

# Political Change and Madrasa Curriculum: A Historical Analysis of *Dars-i-Nizami*

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## Abstract

*Madrasa, as a formal institution of learning, is educating and imparting training to the Muslims since eleventh century. During twentieth century Western academicians took interest in madrasas and Muslim education. In pre-9/11 studies madrasas were taken as educational institutions and as vehicles for preserving and promoting Islamic tradition. However, after the events of 9/11, madrasa - the centuries-old institution of Islamic learning - became the focus of attention of international political discourse. Almost all studies, policy papers and media analysis suggest links between militancy and the education imparted in the madrasas. The madrasas are accused of promoting religious fanaticism and sectarian violence and militancy. Apparently we lacked evidences that madrasas are giving military training to the militants. If something is going wrong with the madrasas, then the fundamental thing is that one should look into the curriculum - the texts which are being taught. Present discourse simply accused madrasa curriculum as stagnant and out-dated without looking its transformation process. These texts are contributing in framing and building a larger part of the madrasa students' worldview. The present study traces out historical development of madrasa curriculum in South Asia. It suggests that political changes defined the scheme of the curriculum. With the course of time, the emphasis of madrasa texts changed, sometimes on the demand of the market/state, which resultantly changed the parameters of Muslim scholarship or sometime simply the nature of the state changed. The study contends that contemporary madrasas of Pakistan are teaching and interpreting the texts according to the changing domestic and international political scenario.*

## Introduction

Madrasa emerged in eleventh century as formal institution of Muslim education when Saljuq wazir, Nizan al-Mulk established a chain of madrasas in Muslim domains, among them madrasa at Baghdad became more famous. According to George Makdisi "the madrasa was the institution of learning par excellence."<sup>1</sup> A range of disciplines was taught at these schools. The Quran and hadith formed a main body of the curriculum,

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then Quranic sciences; *tafsir* (exegesis) and *tajweed* (variant reading of Quran) and the science of *hadith* (traditions of Prophet); involving the study of the biographies of the transmitters of the *hadith*, after that two *usuls* (principles): *usul al-din*, principles of religion (theology) and *usul al-fiqh*, principle sources and methodology of law.<sup>2</sup> But, the study of *madhhab*, the law of the school to which one belong (*fiqh*) began to receive greater attention, because madrasas acquired the function of training judges and magistrates to staff imperial courts. Medieval madrasas also taught a number of rational sciences such as grammar, poetry, philosophy, medicine, mathematics and astronomy. Education was free of all costs for all.

Despite the institutionalization, the mode of education was personalized and the primary allegiance of the student was to individual teachers, it means the teacher was focal point of the educational system, not the madrasa as such. Medieval madrasa had no rigid rules of admission, system of examinations or age requirements. Students of varying ages studied together under the same teacher, and period was not fixed to complete the studies. When student had completed the book, he would receive a certificate (*ijazah*) from his teacher certifying that he had studied the book from him and perhaps others along with him who were then also named, and allowing him to transmit it to other.<sup>3</sup> After spending years at a madrasa a student had a variety of career options before him. He could join the state bureaucracy, take up teaching in a madrasa or set up one of his own or preacher in a mosque.

The system of Muslim education and the various 'rational' and 'transmitted' sciences developed during medieval period were to have a profound influence on Muslims elsewhere. When Muslims occupied and settled in India and established sultanate in early thirteen century, the developed Islamic scholarly tradition and the system of madrasa gained roots in India with consolidation of Muslim rule. Soon India became a leading centre of Islamic learning with the establishment of a number of important madrasas, many of them patronized by Muslim rulers and nobility.

This study shows that the madrasa curriculum, contrary to the common contention, was changed according to the political necessities of the time. In present madrasa discourse Muslim religious education is accused of being conservative, stagnant, and old fashioned. It has been charged that centuries old madrasa texts are irrelevant to the contemporary issues and problems and are unable to present the solution of these issues. Every book reflects spirit of the age. The texts written in medieval times were concerned about the philosophical and theological issue of that age. The critics contend that these texts have little or no capacity to attend the contemporary philosophical and theological problems. They also argued that, after putting freeze on *ijtehad*<sup>4</sup> and by adopting *taqlid* (adherence to one of the schools of Islamic law (*fiqh*) or *madhaib*) the *fiqh* texts are unable to take account of modern legal problems. Still, the Arabic language which the madrasa students have to learn is the medieval one and is taught through the medieval texts of lexicon, grammar and syntax which have, of course, no relevance with the modern Arabic. Therefore, their language skill is confined to the learning of medieval language. Completing the study of these texts the graduates could find little space for

themselves in the public positions except as the functionaries as mosque preachers and *imams* - prayer leaders.

## **The curriculum of Muslim Education in South Asia**

The Arabic curriculum of Muslim education in India could be divided in to four periods. Historically, Islamic education was used as to strengthen and maintain “specific discourses of power,”<sup>5</sup> consequently curriculum was designed accordingly to fulfill the needs the powers that be. The curriculum of the first period, from seventh (12<sup>th</sup>) to tenth (16<sup>th</sup>) century Hijrah, focused on study of law. Specialization in *fiqh* (jurisprudence) and *usul al-fiqh* (principles of jurisprudence) became the standard qualification for scholarship. *‘Ilm* (knowledge) was *‘ilm al-din* (religious knowledge), and it was meant *‘ilm al-fiqh* (knowledge of law). From the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate, scholars in philosophy were condemned by the *‘ulama*, so, for philosophy and logic only one book (*Sharah al-Shamsia*) was considered sufficient for rationalizing the theological issues. Indifference to rational sciences shows that the developing reasoning skill and mental faculty of the students was the not prime objective of the madrasas education. Among the religious sciences, *hadith* gained little attention. For hadith studies, only *Mashariq al-Anwar* was enough, if a student who studied the *Masabih al-Sunna*, text of *Mishkat al-Masabih*, was considered scholar in hadith science.<sup>6</sup> The Muslim educational system of the early centuries of Muslim rule was basically influenced by the origin of the rulers, which defined the nature of their interest in particular discipline. At that time Muslim rulers were from West Asia, and were not indigenized, where the *fiqh* and *usul al-fiqh* became the hard currency in the Muslim scholarship, this standard of scholarship became India’s also. *‘Ilm al-hadith* was not fashioned in Islamic learning circles, hence received little heed.

The second period, 11<sup>th</sup> /16<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup>/17<sup>th</sup>, saw an inclination towards rational sciences. At the end of 9<sup>th</sup> century AH (14<sup>th</sup> CE), two rationalist scholars, Sheikh Abdullah and Sheikh Aziz Ullah from Multan settled in north India during the reign of Sikandar Lodhi (r. 1489-1517), found that curriculum of madrasas was not sufficient in *ma‘qulat* – rhetoric, scholastic theology and logic, and started teaching of rational sciences. With the inclusion of rational sciences in the curriculum, they had set new parameters for scholarship. Now, Qadi ‘Azd al-Din’s (d. 1355) *Matala‘* (on logic) and *Mawaqif* (on rhetoric) and Siraj ud-Din Yousaf al-Sakkaki’s (d. 1228) *Miftah al-‘Ulum* (on rhetoric) had become the new entrants of India Muslim madrasas.<sup>7</sup> During this period we also see the inclusion of *Sharah Matala‘* and *Sharah Mawaqif* which were introduced by the pupils of Mir Sayed Sharif Jurjni (d. 1413) and *Mutawwal*, *Mukhtasar*, *Talwih* and *Sharah ‘Aqaid Nasafi* by the pupils of Allama Sa‘d al-Din Taftazani (d. 1390). *Sharah Wiqaya* and *Sharah Jami* also found place in the madrasa curriculum. For that time, in Muslim India *ma‘qulat*, rational sciences, systemically gained space in the curriculum. A scholar could not be recognized as a scholar unless he was not well versed in *Miftah*, *Mawaqif* and *Matala‘*. These books defined the parameters of Islamic learning of 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries India.<sup>8</sup> The relative expansion of *ma‘qulat* at the expense of *manqulat*, transmitted sciences, perturbed some scholars.<sup>9</sup> At the end of

this period, *hadith* scholar of the time Sheikh Abd al-Haq Dalhwi (d. 1642) unsuccessfully tried to popularize the teaching of *hadith*, however, in next century Shah Wali al-Allah's attempt, to some extent, succeeded.

