Therefore, they often distrusted each other.

The Two-Nation Theory of the Muslim League was provided with an emotional vigor and intellectual content by the poet-philosopher Mohammad Iqbal, whose appeal to the Muslim youth was more forceful than that of the traditional *ulema*. His approach towards the Indian problem was based on reality and he solicited the support of Indian Muslims for the Muslim League.⁸¹ The *Jamiat-ul-ulema i-Hind* never conceded the doctrine of the two nation theory as propounded by the League. This was the base of all the League-Jamiat differences. In June 1940, while presiding over the annual session of the *Jamiat-ul-Ulema* at Jaunpur (U.P), Maulana Hussain Ahmed Madani reiterated his commitment to united Indian nationalism.⁸² This League-Jamiat difference brought Deoband and Aligarh at opposite poles. When Deoband vehemently opposed partition, Aligarh turned out to be the training center of *Mujahidin-i-Pakistan*. It is meaningful to note that the major centers of Muslims education, i.e. Deoband and Aligarh in India, representing two different trends in the politico-intellectual life of Indian Muslims since their very beginning, finally collided against each other in molding the ultimate destiny of the Muslims in the Indian Subcontinent.

The Deoband leadership opposed the demand for Pakistan also from the viewpoint of the difficulties its realization would involve in the missionary activities of the Muslims. They believed that because of the Muslim League demand for a separate homeland the atmosphere of hatred created between Hindus and Muslims would hamper the missionary activities of Islam.

Above all, Deoband was convinced that the Western-educated League leadership was exploiting the fair name of Islam for the worldly gain of Muslim vested interests. The credibility of the League's leadership was questioned for establishment and building of a truly Islamic state.⁸³

History reveals that religion played a vital role in promoting national unity. When coupled with social and economic forces it created powerful

national movements. Since the movement for Pakistan was rooted in social, cultural, and religious distinctions between Muslims and Hindus, one might logically expect that Muslim religious parties would have played a major role in mobilizing the Muslim masses to support the Pakistan Movement. Contrary to this, with very few exceptions, the religious parties bitterly opposed Jinnah and the demand for Pakistan. The Barelvi was, however, the only group to support the Muslim league in its demand for Pakistan and wholeheartedly opposed the Congress as anti-Muslim.⁸⁴

The pre-partition position of religio-political parties on the Pakistan question contrasts with their present position on religious nationalism. The *Jamiat-ul-Ulama* stand on the question of Partition was explicitly in favor of a united India. Maulana Maudoodi and the *Jamiat-i-Islami* had rejected nationalism because in his view it led to selfishness, prejudice, and pride. He declared that the demand for Pakistan was un-Islamic and condemned Jinnah for his un-Islamic habits and mentality.⁸⁵ The *Jamiat* opposed both the League and Congress. Another religio-political party, the *Majlis-i-Ahrar*, took a similar position. However, unlike the *Jamaat*, it was aligned with the Congress. *Jamaat-i-Islami*, *Jamiat-ul-Ulama-i-Hind*, *Majlis-i-Ahrar* and *Khaksar* considered Jinnah as an agent of the British and the worst enemy of Islam.⁸⁶

A rather curious situation confronted the religio-political parties when Pakistan became a reality in 1947. As they had opposed the very creation of Pakistan, these religious groups had to adopt themselves to the changed environment in the newly established Muslim-majority independent state.⁸⁷

Leading Muslim religious elites preferred to migrate to Pakistan after Partition. The Deoband influence had already reached the areas then the parts of Pakistan. The Barelvi *ulema* and the founder of the *Jamaat-i-Islami*, Maulana Maudoodi, also migrated to Pakistan after Partition and started religious activities with Karachi and Lahore as their bases. Subsequently, all the religious groups established their own *madrasahs* and also organized themselves politically. In present-day Pakistan the *Jamiat-ul-Ulama-i-Islam*, *Jamiat-ul-Ulama-i-Pakistan*, *Jamaat-i-Islami*, and *Jamiat Ahl-e-Hadith* represent the cause of *Ulama-i-Deoband*, *Barelvi*, Maudoodi and *Wahhabi* thought, respectively.

Growth of madrasahs since 1947

At the time of independence very few *madrasahs* existed in Pakistan because leading centers of Islamic education were situated in other parts of India. Pakistan inherited a meager 200-odd *madrasahs*, which as per the government's conservative estimates has now increased to over 17,000, although some analysts put this number at 25-30,000. These religious schools are catering to about 2.5 to 3 million students and employ thousands of *mullahs* as teachers, mentors, and instructors.⁸⁸

A key drive of growth in the *madrasah* sector is said to be poverty, an endemic problem of all developing countries, the menace which the successive governments in the last six decades have vowed to eliminate but failed even to reduce to a manageable level. Interestingly, on the one hand, the country has struggled to improve enrolment in formal schools and has been grappling with the problem of large scale drop-outs at primary and

secondary levels. On the other hand, there is a stiff competition going on in the rural areas where Pakistan's majority of poor live to enroll children in *madrasahs* normally situated in cosmopolitan cities and suburban areas. There are three main types of religious institutions in Pakistan: Quranic schools (where only the *Qur'an* is taught), mosque schools (where both quranic and secular subjects are taught), and *madrasahs* (where only Islamic learning takes place).⁸⁹

The mission of the *madrasahs* in Pakistan is to prepare students for religious duties. Adhering to strict religious teachings *madrasahs* teach Islamic subjects such as the *Qur'an*, Islamic law, and jurisprudence, logic and prophetic traditions. *Hafiz-i-Qur'an* (the one who memorizes the *Holy Qur'an*) or *Qari* (the one who can recite the *Holy Qur'an* correctly and in a melodic tone) are produced at the lower level of *madrasahs*. The higher level of *madrasahs* produces *alim* (the Islamic scholar or teacher). An *alim* certificate from a *madrasahs* is equivalent to an M.A. degree in Islamic studies or Arabic from a regular university.⁹⁰

There are five Islamic schools of thought in Pakistan who operate their own systems of *madrasahs*. They are *Deobandi*, *Barelvi*, *Ahl-e-Hadith*, *Jamaat-i-Islami* and *Shia*. Each of these schools of thought organized these *madrasahs* under different boards, responsible for registration, conduct of examination, and syllabus.

The names of these boards are as follows:⁹¹

Wafaq-ul-Madaris Al-Arabia:

This board of *Sunni Deobandi* institutions was established in 1959 and has its center in Multan.

Tanzim-ul-Madaris:

This board of *Sunni Barelvi* institutions was established in 1960 and has its center in Lahore.

Wafaq-ul-Madaris Shia:

This board of *Shia* institutions was established in 1959 and has its center in Lahore. *Shia madaris* teach *fiqh Jafria* named after *Imam Jafer Sadiq* while other *madaris* in Pakistan teach *fiqh Hanafia*.

Rabitah-ul-Madris-ul-Islamia:

This board was established by the *Jamaat-i-Islami* in 1983, and recognizes the *madrasahs* of all Islamic thought. They teach more modern subjects. It has its center in Lahore.

Wafaq-ul-Madaris-Al-Salfia:

This board was established by *Ahl-e-Hadith* in 1955 and has its center in Faisalabad.

Table - 2.1

REIs: Affiliation with various Boards, 1988-2000

Organization	1988	2000	Pp Percentage Increase
Waqaf-al-Madaris al-Arabia (Hanafi, Deobandi)	1840	1947	6
Tanzim-al-Madaris (Hanafi, Bareilvi)	717	1363	90
Waqaf-al-Madaris al-Salafia (Ahl-e-Hadith)	161	310	93
Waqf-al-Madaris al Shia`a	47	297	532
Rabitah-al-Madaris al-Islamia (Mansoorah)	-	191	-
Others (Not Affiliated)	96	2653	2664
Total	2861	6761	136

Source: Ministry of Education Islamabad, 1988, 2000

The two main sects of Sunni Islam, *Deobandi* and *Bareilvi*, dominate the *madrasah* system in Pakistan. They originated in the colonial Indian Subcontinent in response to the perceived imperial plot to destroy Islam and its followers by enforcing its own version of education. The *Deobandi* sect is considered the most conservative and anti-Western.⁹²

The courses in religious *madrasahs* are spread over 16 years and are divided into six grades. The primary and middle grades are of five and three years duration, respectively, while the next two grades are of five years duration each. *Darja Ibtidai* consists of five years duration and is equivalent to primary level of the mainstream education system. *Darja Mutawassit* is of three years duration and is equivalent to middle level. *Darja Sania Aama* is of two years duration and is equivalent to matriculation. *Darja Sania Khasa*, *Darja Aalia* and *Darja Alamia* are of two years duration each and are equivalent to intermediate, Bachelor, and Master Levels, respectively. The following table shows the religious education system and its equivalence with the mainstream education system.⁹³

REIs Grades of Education; Table 2.2

Grade	Level	Class	Duration	Equivalence with Mainstream Education Sys.
Ibtidai	Nazira (Primary)	1 - 5	5 years	Primary
Mutawassita	Hifz (Middle)	6 - 8	3 years	Middle
Sania Aama	Tajwid, Qirat (Secondary)	9 - 10	2 years	Matriculation
Sania Khasa	Tehtani (Higher Sec)	11-12	2 years	Intermediate
Aalia	Moquf Allah (College)	13-14	2 years	Bachelor
Alamia	Dora-e-Hadith (Uni.)	15-16	2 years	Master
REIs stand for religious education institutions				

Curriculum in Traditional Pakistani Madrasahs

The syllabus in almost all traditional *madrasahs* conforms to the basic structure and scholarly standard of the *Dars-e-Nizami*. Although different schools of thought adopted it with certain modifications, yet the focus remains on the teaching of traditional religious subjects. A typical model of what is taught in *madrasahs* in Pakistan is given as follows.⁹⁴

First Year: Biography of the Prophet (PBUH) (*Syrat*), grammar (*sarf*) syntax (*nahv*), Arabic literature, calligraphy, chant illation (*tajvid*).

Second Year: Conjugation-grammer (*sarf*), syntax (*nahv*), Arabic literature, jurisprudence (*fiqh*), logic, calligraphy (*khush navisi*), chant illation (*tajvid*).

Third Year: Quranic exegesis, jurisprudence (*fiqh*) syntax (*nahv*), Arabic literature, *hadith*, logic, Islamic brotherhood, chant illation (*tajvid*).

Fourth Year: Quranic exegesis, jurisprudence (*fiqh*), principles of jurisprudence, rhetoric, *hadith*, logic, history, chant illation (*tajvid*), geography of the Arabian Peninsula.

Fifth Year: Quranic exegesis, jurisprudence, rhetoric, beliefs (*aqaid*), logic, Arabic literature, chant illation.

Sixth Year: Interpretation of the Qur'an, jurisprudence, principles of interpretation and jurisprudence, Arabic literature, philosophy, chant illation, study of Prophetic traditions.

Seventh Year: Sayings of the Prophet (PBUH), jurisprudence, belief (*aqaid*), responsibilities (*fraiz*), chant illation, external study (Urdu texts)

Eighth Year: Ten books by various authors focusing on the sayings of the Prophet (PBUH).

The course of study in all *madrasahs* except that of the *Shia* revolves around the teaching of *Hanafi fiqh*. Most of the texts are 500 or more years old. These texts are taught with the help of commentaries and super

commentaries and glosses or marginal notes (*hashiya*), penned by medieval *Hanafi ulema* for South Asian students, who do not know Arabic well. They no longer explain the original text. They are in Arabic. They have to be learnt by heart, which makes students use only their memory, not their analytical powers. Thus, the system functions on the assumption that it should preserve the tradition of the past. This led to the stagnation and ossification of knowledge under the *Dars-i-Nizami* which earned the criticism not only from Western educated critics but also from Arabic-knowing authorities such as Maulana Maudoodi.⁹⁵ Pakistani *madrasahs* lay heavy emphasis on the teaching of Arabic and Persian languages. The languages in Pakistani *madrasahs* are not taught for their intrinsic worth but because they facilitate mastery of the religion and because they are necessary for an *alim*. For this reason, Arabic occupies the center stage. Persian, which was socially and academically necessary in Muslim India, still forms part of the curriculum. Urdu is generally the medium of instruction in Pakistani *madrasahs*. However, in the Pashto-speaking part of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pashto is the medium of instruction, while Sindhi is the medium of instruction in *madrasahs* in Sindhi-speaking parts of Sindh. Urdu is, indeed, the language in which *madrasah* students become most competent and is the medium of instruction in most *madrasahs*.

Refutation of Other Sects Radd

A major aspect of the course of study in most of *Pakistani madrasahs* is refutation or *radd* of other sects. Sectarian violence in Pakistan in the recent past has been attributed to this aspect of *madrasah* education. The sectarian divide has become sharper and more violent in the society because of the inculcation of bias against other beliefs among the followers by the respective sects.⁹⁶

The theological debate (*munazra*) was the feature of religious sects in colonial India which led to the exchange of invective and scuffles among the followers of main debaters but never turned to terrorism as witnessed in Pakistan's recent history. Though the administration of *madrasahs* usually deny the teaching of any text refuting the beliefs of other sects, they refute other sects through question and answer, interpretation of texts and sometimes teachers recommend supplementary reading material specifically for the refutation of the doctrines of other sects and sub-sects. In most cases, in writings, sermons and conversations, teachers refer to the pioneers of their own "*maslaks*" so that the views of their sect are internalized and become the primary way of thinking.⁹⁷

Despite all denials, the printed syllabus of different sects contains the books to refute the beliefs of other sects. The report on the religious seminaries of 1988 lists several books of *Deobandi madrasahs* to refute *Shia* beliefs. There are several books on the debates between the *Barelvis* and the *Deoband* and even a book refuting Maudoodi's views. The *Barelvis* have named only one book: "*Rashidiya*" under the heading of preparation for debates on controversial issues. The *Ahl-e-Hadith* has given a choice of opting for any two of the following courses. The political system of Islam, the economic system of Islam, "*Ibn-e-Khaldun, s Muqaddamah*", the history

of ideas and comparative religious systems. The *Shia* courses list no book on this subject.⁹⁸

Recently published courses list no book on “*maslak*” for Deobandis. The *Barelvi* mention comparative religions but no specific books. The *Ahl-e-Hadith* retains the same courses as before. The *Shia madrasahs* list books that include comparative religions, though *Shia* beliefs are taught as the only true ones. Polemical pamphlets claiming that there are conspiracies against the *Shias* are available. Similar pamphlets, warning about alleged *Shia* deviations from the right interpretation of faith are also in circulation among the *Sunni madrasahs*.⁹⁹

Moreover, some guide books for teachers note that Quranic verses about controversial issues should be taught with great attention and students should memorize them. In one *Barelvi* book it is specified that teachers must make the students note down interpretations of the *ulema* of their sub-sect concerning beliefs and controversial issues, so that students can use them later, i.e. as preachers and *ulema*.¹⁰⁰ The *Jamaat-i-Islami* syllabus (2002) mentioned additional books by *Maulana Maudoodi* and other intellectuals of the *Jamaat* on a number of subjects including the *hadith* and comparative religions.

The Refutation of Heretical Beliefs and Alien Philosophies

To counter the heresies within the Islamic world and outside influence is the traditional role of *madrasahs*. Several books refuting the beliefs of *Ahmedis (Qadianis)*¹⁰¹ are included in the *Aliya (BA)* course of *Deobandi*. The *Barelvis* and *Ahl-i-Hadith*, have no such books. However, they refute the beliefs of *Ahmedi* through the course of comparative religions. The *Jamat-i-Islami* has also included in its course four books to refute the beliefs of the *Qadiani*. These books are written in Urdu in a polemical style.¹⁰²

Most religious *madrasahs* refute Greek philosophy and Western thought. The *Deobandi* have several books refuting capitalism, socialism, and feudalism. The *Jamat-i-Islami* strongly refutes Western political and economic ideas and the influence of Western culture on the Muslim world. Though not necessarily taught in the *madrasah*, such literature is found circulated by almost all sects.¹⁰³

Students of Traditional madrasahs

While traditional *madrasahs* attracted people from all social classes during the *Mughal* and *Sultanate* period, now these *madrasahs* cater for the children of the lower middle class, the peasantry, and the poor with few exceptions.¹⁰⁴ This shift in student composition owes largely to the fact that education in a traditional *madrasah* is no longer seen as providing its students with skill needed for lucrative occupations. Well-off Muslims might send their children to part-time “*maktab*” as well as regular schools or might arrange for an *alim* to come to their homes to teach them the *Qur’an*, and the Islamic rituals but few send them to full time *maktabs* or *madrasahs*.

As the Muslim education system characterizes rigid dualism between traditional *madrasahs* and modern schools, it is important to note that a fairly large number of middle-class families send one of their sons to

madrasah and the rest to regular schools. Some families known for their Islamic scholarship also carry on in an ancestral tradition by having at least one son trained as an *alim*, while others are educated in schools and colleges.

The students of *madrasahs* belong to families having emotional attachment with the particular school of thought (*maslak*) that the *madrasah* represents. The followers of different sects always oppose each other and cannot make a united homogeneous group. Because of weak economic and social backgrounds the students are often reactionary and inflexible in their attitude and seek extremist ways for the realization of their ideological goals.¹⁰⁵ Their understanding of the modern world is limited because teaching of modern subjects, games, literature, art and extra curricular activities are always ignored in most of the *madrasahs*.¹⁰⁶

Apart from *madrasahs* in rural areas the majority of students in *madrasahs* in major cities of Pakistan also hail from rural areas. In Karachi the *madrasah* students represent all the districts of Pakistan. Pashto-speaking students always outnumber any other community. The graduating students are normally 17 to 27 years old. The girl students are on average younger than the boys. One reason for this is that their course duration is shorter than that of boys.¹⁰⁷ Larger *madrasahs* attract students from different parts of the country and from different communities. Therefore, they help to promote a sense of Muslim unity and representing internal division on the basis of *maslak* at the same time.

Admission to a traditional *madrasah* is relatively informal. While some have an entrance examination and fixed quotas at each level, others are more flexible. Larger *madrasahs* have specific dates for application for admission, usually soon after the fasting month of Ramzan. The schedule of admission is advertised through leaflets and wall posters. In smaller *madrasah* the procedure is much simpler and the students can join at any time of the year. They may not be able to afford to issue advertisements, in which case news of admissions is spread simply by word of mouth. Most *madrasahs* have a somewhat open admission policy with no rigid entrance requirements. Most *madrasahs* charge no fee and also provide food, hostel accommodation and books free of cost.¹⁰⁸ Thus, *madrasahs* also serve as a kind of orphanage for those having no elders or relatives.

The students of traditional *madrasahs* are taught strict adherence to the rules of conduct or *adab*. Dress, food and behavior are regulated according to the *Sharia* and the students are expected to observe them faithfully. Western clothes are frowned upon, and students are expected to grow their beards when they come of age, in imitation of the Prophet (PBUH). The students are more obedient and pay more respect to their teachers as compared to their counterparts in modern educational institutions.¹⁰⁹ However, in practice, modernization also affects the students of *madrasahs*. Many *ulema* nowadays complain about the deterioration of the moral standard of *madrasah* students. Increasing materialism and modernization of media are said to be responsible for the deteriorating moral standard of *madrasahs* students.

Graduates of traditional *madrasahs* take up a range of occupations. Many of them go on to teach in their own or another *madrasah*. Some of them join the armed forces of Pakistan as religious teachers and *khatibs*. They also get jobs in secondary and higher secondary educational institutions as teachers of Islamic studies and Arabic language¹¹⁰ while some of them join family businesses or setup *unani* medicine clinics. The graduates of *madrasahs* usually maintain links with their *alma mater* in various ways. They encourage others to enroll in the *madrasah*, circulate *madrasah* literature representing the religious-political views of the particular *madrasah*, and also collect donations for the *madrasahs* from the public. Thus, the students of the *madrasahs* are an asset throughout their lives.

Teachers of Madrasahs

In almost all traditional *madrasahs* no rigid rules are applied for the recruitment of teachers. They are often appointed through personal networks and serve as long as the administrator of the *madrasah* is satisfied with their performance. All *madrasahs* employ those teachers who belong to that particular “*maslak*” which the *madrasah* represents.

