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Madarsa Education and its Importance in the Muslim Community

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Abstract

The Madarsa is a living embodiment of a once-thriving educational system. It was unconcerned about the rate of growth and advancement in other areas of life, and it resisted any improvement or innovation in the education it provided. In India, a significant number of Muslims attend Madarsa or Urdu-medium schools for their education. An educational institution is referred to as a madarsa in Arabic. Religious education was never needed of Madarsas. However, much has changed in this thinking in recent years, and Madarsa is now regarded as the centre for providing only religious education. People from the backward Muslim community nowadays put a high importance on quality education in their Madarsa. However, several Madarsa in India are privately owned, and the leaders of these Madarsa are unable to meet the needs of this group. The main goal of this paper is to determine the contribution of Madarsa education and its significance in the Muslim community, as well as to identify its shortcomings. For the overall growth of the Muslim community, this paper proposes some remedial steps to enhance the standard of Madarsa education.

Key-words: Madarsa Education, Muslim, Modernization of Madarsa

Introduction

Any nation's growth is influenced by its educational system, and it has long been known that education is the key to human advancement and social change. Education is one of the most significant factors in an individual's or community's political, social, and economic development¹.

The secret to the empowerment of Indian Muslims is education. Madarsas are free educational centers that serve as the core of Muslims' cultural and educational lives. The Madarsa is a priceless tool for traditional education, but it has also played a crucial role in spreading literacy among Muslim society's most oppressed members. Several Madarsas have free boarding and lodging in addition to free education. Madarsas are used to express Islamic cultural heritage and fundamental ideals that are profoundly rooted in the Muslim community's culture, consciousness, and identity. In Maharashtra, the BJP government has de-recognized Madarsas, which only teach students about Islam and do not offer any formal subjects like math, science, or history. Madarsa is a part of formal education, and many students have been admitted into India's top universities and colleges. Madarsa produced a number of notable writers, including Munshi Premchand².

In the modern Indian context, education plays a unique role in empowering minorities, especially Muslims. Today's environment is competitive, and education, in general, and technical education, in particular, is in high demand. Since the Muslim community has lagged behind in terms of education over the years, it is critical to accelerate, foster, and support this community's education. The benefits of modern education are well known among the general public. Even in an enlightened and inclusive society, all sections and classes of the population must be well trained and intellectually prepared to shoulder the obligations of a free country. India has the second-largest Muslim population in the world, second only to Indonesia³.

Objective of the Study

The main objectives of the studies are;

- Researching the role of Madarsa education and its significance in the Muslim community.
- To determine Madarsa's issues.

Historical Background of Madarsa

There are currently about 35,000 Madarsas in India, both large and small, with a total enrolment of around 1.5 million students. According to the Encyclopedia of Islam by E J Brill of Leiden, a madarsa is a place of learning where Islamic sciences, such as literary and philosophical studies, are taught. The origin of Madarsa in India can be traced back to the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate in 1206AD, according to the Encyclopedia. The institution was once a thriving institution, catering to the needs of its patrons, the rulers of the day. The institution reached its peak during the Delhi Sultanate and Mughal dynasties, when it was recognized as a source of administrators and judges⁴.

Originally, the Madarsa was supposed to be a solely religious and cultural organization dedicated to the preservation and propagation of Islamic practices. It was devoid of any political or ideological agenda. However, because of their political clout, they were willing to play a consultative role in policymaking. Madarsa's sheen and utility faded with the passing of time. Madarsa as centers of expertise and excellence declined sharply after the Mughal era. To make things worse, the institution itself became entangled in a vice-like grasp of ideology and conservatism, resulting in stagnation and eventual demise⁵.

The Madarsa movement was revived during the British period with the establishment of Darul Uloom in Deoband in 1866. The institute served a dual purpose: it disseminated Islamic knowledge while also mobilising Indian Muslims to join the freedom movement against the British. During the nineteenth century, orthodox ulama accepted the INC's secular policies. This debunks the first misconception that Madarsa was a hotbed of resentment and harboured anti-India and anti-secular feelings from the start. Madarsa became known by their Hindu counterparts as secessionist strongholds. This impression was reinforced in the post-independence period, when Madarsa remained inward-looking and exclusivist in their approach, despite the Constitutional protections in place to accommodate them. This action jeopardized their chances of mainstream acceptance and further alienated them⁶.