With the increasing interests in rational sciences, the next century saw two competing trends in madrasa curriculum. The rationalist tradition further strengthened by Fath al-Allah Shirazi (d. 1589) who came in India, during the reign of Akbar, made *ma'qulat*-centred changes in the curriculum, which were, generally, accepted by the *'ulama* at that time. The curriculum was designed not to ignore religious sciences, but to widen the mental horizon of the students. However, with the death of Shirazi, the experiment had not died down and the learning of rational sciences gradually gained momentum and became yardstick for scholarship among the Indian scholars. At the end of this period, Shah Wali al-Allah (d. 1762) started emphasizing *manqulat*, especially *hadith*-teaching of *Sihah Sittah* (six collections of *hadith*). At this time, however, Shah Wali al-Allah's *hadith*-centred curriculum had not become popular in Indian madrasas. One cause might be, among the others, as Shah Wali Ullah was Delhi based, that the centre of learning in 18<sup>th</sup> century shifted from Delhi to Lukhnow.<sup>10</sup>

In fourth period, that starts from 18<sup>th</sup> century, the rationalist tradition consolidated with the introduction of *Dars-i-Nizami* by Mullah Nizamuddin of Farangi Mahall (d. 1740), Lucknow, who was the contemporary of Shah Wali al-Allah. Nizaumddin made some changes which not only gave the curriculum a standard formal but also a comprehensive shape. *Dars* was basically a standardized method of learning rather than a list of books being taught to the students.<sup>11</sup> The basic characteristic of this curriculum was that it was designed to widen the mental horizon and develop the habit of reading and research, and analytical skills rather rote learning. In order to develop masterly skill, the students were used to learn one or two relatively difficult, after assessing the mental ability of the student, books on a discipline, so after completing the study they, thus, were able to comprehend other books on that discipline. *Dars'* method was intended to familiarize the students, in sequential way, with the age-old tradition, for that matter Mullah did not bother to include the works of his contemporaries. Promoting logic and philosophy in the madrasas along with religious sciences, the *Dars* heavily loaded with the books on grammar and syntax which were necessary to develop language skill in olden Arabic, the language of text books and to transmit the heritage of Islam tradition. However, all these sciences – logic, philosophy, grammar or syntax – were considered *'ulum al-aliya*, instrumental sciences, learning of these in itself was not the end of *Dars*.<sup>12</sup> *Dars* did not emphasize literal contents of books rather stress on meaning of classical texts and research in the process of learning. It considered book as a mean to education, for developing skills in a particular discipline, not an end itself that was the basic reason behind the changes the curriculum is facing since three centuries.<sup>13</sup> Before *Dars-i-Nizami*, not a single book written by any Indian scholar was taught in the madrasas. For the first time in madrasa history, Mullah Nizamuddin included the books by Indian authors. Usually *'ulama* do not recognize their contemporaries better scholars than them. The inclusion of contemporaries' books

not only shows a token of recognition and respect of contemporaries but also a demonstration of Mullah's magnanimity.<sup>14</sup> He not only introduced *Risala Mir Zahid* and *Mir Zahid Mullah Jalal* (of Mir Zahid Harawi d. 1699/1700)<sup>15</sup>, *Rashidiah* (by Muhammad Abdul Rashid Diwan d. 1672), *al-Shams al-Bazgha* (by Mullah Muhammad Jaunpuri d. 1641) but also did not hesitate to bring in his contemporaries works - *Nur al-Anwar* (by Mullah Jiwan of Amethi d. 1718), the *Sullam al-'Ulum* and *Muslim al-Sabut* of Muhib Ullah Bihari (d.1707/8). *Dars* was designed in such a way that an average student can complete it at the age of 18 or 19. Again, Mullah tried to keep the *Dars* in neutral tone, so it could not develop sectarian biases among the students. For that matter, in addition to emphasis on logic and philosophy, he kept those books on *fiqh* which were written logically and presented *fiqhi* (related to law) debates on rational arguments. On *tafsir* his preference was Allama Qadi Nasr al-Din Baidawi's (d. c. 1286) *Anwar al-Tanzil fi Asra al-Tawil*, commonly known as *Baidawi*, which is an amended version of *al-Kashshaf* of Allama Jar Allah Zamakhshari (d. 1134), a muta'zili.

*Dars* was a progressive innovation of the time in teaching methodology aiming at to enhance the mental faculty of the students through a curriculum which based on thought-provoking books on various disciplines, demanding exhaustive mental exercises. Maulana Shibli testifies that *Dars-i-Nizami* definitely brought about a qualitative change. According to him *Dars* method has three principles; first, conciseness, i.e. only one or two brief books were included in the curriculum on each discipline; second, many books were, following the principle of conciseness, taught incomplete, it means only those sections of books were kept which were considered necessary for learning of discipline; third, for each science only that book was included which was considered the most difficult one on the subject.<sup>16</sup> This was because to enhance the intellectual capacity of the students in order to create an ability to understand any book on the subject if he encounters with it in future. The graduates of *Dars* were better equipped to understand almost all books in Arabic. The religious education too was not neglected altogether. Keeping the holistic view of education, Mullah Nizamuddin did not base the *Dars* on the dichotomy of religious and secular. Right, *Dars* was more inclined towards rational sciences, but it could not be termed as secular, later, changes in late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries made it more religious, however, basic framework for formulation of learning remained same.

The next phase starts in 19<sup>th</sup> with the decline of madrasas, when colonialism in India was on rise. At this juncture, the curriculum taught in madrasas was the revised version of *Dars-i-Nizami*. Books on logic were more than need, nearly fifteen were on list. Some books on logic contained more debates on daily affairs and philosophy than logical issues, like *Mullah Hassan*, *Hamdullah Qadi*, some had complex discussion on various issues which could divert students' attention on real logical issues.<sup>17</sup> On the other hand, only two books were on *Dars*' book list on *tafsir* – a very important religious science, – *Baidawi* (only two and half *paras* (chapters of *Quran*)) and *Jalalain*. *Jalalain* is so terse and brief exegesis that its words are nearly equal with the *Quran*'s in number.<sup>18</sup> On the other hand, there were, like today, heavy emphasize on *hadith* with the inclusion

of *Sihah Sittah*. History and geography were simply ignored.

