ABSTRACT

Islamic Education has passed through three phases in history. The Ummaid, the Abbasides and the Othmani period. Pakistani Madrasah is a descendant of the Indian Schools of thought: the Deoband and the Bareilly. Modern educational philosophies divide spread of knowledge into two basic phases: subject level studies as against the discipline level studies. The former deals with knowledge as store of information passed on to students to be passed onwards, while the latter implies that the scholar is enabled to solve problems with his analytical abilities and application skills. The present paper looks at the Madrasah system of education in Pakistan to find out whether it has the ability to produce scholars that can lead the administrative, economic, social and politically complex issues with analytical and innovative approach that is required of the great Islamic scholars and what is required to do so in this direction. The discussion is based on the thoughts on education of Ibn Khaldoon, Shah Waliullah and Piaget.

KEYWORDS: Educational theories, Religious education

INTRODUCTION

Madrasah in the pre-independence era

Islamic Education has passed through three phases in history. The Ummaid, the Abbasides and the Othmani period. We live in the fourth period which is known as the period of rebuilding, revival and reawakening (Hashmi and Ianggulung 2008). This period is a mixture of the Western influence of education system and the Muslim struggle to benefit from the same while avoiding its backlash in the society? The Western education as mentioned by Asad puts a heavy weight on the side of the secular anti God concepts so much so that any individual educated under it cannot escape its effects.

The Pakistani scenario of Madrasa

Religious education in Pakistan is provided by the same Madrasah system spread through length and Breadth of Pakistan. The output of these Madrasahs comes out after eight years of rigorous studies. The qualified personals, who are called Ulemas would join mosques to lead prayers in the Mosques and address Friday audience to for khutba and sermons. The basic problem with this system is that this Madrasah system was not created to meet the needs of an independent state which would have the religion of Islam as a major way of life. The Pakistani society's answer to that problem is thus quite superfluous and incapable to face the real challenge as can be seen in the gradual metamorphosis of our society into western cultural traditions and values.

However the influence of scholars from this system, by default, in the Pakistani society is very vast and they try to mold public opinion regarding politics, economics, social and individual lives general and people's spiritual life in particular. The questions that this paper addresses is whether this output qualifies to develop and assert a mature influence on the Pakistani society which is under the brunt of global challenges such as International politics, medicines, transplantations, scientific competition, technological and spiritual challenges to its faith through electronic and print media on the one hand and economic challenges such as IMF monitoring and loans on the other. Is the system of Madrasas producing individuals who, in their capacity, could prepare scholars, intellectuals, journalists, politicians, diplomats, lawyers and social scientists to face the challenges of modern times?

The Madrasah system in the Post-independent Pakistan is a continuation of the pre-partition India that was created in the times of fear and oppression to preserve the basic values of Islam in an un-Islamic set up. The following aims were given at the time of establishment of the Deoband Madrasah; Darul Uloom Deoband was established to fulfil these fundamental objectives:

- Imparting and teaching the Holy Quran, Tafseer, Hadith, Beliefs and other useful sciences
- Providing Muslims with complete knowledge of Islam
- Nurturing Islamic morals and inculcating Islamic spirit in students
- Propagating, preserving and defending Islam through pen and tongue.
- Keeping DarulUloom away from the influence of government and maintain the freedom of knowledge and thought
- Establishing madrasas at various places in order to spread Islamic sciences
As can be seen in those times Muslims did not aim to have any share in the administrative set up of the British Empire and hence the education system was narrowly aimed at the preservation aspect only. That aim was successfully achieved by the great efforts of the Madrasah as demonstrated in 1947 by the collective conscience of the people of Indo Pak for a desire to establish a Muslim society. The success of the Madrasah can also be seen in the systematic disappearance of Islam in the Central Asian states such as Kirghizistan, Turkmanistan, Tajkistan and other states under Soviet Russia where there was never a demand or struggle for an Islamic state that could see the theology of Islam in practical shape.