Educational Status of Indian Muslims

The national educational policy of 1986 emphasised the importance of educational liberalisation in liberating society's oppressed groups. The strategy called for extensive use of distance education media to access the unreached⁷. According to the Sachar Committee's (2006) report, Muslims have a poor educational standing. Muslims were found to be the country's most educationally backward group, according to the findings. Muslim enrolment at the primary school level (Class 1–5) was a mere 14.43 percent of overall enrolment figures for 2015–16, despite accounting for nearly 13 percent of India's population⁸.

Table-1

Percentage of Muslim Enrolment in India(2011-2016)					
YEAR	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Primary Level	14.26	14.31	14.34	14.37	14.43
Upper Primary Level	12.36	12.47	12.52	12.60	12.60
Elementary Level	12.89	13.59	13.63	13.77	13.80

Source: District Information System for Education (DISE)

According to preliminary review of provisional results, Muslim Minority children's participation in elementary education programmes has improved significantly. In 2015-16, 14.43 percent of primary school students were Muslim, compared to 14.37 percent in 2014-15, 14.31 percent in 2012-13, and 14.26 percent in 2011-12. Muslim enrolment in Upper Primary classes rose to 12.60 percent in 2016-17 from 12.52 percent in

2013-14, 12.47 percent in 2012-13, and 12.36 percent in 2011-12, similar to Primary enrolment. Muslim enrolment is also on the rise, with 12.89 percent in 2011-12, 13.59 percent in 2012-13, 13.77 percent in 2014-15, and 13.80 percent in 2015-16.

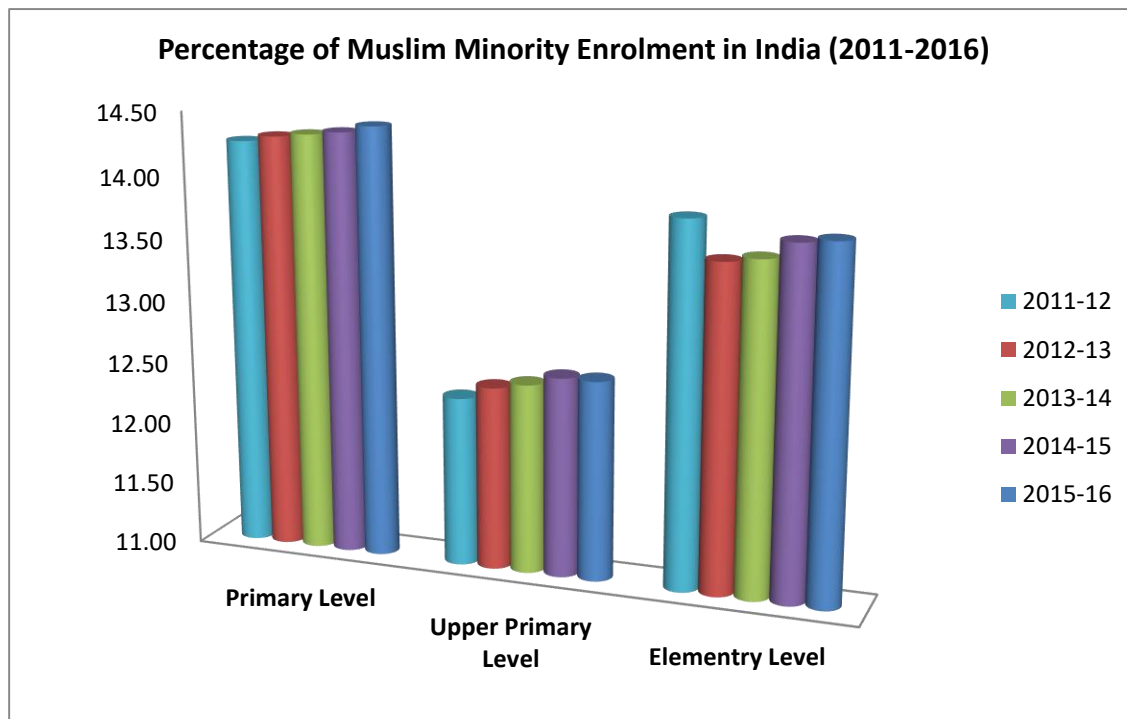


Fig-1

Table-2 The National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO) was used to compile the information presented below (2015-16). These are India's largest sample surveys, which provide information on respondents' caste and faith, as well as education and job characteristics.