Unlike today, in medieval madrasas we saw no clearly defined categorization of students' levels. However, in 19<sup>th</sup> century the madrasas' text books were divided into three major categories; *mukhtasarat* (booklets/pamphlets) for example *Mizan*, *Qutbi*; *mutawasat* (middle-ranged books), like *sharahs*, commentaries on *Sullam ul-'Ulum*, *Mir Zahid*, and *matoolaat* (voluminous), *Baidawi*, *Sadra*, *al-Shams al-Bazigha*. This division of books was used as parameter for promoting the student in next level. First, a student had to finish the lower level's books or *mukhtasarat*, and then he was to be promoted to next. Usually there were three titles for graduates; *Fazil*, who had specialized study on *ma'qulat* with little knowledge on religious sciences; *'Alim*, specialist in religious sciences; *Qabil*, expert in literature and literary-style of writing.<sup>19</sup>

Since past three hundred years many changes have been put in the *Dars*' curriculum by a variety of madrasas. As opposed to popular assertion, *Dars* is not stagnant and capped. Being malleable and flexible to any change, *Dars*' curriculum was revised and amended, and then used by many Indian Muslim maslaks according to their needs, but method of teaching remained same. *Sihah Sittah* collections, which are part of *Dars* from second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, were not the part of the original scheme of study. Actually, these *hadith* collections were the part of the Shah Wali al-Allah's curriculum.<sup>20</sup> In nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, *Dars* contained many books on philosophy, logic, grammar, syntax and literature, which were written after the death of Mullah Nizamuddin, such as *Mirqat*, *Mullah Hassan*, *Sharah Hidayt al-Hikmat* of Maulana Abdul Haq Khairabadi (d. 1899), *Hamdullah Qadi*, *Qadi Mubarak*, *Mullah Mubin*, *'Ilm al-Sigha*, *Dastur al-Mubtadi*, *Mufeed al-Talibin*, *Nafhat al-Yamen*, *Nafhat al-Arab* and others. After adopting *Dars* as a scheme of study, Dar al-'Ulum Deoband, at least three times, introduced curricular changes in the last two decades of nineteenth century.<sup>21</sup> Bigwigs of Deoband abhorred logic and philosophy and preferred remodelling of *Dars* on religious lines, as Maulana Rashid Ahmed Gongohi, one of the most revered Deoband sheikhs and founders, once said, "it is better to acquire the knowledge of English than philosophy and logic, because from it one can hope to get worldly benefit."<sup>22</sup>

### **Transformation of Curriculum of *Dars-i-Nizami***

The system of Islamic education has never been static and monolithic. There were variations and changes in the character and pattern of curriculum, passing through the periods of glory and vicissitudes of times. *Dars-i-Nizami* is not exception. Without taking the *Dars* in its essence, nearly all Pakistani madrasas claim that they are teaching *Dars-i-Nizami*, however, they are, simply, taking it as curriculum only. Curriculum of madrasas or *Dars-i-Nizami*, as Pakistani madrasas preferred to use the term, has continued to transform. The process of transformation of *Dars* passed through three phases during last two centuries from rationalist emphasis to the introduction of modern subjects.

## **1. Period of Rational Sciences (*Ma'qulat*)**

It appears that the body of rational sciences developed during 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries was not, or scarcely, accessible to India Muslim scholars and therefore, was not made the part of curriculum.<sup>23</sup> On the other hand, the tradition of teaching with emphasis on religious science also continued. This tradition was nourished by, in seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Sheikh Ahmed Sirhandi (d.1624), Sheik Abdul Haq Muhadith Dehlvi (d.1641), Maulana Abdul Rahim (d.1718) and Shah Wali al-Allah (d.1762). It was contained reformist elements and aimed at to purge out, what these scholars thought, the un-Islamic practices among the Muslims and propagating reformist Islam, with emphasis on *maqulat*. Madrasa-i-Rahimia of Maulana Abdul Rahim and Shah Wali al-Allah, were became the major players in forwarding this discourse to new generation of Muslim scholars. At the same time, the other discourse which emphasis on teaching *ma'qulat* was preserved and promoted by the house of Farangi Mahall, Lakhnow.<sup>24</sup> Rationalist tradition was consolidated, by Mullah Nizamudin Sihalwi (d.1748) of Farangi Mahall, in the form of *Dars-i-Nizami*.

The first phase was the continuation of the curriculum of original *Dars*, intended to preserve and transmit Islamic learning tradition by heavily relying on secular subjects. The conscious choice of various disciplines with the emphasis on *ma'qulat* and language learning skills, *Dars* had contributed a lot for developing a liberal and progressive intellectual atmosphere, which was much flexible to accommodate the variety of views on different religious and secular issues. Experiment with *ma'qulat* in madrasa had set a new tradition – the Farangi Mahalli - in intellectual and educational environs of India. This new tradition in India raised the level of scholarship to such an extent that only when a person was considered 'alim who wrote at least one *hashiyah* or gloss, or *sharah*, commentary on any well reputed commentary or *hashiyah* of famous books of logic or philosophy, particularly *Mir Zahid*.<sup>25</sup> *Zawahid Salasa*<sup>26</sup> and *Sullamiat*<sup>27</sup> became the standard marker of assessment of scholarship in 'ulama in 19<sup>th</sup> century. Without studying these, a graduate of madrasa could be considered anything else but 'alim. *Dars-i-Nizami*'s rationalist tradition where enriched the learning environment of South Asian madrasas, there developed a sophisticated method of reasoning, arguing and toleration among the 'ulama that generally had far reaching impact on the civil society of early 19<sup>th</sup> century India. Negotiating a strong link between pen and book, and 'ulama, and by the nature of method of teaching and selection of books, *Dars*, with its rationalist tradition, had puts its most of the graduates, politically, in low profile. 'Ulama and graduates of Farangi Mahall, with few exceptions, had not tried to wage jihad, holy war, against new non-Muslim occupiers of India. Nature of contents and rationalist way of thinking, which the *Dars* developed in its graduates, convinced them that joining armed struggle or political agitation against the government of the time was an activity less than their status and was not suitable to their genius. For 'ulama, they believed the best jihad was through pen. Therefore, nearly all prominent *Dars*' graduates, in 19<sup>th</sup> century, used written words, not swords, as vehicle for their jihad. While acquiescing British occupation of India, a painful situation for the Muslims, *Dars* graduates and 'ulama continued their engagement with educational activities.

In the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century when the courts' language was still Persian, the graduates were not only accommodated mosques and madrasas, and by the East India Company as employees, but they also found patrons in princely states ruled by Muslims. However, it does not mean that other systems of teaching were not existed in India. Shah Wali al-Allah's Madrasa-e-Rahimia and its tradition was continued and produced the leadership for the Mujahideen Movement of first half of nineteenth century. Syed Ahmed (d. 1831) and Shah Isma'il (d. 1831), who had led the movement and actively participated in the war against Sikhs for the establishment of Islamic state, both were not the products of ma'quli tradition of *Dars-i-Nizami*.