The moment Pakistan came into being the aim and objectives of the pre-partition Madrasah needed to be revised and modified as the new administration of the country required such personals that were trained in faith and field both to come to the rescue of the new republican of the Islamic state. The demand of the new times could not be met with the eight years of the course of Alim that the Madrasah provides presently. There was a need to adapt the Madrasa to the need of the Ummah and to follow the Madrasah of the 2nd period (Hashim and Langgulung 2008) which included non-religious sciences in the light of the present day world needs of Islam.

A careful analysis of the syllabi of these Madrasas shows that they provide primary Islamic information which is highly useful at the early stages of getting information, however something more is required which is better explained in the basic division of knowledge into subject and discipline Widdowson (1975).

This distinction is essential as it guides towards a set of abilities, concepts, ways of thinking, associated with a particular area of human enquiry which comes as an advanced phase of study as compared to information collection and imparting which comes at the earlier stages of a child. Any field of knowledge which has implies application requires that disciplinary approach is given to its studies which, of course, will be over and above the initial period of the study of information provided to students as a subject when practical application of the subjects is sought through Analysis, criticism and Research.

To state it in plain terms these Madrassas teach the religious education as subject and not as discipline. The present Madrasa, with its pre partition structuring does not involve its students in any of these activities as the aim was (during the colonial period) not to produce scholars with administrative capabilities. What is lamenting is that the same arrangement continues which seeks to prepare people the mosque rather than lead the people in the world. On the level of HEC gradation these full scholars do not go beyond the range of an Intermediate student in the National stream of Education.

This set up has worked very well for about a century in the colonial period where the administration was in the hands of the British and there was no chance for the output of the Madrasa to have any role in the society. However, with the independence of this country the bulk of Muslim scholars coming out of these Madrasa is expected to play a far wider role than those times. This need requires that along with the primary Madrasa we have a higher Madrasa to fill the vacuum. The need was felt around the globe in the Muslim world and wherever Muslims live even in minority as they need the guidance of Muslim scholars for their day to day affairs and also to tackle different sort of challenges faced by them in their society, hence the need for scholars who are equipped in different languages, sciences, arts social sciences with the latest knowledge at hand along with profound knowledge and philosophy of Islam. The experiences of Malaysia and Indonesia where according Islamic education was redefined according to the needs of the society as stated by Hashim and Hassan;

Islamic education not only focused on spiritual farduAin but it became more comprehensive, it included other subjects such as Arabic language, Math and Geography. An Integrated Curriculum for primary School was introduced.

So to meet the needs of the society the Malaysian and Indonesian policy makers introduced an integrated system of education. The official statement of the National Education philosophy NEP is as under;

Education in Malaysia is an ongoing effort towards further developing the potential of individuals in holistic and integrated manner so as to produce individuals who are intellectually, spiritually and physically balanced and harmonious, based on the firm belief in and devotion to God. Such an effort is designed to produce Malaysian citizens who are Knowledgeable and competent, who possess high moral standards, and who are resilient and capable of achieving a high level of personal well-being as well as being able to contribute to the betterment of family, society and the nation at large.

The Malaysian experience confirms that there is an urgent need to address the issue of education in Pakistan at general and particular level if the Pakistani society has any care about its future. As this paper is concerned with religious education its particular addressee is Madrasa system where the reforms are the urgent need of the time. These reforms can be carried out internally as well as by getting help from the present day educationists whose experiences have led the west in material development to the extent where sky is not the limit.

A cautious spiritual and material growth can be visualized if we combine the successfully tested views of Muslim and Western scholars in this regard and develop our education system in its light. I have chosen the great Muslim scholars IbnKhalidun, Ghazali and Piaget to show that a comprehensive lay out for our Madrasa can be developed if the Islamic education has to benefit the mankind which is so much eager to develop materially, spiritually and morally.