Generally, the teachers have the qualification of *alim* or *fazil* course from the traditional *madrasahs*, without having any specialized teacher training. They get meager salaries. The average salary of *madrasah* teacher was two thousand rupees in 2004.¹¹¹ Because of financial constraints many teachers are forced to supplement their income through other means, such as giving tuitions, hiring *imamat* (leading prayer), lecturing in religious meetings, preparing amulets (*ta'wiz*) or working on collection of donations for *madrasah* on commission. Besides poor service conditions and low salaries the unlimited authority of the administration is responsible for the failure of *madrasahs* to attract the best teachers.

In traditional *madrasahs* there are no rules for the protection of service. Therefore, the administrators of *madrasahs* often impose strict discipline and undue restrictions which curtail the freedom of expression among the teachers. Sometimes, the administrators interfere in their personal lives and exploit their compulsions. In traditional *madrasahs* the teacher student relationship is generally authoritarian, but deeply personal at the same time, somewhat like between a father and son. It often resembles the hierarchical yet close bond between a spiritual preceptor and his disciples. The teacher is considered to be a model for the student to emulate faithfully. Students are taught to hold their teachers in awe and reverence for through them they acquire the knowledge that they believe hold the key to their salvation in this world and in the next. Intricate rules of proper conduct governing relations between teachers and students are elaborated upon in special texts on *madrasah* pedagogy which are often part of the *madrasah* syllabus. Students even serve the teachers to the extent of washing their clothes and massaging their bodies. In turn the teachers are expected to treat their students as their children. In practice, however, some deviations take place from the established norms as some of the teachers are most authoritative and least tolerant in dealings with their students.¹¹²

Methods of Teaching

Traditional *madrasahs* follow centuries-old methods of teaching in which the text is the center of all activities instead of the student. Typically, the teacher sits on a low platform, reclining against a bolster, while the student sit below him on mats spread on the floor, placing their books on low tables in front of them. The teacher reads out from the text and asks the students to take turns in reading aloud, and then explains the content of the portions read out. The text is usually in Arabic and the teacher comments on it in Urdu. Although questioning is allowed, dissent and debate are usually unlinked and sometimes discouraged. The study of books of rival *maslaks* is strongly opposed in most *madrasahs* and even leads to expulsion from the *madrasah*.¹¹³ This highly restricts the field of study for students and, therefore, most *madrasah* students have little enthusiasm for intellectual research and hardly any expertise in any discipline. Rote learning is emphasized even in purely subjective courses. Students are also encouraged to learn by heart entire speeches on a range of subjects that they occasionally deliver to public congregations or to gatherings at mosques. Great stress is laid upon the intricate problems of Arabic grammar while the application of knowledge for the solution of problems of contemporary needs is generally ignored.¹¹⁴ Consequently, *madrasahs* are usually unable to produce broad-minded and intellectually enriched personalities who have a pragmatic approach towards the changed environment in which they have to adjust themselves. Therefore, leading *madrasahs* now feel the need of reform in their teaching methods.

In a seminar of *Madaris-i-Arabia* held in *Dar-ul-Uloom Deoband* on October 29, 1994 a unanimous resolution was passed in which appeal was made to all *madaris* to bring meaningful reforms in teaching methods to enable students to adjust themselves to the changing environment.¹¹⁵

Management of Madrasahs

Traditional *madrasahs* are individual enterprises in Pakistan. Larger *madrasahs* are, however, run by an elaborate hierarchy of functionaries. At the apex is the *sarparast* (Chancellor), who is also often the founder of the *madrasah* or his successor, in which case he is generally a direct descendant of the founder. Below him is the *muhtamim* (Vice Chancellor), who is followed by the *sadar madrasah* (Dean) and teachers of different subjects. The senior most teacher is the *sheikh-ul-hadith* who teaches the books of *hadith* to senior students. The rector of the *madrasah* is assisted in his work by a committee of elders (*shura*) consisting of senior *ulema* and teachers, and sometimes of notable Muslims including rich traders, philanthropists and important donors. The members of the *shura* are generally appointed by the *sarparast*. Although, in theory, staff appointments are made strictly on the basis of merit and piety, often the management of *madrasahs* is in the hands of the families of their founders. In many cases the founder of the *madrasah* appoints his own sons or close relatives as his successor. Likewise, *madrasah* rectors often select their own son or close relative or other members of their own caste as senior teachers. Thus, many *madrasahs* come to be seen as family ventures with key posts and access to funds being limited to a narrow circle of friends and relatives, many of whom may not

have the religious or intellectual skill needed for the important posts that they handle.

In theory, elaborate rules govern the management of *madrasahs* and all decisions are supposed to be taken through discussion and consensus. In practice, however, things are always very different. The managers and administrators often override the decision-making process for their personal interests. The report of leading psychologists of the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences reveals that the cult culture grown inside the *Jamia-Hafsa*¹¹⁶ under the influence of its administrators was responsible for the clash of its students with society and with the state. The report also recommended that seminaries need to be under the education department so that individuals may not use them for their personal interest.¹¹⁷

Many of the people in the religious circles also complain that most of traditional *madrasahs* have degenerated into dens of corruption, nepotism, and dirty politics because of the obsession with power and wealth of their administrators.

Madrasah Finances

Traditional *madrasahs* have run on self-help basis from the time of colonial rule. These *madrasahs* rely on a variety of sources to meet their expenses. The vast majority depend on local funds which are generated from within the community. Many *madrasahs* have land or property endowed to them as *waqfs* from which they earn some income. Appeals are regularly issued by *madrasah* authorities to Muslims to contribute in cash or kind to the *madrasah* as a religious duty in the form of *zakat* or *sadaqa*. Such appeals appear in the publications of *madrasahs*. In posters put up on boards outside mosques and on walls in Muslim localities. On the occasion of *Bakr-e-Eid*, students are sent out to the houses of local Muslims to collect the skins of slaughtered animals which are sold to leather merchants. The money is given to the *madrasah*. Some people make donations to *madrasah* as an act of piety. This is done in different ways i.e. constructing a room in a *madrasah* or donating fans or coolers or any other items of common use to *madrasahs* simply to earn the blessing of God for himself or for deceased relatives. The peasants of the localities also contribute in kind of grains after harvest to help run the local *madrasahs*. In smaller *madrasahs* teachers and even students are sent to neighboring towns and villages to collect donations in cash and in kind. Larger *madrasahs* appoint special staff to collect funds for the *madrasah* on commission.¹¹⁸ Beside this the administrators also accept financial help from those who earn illegal money which negatively affects the integrity of *ulema*. The proper use of funds is also not often ensured.¹¹⁹

Government Financial Support

The Government of Pakistan provides financial support to those *madrasahs*, which register themselves for such help. The Ministry of “*auqaf*” and Religious Affairs manage *madrasah* affairs. However, the funds provided by the Government of Pakistan to *madrasahs* is negligible as compared to the funds earmarked for government educational institutions. According to details provided by Institute of Policy Studies the government

provided fifteen lacs of rupees to religious *madrasahs* of Pakistan during the financial year 2000 to 2001. This amount if divided by the number of students comes roughly equal to one and half rupees per student per year.¹²⁰

In 2001-02 the government initiated a *madrasah* reform program at the cost of Rs.5759.395 millions for modernizing the curriculum of *din-i-madaris* by introducing modern subjects, i.e. general science, social studies and computer science. In 2001-02 a total of Rs.1, 654,000 was given to all *madrasahs* which accepted this help. As the number of students are 1,065,277, this amount to Rs.1.55 per student per year. An additional aid of Rs.30.45 million was promised for providing for computers and changing the syllabus in 2003-04 and this comes to Rs.28.60 per student per year.¹²¹ However, since all *madrasahs* do not accept financial help from government, the money is not distributed evenly as the above calculation might suggest.

Madrasahs and Society

Madrasahs in Pakistan are not simply educational institutions but social institutions as well. *Madrasahs* are linked to the wider community through the *ulema* who serve there and play a variety of functions in society. Thus, *madrasahs* play a vital role in protecting the socio-religious traditions of Muslims in the Subcontinent since the colonial era. A major role of *madrasahs* is to provide guidance to the general Muslim public. The *ulema* connected with the *madrasahs* closely interact with Muslims outside the *madrasah* in their capacity as specialists in Islamic law and theology. The public often seek the opinions of *ulema* in matters relating to marriage, divorce and inheritance. They are invited to preside over community functions and their names often figure on the boards of various community organizations. They might be requested to solemnize weddings and lead prayers during important festivals, marriages and burials. *Madrasahs* provide “*imams*” and “*khatibs*” to almost all the mosques in the country. The teachers and students might travel the nearby localities, instructing Muslims in matters relating to virtues and vices.

Some religious organizations having affiliation with a network of *madrasahs* such as *Jamaat-u-Dawa*, *Jamaat-i-Islami*, and *Tahrik-e-Minhaj-ul-Qur’an* actively take part in providing social services in society.¹²²

A particularly important function of many *madrasahs* is to deliver *fatwas* in response to specific requests from the public. Several *madrasahs* have arrangements for separate *Darul-Ifta* offices where “*muftis*” deliver *fatwas*. Requests for *fatwas* come from the public. *Fatwas* are often sought regarding social matters such as marriage, divorce, inheritance, taking interest, or the proper methods of performing various rituals. Sometimes *fatwas* are also sought relating to the national or international developments, such as the *fatwa* delivered by many *ulema* of different *madrasahs* to boycott purchase of American products after the American attack on Afghanistan in 2001.

Fatwas are not binding, though for many Muslims they carry great prestige, as authoritative statements claiming to represent the authentic Islamic position on a particular matter. Still some *fatwas* do not get the favor of the public. Such as the *fatwa* declaring modern banking as un-

Islamic by many *ulema* gets little public support. Some *madrasahs* regularly publish their collection of *fatwas* in the form of voluminous compendia which are then made available for sale to the general public.

In some of the larger *madrasahs*, special courts or *Dar-ul-Qaza*, exist, which handle cases in accordance with their understanding of the *Sharia*. Generally, these cases related to family laws. *Shariat* courts are often cheaper and more expeditious than regular civil courts where litigation is often expensive and long drawn-out. The demand for the establishment of *Shariat* courts in different parts of the country is the result of the inability of civil courts to deliver cheap and speedy justice to the people. Another important role of *madrasahs* is the publication of religious literature. Some *madrasahs* bring out regular religious magazines having wide circulation, while some *madrasahs* have separate publication departments and publish different types of literature in different languages, including Arabic, Urdu, and other vernacular languages.¹²³ Larger *madrasahs* have their own printing presses and even their own websites now. Many among the *ulema* have also regularly contributed articles on Islamic themes to widely circulating magazines and newspapers. The daily *Jang*, Pakistan's most widely circulating Urdu newspaper began an Islamic page in 1978 to which religious scholars have regularly contributed. Mufti Mohammad Yousaf Ludhianavi, a leading religious scholar affiliated with the *Jamiat-al-Ulum madrasah* of Karachi wrote a weekly question-and-answer column called "Your Problems and their Solutions" for many years. This provided religious guidance to common Muslims on all sorts of issues in a highly simplified style. These and other writings were later compiled and published as a seven volume work under the same title and for a similar target audience.¹²⁴ The publisher introduces this work as follow;

"Your Problems and their Solution", is the best loved serious column in the *Jang* newspaper. It is the first thing to be read every Friday. God has granted it a popularity such that hundreds of thousands of people not only await it eagerly but consider it a necessary part of their lives. It has brought about revolutionary change in the lives of countless people. Thousands of people have molded their lives according to the life of the Prophet.¹²⁵

Nowadays the Daily Mashriq, a widely read Urdu newspaper, carries a special *dini* supplement on every Friday, which is highly popular among common Muslims. It is eagerly awaited and widely read by common Muslims. Thus, the *ulema* successfully utilize the press for access to the general public.

The foregoing discussion reveals that *madrasahs* have deep-rooted historical relations with the Muslim society in Pakistan. Therefore, *madrasahs* are not only educational institutions; rather they play crucial socio-political roles in Muslim society. Immediate denial of this role to the *madrasahs* may lead to polarization and chaos in the society.

3- State And Madrasah Relations: 1947-1999

As the previous chapter revealed, the dichotomy in the educational system was inherited by Pakistan from colonial India. The religious *madaris* were in the hands of conservative *ulema* who suspected the introduction of reforms in any sector by the modernist leadership as a conspiracy against Islam. Therefore, partly as a lack of commitment of the government and, partly, because of the fear of opposition from the conservative *ulema*, the government could not undertake comprehensive measures to introduce a uniform system of education in the country.

However, the efforts to introduce reforms in the *din-i-madaris* have been underway since Ayub Khan's regime. These efforts could not produce fruitful results because of multiple socio-political reasons.¹²⁶

Madrasahs under Ayub Khan's Regime

The first-ever attempt to integrate *din-i-madaris* into the formal educational system and to get their financial and administrative control was made in 1961 through an ordinance to transfer the private endowments to the state. These *waqf* endowments were the main source of finance of *din-i-madaris*.¹²⁷

In 1961 a committee for revision of the curricula of the *Din-i-madras* was formed for the first time. It consisted of eleven members in whom only three members represented the traditional *din-i-madras* while six were from universities and two were government representatives.¹²⁸ The composition of the committee indicates the government move to bring about state sponsored reforms. The committee's proposals for the reforms of curricula also reflected this trend. The committee report covered 700 *din-i-madaris* in which *Dars-i-Nizami* was taught and was financed by the Asia Foundation, an American NGO.¹²⁹

The committee report of 1962 suggests that general educational subjects should be introduced in *din-i-madaris* along with traditional religious subjects to meet the challenges of the time. Active support of the clergy was sought to realize this objective.¹³⁰ It was made clear that this would be possible only if certain unnecessary non-religious subjects be replaced by subjects based upon undisputed sources of knowledge.¹³¹ The committee agreed to introduce modern subjects to prepare students for different professions. The National Education Commission 1959 had already recommended these proposals.¹³² The government intended to modernize the system of education reforming the *maktabs* and *madaris*. Under this scheme the primary education as approved by the department of education was to be compulsory for all the students of affiliated *madaris*.¹³³ It is to be noted that the sphere of reform in the syllabus was limited to the non-religious subjects as taught in *madaris*. The report recommended that logic and philosophy be cut down which were considered essential for the religious study in the past and formed part of *Dars-i-Nizami*.¹³⁴ Great emphasis was given to Quranic studies, *hadith*, and early Islamic history.

Table 3.1 Proposals and Changes of the Committee of 1960/61

	Primary Level	Lower Secondary	Middle Secondary	Upper Secondary	Highest Level
<i>Arabic</i>	<i>Ibteddiy ah</i>	<i>Thanawi tahtani</i>	<i>Thanawi wustani</i>	<i>thanawi fawqani</i>	<i>Al,la (sic)</i>
Duration	5 years	3 years	2 years	2 years	3 years
Class	1-5	6-8	9-10	11-12	13-15
Suggestions and modifications by the committee	According to directions of the Ministry of Education	More Qur'an and Hadith Prophet's tradition Islamic Law Modern Arabic lit English Mathematics Social sciences Sports Urdu	Islamic History Alternative Books English Sports Optional subject (preferably Urdu)	Principals of Tafsir More Hadith Modern Arabic lit English Less philosophy Less Logic	1. History of Hadith 2. fatawa 3. Modern Philosophy
Summary	Innovations	All but two are new subjects; Arabic and English preferred	All subjects are new and obligatory	All subjects are new or modified: four subjects are obligatory, one is optional	English and subsidiary subjects are additional; in the final year only the study of <i>hadith</i>

Sources: Based on the Report of Committee set up by the Governor of West Pakistan for recommending improved syllabus for the various Dar-ul-Uloom and Arabic *Madrasahs* in West Pakistan, in Malik, Jamal, *Colonization of Islam*, 1996.

The changes in syllabus were aimed at reforming a system geared more towards an effective and realistic education which would limit the *Dars-i-Nizami*, fade out non-religious subjects and extend courses to ten years preceded by five years of primary education.¹³⁵ The term non-religious remained disputed between the modernists and the clergy.¹³⁶ The proposed scheme made more space for new subjects aimed at bringing about basic changes in religious education. The suggestion for introduction of English,

Urdu, mathematics, sports, and social sciences points towards this objective.¹³⁷ The proposed curricular changes were justified for different reasons. Learning of English was considered essential for handling modern life and for the mission of Islam. The introduction of mathematics was justified for understanding all modern sciences. The recommendation of Urdu as medium of instruction at secondary level was justified on the basis that ordinary people can understand it easily. The elimination of logic and medieval philosophy was explained by its non-essential character for religious education.¹³⁸ In order to supervise the working of *din-i-madaris* a directorate of religious education was proposed to be established within the *Auqaf* Department. It was to monitor and evaluate the standard of work of teachers and students.¹³⁹ Special six months re-orientation courses were to be arranged for the teachers of *din-i-madaris* in order to equip them for learning new subjects.

The report of 1962 explains that it refers to religious learning (*deeni uloom*) and non-religious learning (*dunyavi uloom*) only as a convenient expression and not to convey the impression that they are opposite to each other. Yet repeated reference to “basic Islamic studies” as strictly religious subjects and the need to expunge unnecessary non-religious subjects from the existing syllabus contradict the earlier explanation.¹⁴⁰ The report did not propose to abolish the dichotomy between religious and non-religious rather reinforced it. The reforms meant only the replacement of non-essential, non-religious disciplines by essential non-religious ones.¹⁴¹ The terms non-essential, non-religious, however, remained disputed between the modernists and traditional *ulema*. For the modernists only the undisputed sources were the religious in the true sense, but for the *ulema* not just those sources but a broad spectrum of texts, techniques and sciences that collectively in their evolution cumulatively comprise the heritage with references to which they define themselves were considered essential for religious education.¹⁴²

The report of 1962 begins by characterizing Islam as an all encompassing religion which it takes to mean that religious education ought to cover all aspects of human life. This contrasted the earlier claim of defining and restricting the sphere of religion.¹⁴³ As there was no dispute over the claim that Islam regulates all aspects of life, therefore, it provides strong justification for the reforms of the *madrasah*: for reforms alone would enable the *ulema* to better participate in modern life, to play an active role in matters of the world, as Islam itself enjoins upon them. These realities not only necessitated the introduction of modern disciplines in *madrasahs* but the integration of *madrasah* themselves into the general education system.¹⁴⁴

The overall response to the proposal of report was not satisfactory as the clergy except Abul Ala Mawdudi took it as a conspiracy by government to weaken their sphere of influence.¹⁴⁵

Madrasahs under Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto:

With the overwhelming victory of secular forces in the election of 1970, the clergy was sidelined for sometime.¹⁴⁶ The nationalization policy of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto was also extended to the educational sector. To counter

this move the *Tanzim ul Madaris-al Arabiyyah* was reorganized in 1974, though *din-i-madarris* were not nationalized at first. However, the constitution of 1973 made many concessions to the clergy almost to their satisfaction.¹⁴⁷ On the directive of the government the Council of Islamic Ideology prepared a comprehensive report on the future Islamic character of education in 1975/76.

The report of the sub-committee on the Islamic system of education appointed by the Council of Islamic Ideology recommended the integration of general education with *madrasah* education by introducing the study of the *Holy Qur'an* and teaching of Islam in the curriculum of institutions of general education. On the other hand, modern subjects were proposed to be included in the curriculum of *madrasahs*.¹⁴⁸ The sub-committee also proposed the establishment of a *madrasah* education board. The certificates and degrees issued by this board were to be officially recognized. General science, mathematics and social sciences were proposed to be included in the curriculum of the *madrasah* after the primary level. It was suggested that the *madrasah* education board should be completely sovereign. *Madrasahs* should be allowed to run on public financial support and the expenditure of the board should be borne by the affiliated *madarassas*.¹⁴⁹ The overall character of this report reveals that it was aiming at Islamization of general education more than reforming *madrasah* education.¹⁵⁰

Towards the end of the Z. A. Bhutto era, the University Grants Commission (UGC) recognized the higher degrees of *din-i-madaris*. The National assembly put the certificate (*sanads*) of *Wifaqul Madaris al Arabia* on the same level as an M.A degree in *Islamiyat* provided the student could qualify for B.A in English. The leaders of *madaris* could not agree to this condition.¹⁵¹ The recognition of certificates of *din-i-madaris* was aimed at playing an effective role by graduates of *madaris* in the field of education. All of the universities did not recognize the equivalence. Therefore, graduates of *madaris* faced difficulties for admission to universities.