The developing rationalist habit of reasoning was the overall civilianizing impact of Mullah Nizamuddin's *Dars* on Indian Muslim community, which the most studies ignore. Continuing the reforms in the curriculum in favour of philosophy and logic introduced in fourteenth and fifteenth centuries continually influenced the other disciplines, particularly the principles of Islamic law, *usul al-fiqh*. The original curriculum not only comprised of many secular disciplines but, surprise for many, *Musiqi* (music) was the part of curriculum also.<sup>28</sup> What *Dars* promoted was, definitely, not the religious extremism among the Muslims of India but centuries-old Islamic learning tradition and encouraging scholarly debates and disputations with valued toleration. Though at the initial stage mysticism was not part of curriculum, which later included, the teachers of *Dars* were active Sufis and practitioners of Sufism.<sup>29</sup> Cultivation of spiritualism coupled the rationalist teaching, *Dars* had set tradition in Indo-Muslim scholarship which stayed dominant until middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>30</sup>

## **2. Manqulat Phase**

In second phase which started after the uprising of 1857, *Dars-i-Nizami's* curriculum and to some extent teaching methods faced changes. Political changes that occurred in the mid-nineteenth century greatly affected the curriculum. With the end of the nominal lordship of last Mughal emperor, and the consolidation of colonialism, the Muslim rule in India concluded formally and finally. The 'ulama and madrasas assumed the responsibility of promoting Islamic learning and preserving Islamic tradition in a political environment where, now, Muslims were no more the masters of land. Defending the Muslim identity, in India became the prime task the 'ulama took on their shoulders. For this matter, religious education and madrasas turn out to be chief vehicles.

The colonial rule provided a good environment and ample space for consolidation of differences that led to the emergence of the different *maslaks* – sects - among the Indian Sunni Muslim, who comprised majority, with every sect defined its own understanding of Islam as the correct one. They launched reform agenda according to their understanding through *tabligh* and *tadris* (preaching and teaching). Dar al-'Ulum at Deoband, established in 1867 and Madrasa Manzar al-Islam at Bareilly in 1904 became the frontrunner of the Deobandi and Ahl-e-Sunnat (Barelwi) movements respectively. Both Sunni-Hanafits, but were severe critics of each others' some beliefs. Another Sunni group, Ahl-e-Hadith, who preferred to be called Salafi,<sup>31</sup> was also active in

preaching and establishing madrasas. Due their closeness to the Wahhabism of Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab (1703-1792) of Arabian Peninsula, they were called Wahhabi by their opponents groups because, like them, they shared many features of Wahhabi theology. They, like Wahhabi theology, treat the Quran and Hadith as fundamental texts, interpreted upon the understanding of the first three generations of Islam and with a greater stress on *ijtehad*.

The *'ulama* of these new Sunni movements, who termed themselves reformist-revivalist, focused to egg out their traditional constituency, literate upper and upper-middle class, in order to approach the common Muslims. For that matter they exploited the new technologies introduced by the British, particularly print and new means of communications. Where the spread of printing press from the beginning of 19<sup>th</sup> century, and publication of many religious tracts, which were otherwise available only to few in the form of costly manuscripts, lessen the dependence of common Muslims on *'ulama* in general religious matters, there, it provided new opportunities to reach and influence common Muslim beyond the imagination of any at that time, which could not be conceivable in a manuscript age.<sup>32</sup> The print, on the one hand, threatened to undermine the authority of *'ulama*,<sup>33</sup> as authoritative interpreters of canonical texts, which based on person to person transmission of knowledge, on the other hand, provided their access to grass root level to create a new constituency for themselves. Print where, on one side, put a depersonalizing impact, on the other, it was used by the *'ulama* to recollect, even enhance, personalized authority by extensively writing and publishing canonical texts.<sup>34</sup>

Further, *'ulama* took the advantage of introduction of railway and improvement in the means of communication by the British. It not only made possible for the quicker distribution of books and newspapers, but also rendered easy for the young students to reach madrasas of their choice and for *'ulama* to travel here and there, all over India, for the propose of preaching, participating in debates and disputations and performing other duties what they thought as religious.

Until the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Persian was the language of Muslim culture and court. After the British ascendancy, it remained the language of colonial administration until 1835, when it was replaced by English at the upper level of colonial administration and at provincial and lower levels of administration by vernaculars. In northern India, vernacular meant Urdu/Hindi. With this replacement, *'ulama*, from last decades of 19<sup>th</sup> and earlier decades of twentieth century, switched over from Persian to Urdu as the language of communication, both in print and madrasas. The Persian commentaries and glosses on Arabic texts that started publishing in early nineteenth century, were gradually replaced with their Urdu translation. A considerable number of religious and non-religious works were published, in last three decades of nineteenth century, in the Urdu language, the lingua franca of Muslims of North and North Western India.<sup>35</sup> Soon Urdu became the marker of identity among the Muslim's of India. For educated Muslims, especially of northern India, the decline of Persian was accompanied by the increasing prominence of Urdu throughout the nineteenth century as the language

of literary and religious expression. Urdu became the medium of instruction in most madrasas, and it was principally in this language that ‘*ulama* debated, wrote and published rather than in Persian. Numerous translations of the Quran and of other religious classics were printed in Urdu, both contributed to the development of this language. Language, print and improved means of communication reinvigorated the learning environment of madrasas and contributed towards the strengthening of religious identity among Muslims in colonial India. Despite the popularity and use of Urdu as medium of instruction in madrasa, still, until mid-twentieth even after it, the works published by the ‘*ulama*, were not in Indian Muslims lingua franca, particularly commentaries on *hadith*.<sup>36</sup> These works have target population of Arabic literate scholars and students, not for the general public, reinforced the authority of ‘*ulama*. But, they also have written commentaries and other religious literature for general public.

The colonial policies particularly related with education, recruitment of civil service and official language resulted in marginalization of traditional education and institutions. With the introduction and promotion of formal education system, we witnessed the narrowing down of the ‘*ulama*’s influence on the one hand and the other hand, it also provided an opportunity to make claims to lead the Muslims of India,<sup>37</sup> since colonial laws defined private sphere exclusively as the religious domain in which the ‘*ulama* had final say.

All these religious and socio-political changes that took place in nineteenth and twentieth century British India put deep print on madrasa curriculum particularly on *Dars-i-Nizami*. Nearly all Muslim madrasas of India, no matter what their sectarian affiliations were, took pride by adopting and teaching *Dars* curriculum, but after making changes according to their *maslak*. The original *Dars* which, once, an astute blend of *manqulat* and *ma‘qulat*, a comprehensive syllabi for preparing the students not only for joining bureaucracy or prayer leaders but also skilled them as literate-secular persons in a non-Muslim majority society, heavily became a singular instrument for demarking Muslim identity and for that matter reaching to the lower echelons of Muslim society who were, hitherto, usually not entitled to get higher education.

The second half of nineteenth century observed the surfacing of, both, different *maslaks* and madrasas related to them. The most renowned of these madrasa was Darul al-‘Ulum at Deoband, Established on the heap of rubbles and ashes of unsuccessful mutiny, Dar al-‘Ulum became the centre of the new reform movement, trying to purge out the non-Muslim customs and practices from the Muslim community by reverting to fundamentals of Islam. Deoband revolutionized the *Dars* through making sweeping changing in the curriculum by focusing on the *manqulat* studies. It renewed emphasis on the study of *hadith*, which Shah Wali Ullah tried to popularize in eighteenth century. Using Dar al-‘Ulum as a platform for preaching, Deobandis were inviting Muslim to conform to the understanding of Islam as articulated through the study of fundamental canonical texts. Due to the reform-oriented ideology, as distinguishable from others, soon Deobandi movement got a sectarian dimension.

Founding fathers have had explicit and implicit objectives while establishing Dar al-‘Ulum at Deoband. As some of them actively participated in the Mutiny,<sup>38</sup> so, while establishing madrasa they had some political objectives also, though implicitly. The madrasa had had some political underpinnings – a move to recover from the effects of 1857’s onslaught and to train people who would launch a new political movement in future. As according to Manazar Ahsan Gilani, once Sheikh al-Hind Maulana Mahmud Hasan, at the time of his row with Dar al-‘Ulum’s administration, told “Was this madrasa was established by Hadrat al-Ustad [Maulana Muhammad Qasim Nanautwi] for teaching and education? It was established in front of me. As far as I know, it was decided, after the failure in the turmoil of 1857, that a centre should be established in which people would be trained in [such] a way [that would lead] to compensate the failure of 1857.”<sup>39</sup> However, until the second decade of the twentieth century Deoband kept low profile in politics and acquiesced to the British rule<sup>40</sup> and did not attempt to challenge or wage jihad against the un-Islamic government of the British.