Table-2

Percentage of Enrolment by Cast (Class I-VII)			
Year	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
ST	19.72	19.80	19.70
SC	10.63	10.47	10.35
OBC	44.21	44.53	45.08
Muslim	13.73	13.77	13.80

Source: National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO)

Table-2 Provides a summary of the enrolment distribution of classes I to VIII by educational attainment for the 2015-16 school year. Muslims have a lower literacy rate than other socio-religious communities. When compared to ST children, Muslim children have the lowest enrolment rate. As a result, although the number of Muslims enrolled in school has risen in recent years, the majority of Muslims have only completed secondary school.

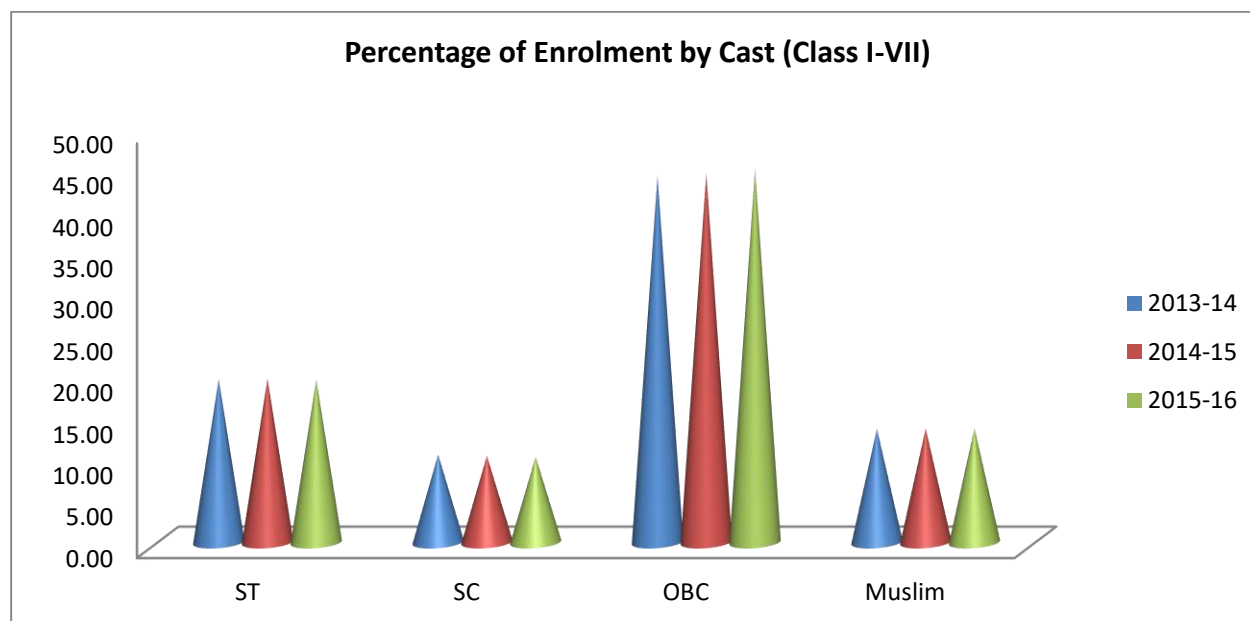


Fig-2

The situation has deteriorated to the point that, if immediate action is not taken, things will spiral out of control. Poor Indian Muslims send their children to Madarsa or Urdu-medium schools that represent Muslim communities due to a lack of good quality public schools and rising identity pride and communal prejudices. This is particularly true for Muslim parents who believe that sending their daughters to an Urdu-medium school would keep them safe⁹.

Madarsa and its Importance in the Muslim Society

Madarsas are religious educational institutions that ensure future generations of Muslims have access to Islamic knowledge. Madarsas, both historically and in the eyes of those who run them, aim to preserve religious practise and are seen as an important tool for maintaining identity¹⁰.

At the moment, the framework of environmental education is obsolete and specialised. By supplying them with a high-quality education, Muslims will reclaim their fortunes and save their identities. Muslim students should put in a lot of effort to learn about the modern world. Training seeks to prepare and inspire students to cope with the environment in which they live, allowing them to take advantage of available opportunities and contribute to the common good. Madarsa's executives are unaware of the exact aim and target of Madarsa education. Madarsa does not have a standardised or science curriculum. Most Madarsa, even a primary school, lacks the requisite facilities, such as a proper building and teaching equipment. Madarsa survives on small gifts and donations and is still cashless. These Madarsa use an outdated assessment and evaluation scheme. The students discover that there is a great deal of religious instruction in Madarsa, but that it does not provide them with the requisite skills today¹¹.