Madrasahs under Zia-ul-Haq

General Zia-ul-Haq took power in July 1977 as a result of Pakistan National Alliance (PNA) Movement against the Bhutto government. The PNA movement had derived great strength from the *din-i-madaris* and the mosques. Since Zia-ul-Haq was convinced that the clergy could play a crucial role in the political affairs of the country, he wanted to establish close relationship with the clergy and the *din-i-madaris*. This strategy proved crucial for his prolonged stay in power.

The Sargodha Report

On 2nd September 1978, Zia-ul-Haq ordered the Ministry of Religious Affairs to prepare a comprehensive report of *din-i-madaris* in Sargodha District. After three weeks the report was presented to the president which was known as the Sargodha Report.¹⁵² The report contains a historical introduction and profile of *din-i-madaris* in Sargodha. The DM education is reported to be spread over 9-10 years, subdivided into following three phases.

Preparatory stage	3 years
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Intermediate stage	2-3 years
Final stage	4 years

It is stated that, after the examination of formal primary education, students are sent to *madrasah* where they learn to read Arabic and Persian. However, they are not taught how to write.¹⁵³ It was reported that the owners of *madaris* are responsible for collecting donations. The staff is ill paid with no security of service. The students mostly belong to poor families from rural areas.¹⁵⁴ The report identified the following sources of income of DMs:

Alms collections during Muslim festivities, such as *ids*, income from properties (shops, houses, agriculture land, endowments, and income from adjacent shrines).¹⁵⁵ There followed a number of proposals about how to improve the finances of the DMs and their curricula.

The report reveals that the problems of these institutions related to the proprietary rights over lands on which they are situated, grants of scholarships to the students and teachers for higher education and recognition of their *sanads* (certificates) for the purpose of obtaining jobs in civil services. The committee also recommended that the government should not deprive *din-i-madrasahs* of their autonomous status.¹⁵⁶

The reforms in curriculum were sought by introducing science and technology to integrate the *din-i-madaris* into formal system of education. The first step towards this objective would be the establishment of All Pakistan Education Advisory Board in order to report on the DMs.¹⁵⁷ For higher education (M.A and M.Phil) a federal *Ulema* Academy or University was to be established and the system of examination standardized.¹⁵⁸ The Sargodha Report proved the first step towards further developments in this sector and helped government to identify the areas of special interests. The Ministry of Religious Affairs had already informed the president that efforts to unite *madaris* of all schools of thought under a single organization had failed in the past. The strongest opposition to this policy came from *Wafaq-ul-Madaris al Arabiya*.¹⁵⁹

The overall analysis of the Sargodha Report suggests that some of the *ulema* were in favor of reforms in the *madaris* and that they had expressed their dissatisfaction over the prevailing situation¹⁶⁰. The *Deobandi* were, however, the only group who strongly favored the status quo. This led to the failure of the reform program within *madaris*. The awareness regarding the need of reforms within *madaris* was helpful for the government to proceed with this program in 1979, when the National Committee for *Din-i-Madaris* was established in Islamabad on January 17, 1979. This was aimed at drawing up proposals with reference to the Sargodha Report with the purpose of extending the scope of *madaris* to transform them into an integral part of formal education.¹⁶¹

The committee had 27 members of which 15 were traditional *ulema* and, therefore, was considered a legitimate body, acceptable both to the clergy and the government at the same time. This committee was headed by Dr A.W. J. Halepota, then Director of IRI (Islamic Research Institute) and former member of CII (Council of Islamic Ideology). The recommendation made by this committee is known as the Halepota Report.

The Halepota Report

The comprehensive report expressed dissatisfaction at the overall situation of *din-i-madaris* in Pakistan. According to the report both the quality of education and the financial position of DMs are lamentable.¹⁶² The curricula and system of examination lacked uniformity and were not meeting the needs of the nation and that of the modern age. The report recommended concrete and feasible measures to improve the overall situation in *din-i-madaris* to bring them in accordance to modern needs. Expanding higher education and employment opportunities for the students of *din-i-madaris* by integrating them into overall educational system in the country.¹⁶³ The committee, however, admitted that *din-i-madaris* were the transmitter of cultural heritage of the society and that the student could boast of a motivation for learning not known within formal educational system. It was also proposed that DM should receive aid through governmental institutions.¹⁶⁴

For the integration of both systems of education the committee proposed that modern subjects should be added to the *Dars-i-Nizami*. For this purpose Urdu, mathematics, social science and general science should be introduced at the primary level. In the secondary stage general mathematics, general science, Pakistan studies and English should be included. At the graduation level two subjects from economics, political science and English should be introduced. It was suggested that one-third duration should be allowed for the instruction of modern subjects.¹⁶⁵ In order to bring uniformity between the two streams of education at higher level, comparative religious sciences were to be offered as optional subjects while History, Islamic economy, and Islam and politics would be compulsory.

The following scheme of studies was proposed:

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|--|----------------------|
| (A) <i>Darja Ibtidaya</i> | (primary): | five years |
| <i>Darja Muatawisita</i> | (middle): | three years |
| <i>Darja Thaniya Aama</i> | (secondary): | two years |
| <i>Darja Thaniya Khassa</i> | (higher secondary): | two years |
| <i>Darja Aaliya</i> | (graduation): | two years |
| <i>Darja Takhasus</i> | (post graduation): | two years |
| (B) <i>Tajwid wa Qir'at</i> | institution of artistic recitation of Qur'an,
(Matric): | five years duration. |

(C) *Deeni Ta'lim Barai khawateen*: Religious education for woman
(Matric): five years duration

The representatives of the four schools of thought agreed to introduce modern subjects in all the above mentioned categories of religious educational institutions.¹⁶⁶

The committee further proposed the establishment of a National Institute of *din-i-madaris* for better coordination among the organization of different schools of thought. This institute would be responsible for conducting examinations of *madrasahs* up to M.A level, publishing results to award certificates and to compile curricula as well as to revise them. This institute would also be responsible for the welfare of *madaris*, teachers and the students.¹⁶⁷ Balanced representation of all schools of thought and government representatives would be ensured in the proposed institution.

In order to make the system of examination effective the committee proposed to hold final examinations. The proposed National Institute for Religious *Madaris* would conduct the final examinations. This would help to integrate religious institutions and enable their students to compete for jobs with students of formal educational institutions.¹⁶⁸ It was stated that at the end of each stage of religious education an external examination would be conducted by the National Institute of Religious *Madaris*.¹⁶⁹ Due to the absence of any rule relating to the equivalence of degrees awarded by religious institutions and those of mainstream educational institutions, the degree holders of *din-i-madaris* faced great difficulties in finding jobs in government departments. In order to overcome this problem the committee proposed the equivalence of certificates of different stages of religious educational institutions with those of formal educational certificates.¹⁷⁰

Equivalence of the certificates awarded by Din-i-Madaris and formal education is as follows:¹⁷¹

<i>Darja</i> (stage)	<i>Sanad</i> (certificate)	
Equivalence		
<i>Darja Ibtidaya</i>	<i>Shadat ul Ibtidaya</i>	
Primary		
<i>Darja Muttawasita</i>	<i>Shahadat ul Muttawasita</i>	Middle
<i>Darja Thanviya amah</i>	<i>Shahadat ul Thanviya amah</i>	
Matric		
<i>Darja Thanviya khasa</i>	<i>Shahadat ul Thanviya Khasa</i>	F.A
<i>Darja Aaliya</i>	<i>Shahadat ul Aaliya</i>	
B.A (Bachelor)		
<i>Darja Takhasus</i>	<i>Shahadat ul Takhasus</i>	M.A
(Master)		

During the national survey it was revealed that most *din-i-madaris* lacked basic facilities, i.e. proper buildings, furniture, teaching aids and libraries. The teachers of DMs were found to be the lowest paid as compared to teachers of government education department. In order to improve the financial situation of *din-i-madaris* the government was also asked to ensure the supply of water, gas, and electricity on priority basis. Future housing schemes were to include the construction of DMs. They were to be provided with furniture, books, teaching and writing equipment. Similar to college and universities book banks would be established with the help of the National Book Foundation. Libraries of DM would be supported by the government.¹⁷² The DMs under the umbrella of National Institute for DMs would not have to pay income tax and the financial aid to those DMs should be provided unconditionally. The financial aid is to be provided from Zakat funds.

Measures for the betterment of teacher's economic and social conditions were proposed. The discrimination against teachers and students of DMs in public employment was to be reduced and they were to be helped to establish themselves economically. The students of DMs were also to be enabled to get better educational and employment opportunities. DM student should be provided with scholarships for higher studies at home as well as abroad. Government should enhance employment opportunities in

the state run institutions.¹⁷³ However, it was not thoroughly probed how employment opportunities could be created for such a large scale production of students by DMs.

Neither the report of 1962 nor that of 1979 proposed that *madrasahs* should cease to exist. But both recommended that religious education be somewhat brought within and be regulated by concerns similar to those of the general stream of state sponsored education. However, the extent of expanding the sphere of modern subjects so that it become indistinguishable from other areas of life and delimiting the influence of clergy through DMs seemed unacceptable to religious elites. Even the many conditions attached to the provision of incentives for agreeing with the reform package were a challenge to their autonomy.¹⁷⁴

Reaction of the Din-i-Madaris

At first, the report was received positively among the *ulema* and it was termed the first step towards the unification of different types of education which was the need of the time.¹⁷⁵ Later on, the situation changed and opposition came from the *ulema* of different schools of thought. Sometimes the *ulema* of the same school of thought differ in their reactions to the reform package. However, the most fervent opposition came from the Deobandi. An important representative of Deoband, Mohammad Yousaf Ludhianwi, was a great critic of the reform committee. He termed the proposed reforms as a deep rooted conspiracy against the autonomy of DMs. He was of the view that modern education was aimed at destroying Muslim identity and culture, and the present initiative would not only destroy Islamic education but Islam itself.¹⁷⁶ He believed that the reform committee was a representative of state power and promotes its interests.

Ludianwi argued that *madrasahs* were the defenders of religious sciences in society and their integration into formal educational system would prevent them from performing their purely religious services and subordinate them to worldly education. This opinion was, however, in sharp contrast to the concept that Islam characterizes a system encompassing life in its fullness: a major theme of the *ulema's* religious discourse. His stand clearly vindicated that there is a separate and independent sphere of religion and its preservation would be ensured only through an independent and autonomous system of *madrasahs*. He warned the government of the worst reaction ever shown by DMs if it tried to proceed with the proposals of the reform committee. As far as the matter of financial aid was concerned, Ludlianwi believed that it was against the spirit of religious institutions and the ego of *ulema* to accept conditional aid from the rulers.¹⁷⁷ He appealed to DMs to reject the proposals of the committee entirely, to show that gaining of certificates and titles was not the aim of the *ulema*.

This was followed by a campaign against the proposals which had assumed an official character. The central organization of the *Wafaq-ul-Madaris* expressed its disappointment with the proposals of the committee and refused to co-operate with its chairman. The Deobandi were the main source of strength behind this campaign as the main DMs in Pakistan were under the influence of religious families affiliated with the Deobandi school of thought¹⁷⁸

Maulana Mufti Mahmood, a leading Deobandi *alim* and leader of *Jamiat-ul-Ulama-i-Islam*, who had mobilized masses against Bhutto during the 1977 agitation, opposed any state interference in the curricula of DMs. He declared the syllabus of the DMs to be perfect and comprehensive.¹⁷⁹

The opposition to the report of 1979 was basically the question of authority and identity of the traditional religious leaders. As the mixed curriculum could undermine this sectarian identity and reduce the unquestioned authority of the owners of DM, the *ulema* could not agree to its implementation. The extent of opposition from different sects was proportionate to the stakes involved for them in the proposed scheme as the strongest opposition of the Deobandi school of thought indicates. The introduction of modern sciences was not acceptable because it is a threat to the separate identity of the religious sphere of education.¹⁸⁰ That in post-independence India these apprehensions were expressed by DMs was quite natural. But the continued suspicion shown by the *ulema* in Pakistan was astonishing as Muslim culture and identity were not at stake in a Muslim majority state.

It is universally understood that reform is the essence of every social order and Islam permits this by embodying the idea of *ijtihad*. The *ulema*, however, failed to execute this important notion to the benefit of Muslim community in any social sector, and the education sector is no exception in this regard. All those who resisted the reforms in DM argued that the experience in other countries was not encouraging as *ulema* of eminence ceased to be produced there, while *madrasahs* in the Subcontinent produce distinguished scholars by adhering to the knowledge of the traditional religious sphere and resisting all forms of reforms. They think that the existence of the present system of *madrasahs* was necessary for the maintenance of religion in society.¹⁸¹

The response to reform of many other *ulema* was more or less the same as that of Maulana Ludhianvi, and Maulana Mufti Mahmood. However, some of the *ulema* had different opinions regarding the question of reforms. Maulana Mohammad Yousaf Banuri, the founder of the *Jamiat-ul-Ulum al Islamiya*, Karachi, was of the view that many texts studied in *madarassa* are sometimes barely intelligible. He held such texts to be obscure because they were written and introduced into *madrasahs* during the period of Muslim intellectual decline in the late Middle Ages. Yet he did not mean to subvert *madrasahs* rather to salvage them. He wrote that some of the texts conventionally used in *madrasahs* ought to be replaced by simpler, clearer, and more authoritative texts. We do not want to do away with traditional sciences but seek only to create greater competence in them through the introduction of better books,¹⁸² said Banuri.

Banuri recognizes the need for the introduction of new subjects in *madrasahs* too, but only in tandem with the strengthening and deepening of the religious sphere.

Mohammad Taqi Uthmani, Vice President of the *Dar-ul-Ulum Madarassa* of Karachi, tends to a similar conclusion, though based on a naïve approach towards the history of *madarassa* education in the Subcontinent. He observes that the *Dars-i-nizami* comprised religious and

non-religious sciences in colonial India, and Muslim students graduating from this system of education were capable of fulfilling their responsibilities in every sphere of practical life. This system has an added feature of enabling a person to strengthen his religious belief and preparing a student for taking up modern sciences at the same time.¹⁸³

He, however, showed willingness to adapt to change by incorporating Western sciences and philosophy under Muslim rule. He contended that the strong opposition of the *ulema* to this idea in the past was based on the perceived policy of British colonialism of destroying their religion in the Subcontinent carried out in the name of reforms.¹⁸⁴ Yet Uthmani considered *madrasahs* as purely religious institutions which can guarantee the preservation of religion in society. As far as the process of integration was concerned, he believed that mainstream institutions need reforms as well to establish their Islamic character, and, until the achievement of this objective, integration would be meaningless. As far as the introduction of modern subjects was concerned he believed that such incorporation should not affect the purely religious character of *madrasah* education.¹⁸⁵

Although the extent and substance of reaction vary among different groups of *ulema* and sometimes among different *ulema* of the same group, the element of distrust and lack of confidence was common among all the *ulema* regarding the government initiatives the essence of which was deeply rooted in the colonial era.

In the prevailing situation the Ministry of Education on March 15, 1981 insisted to arrange a meeting with the *ulema* purely in the interest of the nation. Dr Halepota confirmed that DMs were not to be nationalized and that they were only to obtain financial support and that their graduates would receive equal treatment.¹⁸⁶

On April 19, 1981 the Ministry of Religious Affairs which had borne the cost for the DM committee wrote to the Islamic Research Institute whose director was the chairman of the committee:

Since the *ulema* themselves do not want that Government should take any initiative in this behalf and since the Government's intentions have been suspected quite unjustifiably, no further action will be taken in this behalf, at least for the time being.

According to Dr. Halepota, Zia-ul-Haq, while expressing regret to committee members later on, complained about the non-cooperation of the *ulema*.¹⁸⁷

Din-i-madaris Comprehensive Report 1988

The National Education Policy 1976 had proposed that the state of education in Pakistan should be improved. Therefore, a comprehensive survey of *din-i-madaris* was conducted in the country. In the light of this survey a comprehensive report of *din-i-madaris* was prepared by the committee established for this purpose in 1988.¹⁸⁸ The committee agreed that the funds provided to the DMs were not sufficient for their needs. Therefore, financial aid should be provided to the DMs to improve their performance. The consent of DMs must be secured for this purpose. The committee proposed the following measures for reforming the DMs in Pakistan.

As a tradition the students of DMs belong to the poor segment of the society. The well-off people usually do not study in the DMs. The lack of employment opportunities and lower social status of DMs students are responsible for this situation. Therefore, DM education should be made attractive by providing various incentives to the DM students.

During the survey an overwhelming majority of the *Muntazemeen* of DMs agreed to the changes in the curriculum, though it was not expected earlier. The committee concluded that changes in the syllabus of the DMs should be introduced to bring it in accordance with changing needs, if uniform educational system was not possible at the moment. Thus, a comprehensive study was made to ascertain the extent of changes to be introduced in the existing curriculum.

The report of 1988 also proposed changes in the curriculum of the formal education system. The committee was of the view that the people produced by the formal education sector are usually deficient in knowledge on the basis of which Pakistan came into being. This objective can be achieved by reviewing the books of all subjects and should be based on the Islamic concept of knowledge. In order to enhance the knowledge of the students regarding Islam, the syllabus of *Islamiyat* from primary to graduation level should be reviewed so that repetition may be avoided and each stage may prove a source of new information for the readers. It was noted that the text books of *Islamiyat* from primary to graduation level lacked continuity.

Examination has a vital importance in education. Therefore, an effective examination system can improve the efficiency of educational institutions. It was revealed during the survey that most of the *Muntazemeen* of DMs agreed to affiliate with the proposed board of DMs. Therefore, an effective representation of *ulema* in this board must be insured. The proposed board should have branches in all the four provinces and Azad Kashmir so that an effective coordination between the board and DMs may be maintained.

The committee for DMs came to the conclusion that the teachers of DMs were facing financial hardships especially in old age. The committee therefore recommended that the government create funds for the financial support of the teachers of DMs so that they could lead an honorable life. Medical expenses of those teachers and their spouses should be borne by the government. The teachers of DMs should be sent for training of *Hujjaj* so that they should have more exposure as well as the chance of performing the *Haj* (pilgrimage). Special training for primary level teachers may be arranged and the participants may be given special allowances. Salaries of teachers may also be raised. In the housing schemes a share for the DMs teachers should be earmarked. Scholarships should be allowed to the DMs students and they should be encouraged for foreign study on the same lines as those of the formal educational institutions. Efforts should be made to get the help of Arab countries in this regard. ¹⁸⁹

The Din-i-madaris Regulation

Due to the resistance of the DMs Zia-ul-Haq was forced to postpone for the time being the reform of DMs as proposed by Dr. Halepota. A *Din-i-madaris* Regulation was introduced with immediate effect. It projected an assimilation of the two systems while conserving the autonomy of the DMs.

At present a National Institute of *Din-i-madaris* Pakistan (N I D M P) was to be established with two chambers.¹⁹⁰

The syndicate was to consist of the *ulema*'s representatives, of the ministries and of institutions of education as well as of the provincial governments. Out of 22 members 12 were to be *ulema* pertaining to different schools of thought. The task of the syndicate included the supervision of the DMs attached to the NIDMP. Furthermore, it was to be responsible for improving the qualifications of the teachers, conduct examination at the higher and intermediate stage, lay down conditions for affiliation to the NIDMP, conduct admission tests, issue certificates, levy and collect contributions, administer the funds of the institute (NIDMP), present the annual budget, and take care of any other administrative matters. The second chamber was the Academic Council comprising 32 members with 20 *ulema* and 12 administrative experts and academicians. Its task was to advise the syndicate in all matters of scientific and pedagogical nature, with special emphases on matters of curricula and examinations. The chairman of the NIDMP had a unique position by having the chairmanship of both chambers. Only the president could substitute for him. The President of Pakistan was the ultimate authority and the chairman was responsible to him. The working languages of the institute were to be Urdu and Arabic. The institute was to be financed from different sources: contributions of the DMs, grants-in-aid by the state, and by different institutions, scholarships, *awqaf* funds and other sources.¹⁹¹

Recognition of sanads of DMs

The government efforts to pacify the clergy continued despite the previous failed efforts of integrating traditional religious institutions. An attempt to integrate the clergy through recognizing the certificates of DM was another step in this direction. During the Bhutto era such an attempt had failed because of disagreement between UGC (University Grants Commission) and the universities regarding this issue.