Since *Dars* was designed to train the future administrators and to realize the need of ‘increasingly sophisticated and complex bureaucratic system’ of those days India, as Professor Robinson stressed,<sup>41</sup> but madrasa graduate was expected to be a ‘religious specialist’ also, a new link in the chain and inheritor of Islamic tradition. Teaching of few books on religious sciences might not be produced a competent religious expert as compared to prospective civil servant who had more thorough education in rational sciences. This slant was corrected by Dar al-‘Ulum Deoband, when madrasa graduates were no longer in demand by the state, when the Muslim community was in need of religious experts only, when the ‘*ulama* felt that ground was crumbling under their feet, when ‘*ulama* tried to build anew base of their power or to hegemonize the Muslim community. But, curriculum the ‘*ulama*-e-Deoband designed, though claimed as *Dars-i-Nizami*, was more akin to the syllabus of Madrasa-i-Rahimia.

The project, though highly ambitious, had explicit goal aimed to reform Muslim community through religious education, putting emphasize on the study of fundamental texts – *Quran* and *hadith* – while extending its reach by patronizing madrasas in the towns and *qasbas* (small market towns) founded, all-over India, by the former graduates of Dar al-‘Ulum. Though the method of teaching remained same, Deoband revamped the curriculum of *Dars-i-Nizami*. Taking into account the insufficiency of *hadith* contents, in past teaching of one book, *Mishakat al-Masbih*, considered enough, Deobandi curriculum heavily centred on the study of *Sihah Sittah* – six collections of *hadith*. Now, the study of fundamental religious texts befit more importantly for the young Muslims who were interested in getting religious knowledge in the new social and political milieu of South Asia.

Deeming *ma‘qulat*, rational sciences, and other secular discipline as having no utility in the religious world of ‘*ulama*, these also became meaningless as supportive in understanding the theological problems. Just to live with and keep live the Islamic tradition knowledge of modern sciences was not necessarily imperative, as opposite of what Syed Ahmed Khan and his Aligarh associates were propagating<sup>42</sup> or Nadwat ul-

‘Ulam was trying to blend two in one. Founders of Deoband despised the logic and philosophy, like Maulana Rashid Ahmed Gangohi (d.1905), even the second generation ‘*ulama* and teachers of Deoband was not in favour of *ma‘qulat*, like Maulana Anwar Shah Kashmiri (d.1933).<sup>43</sup> However, texts on logic, though few, were, remained on Deobandi curriculum of *Dars*. Even today, Pakistani madrasas affiliated to Deobandi *maslak* are teaching few texts on logic and philosophy. In the last decade of nineteenth century, when Maulana Gangohi was still living spirit behind the Dar al-‘Ulum and Maulana Anwar Shah Kashmiri was student, the madrasa was teaching on logic *Qadi Mubarak*, on philosophy *al-Shams al-Bazigha*, and *Sadra*, and on mathematics and astronomy *Tasrih* and *Sharah Chighmini*.<sup>44</sup>

With the passionate dependence of Deoband’s curriculum on the study *hadith*, the Dar al-‘Ulum’s organizers not only lessen the reliance on rational sciences, but also adopted the new method of teaching *hadith*. In India, new method of teaching *hadith* was introduced by Shah Wali al-Allah, who had learnt it from Medina during his visit to Hejaz for performing Hajj and this method of teaching *hadith* was named *Sard* or *Daurah*. At first step only *Mishkat* and its commentary by Allam Tayyabi were taught to the students who were intended to specialize in *hadith*.<sup>45</sup> Because *Mishkat* is a collection of *hadiths* that were chosen from *Sihah Sittah*, so its study familiarized the students with the basics of *hadith* science. In final years of study *Sihah Sittah* were taught. The method of teaching, or *daurah*, was that the students, turn by turn, during the lesson, were read *hadiths* from the book, and teacher obliged the students with explaining the *hadith* text if he deemed it necessary or answer the questions if students have some.<sup>46</sup> If teacher thought no explanation was needed or explained according to need, then reader student was quickly moved to read the next *hadith*. So, because of its quickly moving forward it is called *daurah*. Deobandi and later on nearly madrasas of all *maslaks* of South Asian Muslims used *daurah* as method of teaching *hadith*. They not only made amendments to the scheme of study with the exclusion and inclusion of some books, and shift focus of the study from *ma‘qulat* to *manqulat*, but also crafted some changes in original *Dars*’ method, at least in teaching *hadith* by adopting *daurah*. This process of change was not limited to only Deobandi madrasas but others, like Ahl-e-Hadith, also tried to redesign the *Dars-i-Nizami* according to their needs.

Side by side, with the new style of madrasas, which were concentrating on teaching fundamental texts, we saw, until the initial decades of twentieth century, some madrasas were still working on original *Dars-i-Nizami*’s pattern. These madrasas were belonged to ‘*ulama* and graduates of Farangi Mahall, who established them in various parts of India. Madrasa ‘Alia Nizamiyyah of Farangi Mahall, Lucknow was frontrunner in teaching rational sciences.<sup>47</sup> Besides, the Farangi Mahalli madrasas, Khairabadi family, and their pupils, were keeping up alive the rationalist tradition in Muslim scholarship in the face of *manqulat* whirlwind.

Fazal Imam Khairabadi (d. 1827), who wrote *Mirqat*, a famous book on logic which was later on included in *Dars*’ curriculum and is still part of Deobandi curriculum, was the leading rationalist scholar of the time. He also wrote glosses on *Risalah Mir*

*Zahid* and *Mir Zahid Mullah Jalal*. His son Allama Fazl-e-Haq Khairabadi (d. 1862) was also a great scholar of *ma'qulat* and authored *Hadiyyah Sa'diah*, participated in the Mutiny, arrested and deported to Andaman where he died. Son of Fazl-e-Haq, Abdul Haq Khairabadi (d. 1899) carried on the tradition through teaching and writing commentaries and glosses on various *ma'qulat* books and commentaries. Various scholars of Khairabadi school of thought tried to keep up the rationalist tradition until the early decades of twentieth century. Maulana Manazir Ahsan Gilani, a Deobandi scholar and prolific writer, before joining Dar al-'Ulum as a student in early years of second decade of twentieth century, studied *ma'qulat* in a Khairabadi madrasa. He travelled from his home town in Bihar to Rajputana where the madrasa was located. Maulana Manazir narrates the method of teaching of *Mir Zahid*, a classical Dars method of teaching; first the text of *Mir Zahid* (i.e. text of *Qutbiah* of Qutb al-Din Razi (d. 1364) with *Sharah Mir Zahid* written by Mir Zahid (d. 1690) himself, then *hashiyyah* (gloss) on *Sharah Mir Zahid* (which is called *manhiyyah*) again written by Mir Zahid himself, after that Ghulam Yahya Bihari's *hashiyyah* on *Hashiyyah Sharah Mir Zahid* (*manhiyyah*), then student was taught the *hashiyyah* by Abdul Haq Khairabadi on *Bihari's Hashiyyah*.<sup>48</sup> This is the typical method of *Dars-i-Nizami* teaching difficult books on various sciences, mastering in one difficult book would open the gates of other books on the same discipline.