Views of different scholars on Education

IbnKhalidun

IbnKhalidun, the great Muslim educationist has views on education which can befittingly be used for the guidance of Madrasah at lower and tertiary level. He goes for the
Teachers usually explain the difficult and deeper aspects of subjects which students are learning for the first time, therefore, forcing the students to memorize the subject. They accept this as the correct form of teaching. However, the students’ brains are not capable of understanding this. It’s difficult enough for them to learn a lesson. This results in the students becoming lazy, their mind rejects the information and the period of learning is prolonged. This is subsequently a result of poor teaching methods. The teacher should not impose upon the students whether they are new or accustomed to the subject. He should not overload the students with lessons beyond their capabilities and capacities, or should not intrude beyond the textbook under study or begin a new textbook before the current one is completed. Otherwise, the issues will be scrambled and subjects will become complex. When teaching, one must provide thought and revision. Memorization should be avoided.

There is clearly a concern for the mental development of the scholars in question. He believes in the developing of the reasoning abilities rather than the memory development.

**On the teaching of sciences**

*IbnKhalidun* does not ignore the teaching of sciences and he has special instructions for the teaching of sciences when he says skill and knowledge both require the attention of scholars. He supports the teaching of traditions and sciences to develop when he says;

*Tradition is important in teaching. Tradition must be upheld for the progress of science. Otherwise, science and education will recede. Tradition of science and education only prevails in places which have progressed in prosperity.*

*IbnKhalidun* has emphasized the importance of science, education and teaching. He foresees science and education as an inseparable part of prosperity. According to him;

*The real difference between mankind and other beings is the power of thought. Science and art are born from open-minded thought and the intricate learning of the principles of all issues. Ideas emerge from those who have the curiosity and desire to investigate what is unknown. From this situation, the issues of education and teaching arise.*

He advises teachers to teach in a comprehensive manner and to gradually teach subjects in stages, moving from easier to the more difficult. Memorization should be avoided. He emphasizes that teaching methods should be simple and not complicated. He states that the teaching of subjects should not be in broken sequences or else the subject will become scrambled and forgotten. Also, aggressive behavior towards children will turn them off from lessons, create laziness, making them unwilling learners as well as negatively affecting their behavior.

Education, according to *IbnKhalidun*, should consist of theory and practice. Education should be revised and repeated until a good level is attained. He also declares that teachers of these sciences should be knowledgeable in their fields. These clearly defined issues of *IbnKhalidun* are still relevant for educational issues of contemporary times.

For al Ghazali the aim of education is to cultivate man so that he abides by the teachings of religion. Of course here religion means the way of life that guides in every aspect of life giving most priority to what is most important. He believes in the development of man in a holistic manner. Piaget, the modern educationist, sums up the above thought in modern times as follows; He approaches the mind of the child through schema which takes into account the understanding or comprehension of students in the following manner;

**A schema describes both the mental and physical actions involved in understanding and knowing. Schemas are categories of knowledge that help us to interpret and understand the world. In Piaget’s view, a schema includes both a category of knowledge and the process of obtaining that knowledge. As experiences happen, this new information is used to modify, add to, or change previously existing schemas.**

For example, a child may have a schema about a type of animal, such as a dog. If the child’s sole experience has been with small dogs, a child might believe that all dogs are small, furry, and have four legs. Suppose then that the child encounters a very large dog. The child will take in this new information, modifying the previously existing schema to include this new information. The process of comprehension is ongoing as new and new knowledge enters the mind of the learner, he adapts and readapts his ideas through assimilation, accommodation and equilibration. These three concepts are explained below.

**Assimilation** - The process of taking in new information into our previously existing schemas is known as assimilation. The process is somewhat subjective, because we tend to modify experience or information somewhat to fit in with our pre-existing beliefs. In the example above, seeing a dog and labeling it “dog” is an example of assimilating the animal into the child’s dog schema.

**Accommodation** - Another part of adaptation involves changing or altering our existing schemas in light of new information, a process known as accommodation. Accommodation involves altering existing schemas, or ideas, as a result of new information or new experiences. New schemas may also be developed during this process.

**Equilibration** - Piaget believed that all children try to strike a balance between assimilation and accommodation, which is achieved through a mechanism Piaget called equilibration. As children progress through the stages of cognitive development, it is important to maintain a balance between applying previous knowledge (assimilation) and changing behavior to account for new knowledge (accommodation). Equilibration helps explain how children are able to move from one stage of thought into the next.