To take up this issue once again the UGC committee for the equal status of DM certificates was established in 1980. Its proposals were finally implemented on April 16, 1981.¹⁹² The *Fawqaniyyah* certificate of Islamiyat and Arabic was to be recognized by colleges and universities on condition that the graduates of DM would have successfully passed two more subjects which were compulsory for the B.A. examination. This was the revival of the proposal made in 1976 on the equivalence of degree. Later on, it was decided that for teachers of Arabic and Islamic studies, parity of status with M.A in these subjects should be given to the *Shahadat ul Fazila Sanad* of *wafaq-ul-madaris* (Deoband), the *Shahadatul Faragha* of *Tanzimul Madaris* (Barelvi) as well as to the final certificates of the two other schools of thought, the *Shia* and *Ahl-e-Hadith*.¹⁹³

Besides the formal recognition of their graduates the government wanted to provide financial support to DMs because of their bad financial position. It was proposed that financial support should be provided from the *zakat* fund as *zakat* regulation had already declared DM students eligible for the receipt of *zakat*. The CII supported the criteria of the *zakat* regulation. It was, however, made clear that only the DM student would be eligible for

receipt of financial support and no one else. To ascertain the other conditions for the receipt of *zakat* a 12 member committee was nominated by provincial *zakat* administration. Others details were finalized by this committee.¹⁹⁴

Reaction of Clergy and Din-i-madaris to the Official Policies

Since the proposal of the DM committee of 1979 was not received well by the Deobandi *Wafaq ul Madaris*, they successfully campaigned to win over other schools of thought. They presented alternative curricula to that of the DM committee comprising of 16 instead of usual of eight years of instruction in accordance with the proposals of the National Committee for *Din-i-madaris*, while the curriculum committee of the Halepota Report had proposed a subdivision in four levels similar to the formal education system (primary, Matric, B.A and M.A level, middle and F.A having been dropped).

The *Wafaq* and the *Tanzim* preferred a stricter subdivision into six levels. The religious scholars thus wanted to adapt their system of education primarily to the colonial system of education. The English denominations of the certificates received an Arabic nomenclature in DM system thus opening the possibility of putting the formal secular aspects of the DM curricula on a religious, traditional level. In the course of instruction of *Wafaq ul Madaris* some innovation were added to the *Dars-i-Nzami*. The curricula nevertheless were essentially different from that proposed by the DM committee of 1979. It had been the aim of the National Committee for *Din-i-madaris* to integrate new disciplines into the traditional system of education of *madaris*. The classical traditional curriculum would thus be simultaneously modernized and legitimized in Islamic fundamentalist manner.¹⁹⁵

The enthusiasm of the members of the Halepota Report for integration was based on the concept of knowledge which had been presented by Islamic intellectuals in 1977 in Mecca in the first World Conference on Islamic Education. This points to their unquestioned belief in technology.¹⁹⁶ The curriculum proposed by the DM committee was close to the one advocated by Abul Ala Mawdudi and supported by a small section of different schools of thought who favored modernization.

While the clergy by and large paid no heed to the proposal of the Halepota Report for the curricula at the primary level, the proposal for curricula of the *Wafaq* at middle level (grades 6 to 10) actually included new subjects. The classical subjects of *Dars-i-nizami* were part of it only towards the end of this level. The studies of Islamic law were nevertheless still at the core of the curriculum in contrast to the proposals of NCDM, in which modern as well as classical subjects were compulsory. Still subjects such as English and Pakistan Studies and general science were not taken into consideration in the proposals of the *Wafaq*, while economics, comparative religious sciences as well as communism and capitalism, social sciences and other new subjects were offered as optional subjects.¹⁹⁷ After several interactions with the government *Wafaq-ul-Madaris* agreed to some adjustments with the government proposals. A factor in this was also the fear of losing teachers as the previous years witnessed a brain drain away

from *madaris* to the formal institutions and to foreign countries. The decision in favor of a new curriculum was further facilitated by the prospects of official recognition and financial support by the government. The government accepted the sixteen years curriculum as it apparently fulfilled the conditions for a formal recognition. There was, however, no essential alteration of the classical DMs course of instruction. The *ulema* had been able to profit by this alteration, gaining official recognition. This showed the ability of the *ulema* to meet the demands of innovation and pragmatism without acting against their own interest. With the new curriculum they gained influence, rather than losing it. They finally achieved formal recognition via these curricula, and, on this basis, were now able to influence the secular sector. The DMs thus evolved into alternatives to the secular, official, or commercial systems of education.

Table 21: Different Curricula at a Glance

Subject	1 a	1 b	1 c	2	3	4	5
Koran, Reading, Memorizing		x	x	x	x	x	x
Morphology	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Syntax	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Arabic		x	x	x	x	x	x
Biography of Prophet (sirat)			x	x	x	x	x
Arithmetic	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Pakistan Studies			x				x
General Sciences			x				x
English			x			x	x
Islamic Law and Hadith			x				
Natural Sciences			x	x	x	x	
Islamic Law	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Methods of Islamic Law	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Logic	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Arabic Literature	x	x	x			x	x
Tradition or Literature			x				
Rhetoric's	x		x	x	x	x	
Interpretation of Koran	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Tradition	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Methods of Tradition	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Principles of Belief, Scholastics	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Philosophy	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Islamic History		x	x	x	0	x	x
Economics			x	x	0		
Political Sciences			x	x			

					0		
Cultural Sciences			x	x	0		
Methods of Interpretation of Koran	x		x				x
Law of Tradition			x				
Comparative Sciences of Religion			x	x	0		
Discussions (<i>Munazara</i>)	x						x
Prosody	x						
Religious Studies (<i>Diniyat</i>)				x	x	x	x
Urdu			x	x	x	x	
Persian			x	x	x	1	x
Gymnastics (<i>Tamrin</i>)				x	x		
Moral (<i>Ikhlaiyat</i>)		x		x	x	x	
Law of Inheritance		x		x	x	x	
Dictation		x					x

Sources:

- 1a = *Dars-i-nizami*; cf. *Halepota Report*, pp. 122, 135, 147-155.
 1b = Curicullum of four years of the *Wafaq al-madaris al-arabiyyah*; cf. *Halepota Report*, *ibid*.
 1c = Proposal of National Committee of Din-i-madaris, 1979; cf. *Halepota Report*, *ibid*.
 2 = Wafaq-proposal partly enacted in 1983; cf. *solah sala nisab-e-ta lim* (tajwiz), Multan, 1983, *Waqaf al-madaris (manzur kardah 1)*.
 3 = Waqaf-proposal as enacted in 1984, cf. *solah sala nisab-e-ta lim*, Multan, *Waqaf al-madaris (manzur kardah 11)*.
 4 = Tanzim-proposal, enacted in 1983; cf. *solah sala nisab-e ta`lim (manzur)*, Lahore, 1984, Tanzim al-madaris.
 5 = *Jama`at-e Islami: Cheh salah nisab fadil alim-e islami* 'Ulama' Akademi, Mansurah, Lahore, n.d.; exams are to be passed in "English", "Pakistan Studies", "Mathematics", "General Science", "Islamic History" and "Diniyat".

Explanations: 0 = These subjects are to be taught after graduation (faraghat) in a special two years course (darajah-e takhassus); cf *solah sala nisab-eta`lim, Wafaq al-madaris al-arabiyyah*, Multan, 1984 (*manzur kardah 11*), pp. 7ff. 21, 39.

1 = Persian is a precondition for the course of *Tanzim*.

To evaluate the situation correctly it is important to note that Zia ul Haq, the bureaucracy, and the *ulema* had different objective in the agenda of reforms. The president sought the acceptance of his leadership by the *ulema* and thus Islamic legitimization of his rule. For the bureaucracy, formalization of DM served as a means to bring them under control and thus to neutralize them politically. The *ulema*, in contrast, were aimed at

escaping their backwardness and achieving social recognition without giving up their tradition. On the other hand, the appeasement of *ulema* was a pragmatic move of Zia ul Haq who managed to isolate clergy from mainstream political parties during MRD Movement.¹⁹⁸

Barelvi *Tanzim* was relatively more easily ready for accepting the government agenda. The new curriculum of the Barelvi is characterized by the additional eight years phase put in front of the old curriculum. The innovations to the old curriculum are of no particular value. Mathematics, history and geography are listed but not specified as to their contents. The new subjects are said to cover only the classes up to grade 10. There are almost no alternations to the classical DM course of instruction. This is evident from a sentence contained in the curriculum of the *Tanzim* in 1983.¹⁹⁹

A spectacular reaction of the *ulema* and of the DM against the official measures of Islamization was the boycott of the *zakat* system. The most important point of controversy between the state and the clergy was the regulation that the institutions receiving *zakat* were to maintain an account on the *zakat* funds received and this bookkeeping was to be audited by the *zakat* administration. The bureaucracy would thus have information on the budgets of DM, the *ulema* and ultimately of religious political parties. The auditing personnel were to be nominated by the chief administrator *zakat*. The Central *zakat* Administration (CZA) was actually demanding from the *Mohtamins* proof that the fund had been spent according to the rules of *Sharia* as understood by the Central *zakat* Administration (CZA). Reacting to this regulation the DMs affiliated to the *wafaq ul madaris al Arabia* refused to accept *zakat* from PZC as long as *muftis* did not agree on the compatibility of the new regulation with the *sharia*.²⁰⁰ *Wafaq ul Madaris* did not agree to some parts of the *zakat* regulation and, therefore, they refused to accept *zakat*.²⁰¹

The *Wafaq ul Madaris* called upon all the DMs affiliated to it not to accept any *zakat* funds from the *zakat* administration and even to return the amounts already received. Maulana Mufti Mahmood, a leading *Deosbandi alim* had issued a *fatwa* in this regard declaring whole official *zakat* systems against the *Sharia*. However, the appeal of boycott was not received unanimously because some the DM accepted *zakat*. *Jamia Ashrafiyyah*, Lahore, was one of the largest *Deobandi* DMs which accepted official *zakat*.

In contrast to the policy of the *Wafaq* the *Barelvi Tanzim* not only accepted the official *zakat* but asked for it without any precondition. The *Tanzim* rather asked for raising *zakat* fund to the DMs and making the flow easy.²⁰² Thus, while *Deobandi* were still claimed to reject *zakat* from central *zakat* fund, the *Barelvi* proved to be main beneficiary from this system. Besides *Barelvi*, the *Ahl-e-Hadith* and *Jamaat-i-Islami* were the main beneficiaries. Though the *Shia* were ideologically against the prevailing *zakat* system, some of its DMs received *zakat* as well.²⁰³

Madrasahs under Democracy, 1988-1999

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan (1979) and the Iranian revolution (1979) brought far-reaching implications for the whole region and especially for Pakistan. The religious forces were most suited to be anti-Soviet forces

because the war against Soviet occupation in 1979 was initiated in the name of Islam. General Zia-ul-Haq promoted *Sunni* Islam in order to neutralize the influence of *Shiism* and to strengthen *jihad* in Afghanistan at the same time. The defeat of the Russian army in Afghanistan in 1989 was, therefore, considered to be the victory of Islam. This development had far reaching impacts on Pakistani *Sunni* religious circles as they had provided active support to the *jihadis*. These forces started to visualize an Islamic revolution on the same lines in Pakistan. Meanwhile, the international community ceased to take further interest in the region after the Soviet withdrawal.

The instability in Afghanistan and the rising influence of religious extremists were the main challenges for the successive democratic governments in Pakistan from 1988 onwards.²⁰⁴ The main focus of the governments during this period remained on appeasement of the extremist religious forces rather than to contemplate their education system. The establishment of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan encouraged the clergy of Pakistan to demand Islamization of the society according to their interpretation of the *Sharia*. Since the ruling Taliban in Afghanistan had studied in the DMs in Pakistan, therefore, the links between these *madaris* and the Taliban were further strengthened. With this, the element of militancy for the realization of religious objectives was incorporated into the minds of students of DMs.

The rise of the Islamic movements, the *Tehrik-i-Nifaz-e-Shariat-i-Mohammadi* (TNSM) of Maulana Sufi Mohammad in Malakand Division (NWFP) in November 1994 and of *Tanzeem-i-Ittehad-e-Ulam-i-Qabail* (TIUQ) Khyber Agency (FATA) were initial manifestations of the *ulema* assertion for political authority. This claim for political authority was justified on the perceived failure of government to deliver social justice and maintain law and order effectively.²⁰⁵ The TNSM in pursuit of its goals rallied thousands of supporters in May 1994. They demonstrated in Swat and blocked the Malakand Pass. In November of the same year another rebellion took place in Swat in which the TNSM activists paralyzed government institutions. In the ensuing violence government officials were made hostages and a PPP MPA was killed while resisting being taken prisoner. The movement spread to other parts of Malakand in several days. Under heavy pressure of the movement the NWFP(=Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) government announced the enforcement of *Sharia* in Malakand Division. According to the *Nifaz-e-Sharia* Regulation 1994, session judges, civil judges and magistrates were renamed as *Zila Qazi*, *Ilaqa Qazi* and *Qazi Faujdari*, respectively. However, normalcy could return to Swat only after a long spell of violence claiming dozens of lives and loss of property worth hundreds of millions.²⁰⁶ Soon after, the TNSM leadership questioned the credentials of *Qazis* appointed by the government for not fulfilling the requirements of the *Sharia*. The mushroom growth of the *madrasahs*'s influence and the increasing number of F M radio stations run by local clerics is a post-1994 phenomena in Swat.²⁰⁷

Parallel to the development in Malakand Division, a socio-religious movement started in Khyber Agency (FATA). This was known as *Tanzeem-i-Ittihadah-e-Ulama-i-Qabail* (TIUQ). The workers of the *Tanzeem*

challenged government authority by taking law and order into their own hands. They imposed harsh punishments upon local people. The government had no other option than to order several military operations to establish its writ in the Khyber Agency, albeit temporarily. A decisive operation in August 1995 against the tribesmen resulted in the deaths of twenty-one people. Later on, the government released several leaders of the TIUQ on the assurance that government authority would not be challenged in the future.²⁰⁸ Though both TNSM and TIUQ are based on local motives, they draw strength from the common slogan of *Sharia* and the same segment of the society. The PPP government confronted this situation until its dismissal in November 1996.

These religious movements and other extremist groups to raise important concerns and politicize public opinions were unquantifiable contributors to the provincial and national changes made by the caretaker government after the dismissal of the PPP government at the center. After the election of 1997 the provincial government of Pakistan Muslim League and Awami National Party confronted the same situation that had been faced by the previous government. In June 1997 the provincial government lifted the ban on the TNSM and the activities of Sufi Mohammad. The chief Minister promised that the establishment of *Qazi* courts would be reviewed in Malakand Division.²⁰⁹ In spite of heavy electoral success of Pakistan Muslim League and Awami National Party in the province, neither rising extremism could be overcome nor could the issue of law and order could be permanently resolved.

Many factors are said to be responsible for the failure of successive democratic governments to overcome the menace of extremism. The Taliban regime in Afghanistan is counted to be the main external factor in this context. The Taliban being the product of DMs in Pakistan had deep relations with the leadership of religious parties and most of the large DMs in the NWFP and tribal areas. Among the internal factors the failure of the judicial system to deliver speedy justice and the close links of the Inter Services Intelligence Agency (ISI), an intelligence wing of the Pakistan army, with the extremist religious groups along with local issues are responsible for ever-increasing extremism and militancy in Pakistani society.²¹⁰

Recommendations of Educational Policies and Council of Islamic Ideology

The recommendations of the first Educational Conference (1947) and those of all educational policies declared that a uniform educational system should be introduced in the country. Similarly, the reforms in the religious education were proposed to bring it at par with the formal educational system in the country. The National Educational Policy (1979) recommended utilizing mosques for the universalizing of primary education. The *imams* (prayer leaders) of mosques should be employed in such schools along with other teachers for this purpose.²¹¹ National Educational Policy 1998-2010 proposed the establishment of a *Din-i-madaris* Board for maintaining the standard of education in *Din-i-madaris* through

standardization of curricula and examination system, equivalence of *asnad* (certificate), award of scholarships, grant-in-aid and financial assistance by the government. The willing *tanzeems* of independent *madaris* will be eligible for affiliation by the board. Model *dar-ul-ulums* were to be established through phased programs at divisional level throughout the country to absorb the graduates of these *madaris* in the market for technical, vocational and formal educational courses. A Proposal for removing the three-tier system of education (English medium, Urdu medium and *din-i-madaris*) was recommended.²¹²

The Council of Islamic Ideology also recommended a comprehensive reforms package for the educational system in the country. The recommendations of the Council of Islamic Ideology 1975-76 stated that all the branches of learning and education on study of sciences and religion belong to Islamic educational system provided that the elements that are opposed to Islamic ideals are removed. Hence, no educational institution should be considered outside the ambit of Islamic educational system. The deficiencies and gaps are filled up by adding the study of the *Holy Qur'an* and teaching of Islam to the curriculum of the institutions of general education. On the other hand, subjects helpful in modern times are included in the curriculum of the institutions of religious education. The essential atmosphere for preserving Islamic ideals of character, morality and spiritual zeal is maintained in all the institutions. It should be seen that the curriculum and general atmosphere of all the institutions are conducive to the fundamental ideals of Islamic unity, brotherhood, love for the country, and the Islamic ideals for which Pakistan came into existence. Similar recommendations, made in 1978 by the CII, were aimed at the establishment of uniform educational system in the country (bringing all the streams of educations into a single uniform system).²¹³

The foregoing discussion revealed that repeated efforts for integration of the traditional educational sector with that of the formal education system could not be realized since 1947. The main reasons in this regard were the lack of commitment on the part of bureaucracy and non-cooperation of the clergy. The *ulema* always considered such moves as part of a direct threat to their influence and a challenge to their authority. On the other hand, the governments, especially military governments, tried to legitimize their claims to political power through such measures and were not able to gain the confidence of *ulema* for this purpose. Despite all these efforts the dichotomy in the educational system was more visible after more than 50 years than it had been in 1947.

4- Reforms Since 2000: Action Against The Status Quo

Reforming *madrasahs* is a major cause for concern in the 21st century. The new developments at international level, especially the events of 11th September 2001, increased the importance of *madrasah* reforms not only for Pakistan but for the whole world.

The Government of Pakistan and countries in the West, particularly America, are now eagerly seeking to enforce changes in the *madrasah* system in the belief that non-reformed *madrasahs* are rapidly emerging as major training grounds for terrorists. In addition, many Muslims, including the *ulema*, are also at the forefront of demand for change in *madrasah* system. The different actors in this complex game have widely differing understandings of reforms, each reflecting their own particular agenda. This chapter is aimed at analysing different ways in which reforms in *madrasahs* in Pakistan are imagined and advocated by different actors, especially the state and its agencies. This chapter also looks into the detailed efforts for this purpose undertaken by the government and the efforts of NGOs with the collaboration of *madrasahs* since 2000.

The expansionist designs of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan towards the end of 20th century worried neighbouring countries especially Pakistan because of the increasing trend of *Talibanization* at border areas (FATA) and in the N.W.F.P (=Khyber Pakhtunkhwa). Rising extremism and militancy remained a constant threat to successive governments during the last decade of the 20th century. The military government which came into power as a result of a bloodless revolution on October 12, 1999 faced the same challenge in an increasing way. Therefore, the government wanted to remove the general perception of the international community that *madrasahs* were breeding terrorism. In addition, the government wanted an effective control over the religious movements which it considered were drawing support from *madrasahs*. The government also wanted to bring the *madrasahs* into the mainstream education system by changes in the existing curriculum of *din-i-madaris*.