Keeping aside the Aligarh and Nadwat al-'Ulama, the traditional Muslim educational stream still has the current of the rationalist discourse. Slowly and gradually, from the early decades of twentieth century, it faded away. Religious assertion that emerged in various Muslim sects after the Mutiny and, introduction and development of new style of state structure by the British made the traditional curriculum of *Dars* unmarketable. Even though strong evidences are present, which showed existence of madrasas that were teaching in typical style of *Dars* with the emphasis on *ma'qulat*. However, final blow to rationalist tradition madrasas came when, for the first time in the history of British India, politics was communalized during the Khilafat Movement (1919-22). This communalization of politics not only deepened the schism between modern and traditional-religious sections of Muslim society but also sealed the fate of secular and rational sciences in South Asian madrasas.

The new chain of madrasas established by various sects during the British period which were stressing teaching of Quran and *hadith*, consciously or unconsciously accepted the colonial dichotomies of private and public, and religious and secular. Revising the curriculum with deemphasizing on secular and rational sciences, these madrasas copied the administrative structure and examination system the British introduced while organizing the public school system funded by state. These administrative and structural reforms when adopted by madrasas led to change to centuries-old tradition of personalized teaching. From medieval times the Muslim education had patterned on person-on-person basis. Learning was processed through intimate relationship between teacher and the pupil. *Dars-i-Nizami* was styled on this pattern. Colonial and post-colonial madrasas not only awarded certificate and degrees

but converted personal teaching to impersonal class teaching. Evidences are there that until the last decade of nineteenth century, the tradition of personal certification by the teacher awarded to the student was continued at Deoband.<sup>49</sup> Two decades later Maulana Manazir Ahsan Gilani told us that he participated in *daurah hadith* of Maulana Gangohi and Maulana Kashmiri and other teachers, in crowded class of 80 or 85.<sup>50</sup> All students were grouped together with any distinction of age and intellect. Consequently, for teachers, due to strength of class, it was not possible to pay individual attention to students unless extraordinary student caught the attention of the teacher by sheer of his intellect. This situation was not limited to Deoband, the students of other madrasas were also facing same situation. Impersonal, rather intimate, model of relationship between teacher and student, which were alien to medieval Islamic world of learning and is a characteristic of modern educational institutions, replaced the old one. As a result, it weakened the teacher-student bond that was woven with the *adab* (values) of love and respect related to this relation. It not only effected the social and spiritual link that student felt with teacher but also gave him relatively more freedom of action in practical world, which was unthinkable in previous times, because the student considered himself answerable, out of respect, to his teachers even after completion of education and joining of practical life. Now it is a rare commodity.

### **3. Introduction of modern disciplines**

The Dars-i-Nizami curriculum faced third major overhauling in present days, here we concerned with Pakistani madrasas only, which started in late sixties when Ayub Khan Regime (1958-69) bid to reform it. The curriculum the contemporary madrasas are teaching took shape, more appropriately, in early 1980s when the General Zia ul-Haq (r. 1977-88) started the so-called programme of Islamization to overcome the crisis of legitimacy which he was facing after coup and when the US and the West felt the need to counter the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan to continue the cold war through proxy and planned to use madrasa to this end

Last two and half decades have witnessed a lot of academic interest in madrasa. It was not *'ulama* or Islamists who brought madrasas into limelight but modernist and largely secular forces. These forces tried and are trying to reform them, particularly after nine eleven. The Western-educated liberal policy makers, modernists, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the West are in favour of restructuring and reforming the framework of traditional education, being so, it would positively contribute in development, otherwise an economically valueless education.

After independence as Pakistan inherited the modern school system which has dominated over the educational sphere, yet the madrasas have not only survived but shown a slower but gradual growth. During the first three decades Pakistani *'ulama* strived to establish new madrasas as the central madrasas of various *maslaks* were remained behind in India, while some *'ulama* migrated to Pakistan, and founded new madrasas. Mushrooming of madrasas has seen witnessed during the General Zia ul-Haq regime that actively supported them because of political motives. His desire for

controlling madrasas was influenced by domestic as well as external factors. He tried to control the madrasas not only through suggesting the curricular reforms but also providing financial aid via newly established fund- Zakat Fund. Zia was not alone, all military regime, except short-lived of General Yahya Khan, tried to manoeuvre madrasas through various means, for instance, putting *wakfs* (religious endowments) under governmental control or suggesting reforms in curriculum and recognition of certificates and degrees or through doling out funds to them. Actually reforming endeavours started in 1960s by the Ayub Khan regime.

In 1961, a committee for the revision of curriculum of the madrasas was formed, with apparent objective, to bring them into mainstream education system. As compared to bureaucrats and professionals, *'ulama* were under-represented in this committee. Surprisingly, for fieldwork and necessary investigations finances were provided by the Asia Foundation, indicating an American interest in Pakistani madrasas as early as 1960s. The report of the committee, covering almost all larger madrasas in which *Dars-i-Nizami* was taught, accommodated financiers' view more than the *'ulama*'s.<sup>51</sup> The report suggested that to cope with the current challenges the *'ulama* should have to play role as citizens. This objective could be achieved, the report recommended, by subtracting some non-religious subjects and substituting them by religious subjects based upon "undisputed sources of knowledge."<sup>52</sup> To widen the madrasa student's outlook, the committee suggested the introduction of new subjects comprising modern knowledge, which would enable them to enter into public professions. *Ma'qulat* emphasized in *Dars-i-Nizami* considered by the *'ulama* as fundamental to the study of *manqulat*, *fiqh*, *usul al-fiqh*, and of theology. *Dars* designers thought that the proficiency in them made easy to understanding other disciplines. Opposite to this claim, the report recommended a drastic reduction on heavy reliance on logic and philosophy, which are not 'essential' for getting religious education and be replaced with modern subjects. The report reveals that the learned members of the committee accepted colonial dichotomy of secular and religious knowledge and utilitarian approach to education. Though report stressed that religious knowledge be based on undisputed sources, it did not recommend to replace the classical madrasas' texts with works written by contemporary *'ulama* or suggest for the writing and, then, inclusion to the curriculum of new commentaries with new interpretation of classical texts according to needs of modern Muslim society. Though Islam itself does not make distinction between secular and religious knowledge, however, *'ulama*'s response to the report shows that they also accepted the colonial notion of secular and religious. The *'ulama* viewed the report as an effort by Ayub Khan regime to dilute the new boundaries of their area of influence. *'Ulama* took the report as an attack on their centuries-old autonomy and considered it interference in their internal affairs, and opposed the reforms as suggested. It was, however, backed by modern Islamists, like Maulana Maududi.<sup>53</sup>

Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto's populist regime (1971-77) when implemented its programme of nationalisation of various industries, the educational institutions were also taken under governmental custody. Like Christian missionaries' educational institutions, all

madrasas, who were imparting religious education only, remained out of the pale of nationalisation programme. During this period no active efforts were made to control madrasas through proposing reform in their curriculum. However, Bhutto regime made an attempt to improve the economic and social status of the madrasa students and teachers. Thus, the higher diplomas of the madrasas were recognized by University Grants Commission (UGC). In 1976, the ministry of Education finally recognized the certificates, so that the graduates of religious schools could play “an effective role in the field of education.” The recognition was, however, limited to B. A. degree only.