In the age of internationalism, Muslims in India should recognise that they are at the bottom of the educational barrel. The use of information technology and increased cultural broadcasting through electronic media has brought the international community closer together. The Muslim community should concentrate its efforts,

especially in general and Madarsa education, in order to achieve dignity, peace, and prosperity, as well as the required security of their lives. In relation to the Madarsa, education is needed to maintain a delicate balance between the Muslim community's focus on religious grounds, on which it wields extraordinary influence, and the need to make education an educational and legitimate tool to enable the community to assert its place in the country's developmental mainstream. To meet the modern world's challenge, Madarsa will need to be revitalised, which will necessitate a focus on educational quality as well as the expansion of the science base, knowledge, and technology. In a pluralistic, multicultural, and inclusive culture, Madarsa should pay heed to the importance of Islamic teachings. According to the national curriculum, the subjects must have a single curriculum that combines conventional Islamic themes and themes. A key aspect of national minority education policy is to pay particular attention to backwards education¹².

Several schemes have been suggested in the past to achieve this aim. Intensive area services for educationally underserved minorities, the modernization of the Madarsa education scheme for the recruitment of Urdu teachers, and part-time Arabic/Persian teachers are just a few of them. It is past time to try a new way in which all of this occurs. Plans are carried out in a coordinated manner. In Madarsa, the implementation of modern education would aid in the healthy growth of a student's total personality and contribute to the creation of a compassionate and inclusive society¹³.

The goal of Madarsa education should be the holistic and all-around growth of each student. This is particularly important because Madarsas serve as nurseries for the Muslim community's future religious leaders. It will concentrate on fostering a balanced physical culture through outdoor activities such as fitness, sports, and community / social service, among other items¹⁴.

Efforts for Modernization of Madarsa

In India, there are projected to be 35,000 to 40,000 Madarsas. The government has made numerous attempts to modernise Madarsa education in order to make it more appropriate. The Department of Education's High Power Panel on Minorities (1980) and Committee on Minorities Education (1990) lobby for related curriculum improvements. The Prime Minister's 15 Point Programme for Minority Welfare and the National Policy on Education (1986) and Programme of Action (1992) recommended that traditional Madarsa be modernised, and the 'Scheme of Modernization of Madarsa' was introduced as a centrally funded scheme in 1994, offering the voluntary addition of English, Science, Mathematics, and Hindi subjects. The 'National Monitoring Committee for Minorities' established a Standing Committee in 2004¹⁵.

The path to development is education. The status of backward classes among religious minorities is a necessary condition for socioeconomic change. Religious minorities' literacy and educational levels differ dramatically from one group to the next and from region to region. The educational status of Muslims is relatively poor, according to census data on religious minorities. For Muslims' academic growth in India, it is

critical to broaden coverage and provide quality education, with an emphasis on girls' education and vocational education.

The government's Madarsa modernization plan should be appropriately revised, strengthened, and funded so that it can provide finance and modern education to Standard X within those Madarsa that are currently only providing religious education, or so that such students Madarsa can receive such education concurrently in the common schools in their neighbourhood can operate Madarsa¹⁶.

The National Policy on Education is dedicated to ensuring that self-educationally backward minorities have access to all available services. Children from Muslim minorities who are educationally backward are enrolled in the Madarsa with little involvement in the national mainstream education system. The Central Government is introducing a sector-focused and Madarsa Modernization Scheme to ensure that they have access to modern education. The government launched a number of initiatives to empower Muslims, but none of them were successful¹⁷.

The Sachar Committee's (2006) study looked at Muslims' educational status in depth. Muslims were found to be the country's most educationally backward group, according to the findings. Muslim enrolment at the primary school level (Classes 1–5) was a mere 9.39 percent of overall enrolment figures for 2006–07. Muslim enrolment at the primary school level (Classes 1–5) was a meagre 9.39 percent of total enrolment figures for 2006–07. In the modern Indian context, education plays a unique role in empowering minorities, especially Muslims. Since the Muslim community has lagged behind in terms of education for decades, it is important to advance, nurture, and encourage education at a faster pace and as a priority. After Indonesia, India has the largest Muslim population of any nation on the planet. Madarsas are religious educational institutions that ensure that future generations of Muslims are well-versed in Islam. Madarsa strive to maintain religious tradition and are seen as an important identity preservation tool, both historically and today. It goes without saying that Madarsa has made a significant contribution to the cause of independence.