Agenda of Reforms and the Musharraf Regime

The government policy towards reforms dates from August 2001, prior to the 11th September terrorist attacks on the USA. The president's wide-ranging and widely reported speech of January 12th, 2002 underlined the need to curb the influence of religious institutions. His proposals included the need to widen the *madrasah* curricula and bring them within the mainstream of education and instructed *madrasahs* not to take students from other countries.²¹⁴

The press is currently full of discussion and press releases related to *madrasah* reforms. Views are, however, divided on the actual role of *madrasahs*. Some people argue that these are the hub of evil activities occurring in the world while some consider them the cradles of peace and harmony. The responsibilities of these institutions increased many fold in the backdrop of the present worldwide criticism about their role as far as peace and harmony is concerned.

It is difficult to identify the exact time when *madrasahs* became violent. A major contribution to the militancy rampant in *madrasahs* today was made in the 1980s. A study conducted by Patrick Belton shows how textbooks developed at the University of Nebraska-Omaha and published by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) were used to encourage and justify the holy war against the Soviets. These books were so radical that they were used by the Taliban in the *madrasahs* under their rule. What is obvious now is that *madrasahs* faced interference from many external forces ranging from the Pakistani government to the US government and *al-Qaeda*, which wanted them to serve their respective political interests.²¹⁵

As a part of the *madrasah* reform program of the government, the National Education Policy 1999-2010 had envisaged the following objectives in the context of the *din-i-madaris*.

To bridge the existing gulf between formal education and the *din-i-madaris*.

To equate their degrees with the formal education system.

To recognise them and provide valuable and related books for research and reforms.

To evolve an integrated system of national education by bringing *Din-i-madaris* and modern schools closer in the curriculum and the contents of education.²¹⁶

In line with these objectives the government initiated certain revolutionary steps for improvement of the working conditions of *madaris* across the country.

Table 1.4

REIs: Government's Development Programs, 1985-2004

Duration	For	Amount in Million
1985-88 (3 years)	Teaching of English, Economics and Pak-study	1.90
1994-97 (3 years)	Teaching of English, Economics and Pak-study (at Metric Level)	19.95
2000-03 (3 years)	Introduction of Computer for 50 Institutions and Improvement of communication at Intermediate Level	30.45
2001-04 (3 years)	5 Computers and 2 printers each per 150 Din-i-madaris	99.50

Source: Ministry of Education Islamabad, 2001

The Pakistan Madrasah Education (Establishment and Affiliation of Model Deeni Madrasah) Board Ordinance 2001

In the first instance an ordinance called “The Pakistani Madrasahs Education (Establishment and Affiliation of Model *Din-i-Madrasahs*) Board Ordinance 2001 was promulgated on August 18, 2001 with the objective of enabling the establishment of *din-i-madaris*, improving and securing uniformity of the standard of education and integration of the system of Islamic education imparted in *din-i-madaris* within general education, providing for securing the registration, regulation, standardization and uniformity of curricula and standard of education of *din-i-madaris* imparting specialised Islamic education in Pakistan with the general education system, maintaining the autonomous character of *din-i-madaris*, bringing education and training imparted in religious institutions in consonance with the requirements of the modern age and the basic tenets and spirit of Islam, providing greater opportunities in national life for the graduates of *din-i-madaris* and according recognition of equivalence of degrees, certificates, and *Asnad* awarded by *din-i-madaris* and to regulate their examination system.²¹⁷ The ordinance provided for representation of the different schools of thought in the Board.²¹⁸

To start with, a Pakistan Madrasah Education Board provided under the ordinance was setup on September 8, 2001 under the control of the Ministry of Religious Affairs. The board further established in the preliminary stage three model *din-i-madaris*, two at Karachi and Sukker for boys and one at Islamabad, exclusively for girls. In these *madrasahs* religious education along with general education is given to the students. Sufficient funds were allocated for proper functioning of the Board and the model *din-i-madaris*. Moreover, the board is fully equipped with essential staff, building, furniture and office equipment and is utilizing its powers to perform such functions as are necessary to implement and achieve the objectives of the ordinance.²¹⁹

The ordinance, however, could not be properly enforced as religious circles, particularly; the *Ittehad-i-Tanzemat-e-Madaris-i-Deenia* did not cooperate with the government in any activity of the Madrasah Board or accept any membership therein. In the backdrop of such a situation, the government reviewed its policy and initiated more steps in the context of registration of *din-i-madaris*, rationalizing of syllabus and mainstreaming of *madrasahs* which formed government policy on the issue.²²⁰

While undertaking initiatives on *madrasah* reforms it was envisaged that the activities and functioning of *madrasahs* may also be regulated through an independent enactment, providing for their registration. No specific law existed to regulate the activities of *madaris*. Neither was registration mandatory nor did registration provide any regulatory mechanism. Except for those affiliated with the well-known institutions, the majority of *madrasahs* were unaware of registration obligations and formalities. In the absence of a specific law, the *madrasahs* in the country were operating in a void, the dangers of which were amply witnessed in the protests and demonstrations. Hence, there was a need for a specific law²²¹. For registration purposes there was reliance on

The Social Welfare Voluntary Organization Act 1961.

Act XXI of 1860 for the Registration of Literary, Scientific and Charitable Societies (for *madrasahs* which are trusts).

Under these acts the registration authority is vested with the registration firms and joint stock companies or with an officer duly authorized by the provincial government. Thus it was expedient to provide a forum for the registration, standardization, and uniformity of curriculum of religious institutions.²²²

Before that, urgent action was needed to start a consultative process for evolving consensus to create a regulatory framework. A number of meetings with heads of *Wafaqs/Tanzeem-ul-Madris/Rabita-ul-Madris* and some prominent *ulema* were held in the Ministry of Religious Affairs to strike a consensus on forming a law for this purpose. The consensus could not develop for a considerable period due to the reservations of the religious circles and heads of *Wafaqs/Tanzeems* on the proposed framework. At last the (ITMD) agreed to cooperate with the government in the registration process. As a result the government after consultation with the ITDM, promulgated an ordinance by amending the Societies Registration Act of 1860 on December 1, 2005 by adding section 21 after section 20 of the Act.

Societies Registration Ordinance of 2005

The ordinance is also called the *Din-i-Madaris* Voluntary Registration and Regulation Ordinance, 2005. In the ordinance it is has been clearly provided that:

No *madrasah* shall operate without getting itself registered.

Every *madrasah* shall submit an annual report of its educational activities and performance to the registrar.

Every *madrasah* shall cause to be carried out the audit of its accounts by an auditor and submit a copy of its audited report to the registrar.

No *madrasah* shall teach or publish any literature which promotes militancy or spreads sectarianism or religious hatred.²²³

Madrasah Reforms Project (M R P)

The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) agreed between the federal, provincial and regional educational authorities for executing a multimillion rupees project for reforming 8000 *madaris* within five years is a ground-breaking event.²²⁴ The Madrasah Reform Project (MRP) is a part of the government comprehensive program for the reform of religious institutions in the country. The Madrasah Reform Project was started on January 8, 2003 with the approval of Rs: 5759.395 million (Rs: 5.759 Billion) to reform some 8000 *madrasahs* by introducing subjects taught at schools across the country. The aim of the project was to teach formal subjects such as English, Mathematics, Pakistan Studies/Social Studies, and General Science along with religious education. This program was launched by the Federal and Provincial Educational departments and two separate project management units were setup at Federal and Provincial Levels²²⁵.

The project envisages teaching of English, Mathematics, Pakistan Studies and Social Studies and General Science from primary to secondary level. English, Mathematics, Pakistan Studies and Social Studies and General

Science were to be taught at Primary, Middle and Secondary levels. At the intermediate level pupils are to be taught English, Economics, Pakistan Studies and computer sciences, thereby opening up to them the field to pursue higher studies in the colleges, universities and professional institutions to compete for and take up well regarded and well paid jobs in the corporate and public sectors.²²⁶ The project covers the cost of books, stationary items, sport facilities and utility charges as well as one-time grants for library and furniture. It includes the provision of computer sets and also payment of salaries to teachers hired on contract by the concerned institution in consultation with provincial education departments for teaching formal subjects. Willing *madrasahs* will be helped for three years under a phased program by extending these facilities to 3000 teachers in the first year, an equal number in the second year, and 2000 in the third year. The total period of the project would be five years.²²⁷

The funds were to be released by the Ministry of Education to the provincial education department, which together with the provincial education foundation are to be responsible for monitoring and evolution of the project implementation. An allocation of Rs: 225 million has been made in the next year budget for the project whose beneficiaries are estimated to be around 1.5 million students both male and female throughout the country as well as in Azad Kashmir.

Specifically, the Federal Government signed a memorandum of understanding with the four provinces, the Federal Administrated Tribal Areas (FATA), Federal Administrated Northern Areas (FANA) and Azad Kashmir. The provincial education departments have to select the schools for the project in line with the education reform formula. The Federal Education Ministry was to oversee its execution.²²⁸

The establishment of the MRP marks the first-ever concrete step taken to equip the pupils of *din-i-madaris* with modern knowledge along with religious learning. Over the years there had been hardly a government that had not toyed with this idea but all plans drawn to this effect failed, partly because of bureaucratic apathy and, partly, because of resistance by clerical orders and managers of these schools. The educational bureaucracies, manned by the products of the formal school system, had, in effect, no real heart in the venture. They drew up blueprints to bring these schools into the formal system just to meet their bosses's wishes. Otherwise, they had neither particular motivation nor the will to implement those plans. For their part, the clerical orders viewed any reform plan for these schools with suspicion and as an encroachment on their domain.²²⁹

Owing to the lack of understanding between both sides in the past, the present (MRP) initiatives seem to have met the same fate at the completion of its five years tenure. Five years on, the pessimist outlook has been prove right, and the government has decided to wrap up the project after having targeted only a small fraction of some 8000 *madrasahs* (as per the Education and Planning Commission) in the country. The Ministry of Education is forthright in admitting its failure. "In the last five years we reached out to only 507 *madrasahs*", reveals the project coordinator, Dr. Muhammad Hanif.²³⁰

MRP had started with two main objectives, to mainstream the *madrasah* education system by introducing formal subjects in their syllabi and to open lines of communication with the elaborate network of seminaries. In order to achieve the first objective the Ministry was given the target to educate 1.5 million *madrasah* students (as per the Education Ministry and Planning Commission) in modern subjects. At present, only 50000 *madrasahs* students are receiving education in these subjects. The Ministry had promised to provide four formal subjects teachers to all 8000 *madrasahs*. However, presently only 2291 teachers are employed under this arrangement against the target of 32000. A senior official of the MRP says, “We failed to develop the capacity to utilize all the funds which were allocated for the project.”²³¹ The total expenditure in five years was less than 2.8 percent of the total allocation of Rs: 5.759 billion.

The second objective also failed to be achieved. Right from the start the Ministry of Education lacked clout with the *madrasahs*'s leadership and failed to build bridges with them. The lack of cooperation from the Ministry of Religious Affairs, which enjoyed a far better relationship with the *madrasahs*, did not help either. “Non-existent communication and lack of understanding and consensus among the stake holders did not bode well for the project” declares a senior planning commission official who was also member of the project evaluation team in early 2007. The prime minister had tasked the planning commission to prepare the report on MRP.²³²

In fact, inter-departmental wrangling contributed to the failure of the programme. The Ministry of Religious Affairs which has long served as the government's contact point with the *madrasahs*'s leadership acted as rival to the Education Ministry in the reformation drive. As the planning commission report notes, “this diarchy has created some tension and misunderstanding between the two ministries at the cost of effective implementation of the Madrasah Reform Project”.²³³

At the same time, the details of 507 *madrasahs* that registered with the Ministry of Education lent credence to the belief that the project was a dismal failure. Among other reasons the Ministry of Education has the share to blame for this failure as it could not overcome bureaucratic red tape. For instance, the delay in the release of funds to *madrasahs* created doubts about the seriousness of reform efforts. “It takes roughly 24 months to release funds to the *madrasahs* once we had completed the process of identification and selection”, a senior Education Ministry official discloses. The Ministry of Interior and the provincial home departments are also partly responsible, as they have to provide clearance before a seminary is deemed eligible.

The provincial governments further compounded the problem. For instance, at the commencement the MRP, the Punjab Home Department objected to the implementation of the project in the province citing fears of possible backlash, and the Punjab component of programme was executed by the Federal Ministry because of this reluctance. The NWFP (=Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) government has yet to proceed with the project because of certain reservations. With such hurdles it is no wonder that the total number of *madrasahs* that applied for the money to purchase educational material far exceeds those actually received grants from the Ministry of Education.²³⁴

This is really sad because government had expressed great optimism soon after launching of the MRP. At that time it was hoped that all the stakeholders had come to realise the importance of turning the pupils of these schools into vibrant personalities, well-grounded in spiritual attainments and well equipped with temporal knowledge. According to the Federal Education Minister the scheme has received positive response from all religious *madrasahs*, a factor that she says has encouraged her ministry to launch the reform project.²³⁵

While the Madrasah Reform Project (MRP) of the Ministry of Education failed to take off, the Ministry of Religious Affairs has apparently succeeded in convincing the *madrasahs's* leadership to join its registration drive. Currently, the total number of registered *madrasahs* all over the country is roughly 15102.²³⁶ While the Religious Affairs Ministry has made headway in its registration drive it has been able to do so by making critical concessions. For instance, they have permitted *madrasahs* not to disclose their sources of income. A *madrasah* leader to this said, “There is no clause in the existing agreement that makes it obligatory for us to reveal our sources of income.” As long as this clause was enforced, most of the *madrasahs* refused to register themselves. Another crucial compromise has been the government recognition of the five *wafaqs* or educational boards as officially recognized institutions that can issue educational degrees to students.²³⁷

The contacts between the *madrasahs* leadership and the government were discontinued in July 2007 because of the Lal Masjid operation. When negotiation resumed after five months the ITDM and Ministry of Religious Affairs agreed to grant board status to *madrasahs* organisations and; in turn, the *madrasahs* leadership agreed to the establishment of an inter-*madrasah* board which will oversee the functioning of *madrasahs* all over Pakistan.²³⁸

It is, however, unclear how the Pakistan People’s Party government will view the understanding reached between the ITDM and the provincial governments while the government has directed the Ministry of Education to wrap up the programme, though continuing funds to 507 *madrasahs* cleared by Interior Ministry. The present government has jumped into the arena by launching its own project named the *Madrasah Welfare Authority*.²³⁹ How much chance there is for the success of this project, we will have to wait for another five years to say for sure.

Madrasah’s Asnad Issue and Religious Parties

The issue of the *madrasah’s* *asnad* resumed importance when graduation was declared a precondition for contesting the election to provincial and National Assembly elections in 2002. While no one with less than the graduation degree was allowed to contest the election, the graduates of *din-i-madaris* were allowed to contest the general election of 2002, though they had yet to fulfil the requirements setup by the UGC (University Grants Commission) for the equivalence of *madrasah* *asnad*. The issue finally came before the Supreme Court of Pakistan.

On 29 August 2005, the Supreme Court of Pakistan ruled that the *asnad* (certificates) issued by the *madrasahs* are not valid as these institutions run without statutory sanction and without affiliation with the University or

Educational Board. The court ordered the election commission not to recognise the results of those candidates who won had seats in recently held local council's election, holding *madrasahs* degrees. Pakistani law has imposed a minimum educational requirement of matriculation to hold local council office.²⁴⁰

The apex court noted that the *madrasahs asnad* cannot be considered equivalent to matriculation certificate if their holders did not pass examinations in English, Urdu and Pakistan Studies. In its detailed verdict, the court held further that *madrasahs* were functioning illegally in the country, since they don't have affiliation with any university or board of intermediate and secondary education. The apex court noted that unregistered *madrasahs* don't teach a curriculum that can train students to face the harshness of the modern world. Seminaries, the court observed, are not providing students with general education that could enable them to come into the mainstream of society and compete with the educated class for employment or other purposes, including election. It noted that not a single religious educational institution included in its curriculum subjects like English, Urdu and Pakistan Studies, even though the interboard committee chairmen had recommended this. While supporting the reservation expressed by the apex court, the *Daily Times* observed,

The seminaries in Pakistan enlist a million pupils and throw out thousands of graduates every year with nothing much to do except to setup new mosques to earn their livelihood. Pakistan cannot produce young people who can propel the economy forward. What kind of young men does Pakistan produce? In a word: warriors. The truth is that there is nothing secular in Pakistan Studies, English and Urdu either, if you take a close look at the text books that the students have to mug up.²⁴¹

In the prevailing scenario when a large number of madrasah graduates take active part in the affairs of the state and form the leadership of almost all the religious parties, the court decision is significant. Incidentally, the qualification of 68 parliamentarians holding madrasah degrees were challenged in the Supreme Court in 2003 and judgment is still awaited. The recent supreme court judgment and its delaying tactics regarding the erstwhile degree issue of 2003 is seen to be the part of the Musharraf strategy to placate MMA rather than taking the issue seriously that is becoming more and more of an embarrassment and burden to the dictator, says Iftikhar Hussain Gillani, an unsuccessful candidate in the 2002 election against an MMA candidate. Gilani who had challenged the madrasah degree of his rival in 2003, regretted the attitude of apex court regarding his case.²⁴²

The verdict provided Musharraf with a weapon to exclude an entire spectrum of Islamists from their present positions of power and membership in the national parliament and the state assemblies. The move might be counter productive as the religious parties have close links with *jihadi* groups, and their retaliatory violence targeting government interests could not be ruled out if Musharraf failed to exercise adequate control in the emerging circumstances.²⁴³ The leadership of religious parties defended the *wafaqs* and *tanzeemat* of religious *madaris* in their struggle to resist the

registration process started by the government and identified their interests with the *madrasahs*.

Maulana Fazl ur Rehman the leader of the opposition in the National Assembly and Secretary General of the *Muttahedda Majlis-e-Amal* (MMA) while rejecting the Registration and Regulation ordinance 2002, claimed that *madrasah* syllabus contained no material encouraging sectarianism and extremism. Addressing a conference at the *dar-ul-uloom*, Rehman demanded, “When we do not take a single penny from the government, why should we furnish the details of our accounts to them?” Adding further “we have returned to the assemblies only with the force of these religious seminaries. If their independence or survival is threatened, we will resign forthwith.”²⁴⁴

Maulana Samiul Haq, another stalwart of the Islamist movement and one of the most prominent patrons of the Taliban, expressed fears that Pakistan would become a secular state if the government dismantle the *madrasahs* system. Speaking at the *Madrasah Taaleem-ul-Qur’an* in Rawalpindi on August 26, Haq the chief of his own faction of *Jammiat-ul-Ulama-e-Islam*, said, “The government should not be at the US and the West’s beck and call” adding that Pakistan should try to uphold the freedom and character of the *madrasahs*.²⁴⁵

Speaking about the government stand Religious Affairs Minister Ijazul Haq declared that the government would not tolerate terrorism, sectarianism or spreading hatred. However, the words could not be translated into action as the resistance to reform is widespread.²⁴⁶

The government seemed to compromise on this issue also as it was witnessed in the past when the previous two ordinances of 2001 and 2002 in this regard could not be implemented in letter and spirit.²⁴⁷ Nor does the present situation offer any hope.

Government Concerns regarding Militancy and Foreigners in Madrasahs

The role of the *madrasahs* in national political developments and armed conflicts has been a subject of intense debate in Pakistan since 1980.²⁴⁸

Much of the armed resistance against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan was initially organised in the N.W.F.P (=Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) and Baluchistan. Pakistani *madrasahs* and Afghan and Pakistani *madrasahs* students were in the forefront of the *jihad* movements against the communist regime. *Darul-ul-Ulum Haqqania* of Akora Khattak near Peshawar and several other *Deobandi madrasahs* in N.W.F.P(=Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) played an important role in the mobilizing and recruitment of the thousands of volunteers for the Afghan *jihad*. The *Jamaat-i-Islami* also used foreign funds for the Afghan *jihad* to establish a network of *madrasahs* in Afghan refugee camps in Baluchistan and N.W.F.P(=Khyber Pakhtunkhwa), which, subsequently, became recruitment centres for the foot soldiers of Gulbadin Hikmatyar’s *Hizb-i-Islami* movement. The emergence of the *Taliban* movement in 1994 is, in fact, a logical extension of the role Pakistani *madrasahs* was playing in the Afghan *jihad* during the 1980’s. It provided an excellent excuse to the *madrasahs* and their associated religious

political groups to receive a vast amount of funds from Muslim countries mostly from Saudi Arabia and Iran in the name of Afghan relief and *jihad* projects and then to use these funds, or part of them, for recruiting more students, expanding the physical facilities of their *madrasahs*, and also for their sectarian activities including the acquisition of weapons.²⁴⁹ Later in the 1990s the Afghan Taliban and other *jihadi* organizations were provided with fresh blood by a large number of *madrasahs* in Pakistan. These *madrasahs* became major centres for training of foreign and indigenous warriors for *jihad*.