Second concerted effort to control the madrasas through imposing reforms on them, was made by General Zia ul-Haq’s regime – though military regime but unlike Ayub Khan’s it professed Islamization. A committee was formed in 1979 with a mandate to make proposals on to transforming madrasas into “an integral part” of Pakistan’s educational system.<sup>54</sup> Being utilitarian in its approach the report, for making madrasas better institutions of learning, recommended “concrete and feasible measures for improving and developing *Deeni Madaris* [religious madrasas] along sound lines, in terms of physical facilities, curricula and syllabus, staff and equipment... so as to bring education and training at such madrassaha in consonance with the requirement of modern age and the basic tenets of Islam to expand higher education and employment opportunities for students of madrassaha... integrating them with the over all educational system....”<sup>55</sup> For the integration of the two systems of education, the committee proposed to insert modern subjects into the *Das-i-Nizami*. The committee also suggested the improvement of economic situation of teachers and students and also improvement in infrastructure, physical and civic facilities in madrasas. Though, the report praised the madrasas’ role for protecting and preserving Muslim identity during colonial period, however, its recommendations, apparently, convey a perception that madrasas were inferior to the formal educational system.

‘*Ulama* particularly Deobandi, criticized the report. They said that recommendations of the reports shows in-built biases against traditional religious education and were insisting that there was a need to reform the curriculum of modern Pakistan’s educational institutions – schools and colleges, insofar as all non-religious contents were eliminated.<sup>56</sup> They considered madrasas as bastion of the religious education and the integration of traditional education system with the modern school system would be a disservice to Islam and would make it subservient to modern sciences. Anticipating the ‘*ulama*’s aggressive reaction, General Zia forced to postpone, for the time being, the implementation of reforms as recommended by the committee.

However, UGC was ready to recognize the higher certificate of Islamiyat and Arabic on condition that the graduates of the madrasa would have successfully passed two more subjects which were compulsory for B. A. (Bachelor of Arts) examination. In 1982, it was decided that for the purpose of recruiting teachers of Arabic and Islamic Studies in government school and colleges, parity of status with MA in these subjects should be given to all madrasa *wafaqs*’ highest degree after their students complete *Daurah-e-hadith*. For all other professions the madrasa graduates would have to take

examination in two more subjects, excluding Arabic, Islamic Studies, Persian and Urdu, at the B. A. level from a university. They would also pass the compulsory subjects of Islamic Studies and Pakistan Studies at the B. A. level.<sup>57</sup> A further two-year successful study would lead to the equivalent of M. A. degree. It was necessary, for the sake of uniformity that the certificate should bear the title of *Shahadah-ul-‘Alimiah fi al-‘Ulum-i-Islamiah wa al-‘Arabiah*, which in fact a sixteen year madrasa education. Pakistani universities were to be recognized this degree equal to a M. A. in Arabic or Islamic Studies from a public university.

The report of 1979 contained many similar recommendations of 1962’s report shows that government’s a fixed approach to madrasas and it also demonstrates its limited ability to implement the reforms. However, after initial response of rejection, the madrasa boards slowly and gradually introduced some changes in their curriculum. *Wafaq al-Madaris* (Deobandi) and *Tanzim al-Madaris* (Barelwi) modified their curriculum. New curriculum drawn up by the *wafaqs* comprised sixteen instead of eight years of instruction in accordance with the proposal of the 1979 report.<sup>58</sup> Behind the yielding to some governmental pressure and reluctantly acceptance of the some recommendation of the 1979 report, major factors were, inter alia, recognition of madrasa degrees and hope of some carrots – provision funds from Zakat Fund. The introduction of Zakat system in 1980 and the official recognition of the madrasa degrees in 1981 led to swelling of the number of madrasas. A further mushrooming has been witnessed after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the launching of jihad.

The third major initiative towards madrasa reform – to advocate the introduction of modern disciplines in the curriculum – has taken by, again, a military regime. When General Musharraf took power by staging a successful coup against the elected government of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, he was ostracized, for first two years of his reign, by the world community. The 9/11 events changed the whole scenario and he became the darling of the West. Being partner in the so-called ‘war on terror’, he started projecting a slogan ‘enlighten moderation’ as his government motto. The first target of policy of ‘enlightened moderation’ seems to be madrasas. West’s policy and media projections, and reports funded by Western organizations are pointing finger on the utility of madrasas and the education they are imparting and blaming them for fomenting the jihad sensationalism.

General Musharraf (r. 1999 - ) initiated certain steps for controlling the madrasas across the country. In the first instance, an ordinance, called “The Pakistan Madrassa Education (Establishment and Affiliation of Model Deeni Madaris) Board Ordinance, 2001,” was promulgated on August 18, 2001. The stated objectives of this piece of law were to integrate the system of Islamic education imparted in madrasas with the general education, to provide for securing the registration, regulation, standardisation and uniformity of curricula, bringing education and training, imparted in religious institutions, in consonance with the requirements of the modern age and providing greater opportunities in national life for the graduates of madrasas and according recognition of equivalence of the degrees and certificates awarded by them and to regulate their

examination system.

To start with, a Pakistan Madrasa Education Board provided under the ordinance was set up on September 8, 2001 under the control of the Ministry of Religious Affairs. The Board further established three Model Madrasas, two at Karachi and Sukkur for boys and one at Islamabad exclusively for female. The curriculum of these madrasas contains religious along with the components of general education. Sufficient funds have been allocated for proper functioning of the board and the model madrasas.

The ordinance, however, had not properly enforced as the religious circles, particularly the Ittehad-e-Tanzeemat Deeni Madaris (ITDM) – alliance of five madrasa boards (*wafaqs*), rejected the ordinance and did not cooperate with the government in any activity of the Madrasa Board or accepting 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 madrasas, rationalising of syllabus and mainstreaming of madrasa which formed its current policy on the issue.

With the Western funding the Musharraf regime's initiatives are more directly focused than its predecessors on regularizing and putting madrasas under the governmental yoke of rules and regulations. After the events of seventh July 2005 (commonly known as 7/7) in which three of suicidal bombers were British nationals of Pakistani origin, the Western powers pressurized General Musharraf to put madrasas under some control.<sup>59</sup>

President General Musharraf issued a presidential ordinance on August 15, 2005, amending the Societies Registration Act 1860, and requiring all the madrasas to get registered with the authorities. Secretary Ministry of Religious Affairs said the law had been amended in concurrence of Ittehad-e-Tanzeemat Deeni Madaris.<sup>60</sup> The Section 21 of the Ordinance was added to the Societies Registration Act 1860, which provides that no seminary will be allowed to operate without primarily getting registered. December 2005 was made as a deadline for registration. Moreover, it would be binding on every madrasa to submit an annual report of its activities and performance. The madrasas would be required to submit their accounts to a certified auditor, who will report them to the registrar. The amendment also stipulates that no seminary shall teach or publish any literature that promotes militancy or spreads sectarianism and religious hatred. The ordinance applied to the federal capital only as provincial governments separately promulgated similar ordinances. The new law also defines madrasa, which says that only such institutions which provide boarding and lodging facilities will be registered and *maktabs* operating in mosques will not need registration. Despite the government's claim that ordinance was promulgated after getting the consent of ITDM, however, to appease the clergy the government made two amendments before the deadline for registration ends, which made it toothless.<sup>61</sup> Resultantly, the government, again, after consultation with the ITMD, promulgated amended ordinance, the Societies Registration Act of 1860 (Second Amendment) on December 1, 2005.