One can see that the development of a child under these processes lead him to adapt and adopt so that his mental doors remain open for new ideas. These ideas are more welcome when they come from a faithful mind as a Muslim mind moves with the insight of his faith as declared by the
Prophet Muhammad, beware of the insight of a believer as he sees with the light of Allah.

As can be seen the combination of these philosophies would mean to develop the child psychologically, mentally, spiritually and materially so that a beautiful personality is developed that has sound grooming in different aspects and contribute to the well-being of self and society.

The Pakistani Madrasas then is just a stop gap arrangement...........where orphans, deprived and devotees are admitted to get some type of basic knowledge that could acquire them some sort of position in the society but never match the task which is normally assigned to them in the society. The discrepancy between their actual abilities and the tasks ahead creates continuous misbalance in the society and the result is that this Madrasah has not produced a single scholar of the International caliber that could the whole Pakistani nation look up to in a collective manner, let alone the International audience who are supposed to be invited to understand Islam by the Muslim scholars.

The methodology of the Madrasah does not seem to follow the great principles of the Muslim philosophers such as Ibn Khaldun, Ghazali, Iqbal, Mawlana Maududi nor the techniques used for the modern mind which could lead to the better development if applied on Islamic heritage material could producing wonderful results for Madrassas and the world at large.

A highly simplified example of this is the memorization of the Qur'an where the audio - video aids could lead to more interesting activities and quicker results on experimented by Al Huda, Islamabad and masjid Umer Farooq at Karachi. The need of the time is to provide refresher courses to Madrassasteachers in the Modern techniques of teaching Islamic material which also requires research based approach for which this university could provide the first aid help.

This is essential to reform the Madrasahat its present level and improve its standard however, what is more crucial is to develop a higher Madrassa and University level teaching which could take its input directly from Madrasah and provide necessary training In Research related activities regarding Islam and Islam related issues around the world such as mentioned above. Research in the field of Qur'anic text studies by scholars such Itsuzu, Neuwirth, Salwa El Awa, Abdel Haleem, Mustansir Mir, Neal Robinson and many others can work as a guiding force to provide higher material for discussion and development. The vision is thatsuch Madrasah would produce scholar of high caliber who would be trained in the technical know- how of the present time, equipped with modern languages and understand the intricacies of the modern time and be able to address these issues in an Academic manner.

Pakistan has been fortunate in this regard as the universally acclaimed scholars such as Mawlama Maududi, the great poet Allama Iqbal and the great European scholar Allama Asad belong to this land; their thoughts could have been a guiding force for the higher Madrasah as they address the Islamic issues from the perspectives of discipline and therefore do not find any place either in the secular system or the Madrasah where the subject of Islam is taught more like a subject rather than a discipline. Scholars coming out of such a system would carry the message of Islam in a more authentic way with better results.

It is felt that presently all such issues when faced meet non-academic, Un-intellectual response and often the response comes from the illiterate classes of the society who find no other way to respond, except in a reactionary manner for example, burning their own streets and cars when reacting to a priest’s activities against the Holy Book of the universe: The Qur’an or the publication of blasphemous material.

Such an approach requires that Muslim scholars from East and west sit together to develop the primary, high and higher secondary and University level Madrasah in Pakistan the Models of which could be replicated around the world to produce such scholars with a job structure that could induct these scholar in practical fields such as Finance, legal system, Bureaucracy, politics and society at large. This would in turn require that the syllabi is reformed in the light of the these conferences conducted in 1977 (Makka), 1980 (Islamabad) and 1981 (Bangladesh).

Two models can help us in this regard. One the Azhar Model that guides in the higher level research of the Islamic related mentioned which was adapted by Malaysia and Indonesia Hashim and Langgulung(2008)

The hindsight is always more educative as in our case, we the aspirants of the greatest system on earth with the help of Allah need scholars who understand the needs of the present times along with the vision for the future with the understanding of the glorious traditions of the history and religion of Islam.