According to the journalist Ahmad Rasheed, the Taliban primarily evolved from the dozens of *madrasahs* established in the refugee camps along the Pak-Afghan border territories. Besides teaching, these children received hands-on training on some of the most lethal weapons in the world. The Taliban, as a result, soon became an invincible force.²⁵⁰

According to government sources, the *madrasahs* that impart training to militants to fight the security forces also included the *madrasah* of Maulana Fazlullah, a key leader of the *Tehreek-i-Nifaz-i-Shariat-i-Muhammadi* (TNSM) Swat. A similar allegation was also levelled against the *madrasah* of Maulana Liqat in Bajaur. The same *madrasah* was later destroyed as a result of a drone aircraft attack.²⁵¹

Security officials consider that these *jihadi* elements were a main reason behind Ghazi Abdul Rasheed's refusal to surrender during the Lal Masjid operation. He had been made hostage by the militants and, in case of surrender, they would not have spared him.²⁵² In any case, besides the domestic fallout the instrumental use of *jihad* had serious repercussions for Pakistan's foreign relations.

The state policy shift following 9/11 was, therefore, deeply resented, resisted, and agitated against by conservative Islamists. The activities of those conservative forces became a challenge to the writ of the military government at home and a major cause of embarrassment for the government in foreign relations.²⁵³ Therefore, the government had to adopt strict measures against conservative elements to overcome the internal security challenges and to pacify the perception of the international community that Pakistani *madrasahs* bred global terrorism and militancy. These steps led to the breach of the traditional mulla-military alliance.²⁵⁴ In his address to the nation on January 12th, 2002 General Musharraf declared:

Madrasahs will be governed by the same rules and regulation applicable to other schools, colleges, and universities. All *madrasahs* will be registered by 23rd March, 2002 and no new *madrasah* will be opened without permission of the government. If a *madrasah* is found indulging in extremism, subversion, militant activity, or possessing any type of weapon, it will be closed.

At the same time, Musharraf announced a ban on five extremist groups and put another on the watch list.²⁵⁵ Meanwhile, an ordinance, namely, Madrasah Registration and Control Ordinance 2002, was introduced to control the entry of foreigners into *madrasahs*, to keep check on them, and also their sources of funding. The law was rejected by most of the *madrasahs* which wanted no state inference in their affairs.²⁵⁶ Following

this, intelligence agencies backed by heavy contingents of police and other law enforcement agencies raided several seminaries in September in Karachi and picked up about 21 Indonesian and Malaysian students from at least two *madrasahs*, *Jamia Abu Bakr* and *Jamia Darsat* located on University Road. The administration of these *madrasahs* said that security officials asked the particulars of students and picked up some of them after marking their names.²⁵⁷

Interior Ministry officials in Islamabad confirmed one of the arrested students as a brother of Hambali, a key suspect in the Bali bombing in Indonesia, and claimed that most of these arrested students were staying here illegally and involved in activities which were not in Pakistan's interests. "These are suspected terrorists or people who have links with the terrorists", an Interior Ministry spokesman was quoted as saying in Islamabad.²⁵⁸

The administrators of these *madrasahs*, however, contested the claim of the Interior Ministry and rejected the involvement of *madrasahs* in activities against the interests of the state. They called it a part of the global agenda of the West to defame Islam and *madrasahs*.²⁵⁹

Later, in February 2005, an agreement was made between the administration of *madrasahs* and the government that foreigners have to obtain an NOC from their respective embassies for further stay and new entrants should possess proper educational visa.²⁶⁰

All these efforts, however, failed to bring the desired results. The era of Musharraf demonstrates that it is not easy to dismantle the infrastructure of militancy for it was installed in the name of Islamic *jihād* and it is deeply rooted in the socio-economic and political life of the nation. How to get the militants isolated from *mullas* and religio-political parties remains a big problem. The Lal Masjid episode demonstrates the point. The role played by *ulema* during the six month long standoff indicate that they shared the ideology of the Ghazi brothers because they never explicitly condemned the establishment of a state within the state by the Lal Masjid administration.²⁶¹

The alternative moderate view of Islam with a peaceful progressive outlook, though held by the large majority, is largely unsupported by the clergy. It has quite a few public faces, mainly, some scholars without a chain of *madrasahs*. They remain vulnerable to attacks from the well entrenched militants. Their credentials as Islamic scholars are also made questionable by the conservative religious class having a large *madrasah* network. Thus, conservative, reactionary, and militant views of Islam dominate religious discourse. The dilemma faced by the state is that it cannot follow the prescription of the Islamists nor do the Islamists seem likely to subordinate their agendas to the will of the state.²⁶² The situation has reached the point of no return. The collision between the two will ultimately be decided in one way or another. But, the fallout will be costly for the whole nation.

The key reasons responsible for this situation are the strong opposition of religious institutions to change, the limited preparation for planning and implementation of appropriate measures in a positive manner, and the

insufficient will of the government to bring about changes in the overall system.

Madrasah Reforms and the Role the of NGOs

So far we have come to know that the pace of *madrasah* reforms is slow, mainly, because of the distrust prevailing between government and *madrasahs*. Since reform is inevitable for competing with other institutions, the role of Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) and that of the people from within the *ulema* may play an important role in creating a sense of awareness for reforms among the teachers, students and administration of *madrasahs* and in the society as well. Presently, several NGOs are working in this sector.

International Centre for Religion and Diplomacy (ICRD)

The International Centre for Religion and Diplomacy (ICRD), a prominent NGO, is endeavouring to address conflict across the world that exceeds the reach of traditional diplomacy by incorporating religion as a part of solution. More often than not, these are identity-based conflicts that take the form of ethnic disputes, tribal warfare or religious hostilities”, said Azhar Hussain ICRD vice president in an interview with *The Nation*. He said that in Pakistan the ICRD was working on a project aimed at helping teachers of religious schools by conducting teachers training workshops which would, in turn, ensure better education and improved moral guidance.²⁶³

The ICRD is working in collaboration with religious and civic organizations in Pakistan to encourage the expansion of *madrasah* curriculum, to include the scientific and social disciplines with special emphasis on religious tolerance and human rights. Under this program the religious institutions (*madrasahs*) are encouraged to adopt pedagogical techniques that can promote critical thinking among students, teach conflict resolution and dialogue facilitation skills, and equip newly trained teachers with the skills to train other leaders of *madrasahs* in this area.²⁶⁴

By providing *madrasah* leadership with the opportunity to discuss and reflect on Islamic principles with the leaders of other sects, the ICRD is fostering peaceful coexistence among these diverse groups. It is also encouraging greater adherence to the principles of tolerance and human rights in Islam, upheld in past Islamic civilization.²⁶⁵

In order to achieve the objective of changing the culture of intolerance ICRD has conducted training workshops for *madrasah* leaderships from five religious schools of thought, *Deobandi, Ahl-e-Hadis, Shia, Barelvi and Jamat-e-Islami* that sponsor these religious schools. In addition, workshops are being conducted in separate tracks for administrations and senior faculty from *Deobandi madrasahs* in Baluchistan near the Afghan and Iranian border and *Ahl-e-Hadith madrasahs* throughout the country at the special requests of selected *madrasah* leaders. The ICRD has also begun conducting “training of trainers” workshop to produce trainers who can train other *madrasahs* leaders on their own.²⁶⁶

About the impact the ICRD has created so far its vice president said the centre work has been greeted with enthusiasm by the *madrasahs* leaders. He said that their role is one of helping the *madrasahs* to help themselves. Toward this end it has been essential that the *madrasahs* view this as their

own effort and not as something imposed from outside. Exposure to the pioneering breakthrough in the arts and sciences that took place under Islam a thousand years ago, including those relating to religious tolerance, is providing added incentives for *madrasahs* to expand their horizons by reshaping their curriculum, the ICRD head observed.

The ICRD also plans to help religious schools develop model curricula for their students. Giving an outline of this program, the ICRD head said that it would offer several alternative curricula that could serve as models for future consideration of *madrasah* leaders through engaging them in determining best practices in Islamic education, convening curriculum enhancement conferences for systematic enhancement of *madrasah* curriculum, and creating an inter-sectarian curriculum development committee to develop the models. The exchange of faculty visits between Pakistani *madrasahs* and American Islamic religious and culture centres is also a part of programme.²⁶⁷

National Research and Development Foundation (NRDF)

The National Research and Development Foundation (NRDF), a Peshawar based NGO, is working to modernize the curricula of *madaris* with the collaboration of the *ulema*. The NRDF facilitates the task of arranging workshops to prepare a draft reformatory package for the religious institutions with the objectives of analyzing the present educational system of *din-i-madaris*, prepare a draft reformatory package for *din-i-madaris* in the light of all these discussions so that they can play their roles in maintaining peace and harmony in the society, devise strategies for enforcing this reformatory package in these religious institutions and arrange conferences for *ulema* in which they preach the real teachings of Islam. The NRDF plays the role of host facilitator in all these workshops.²⁶⁸

Workshops were held in the NWFP(=Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) and Islamabad at the same time in which prominent scholars and *ulema* participated from the surrounding areas in large number. The participants included *ulema*, *muhtamimin* (administrators) from prominent religious institutions, teachers, scholars, intellectuals, serving university professors, and political leaders. After thorough deliberation the participants of the workshops strongly recommended changes in the curriculum of *din-i-madaris* in the light of the point of views of the *ulema* of the country to modernize and upgrade it to the present times. The participants agreed that the following changes in the curriculum of *din-i-madaris* should be made to bring them in conformity with the present age.²⁶⁹

The curricula of *din-i-madaris* “*Dars-i-Nizami*” were according to the standards of that age. But now the needs and requirements of the time have changed. At that time the Muslims were under the imperialist control of the British. The main goal at that time for Muslims was to save Islamic values and teaching. But today Islam needs to be presented in its true form as a religion of peace and harmony.

It was possible to live in isolation from the world in the past but today no country or society should survive completely cut off from the world. Therefore, it is appropriate to upgrade the curricula, keeping in mind modern needs and requirements.

The modern day unsolved issues are permanent threats to the status of Islam as a religion of peace and harmony. It has created confusion and disappointment in Muslim society. Therefore, this perception should be changed through reforming the system of *din-i-madaris*.

There are a number of economical, social and cultural issues that cannot be solved with the outdated curriculum in vogue in religious institutions. Therefore, efforts should be made to introduce modern subjects in the curricula of these institutions.

Some important subjects like knowledge of world and Islamic history, social and economical issues, comparative religions, and international law must be included in the curriculum of *din-i-madaris*.

English should be introduced in the curricula and Arabic must be modernized, so that students can speak and write both languages effectively.

Books relating to the *fiqh* of all schools of thought should be taught so that students can understand inter-sectarian differences.

Subjects like mathematics, sciences, and computer science should be introduced in *din-i-madaris*.

The libraries of *din-i-madaris* should be upgraded with the latest books in all disciplines.

Modern and upgraded *tafseers* should be included in the syllabus of *madrasahs*. The workshops recommended training for the administrators of *din-i-madaris* on modern lines so that they may be able to run their institutions effectively. Similarly, teacher's training and refresher courses on teaching methodology were also recommended.²⁷⁰

The participants of workshops agreed that the present examination system in vogue in *din-i-madaris* was highly defective. Therefore, it should be completely revamped. A uniform examination system was recommended for all the *madaris*. It was suggested that the examinations should be transparent and the schedule of academic year and examinations should be strictly adhered to.²⁷¹

The NDRF coordinator made it clear that all these efforts need the cooperation of religious *madaris* and, therefore, appealed for their active support in this mission.

The Euro-Consultant Pakistan (ECPAK)

The Euro-Consultant Pakistan, one of the prominent NGOs sponsored by European Commission Pakistan, works on projects that link poverty alleviation with education. The focus of its activities is the rural areas of Pakistan. ECPak is endeavouring to reduce religious extremism through reforming the *madrasah* system in Pakistan.²⁷²

The organization intends to facilitate the launching of cost effective process suited to the local condition in central districts of N.W.F.P.(=Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) with the support of local community and the stakeholders with the following objectives.

To set up a mechanism whereby local communities are able to take part in establishing new community-based schools through private-public partnership in their respective areas in a sustainable manner.

To enhance the capacity of local communities, education departments, and local environmental representatives for management of the primary education programs at the local level.

To develop public-private partnership for exchange of knowledge, training of teachers, and assessment of procedures.

To develop the capacity of communities for monitoring and evaluation, particularly for participatory evaluation.

To bring students and teachers of *madaris* into the framework of educational development programs and to build their capacity for enabling them to interact with the outside world and reflect on local issues according to the modern interpretation of the teaching of the *Qur'an*, based on the advanced knowledge and research available to them.

To evolve a locally acceptable and self-sustaining model for the promotion of primary education which could also be reliable in other parts of the province after conducting in-depth investigation of education as a whole covering all problems and opportunities, weakness and strength, scope and potential for improvement and expansion, and the capacity of the education sector to accommodate the future needs of the community in the target areas.

To enable local communities to set up 60 community-based schools in the central districts of the N.W.F.P(=Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) while ensuring there efficient management and sustainability.

Improve in-service teacher training.

To utilize the services of the *ulema* for mobilization of the communities and fund raising.

To support private schools and local communities to take over dysfunctional and non-functional schools.

To encourage and upgrade the rate of enrolment in primary education through advocacy and awareness rising.

To organize workshops and meetings with *ulema* from *madaris* to discuss improvement and widening of the curriculum. This could be accepted and developed by *ulema* themselves.

To develop a profile of existing government and private schools and *madaris* to set up benchmarks for future planning and assess change and impact.

The ECPak is conducting research studies on the basis of which reforms will be introduced in religious institutions to bring them into the mainstream and include modern subjects in their curricula.²⁷³

According to the final report of the ECPak, progress towards the achievement of these objectives is encouraging because of active public support. The report reveals that 25 *madaris* have introduced modern subjects in their syllabus. One hundred teachers of *din-i-madaris* have attended five training sessions under this program. One hundred and sixty *ulema* have gone through training related to educational development, resources mobilization, monitoring, etc. Support of religious political leaders has been ensured for all these activities. A group of *ulema* has been facilitated to make recommendations for reforms in the syllabus of *din-i-madaris*. The existing libraries of *din-i-madaris* have been provided with

new books. The response of stakeholders to all these efforts is encouraging, according to the final report.²⁷⁴

Several other NGOs engaged in promoting literacy and basic education in Pakistan are working to bring different streams of education closer. These efforts need more attention of government and wide public support in the larger interest of the country.

The foregoing discussion reveals that like all other initiatives of reforming *madrasahs* in the past, the reform agenda of the Musharraf regime also failed to achieve its objectives, more or less for the same reasons. However, at the same time non-governmental organisations made some progress, though very limited, in this sector with the collaboration of *madrasahs* leadership. How the *ulema* responded to the government sponsored initiatives and what factors are responsible for such response? In next chapter I will discuss this in detail.

However, it is to be realized that reforms introduced without the collaboration of religious leaders never succeed. In addition, the government should reform its own institutions first and open itself to public scrutiny before setting about to reform *madrasahs*.

5- Response of Madrasahs and Prospects of Reforms:

Rebellion Against State Power

While it is widely understood that the agenda of *madrasah* reforms since 2000 has miserably failed to realize its objectives, we have so far focused only on the government's own shortcomings and drawbacks in this regard. The previous chapter while discussing all the state sponsored initiatives also analyzed the lack of coordination among different ministries and bureaucratic hurdles besides malafide intentions of some responsible officials behind the failure of all these efforts.

This chapter will mainly discuss the response of *madrasahs* to state sponsored reforms agenda as a party in this connection. How did *madrasahs* respond to the reform agenda? How did they argue their case? How far are they responsible for the failure of reforms initiative since 2000? In this chapter I will address these questions.

Before going on to discuss the response of the *ulema* to state sponsored reforms, one should know the excessive US interest in educational systems, especially, religious educational institutions in the Muslim world.

US Policy and Religious Education in the Muslim World

The US repeatedly blames the religious educational institutions for breeding violence and increasing militancy in the society. If it is true, it is not the product of an Islamic approach to education but of the militaristic policies of General Zia-ul-Haq and his supporters. For nearly a decade, the US government among others, poured hundreds of millions dollars of weapons into Pakistan. Much of it through *madaris* and used *madaris'* students to fight a proxy war in Afghanistan.

According to the *Washington Post*, the US government even supplied texts to *madaris* glorifying and sanctioning war in the name of Islam.²⁷⁵

After the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, the US took no further interest in the region for almost a decade. During this period other foreign and domestic actors jumped into the field and fully exploited the situation for their own interests.²⁷⁶

Thus, degeneration was accelerated by the activities of cult *mullas*, evangelical US policies and continued occupation of Afghanistan by foreign forces as well as hostile propaganda dominated Western media, and *madrasah* education lost its hereditary image. The government also failed to harness, defuse and redirect the rising militancy in *madrasahs* after the Afghan war.²⁷⁷

The events of 9/11 almost revolutionized the mind set, not only of the ruling evangelical hawks of the United States but also of the religious extremists all over the Muslim World.²⁷⁸

Since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, Islamic schools known as *madrasahs* have been of increasing interest to analysts and officials involved in formulating US foreign policy towards the Middle East, Central and Southeast Asia. *Madrasahs* drew added attention when it became known that several *Taliban* leaders and *Al-Qaida* members had developed radical political views at *madrasahs* in Pakistan, some of which allegedly were built and partially financed through Saudi Arabian sources. These revelations have led to accusations that *madrasahs* promote Islamic extremism and militancy and are recruiting grounds for terrorism. In this context the Pakistan educational infrastructure of which the religious educational institutions are an important part has been of great concern to the United States.²⁷⁹

In September 2002, USAID committed 100 million dollars over five years for general education reforms. The Research Triangle Institute (RTI) a US based non-profit corporation received a USAID contract for 60 million dollars of this aid to implement a USAID education sector reform assistance (ESRA) project in Pakistan.²⁸⁰

The United States has also committed additional resources through the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) which received 29 million dollars in the financial year 2003. One of the MEPI goals is to encourage improvement in secular education throughout the Arab world, and MEPI's draft strategies have registered concern over the rising enrolment in Islamic schools (*madrasahs*).²⁸¹

The Bush administration requested 145 million dollars for MEPI for the financial year 2004. The House Committee on Appropriations recommended 45 million dollars for MEPI and "Islamic Outreach" programs in the financial year 2004. The committee cited the importance of educational training and exchanges but stated that these funds must be apportioned more equitably between Arab Muslims and Non-Arab Muslim nations. The Senate reports on foreign operations and appropriation support the administration's full budget requests for MEPI.²⁸²

The congressional hearing on terrorism two years after 9/11, Senate Judiciary Committee on Technology and Government Information, September 10, 2003 and the hearing on terror financing, the Senate Government Affairs Committee, July 31, 2003, have examined the possible

relationship between *madrasahs* and terrorists' financing. During the year 2004 the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations criticized the educational system of Saudi Arabia calling the country the center of Wahabism, the ultra-purist, *jihadist* form of Islam. A Saudi-based charity *Al-Haramyn* which was operating educational institutions in Indonesia has been named by the US government as a conduit of terrorism.²⁸³

Anis Ahmad of Institute of Policy Studies writes that 26 of 28 recommendations of the American senate committee constituted to investigate the events of 11 September 2001 were related to education and media through which the committee had stressed that the Muslim mind should be changed. Anis Ahmad quotes three papers published by the American think-tank and the *Washington Quarterly*. These papers have been written by Charly Bernard Edward, P. Dejerjian and Stephen Philip Cohen. In these papers Americans have been advised to keep close contacts with the Pakistani Army rulers and through them education and educational institutions must be targeted for favorable reforms. In these papers Muslims were divided in four groups, traditionalists, fundamentalists, modernists and seculars. Among them seculars were chosen as favorites to be promoted and helped. Modernists may be required to write down books for the educational institutions in which a moderate soft image of Islam was to be presented.²⁸⁴

Even high-profile American officials made direct comment on *madrasahs*. The US Secretary of State, Colin Powell, said that Pakistan was expected to introduce a new educational system as in *madrasahs* anti-American sentiments were imparted and these have to be changed. Even if American financial aid is needed that would come.²⁸⁵ The Defense Secretary, Donald Rumsfeld, while talking about *madrasahs* said that these institutions train people to be suicide killers and extremists, violent extremists.²⁸⁶ All such US policies and accusations played crucial roles in shaping the stand of *madrasahs* regarding reforms.