From 1857 to 1947, they never compromised with the British government and always held the torch of freedom. Madarsa not only participated enthusiastically in the 1857 revolution but also they also provided leadership to the movements at various places. The Reshmi Rumal Tahrik (Silky Handkerchief Movement) was solely a religious movement. The largest forum for Ulamas was Jamiatul Ulama Hind, which was established in 1919. Jamiatul Ulama Hind supported the Congress Party's nationalist movement and inspired the Full Independence and Non-Cooperation Programme. The two-nation theory, as well as the development of Pakistan, were fiercely opposed by Madarsa educated citizens. At a time when Hindu and Muslim communalist groups were endorsing the British, Madarsa teachers and students such as Maulana Obaidullah Sindhi and Maulana Barkatullah Khan Bhopali were among the first Indians to claim full freedom for India¹⁸.

Problems Faced by Indian Madarsa

Madarsa is one of the world's largest non-governmental organisations (NGOs) dedicated to promoting education among the general public. Madarsa and makhtabs provide free tuition, lodging, and books to their students. Madarsas have played a critical role in fostering literacy and a sense of national pride among Muslims, who have the unfortunate distinction of being India's least educated class, and Dalits. Madarsas are mainly used for theological studies, but they have also produced a number of scholars and learned men. Madarsa was one of the first educational institutions to follow the direction of generalisation and modernization. Madarsa's service is unquestionable. These Madarsas have played a critical role in safeguarding human, Islamic, and social values in India. These institutions have also contributed to the country's growth by maintaining Islamic traditions, publishing and disseminating Islamic literature, defending the Islamic faith, and cultivating culture and civilization¹⁹.

However, in recent times there have been some shortcomings in the Madarsa education system, which can be stated as follows:

1. There are no clear goals and priorities.
2. In some Madarsa, there is a lack of required facilities such as a proper building, classroom & particularly furniture, blackboard & teaching equipment and resources.
3. Outdated conventional teaching and learning approaches and techniques.
4. Isolation from contemporary growth in natural and social sciences, with an overabundance of conventional subjects and a pessimistic attitude toward current issues.
5. A lack of cooperation between Madarsas and Makhtabs.
6. Inadequate examination and evaluation scheme.
7. Planning and administration are of poor quality.
8. The company's financial situation and management are in bad shape.

Present Status of Madarsa

According to data from the Ministry of Education for the year 2018, the Central Government is providing financial assistance to Madarsa in 18 states to help them boost their educational status. There are over 10,000 Madarsas in India, with over 20 lakh students studying in them. The state with the most Madarsa is Uttar Pradesh, with over 18 lakh students studying in over 8000 Madarsa. Many of the Madarsas will be converted into schools by the government. The majority of them are Madarsas that are aided by the government, while the rest are run independently. Deoband and Nadwa, for example, have produced thousands of graduates and developed a large number of Madarsa²⁰.

The Government of India has developed Urdu medium institutions and bridge courses, specifically for Madarsa board students, where they can gain admission and improve their educational status. The Scheme to Provide Quality Education in Madarsa (SPQEM) is one of the most valuable initiatives by the Indian government, which aims to improve the quality of education in Madarsa so that Muslim children can meet national education standards in formal subjects.

Conclusion

It has been stated that Madarsas are important for Muslims because, in addition to providing basic education, they also serve as an important means of maintaining the community's identity. Madarsas are frequently the only educational choice for Muslim children, especially in areas where there are no schools and Muslims have become more visible. Children frequently dislike going to Madarsa, but it is necessary due to a lack of other options and a lack of education in their mother tongue.

The government's modernization of Madarsa has been a contentious issue, with many different points of view among the group. Although there is widespread agreement that Madarsa needs to be modernised, the government's modernization plan has not given much relief to the community in terms of quality education. Promises of modernization have gone unfulfilled and little has been achieved. Teachers of science and mathematics are named as a result of this. Their wages are not paid on a regular basis by the system. Aside from that, the fixed wage is extremely low. Aid given to Madarsa is commonly believed to be "just on paper." Giving computers to Madarsa, which would greatly benefit the society, has not been considered. However, "modernization of the Madarsa" does not necessarily mean the inclusion of science/math teachers and computers. As previously mentioned, Madarsa must be affiliated with the Board of Regular Education.

Suggestions

The following are a few suggestions for improving Madarsa education in India:-

1. Broaden Madras' reach beyond religious education to include secular subjects such as science, mathematics, English, and computers.
2. Make a plan for Muslim students to have access to religious and school education so that they can complete their education before they reach the eighth grade.
3. Infrastructure growth, such as classrooms, furniture, and blackboards, is important for Maktabas and Madarsa.
4. A teacher training curriculum should be available for those teachers who choose to work with Madarsa education. They should be accommodated either in established university-affiliated training institutes or in a separate training scheme.

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