On the part of Madrasah this is a serious task to be taken and is inevitably to be taken by institutes which might only be some form of the Madrasa as the secular aspect of the society, with all its desires and faith for Islam might never be in a position to do the job. That would be them at their best, however, at their worst they hardly seem interested in any religious turn to the human mind and prefer to follow the West in sum total.

This kind of situation is creating a great rift in the society in which we notice a gradual cornering of the religion, religious scholars and even seeming religious people. This is in the same fashion as the Muslim identity in the West is being challenged, and any return to Islam is considered equal to fundamentalism, and terrorism. The peaceful face of Islam is getting overshadowed and the innocent faces of the religious students (now mixed with Taliban) seem horribly blended with brutality and mercilessness. This is one of the hardest challenges faced by the Madrasa of Islam in general and that of this country in particular. The education in the present times need not be divided into religious and secular segments.

This is more specifically so from the perspective of Islam as the sole aim of man is to discover himself (nafs) and his Creator (Khaliq) through the discovery of the nature created by Him. The Qur’an time and again reminds man to look into nature;
And of His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the difference of your languages and colours. Lo! Herein indeed are signs for men of knowledge. (22)

And of His signs is this: He showeth you the lightning for a fear and for a hope, and sendeth down water from the sky, and thereby quickeneth the earth after her death. Lo! Herein indeed are portents for folk who understand.

Don’t they see how the camel has been created?
And how they sky has been raised? Q: 88:17-18

And indeed in the creation of the skies and the earth there are signs for the people of wisdom. So the education in the Islamic world must prepare people read these signs in the physical world and not just in the text, as it is these physical signs that guide man to the practical track rather than the language of the text. It is high time that research oriented studies should be the goal of early education that prepares scholars to explore the universe in the name of their Lord and to harmonized the ‘self’ according to the nature of the universe and thus create the environment that is in keeping with the one that brings forth the hidden potential of man and facilitates that develops it to such heights which have never before been imagined by man and only known to Allah. A progressive approach in this regard will prepare scholars who teach the students at Madrassas as teachers and educators of future and will provide vision of the future madrassas of the state.

STRATEGY FOR FUTURE

The above analysis requires that a careful revision of the whole system of education is done in the light of the development of a personality which is aware of its duties on earth in the best possible manner. This applies universally to all education system, however, it can pleasantly be done within the fold of Madrasa education where two pronged strategy has been recommended.

i) Revise the aims of madrasa education in the light of the new responsibilities and develop syllabi accordingly.

ii) Establish Higher Madrasa of Islamic education that could cover the broader scholarly aims faced according to the challenges ahead in present times.

This job can only be done by the people who know the Creator and acknowledge Him. These goals cannot be achieved by the secular mind who explores the universe only for material gains. Time has proved that the early stance of the madrasa regarding the study of sciences and even English language has been revised and this paves the way for the next phase of the Madrasa education which will have to be comprehensive and all-embracing to help the world society at large and the Pakistani society in particular to begin this job.

If these steps are taken and the new trend is set the time is not far when the model of madrasa will be followed by every parent for their children and if the positive trend is set the dream and vision for future is to replace the entire western education system by the Islamic system and the world will gain in its scientific, material development even more along with the moral and spiritual development that is becoming a rare commodity in the world society.

The researcher feels an urgent need to address these issues with long term planning that must devise syllabi for Madrasa that educate students in the great heritage of Islam, the modern Exegetes of the Qur’an, the modern periods’ reaction to Islam its objective reasons an modern methods of propaganda, media techniques, the biography of the Prophet (saws) and its applications in the modern times along with the scientific and material developments which is the offshoot of the Islamic study of the signs of God in the physical world. In short the content of Islam must move in a systematic way from subject to discipline.

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Cite this Article: Dr. Ahsan UR Rehman "Madrasha Education in Pakistan; subject or Discipline?" Weber Educational Research & Instructional Studies, Vol. 1 (1) 2015, Article ID weris_105, 36-40, 2015