Media's Role regarding madrasahs

The media, especially international news media, paint a very negative picture of *madrasahs* and their activities. More often than not, *madrasahs* are shown as sites brewing anti-social activities, brainwashing for suicide bombing, attacks on civilian targets hosting Western interests and other such happenings are all shown with *madrasahs* in the background. The print media, especially the English press is especially hostile to *madrasahs*.²⁸⁷

The media reports of the *Washington Times* have tied former madrasahs students to terrorist attacks in the United States and Europe and to militant groups operating in Afghanistan.²⁸⁸

Urdu newspapers, however, are not so hostile to *madrasahs*, and provide a wide coverage of their activities and outlooks.²⁸⁹

The Approach of Liberals, Academics and Scholars to madrasah Reforms

The liberal elements are viewed as the arch rivals of *madrasahs* in Pakistan. In their pursuit of liberal thinking and attitude, they consider *madrasahs* as harbingers of retrogression and orthodoxy. *Madrasahs* and clerics, in turn, denounce the liberals, terming them the promoters of evil. Both camps refuse to recognize the existence and subsequent validity of each other's school of thoughts, *modus operandi* of learning and the overall ideology of life.

In comparison, academics and scholars have a mixed approach. Skeptical of liberals who demand dissent from convention they mostly mend fences with the clerics and share some wavelengths, at least on controversial issues with them.²⁹⁰

A.H. Nayyer, noted analyst working with the Islamabad-based NGO Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), said any government that announces *madrasah* reforms must first identify the nature of reforms. It is clear that the present claim of reforming *madrasahs* emanates from an urge to eliminate sources of extremism in the society.²⁹¹ Nayyer believes the roots of extremism lie in so many other nooks and corners.

Almost all agree that extremism has taken roots because of the absence of governance and justice in the society. If the government does not have any plan to fill this vacuum, any action against *madrasahs* would be meaningless and only temporary. If it has a plan to improve its governance and the system of justice, it will have to share it with the public at large, for no scheme for good governance and justice would succeed without an active participation by the general public.

Nayyer claims that the people behind Musharraf's efforts of reforming religious education were those who influenced by the *Jamaat-i-Islami*. The *Jamaat* has been trying for quite sometime to convince *madrasah* to include secular subjects in their curriculum. Several meetings in this regard were held with the four boards of *madrasahs* education which failed.²⁹² Fearing opposition from *madrasahs*, Nayyer said, the Musharraf government modified curriculum that retained everything existing and added a few subjects like English, mathematics, sciences and social studies from public school curriculum. A state grant was also offered for those who agreed to

government's proposals. Despite the monetary incentives the majority of *madrasahs* spurned this offer. Those who accepted, however, knew that the modification meant added burden. In any case, what escapes everyone's mind was the fact that the *madrasah* teaching methodology centered on the rote system and added subjects would be taught and learnt in the same spirit.²⁹³

Regarding the elimination of extremism and militancy with the introduction of modern subjects Nayer said social study and Urdu text books contain a lot of material that can potentially be a source of extremism and militancy. Moreover, *madrasahs* are not the sources of extremism and militancy. Our normal school system and our media do not do any less.²⁹⁴

According to Christopher Canland, an initiative must proceed from the recognition that Islamic boarding schools and Islamic education are an integral part of national education of Pakistan. Reform efforts based on the assumption that national education must remove off religion from educational curriculum are only impractical. Avoidance of religious subjects in national education and weakening of Islamic education sector are neither likely to improve tolerance and understanding between people of different faiths nor diminish violence in Pakistan or abroad.²⁹⁵

Tariq Rehman, an eminent educationalist, believes that reforms of Islamic education must also recognize that present backwardness in administrative, curricular and financial terms of Islamic institutions is a direct product of a highly polarized educational system. In this context it should be recognized that the promotion and subsidy of elite education is responsible for much of the backwardness of the institution of Islamic education.²⁹⁶

While analyzing the approaches of different actors we can easily understand the nature and prospects of state-sponsored reforms. This will also help us to know the response and reservation of the stake holders (*madrasahs*) in its real perspectives.

The madrasahs' Response to State-Sponsored Reforms

The response of *ulema* to the state-sponsored reforms is not always encouraging. The reasons behind *ulema's* reservation are mainly based on the lack of sincerity on the part of government. The *ulema's* response to different state-sponsored measures shows that these measures were aimed at destroying their educational system as a part of a global conspiracy of the West to destroy Islam.

Maulana Hafiz Abdul-Rehman Madani, a leading Islamic scholar and chief editor of the monthly journal *Muhhadis*, in an interview with *The News* expressed his reservations regarding *madrasah* reforms in detail. He claimed that the government's present initiatives are being taken for fulfilling the foreign agenda because these reforms are being executed through the Ministry of Interior, which is not its domain. "The move is indicative of the bad intention of the government as it should have been executed through the Ministry of Education", he claimed.²⁹⁷

He regretted the discriminatory attitude of government towards *madaris* because it does not provide financial help to *madaris*, rather it criticize foreign Muslims providing financial help to *din-i-madaris*. He pointed out

that several NGOs functioning with the help of foreign aid are not questioned while *madaris* are repeatedly blamed for the same reasons.²⁹⁸

Commenting on the standard of curriculum of *din-i-madaris* he observed that it is superior to that of the formal education system and it is being reformed by the *ulema* themselves according to their needs. On the other hand, the curriculum of formal education which is the legacy of the colonial era which needs urgent reforms could not be reformed according to the needs. However, he outrightly rejected the integration of *din-i-madaris* with the formal education system as it would be detrimental to Islam itself. About the registration of *din-i-madaris*, Maulana Madani termed it a step to interfere with their affairs which the *madaris* will never allow.²⁹⁹

Regarding the audit of financial sources of *madaris*, he was of the view that when the government does not provide sufficient financial help, it has no right to know about the income and expenditure of *madaris*. Commenting on the misuse of money by *madaris*, he was of the view that the government's own institutions are deeply involved in this which could not be overcome so far.³⁰⁰

Regarding the involvement of *madrasahs* in terrorism and sectarianism, Maulana Madani claimed that *madrasahs* are not involved in such activities. He termed it a part of the Jewish conspiracies to defame religious educational institutions all over the world. He regretted that some secular elements in Pakistan shared the views of anti-Islamic forces. He confirmed that no *madrasah* teach sectarian hatred. It is the product of international political developments which have no relation with *madaris*. However, during my personal interaction with members of the *ulema* for collecting data for research, most agreed that sectarianism has been a reality in the Subcontinent for a long time, and its existence cannot be denied.³⁰¹

The reservations and apprehensions expressed by Maulana Madani were also supported by the president of *Waqaf-ul-Madaris Al-Arabia*, Maulana Muhammad Hanif Jalandhri. In an article in the daily *Nawa-i-Waqt* he observed that government efforts of reforms are based on malafide intentions and these are being taken on the behest of the Western and Jewish lobbies. He contended that the West never wanted *madaris* to prepare good Muslims by spending money for *madaris* reforms, rather they want to involve the students of *madaris* in worldly pursuits and to weaken their zeal for the study of purely religious subjects.³⁰²

He revealed that *madrasahs* are not only aimed at preparing experts of religious knowledge but the people who speak truth irrespective of its consequences, those who do not believe in materialism, who are always content with the simplest means of life, and whose loyalties could not be purchased with money. What reforms one intended to introduce for the achievement of these objectives? In his views the present curriculum of the *din-i-madaris* fulfills these objectives.³⁰³

About the lack of worldly knowledge of *madaris* graduates, he claimed that the *ulema* know about this more than others know about their own religions. He questioned why the government is not introducing reforms in formal educational institutions where so many flaws are witnessed and they need immediate redress.

Regarding terrorism he denied the involvement of *madaris* in it.³⁰⁴ He complained that government agencies were behind harassing *madaris* while several high-ranking government officials have confessed that *madaris* are not involved in anti-state activities.³⁰⁵ He warned government that any interference in *madaris* would have serious repercussions. Therefore, he advised that *madaris* should be left in their present positions.³⁰⁶

While commenting on the terrorist attacks in the United States and Europe, which were associated with *madrasah* students according to the *Washington Times* report³⁰⁷ the late Mufti Dr. Sarfaraz Naeemi (1948-2009), head of *Jamia Naeemia* Lahore and Secretary General *Tanzeem-ul-madaris*, observed:

The actions of a small minority have given bad name to Islam and its centuries-old educational system that can interface with the modern world.

He said it was the duty of the government to find and crush *madrasahs* that preach violence. “We are preparing our students for every field of life”, he claimed.³⁰⁸

Khalid Rehman, director of the Institute for Policy Studies in Islamabad, said that in conservative parts of the country such as the Tribal Areas and Baluchistan, religious institutions generally see prescribed reforms as ‘out of context’ with Islam and the traditional life-style.

This does not necessarily mean that they are extremists. But because *madrasahs* in these areas play a dominant role in the development of children with limited exposure beyond school walls, it is easier for them to be converted to any kind of venture if influential figures are so inclined, Rehman said.³⁰⁹

A student of *madrasah* in Lahore while reacting to the US missile attacks on suspected Taliban targets that included *madrasahs* said that they harbor no ill will towards Americans but are angry with their government policies that they have hurt Muslims. “The US wants to treat us like slaves here when they should treat us like friends” said Akbar Syed, a 21 years old *madrasah* student.³¹⁰

During my visit to several rural *madrasahs* in the NWFP(=Khyber Pakhtunkhwa), the *ulema* expressed similar reservations regarding reforming *madrasah* education. They declared that *madaris* curriculum is capable of fulfilling its objectives. They repeatedly claimed that they do not need government help because of much complicated official procedure of audit and because they are content with the least modern facilities. Their contention is based on reality and I agreed with them on the basis of my personal experience because the honest officials in the government department have to grease the palms of auditors to get financial clearances.

However, the administrator’s claim of relying on the least worldly means at least for themselves was found contrary to the fact during my field work because they used many of modern facilities for themselves which their counterparts in government institutions usually do not enjoy.³¹¹

Madrasah Registration Ordinance and Response of madrasahs

While undertaking government initiatives on *madrasah* reforms, it was envisaged that the activities and functioning of *madaris* may also be regulated through an independent enactment providing for their registration. *madrasahs* were therefore directed in 2002 to register with the government within six months or face closure. The ordinance for this purpose was introduced in August 2002, known as *Madrasah* Registration and Control Ordinance 2002. According to this ordinance, no *madrasah* will function without government permission. The officials of the *Madrasah* Authority will monitor the activities of *madrasahs*, no *madrasah* shall accept foreign financial help without government permission.³¹² The representatives of *madaris* of four schools of thought rejected the said ordinance.³¹³

Addressing a press conference after the protest convention, the leaders of different schools of thought pledged that they will never allow the government move to control *din-i-madaris* on behest of America through various pretexts.³¹⁴ The *ulema* were of the opinion that measures like registration, change of curriculum, and mainstreaming *madaris* are aimed at depriving *madaris* of their independence and to destroy their Islamic identity.³¹⁵ They claimed that all such measures were a part of the American agenda to secularize the educational system, which *madaris* will resist at any cost.³¹⁶ They assured their support to the government against *madrasahs* involved in sectarianism, terrorism or possessing arms, but stressed that the government should provide solid proofs in this regard.³¹⁷

While commenting on the registration issue Mufti Munibur Rehman, one of the representatives of *Wafaq-ul-Madaris* said, “The issue must not be resolved only to please external players”. He said the present government has not contacted us even once to discuss the issue. We are ready to accept the reforms which are in the best interests of our students and without being pressurised³¹⁸. Rehman, however, denied the charges of ambiguous, illegal, unlawful and un-Islamic activities urging the government to notify such *madrasahs* and to give proof of their militant actions.³¹⁹

Regarding such widespread discontent among the *ulema* about the government initiative, Dr. Mahmood Ahmad Ghazi, member of the National Security Council, categorically declared that the government holds the *ulema* in high esteem and believes in protecting the sanctity of religious institutions. He regretted that some anti-government elements are instigating *ulema* and spreading misconceptions about the government’s policy in regard to religious matters.³²⁰ He further declared that the government has no intention of intervening in the working of ‘*din-i-madaris*’ or to curtail their freedom and independent status in any manner whatsoever.³²¹

In order to create consensus on the issue of registration the government initiated consultative process with the *ulema*. A number of meetings between the officials of Ministry of Religious Affairs and the heads of organizations of different schools of thought were held to strike a consensus on framing a law for this purpose. All these efforts failed to get the cooperation of the *ulema* until the government made some vital compromises. For instance, *madrasahs* were permitted not to disclose their sources of income and the government also withdrew the demand that *madrasahs* should immediately expel foreign students, besides the

government recognition of the five *waqafs* or educational boards as officially recognized institutions that can issue educational degrees to the students was another crucial compromise.³²²

After such compromises to get the cooperation of the *ulema* the government was able to promulgate the Madrasahs Voluntary Registration Regulation Ordinance 2005. General Musharaf and the Ministry of Interior are said to have been unhappy with such compromises. But four years ago when this exercise began, the *madrasahs* had refused to get themselves registered if forced to disclose their sources of funding and repatriate of foreign students.³²³

The report of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, however, revealed that the progress in registration is not encouraging because the total number of registered *madrasahs* in 2007 was 13,000, while their actual number is estimated to be over 200,000 across the country.³²⁴ The Interior Ministry has expressed concern over the issue as the Ministry of Religious Affairs does not have a proper mechanism to determine the exact number of seminaries operating unlawfully.³²⁵

The exact number of the students studying in the country is not known yet as the Ministry of Religious Affairs has so far registered only those seminaries that house 30-40 students. The ministry provided cursory figures to the Ministry of Interior after the voluntary registration ordinance was promulgated. Officials in the Ministry of Religious Affairs observed that it was an uphill task for the Ministry to register religious seminaries as there was no mechanism to trace unregistered *madrasahs*.³²⁶ A source in the Religious Affairs Ministry said that there has been a sharp growth in the institutions associated with the *Deobandi* school of thought and the N.W.F.P(=Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) witnessed the largest unregistered *madrasahs*, adding that a number of *madrasahs* were brainwashing students for militant activities and the Interior Ministry was quite concerned about this.³²⁷

Former education Minister Javed Ashraf Qazi was of the opinion that the main reason behind the failure of *madrasah* reforms during the Musharaf regime was the refusal of “The Alliance of Madrasahs” (*Ittihad-i-Tanzeemat-e-Madars-i-Deeniya*) to cooperate with the government. At first, the *madrasahs* refused to enlist and register under the Companies Act, refusing also to provide other required details, i.e. number of students, boarders, and sources of funding, he claimed.³²⁸

Madrasah Education Board and Response of madrasahs

As a part of the government agenda of reforms, an ordinance called *Madrasah* Education (Establishment and Affiliation of Model *Din-i-Madaris*) Board Ordinance 2001 was promulgated. It was aimed at the establishment and affiliation of model *din-i-madaris* in which modern subjects are to be taught along with traditional religious subjects and to prepare students to perform better in the modern world.

Madrasah reforms project (MRP) was initiated by Ministry Of Education with two main objectives: to mainstream the *madrasah* educational system by introducing the formal subjects in their syllabi and to open lines of communication with the elaborate network of seminaries.³²⁹ The *ulema*

expressed serious reservations regarding the *Madrasah* Education Board Ordinance as they have expressed in the past for similar initiatives on the part of the government. The alliance of *madrasahs* of all the five boards of different schools of thought in its response rejected the *Madrasahs* Board Ordinance and refused to cooperate with government in this regard. They warned that the *madrasahs* are fully prepared to resist any move aiming at curbing their influence. They made it clear that they do not need government financial aid because of their total reliance on God's help. Therefore, they could not surrender this permanent source of strength by accepting temporary government aid.³³⁰

Regarding the employment opportunities for *madrasah* graduates with the introduction of modern subjects, they declared that the aim of religious education was not to get jobs. However, they advised the government to focus on the provision of jobs to those who have studied in government colleges and universities and were roaming jobless.³³¹

While reacting to the government initiative to introduce modern subjects the *ulema* showed mixed reaction. A small number of *ulema* mostly from the *Barelvi* school of thought welcomed it as a positive sign to promote modern education in *madrasahs* while the majority termed it a part of the government agenda to control *din-i-madaris* and to kill the spirit of *jihad* among Muslims.³³²

Maulana Hanif Jalandhri, the head of *Wafaq-ul-Madaris-al-Arabia* and coordination secretary of the Alliance of *Madaris Deenia* in his response said that the *madaris* will never allow changes in their curricula whatever amount the government may allocate for this purpose. He declared that *Wafaq-ul-Madaris* has unanimously rejected the official aid. He advised the government to waver utility bills of *din-i-madaris* if they really want to help *madrasahs*.³³³ Maulana Jalandhri clarified that the curriculum of *din-i-madaris* is aimed at preparing religious scholars and not engineers or doctors. He said that only *ulema* have the right to make and propose changes in the curriculum of *din-i-madaris*. Commenting on the introduction of modern subjects along with the existing religious disciplines, he argued that this will be a burden on the students. Therefore, they will neither be able to become experts in modern disciplines nor in religious ones.³³⁴ He regretted the discriminatory attitude of government towards *madrasahs* and demanded of the government to hold talks with the *ulema* and *madrasah* boards on all vital issues related to *madaris*.³³⁵

The head of *Tanzeem-ul-Madaris Ahl-e-Sunnah*, Mufti Muneeb-ur-Rehman, while addressing a convention of heads of *din-i-madaris* announced that the *Tanzeem-ul-Madaris* which is an organization of a network of ten thousands *din-i-madaris* will never become a part of government initiative to change the syllabus of *din-i-madaris*.³³⁶

During my personal interaction with the *ulema* and heads of different *madaris* in the NWFP(=Khyber Pakhtunkhwa), similar reservations were expressed by them regarding the changes in the curriculum of *din-i-madaris*. They emphasized eternal salvation and stressed that they have no reason to care for this world. The ground realities, however, speak otherwise.³³⁷

Five years on, the *Madrasah* Reforms Project could reach only 507 *madaris* against its target of some 8000 *madrasahs*. A senior official of the Ministry Of Religious Affairs revealed that the Ministry Of Education reached out to only those *madrasahs* that are either alienated from the mainstream or are not part of any of the five recognized *madrasah* organizations.³³⁸

Table 5.1
English-teaching in the religious Schools (Maktabs and Madrasahs)

Area	Num ber of Institio ns	Num ber of Student s	Institutions Teaching English			Stud ents learning English	Percent age
			Middle metric	higher			
Punjab	1332	206, 778	1 01	7 8	3 6	6951	3.4
NWFP	678	88,1 47	2 4	1 5	8	2607	3.00
Sindh	291	71,6 39	1 0	1 3	7	2529	3.5
Baluchista n	347	40,3 90	1 4	7	2	1139	2.8
AK	76	43,4 47	n il	7	2	91	0.2
Islamabad	47	7,85 8	2	4	1	110	1.4
Northern Area	103	12,1 50	4	1	n il	102	0.8
Total	2862	470. 490	1 55	1 25	5 6	13,5 29	2.2

Source: Calculated on the basis of figures given in Report *Madrasahs* 1988 in: Rehman Tariq, *Language, Ideology and Power*, 2002.

Pre-Conditions of madrasahs

As *madrasahs* and *ulema* were of the opinion that all the initiatives of government reforms were undertaken unilaterally and without consultation with the representatives of *madrasahs* organizations and prominent *ulema*, they refused to cooperate with the government until the following conditions were met.

1. The government should promise to hold talks with good intentions with *madrasah* at high level regarding any important matters relating to them;
2. *Madrasah* boards may be granted the status of degree-awarding universities;
3. If granting of university charter was not possible, the status similar to *Model Din-i-Madrasah* may be extended to *madrasah* boards;

4. Not only *Shahadat-ul-Aaliya* with B.A degree may be notified but the condition of getting equivalence certificate from Pakistan universities may be withdrawn for the *Shahadat-ul-Alamiya* degree. On the same footing *sanvia aama* and *sanvia khassa* may be recognized at par with secondary and higher secondary school certificates respectively;

5. The simple and easy procedure for registration agreed upon between the two sides may be introduced;

6. Procedure for permission for those foreign students who want to study in *din-i-madaris* should be made simple and easy;

If any *madrasah* was suspected to be involved in any unlawful activity, its case may be investigated according to the law. But it is best to inform the respective *Wafaq*.³³⁹

The *ulema* made it clear that these measures will create atmosphere of goodwill between *madrasahs* and the government.³⁴⁰

Islamic Education Commission

After the failure of the government's previous efforts of reforms and in the present atmosphere of distrust, the government planned to establish a separate Islamic education commission under which the *Madrasah Education Board* will be established. This board will conduct examinations for the students studying in *madrasahs* belonging to different schools of thought and registered to this board. The cost will be borne by Ministry of Religious Affairs. The plan included vital changes in curriculum and examination system with consultation with Islamic scholars imparting training at local and international level.³⁴¹

Commenting on fresh initiative of the government, the *Daily Pakistan* (Urdu) observed that all such efforts in the past failed to get the support of the *madaris*. Therefore, there is no guarantee that the *madaris* will accept the proposed education commission and allow their students to appear in examination of an inter-*madaris* board. In this connection, it is necessary to take *madaris* into confidence because it is a general perception that the government try to weaken the *madaris* under foreign pressure. Therefore, *madaris* do not support any government policy. If this perception is removed, *madaris* may agree to possible cooperation.³⁴²

The new developments in 2007 because of the Lal Masjid operation worsened the prospects of cooperation as *ulema* of *Wafaq-ul-Madaris* announced that no further talks will be held with the government as reaction to the Lal Masjid operation.³⁴³ The proposed plan, however, could not be realized because of mutual distrust until the new government of Pakistan Peoples' Party came into power.

Current Situation and the din-i-madaris

Din-i-madaris again became a hot topic of discussion when the war on terrorism intensified once again in N.W.F.P (=Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) and FATA.

The government of the Pakistan Peoples Party seems to deal with *madaris* on the same lines as the previous government had done. President Asif Ali Zardari during his visit to Washington announced that all the *madrasahs* in the country will be taken over by the government to separate

students from extremism and impart them modern as well as religious education.³⁴⁴

Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gilani when taking oath in March 2008, announced under PM's 100 days programme to set up a *Madrasah* Welfare Authority which was supposed to be functional by July 9, 2008 has not been set up because the task has yet to be assigned between ministries of Interior, Religious Affairs, and Education. One of the main reasons of the failure of previous reforms is stated to be the lack of coordination among these Ministries.³⁴⁵ After the present government's announcement, to proceed with *madaris* reforms, survey forms for collecting details of *madaris* have been distributed.

Madrasahs Reaction to the Present Initiatives

In a meeting of *Wafaq-ul-Madaris-al-Arabia* held on 8th April 2009, the government's announcement of *madrasah* reforms was declared unilateral and expressed concern was expressed that the government had not contact the leadership of the *madrasahs* in this regard during the past year. It was declared that the present initiatives were the continuation of the Musharaf policy. It was resolved that no government initiative will be supported without taking the *madrasahs* into confidence.³⁴⁶

A convention of the Alliance of Organizations of *Din-i-madaris* "*Ittehad-i-Tanzeemat-e-Madaris-i-Deeniya*" was held on April 9, 2009 in Islamabad. The unanimous declaration after the convention termed the present initiatives of government reforms of *din-i-madaris* as continuation of the agenda of the previous government. They rejected the distribution of survey forms. All the organizations directed their respective affiliated *madrasahs* that they should not complete the survey forms distributed by government agencies. They advised the government to contact the respective organizations of *din-i-madaris* for this purpose.³⁴⁷

The response of the *din-i-madaris* to this declaration was quick, and nearly all the *din-i-madaris* do not usually cooperate in this regard. The situation is so pathetic that I failed to convince most of administrators of *madaris* to cooperate in this regard during my field work in April-May 2009.

The response to the issue of *madrasah* reforms reflects different understandings of appropriate Islamic education. To many traditionalist *ulema*, *madrasah* education is a perfect system of education and change in it is considered to be a threat to the identity and intensity of faith and departure from the path of pious leaders. To them reforms are aimed at undermining the power of *ulema* as leaders of the community and their claim to speak authoritatively for Islam. They often see proposals for reforms as interference in their own jurisdiction. Since their claims to authority as spokesmen of Islam are based on their mastery of certain disciplines or texts, any change in syllabus will directly undermine their own claims. Moreover, they consider it a foreign conspiracy to convert purely religious education into secular education.

A section of traditionalist *ulema*, however, accepting the need for reforms, argue that this should be strictly limited and must not threaten or dilute the religious character of *madrasahs*. They favor reforms to the extent

that *madrasah* students should get basic knowledge about modern subjects. Yet they argue that the main focus should remain on the study of religious education. They believe that excessive stress on modern subjects would harm the cause of both of religious as well as modern education. Though their apprehensions may not be entirely baseless, it is a fact that reforms may seriously undermine the monopoly of traditionalists of interpretation of knowledge. Despite this deep-rooted controversy regarding *madrasah* reforms, no sector including *madrasah* education is immune to change, the demand for which also regularly comes from different people, including some leading *ulema*.

Prospects of Reforms

An analysis of the response of *madaris* to state-sponsored reforms during the last eight years predicts that high resentment and deep suspicion among the *madrasahs* regarding government's efforts prevailed all the time. The same atmosphere of distrust exists even today with the PPP government in power. The present government seems to take the previous agenda forward to which the initial response of *ulema* is not encouraging. While the fate of all previous efforts aimed at reforming *madaris* are before the present government.

How to address the present challenge? A number of options are available but require clear leadership from the government and a willingness to take some political risks. In the case of *madrasah* reform strategy the *conditio sine qua non* is to have a formal regulatory mechanism for guaranteeing efficacy of all educational institutions and ensuring quality control whether it is private secular schools or *madrasahs*. This should encourage registration, create concomitant statutory obligation on the registered entity and its sponsors by way of governance, financial accountability, and responsibility towards society.³⁴⁸

The reform efforts should inter alia provide for the following elements:

A: Registration of *madrasah* as well as private schools for quality control purposes is essential. However, to give more credibility to the efforts, this process is best managed at the provincial level with minimum interference from federal government;

B: Construction of *madrasahs* on public lands must be scrutinized more carefully to ensure that the intended purpose of state land use is being met;

C: Inclusion of local council representatives in the management committee or board of directors of *madrasahs wafaq* should be suggested in order to ensure local citizenry are involved in the working of *madrasahs*;

D: There is a need to set up an interdepartmental committee headed by a *Nazim* (local-level governor) to steer the reform agenda forward based on local input but with accountability to the federal government;

E: Some measures for ensuring that the local student body representation balances external students enrollment in urban *madrasahs* should be encouraged so that there is greater connection between the community and *madrasahs*.

F: Greater placement of *madrasah* graduates should be encouraged through apprenticeship programs in which *madrasah* graduates can find a

way to teach their religious ideals while also contributing as productive members of society.

G: Exchange of possible practices and ideas between schools and *madrasahs* within Pakistan and abroad. It is important to promote greater interaction between youth of various schools in Pakistan to reduce class tensions. There are some very promising programs that a few *madrasahs* are starting on their own accord in Pakistan and abroad. However, it is important to ensure that the lessons are meant to be mutual and no particular role model is chosen as that is likely to lead to conspiracies of political patronage.³⁴⁹

All such measures should aim at giving these essential Islamic indigenous institutions back to the community which is the need of the time. But taking on board the stake- holders (*madrasahs*) is prerequisite.

Final Assessment

The institution of the *madrasah* is about a thousand years old. As a system of Muslim education it has always played an important role in the preservation and transmission of Islamic traditions all over the world. It continued to play this role in the lives of millions of Muslims after the arrival of Muslims in the Subcontinent in the eighth century, A.D. However, with the establishment of colonial rule in the Subcontinent, a system of education was introduced which best suited the interests of the rulers. The new system became a rival of traditional *madrasahs* in the Subcontinent. The polarization between the two systems increased subsequently which was observed on every aspect of Muslim life and shaped the politically opposed ideologies of the Muslims who studied in the respective educational systems. The same bi-polar system of education was inherited by Pakistan from colonial India after its independence in 1947. Though playing an important role in the social and religious lives of Muslims in Pakistan, *madrasahs* always feel isolation at the state level. Therefore, their assertion for a greater role and their relevance in the modern world has long been an issue of debate.

Being a predominantly Muslim country, Pakistan cannot simply wish away nor ignore this important educational sector. The first attempt to integrate the mutually opposed systems and reform centuries old *madrasah* education was made in the early 1960's, during Ayub Khan's regime. The attempt, however, failed miserably. The main reasons behind this failure were the lack of understanding between the government and the religious elites and bureaucratic red-tapism. This move caused greater estrangement between the two sides throughout Ayub Khan's regime.

Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, however, tried to appease the clergy by giving them certain concessions through the 1973 constitution. The clergy, however, soon rebelled against Bhutto, too, and most religious parties representing *madrasah* leaders actively supported PNA movement which led to the imposition of military rule in 1977.

General Zia-ul-Haq, came to power in July 1977. He enjoyed better relationship with religious circles, partly, because of political expediency and, partly, because of the fast changing international priorities of the super powers in South Asia.

The Afghan revolution of 1978 and the Iranian revolution of 1979 brought far reaching religio-political changes in this region. In the face of new developments the role of *madrasahs* also changed from the socio-religious to religio-political.

Zia-ul-Haq gave certain concessions to the *ulema* by providing financial support to *madrasahs* from the Zakat Fund, and equating their final degrees with the M.A degree in Islamiyat and Arabic awarded by the universities of Pakistan. To reform the curricula of *din-i-madaris* and bring them into the mainstream a comprehensive study of *din-i-madaris* was made during Zia regime. The final report of this study which is known as the Halepota Report, proposed the introduction of modern subjects i.e. Urdu, English, general science, mathematics and Pakistan Studies at different stages in the *din-i-madaris*. The report also proposed certain changes in the duration of

different stages of studies and examination systems to improve their performance and the prospects of graduates of *din-i-madaris* to compete for jobs with graduates of formal educational institutions. The report also carries the proposal for establishment of a National Institute of *din-i-madaris*, which would oversee the function of *din-i-madaris* and works to improve their condition.

All these efforts failed because most of the *ulema* took it as an attempt to reduce their spheres of influence and to deprive *madrasahs* of their independence, which they inherited from the colonial era. The harshest reaction to government policies came from the Deobandi school of thought who, besides opposing the changes in curriculum, rejected financial aid from the Zakat Fund. The flow of foreign funds to *madrasahs* of different schools of thought during the 1980s strengthened their positions and they started to assert a greater political role, especially after the defeat of the Soviet armed forces in Afghanistan at the hands of religious forces. All democratically elected governments from 1988-1999 grappled with this problem. Thus, the dichotomy in the educational system could not be abolished till the end of twentieth century.

The events of 11th September 2001 increased the importance of *madrasahs* all over the world as the Taliban (students of *madrasahs*) were considered associated with Usama bin Laden, the alleged mastermind of the September 11th terrorist attacks. In order to neutralize the perception of the world regarding the role of *madrasahs*, the Musharraf government took legal steps to monitor the activities of *madrasahs* and to reform their syllabi by introducing two ordinances. Such moves, however, proved counter productive as *madrasahs* became more and more violent with the passage of time.

The Madrasahs Reform Project (MRP) initiated for reforming the curriculum of *din-i-madaris* during the Musharraf regime failed to achieve its objectives, partly because of opposition from *madaris* but, mainly, because of the limited preparation for planning and implementation of appropriate measures in a positive manner and the insufficient will of the government to bring about changes in the overall system. The registration drive started by the government to monitor the activities of *madrasahs* and to check increasing militancy and foreign funding was equally unsuccessful. Similarly, efforts undertaken by NGO's for bringing *madrasahs* into the mainstream also received limited response during the past eight years.

The shift in state policy after September 11th 2001 to discouraging militancy for the realization of religio-political objectives broke the traditional *mullah*-military alliance. The polarization reached the highest level towards the end of the Musharraf regime as the ITDM refused to hold any negotiations with the government regarding any matter relating to *madrasah* reforms. The government's inefficiency to handle the issue properly is largely responsible for such polarization. The *ulema* on their part cannot escape the responsibility for the failure of reform efforts during the Musharraf regime as well.

The *ulema*'s response to reforms was mainly shaped by the apprehension that the government agenda of reform is being taken at the behest of foreign

powers, especially, the USA. The *ulema* cite the increasing interests of the USA in the religious educational institution in the Muslim world and the earmarking of funds for reforming the religious education system in this regard. The *ulema*'s doubts about the sincerity of the government may be partially true. But their absolute resistance to reform their educational system cannot be called logical and their strict adherence to the status quo may not auger well for their own survival.

Madrasahs reform cannot be eluded for long because the demand for it regularly comes from different segments of society, including leading scholars, academics, and intellectuals and also from some *ulema*.

The present government should not abandon the efforts of reforming *madrasahs* but should proceed with great caution and ensure its absolute sincerity while undertaking the reform agenda. Before taking further steps *madrasahs* should be taken into confidence and possibly the whole community should be taken on board. Only these measures can ensure the future prospects of reforms.

Glossary

alīyah: عالیه two-year program of Islamic studies that follows the *thānvīyah-i-ḥāsā* تهنویه خاصه

‘*alīm* عالم (pl. ‘*ulemā*’ علماء): scholars of Islamic religion and law.

‘*alīmīyah*: علمیه two-year program of religious studies that follows the ‘*alīyah* عالیه.

ahl-i-ḥadīt: اهل حدیث Sunni interpretative tradition not strictly following any of the four recognized Imams (in Pakistan sometimes called *Salafī*).

Barelvī: بریلوی usually refers to the followers of Imam Ahmad Raza Khan, an important Muslim scholar of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. *Barelvīs* بریلوس observe practices that are Sufi in orientation, such as worship at the graves of religious leaders and the acceptance of rituals associated with this religious tradition.

Dars-i-Nizāmī درسی نظامی *the madrasah curriculum of Sunni madrasahs in the Indian subcontinent was authored by Mullah Nizām ud-Dīn Sehlāvī of the Firangi Mahal madrasah of Lucknow (d. 1748). With the exception of minor changes it has remained in use up to the present day.*

dars-i-Qur’ān: درسی قرآن literally, study of the Qur’ān. Informal study sessions that convene at a home or a mosque.

dār-al-ḥarb: دارالحرب abode of war.

dār-ul-ulūm: دارالعلوم *madrasah, university.*

daurā: داورا literally, a tour. Here, a tour of religious proselytizing, often in the service of groups such as the *Tablīghī Jamā’at* تبلیغی جماعت.

da’wa: literally, “summons” or “invitation”. Implies proselytizing to non-Muslims to embrace Islam and to Muslims to become better Muslims, variously defined.

Deobandī: دیوبندی School of Islam that emerged from a Muslim religious revival movement in the Indian subcontinent during British rule begun in the town of Deoband دیوبند in Uttar Pradesh in modern-day India. A puritanical movement to uplift Muslims by purifying Islamic practices through, among other things, discouraging mystical beliefs, such as intercession by saints and propitiation at graves and shrines.

dunyavī: دُنیاوی Related to the world (secular affairs).

fatwa فتویٰ (pl. *fatawa*): A legal opinion (in Islamic jurisprudence).

fauqanī: فقانی *madrasah* مدرسه education of eight years in four two-year stages, beginning with *thānvīyah-i-ammah* تهنویه عامه and ending with the *alīmīyah* .

fiqh: فقه Islamic jurisprudence.

ḥadīt: حدیث The sayings, actions and thoughts of the Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon Him!) with the Holy *Qur'ān* it comprises the Sunna (Islamic law). Scholars of various interpretative traditions disagree about the legitimacy of *ḥadīt* texts in the interpretative traditions of Islam.

ḥafez: حافظ One who has memorized the Holy *Qur'ān*.

Hanafī: حنفی Dominant school of Islamic jurisprudence in Pakistan and South Asia generally. Considered to be the most liberal of the four school of *fiqh* (jurisprudence) because it accepts both analogical reasoning and unanimity in decision making.

ḥifz-e-Qur'ān: حافظ قرآن Memorizing the Holy *Qur'ān* .

ibtidai: ابتدائی literally “primary”. The first level (five years) of religious education roughly equivalent to the period of primary education in worldly sector.

ijtihād: اجتهاد derivation of rules for the new situation from the principal sources of Islamic jurisprudence.

Islamiyat: اسلامیات Islamic studies. An official component of Pakistan’s state curriculum.

Jamā'at-i-Islāmī: جماعت اسلامی sectarian Islamist political party in Pakistan.

jāmi'ah: جامعہ college

madrasah: مدرسه (pl. *madaris* مدارس) school that imparts secondary and post secondary religious education using a specialized curriculum, *Dars-i-Nizāmī* درس نظامی .

maktab: مکتب (pl. *Makatib* مکاتب) religious primary school that generally teaches young children to read the *Qur'ān* and sometimes to recite it.

markaz: literally, “center.” Headquarters or central offices of an organization. In the context of this study, the central location of the five boards that govern Pakistan’s *madaris*.

maslak: مسلک (pl. *masalik* مسالک): Way or practice, usually in reference to a particular interpretative tradition.

Matriculation (Matric): certificate on completion of ten years of education and passage of an examination. Matric qualification is a pre-requisite for many jobs as well as admission to colleges and universities in Pakistan.

maulvi: مولوی religious scholar.

mutawassitah: متوسطة First level of formal religious education that follows *ibtadai*. Three years long; it is the equivalent of middle school. (vastani)

nazra Qur'ān: ناظره قرآن Learning to recite the Holy Qur'ān.

nisāb: نصاب The curriculum.

qārī: قاری a master of the recitation of the Holy Qur'ān in one of the major seven styles of recitation, *tagwīd* تجويد.

radd: Refutation of the doctrines of rival *mazhabs* مذاهب .

tafsīr: تفسير (pl. *stafāsīr*): Exegesis of the Holy Qur'ān.

takmīl: تکمیل Typically a one-year, post-M.A. course of religious study.

thānvīyah-i-ammah: تهنويه عامه Two-year level of religious studies that follows *mutawassitah* متوسطة .

thānvīyah-i-ḥāsā: تهنويه خاصه Two-year level of religious studies that follows *thānvīyah-i-ammah*.

taqlīd: تقليد Imitation (of past jurisprudential precedent).

'ulemā' علماء See 'alīm

ul-ulūm-al-aqlia: علوم العقليه Rational sciences, such as philosophy, geometry, medicine, chemistry and geography. Often contrasted to *ul-ulūm-al-naqlia* علوم النقليه (religiously “transmitted” sciences).

ul-ulūm-al-naqlia: علوم النقليه “Transmitted sciences” such as reading and interpreting the Holy Qur'ān and *ḥadīth* حديث (traditions and sayings of the Prophet Muhammad). Sometimes called traditional or religious sciences. Often understood in contrast to *ulūm-al-aqlia*.

umma: أمة The global Muslim community, the community of the Islamic faith.

vustani: وسطنى First level of formal religious education that follows *ibtadai*. Three years long, the equivalent of middle school. (See **Mutawassitah**.)

wafaq: وفاق School of thought (**Maslak**). Usually translated as “board” as in school board. There are five such boards (**four Sunni and one Shia**). And most of Pakistani *madaris* are affiliated with one of them.

zakar: زكوة Almsgiving. Muslims donate a percentage of their annual earnings as alms or charity. The mount differs according to Sunni and Shia traditions.

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