Having a madrasa officially registered with the govt is now required not merely to have its advanced degrees recognized by the public universities but as the very condition of the madrasas legitimate functioning. The government, however, was yet to effectively implement this stated policy, that is, by shutting down madrasas that fail to register with it.

Somehow, these state-level attempts, to some extent, have definitely put an impact on the present day curriculum of Pakistani madrasas, despite the proclaimed resistance the *'ulama* offered against these reforms. All madrasas belong to various *maslaks* affiliated to one of the five *wafaqs* claim that they had adopted *Darsi-i-Nizami* for imparting religious education. The texts studied in these madrasas, with the exception of *hadith*, are same as those of the *Dars*, with some variations. Diversity in knowledge was the beauty of *Dars*. Still, the *'ulama* discouraged the textual innovation. The primary concern at madrasas of present and past has always been the conservation of the classical Islamic texts and sciences as studied in madrasas. In exchange of recognition of their degrees the madrasa *wafaqs* included modern subject in their curriculum up to year-ten. The next years' study base mostly on *manqulat*. So, the *talib 'ilm* (madrasa student, literally means seeker of knowledge) of twenty-first century madrasa of Pakistan is studying modern *'ulum*, such as social studies, English, Urdu, mathematics, science and even in some cases computer-learning along with classical texts related to religious and traditional rational sciences. The social and political pressures forced the *'ulama* to rethink on the issue of curriculum reform and they conceded, modern subjects made inroads in madrasas. But the question is what was the fundamental aim and objective of the of the reform attempts, i.e., the introduction of modern subjects in the madrasa curriculum? As stated in the reports of 1962 and 1979 and the present Pakistani regime is repeatedly saying that aim of intended reforms is to integrate the system of madrasa education with the general education and bringing madrasa students in mainstream economy. The un-stated motive, behind these attempts to liberalize the madrasa mind or to define the Muslim modernity, seemingly failed to achieve.

## **Conclusion**

Contrary to common assertion, madrasa curriculum is not immune to change. From the establishment of madrasa system in eleventh century to date madrasas' curricular texts used to change according to the need of the time, which had been defined the nature and character of Muslim politics. The emergence of madrasa in eleventh century was basically Sunnis response to the growing influence of Shia'hs, who saw them dangerous heretics and was a reaction to the political power of the Fatimids and Buwaids. So George Makdisi had rightly given his observation of this kind of trend, prevailing in madrasas which were politically motivated though not state-sponsored and were autonomous in devising their curriculum. The process of exclusion of rational sciences began in eleventh century and the foreign sciences becoming extinct by the twelfth century. Succumb to the religious-cum-political necessity; the madrasa curriculum had faced massive change.

After the consolidation of Muslim power in India, when madrasas were established the Muslim educational curricula were patterned on Central and West Asia curricula's with emphasis on the study of religious science, particularly on law. As Mughals Indianized themselves and state had become secular in its character particularly under Akbar, madrasa curriculum revitalized with emphasis on rational sciences that later on formalised by Mullah Nizamuddin in early eighteenth century. Mullah's curriculum – Dars-i-Nizami – was not a simply list of books to be studied in madrasa but it was also comprised of teaching methodology. Though competing trend of religious sciences continued but had not popularized in Muslim educational circle until we see change in Indian state and politics with the advent of the British. Taking roots in Indian soil, colonialism changed the political scenario in which, now, Muslims were subject, not rulers of the land that is why state and society's requirements changed, madrasa graduates were no more required. The British imposed new political and administrative institutions, which were alien to Muslims. Under changed political conditions the Muslim madrasa and 'ulama assumed responsibility of preserving and protecting Muslim identity. Resultantly, Dars-i-Nizami heavily tilted towards *manqulat*, religious sciences. After independence, though some texts were resilient and continued to be on the book list. However, many new texts were introduced in post-colonial Muslim state, a new concept of Islamism was entered in madrasa texts, which were alien to medieval texts. Pakistani governments, particularly military regimes tried to reform the madrasa curriculum. In lieu of recognition of their degrees madrasas yielded to the pressure and introduced some modern subjects in their curricular scheme. With the changing political scenario, due to Afghan jihad the classical texts taught in madrasas have been fashioned with new interpretations along with the new texts promoting Islamism. The same trend remained in practice after 9/11, but now the political Other was changed.

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  12. Ibid. p. 260.
  13. Ibid. p. 261; Abul Hasanat Nadwi, Hindustan ki Qadim Islami Darsghain ,op. cit. p. 98.
  14. Maulana Abdul Qayyum Haqqani, “Nisab Madaris Arbia ki Tashkil-e-Jadid ka Mas’lah,” Mujla Ilm-o-Aghi, Government National College, Karachi, 1984-86. p. 490.
  15. Professor Francis Robinson contends, in discussion with me, that Mir Zahid Harawi should not be considered as Indian because he was from Harat. My contention is that his father migrated from Harat and settled in India. Mir Zahid Harawi born (Jaunpur 1591-92) and died (1672) in India, so, he should be considered as Indian not as foreign scholar.
  16. Shibli Maumani, Maqaat-e-Shibli, quoted in Muhammad Raza Ansari Farangi Mahalli, Bani-e-Dars-i-Nizami, p. 263.
  17. Abul Hasanat Nadwi, op. cit. p. 95.
  18. Muhammad Hanif Gangohi, Zafarulmuhsaleen ba Ahwal al-Musanayfeen, Hanif Book Depot, Deoband, 1996. p.101.
  19. Abul Hasanat Nadwi, op.cit. pp. 103-104.
  20. Maulana Qadi Zain al-Abdeen Sajjad Merathi, “Nisab Madaris Arbia ki Tadween-e-Jadid,” Ilm-o-Aghi, 1986-87, Karachi. pp.501-502.
  21. Sayyid Manazar Ahsan Gilani, Sawanah Qasimi, Maktabah-e-Rahimia, Lahore, 1980.
  22. Maulana Qadi Zain al-Abdeen Sajjad Merathi, op. cit. p. 505.
  23. M. Hamiuddin Khan, History of Muslim Education (712 to 1750), Vol. 1, All Pakistan Educational Conference, Karachi, 1967. pp. 135-136.
  24. For discussion on educational traditions of rational and religious sciences in Seventeenth and early Eighteenth centuries Muslim India see, Francis Robinson, The ‘Ulama of Farangi Mahall and Islamic Culture in South Asia, op. cit. pp. 41-42.
  25. Akhtar Rahi, Tazkarah Musanayfin-e-Dars-i-Nizami, Maktaba Rahmania, Lahore, 1978.
  26. Zawahid Salasa or Hawashi Salasa means glosses (hashiyahs) by Mir Zahid Harawi (d. 1690) on three famous texts of philosophy and logic, viz., Hashiyah Sharah Mawaqif (Gloss on Mir Sharif Jurjani’s Sharah Mawaqif), Hashiya Risalah Taswar-o-Tasdiq (gloss on Qutb al-Din Razi’s Risalah Taswar-o-Tasdiq) and Hashiyah Sharah Tehdhib (gloss on Allama Dawani’s Sharah Tahdhib.)
  27. Sullamiyat means Muhib Ullah Bihari’s Sullam al ‘Ulum and its sharahs (commentaries) particularly written by Qadi Mubarak (d.1751), Hamd Ullah (1747), Mullah Hasan (d. 1794), Mullah Mubin (d. 1810-11), and Bahr ul-Ulum (1810-11).
  28. Shibli Naumani, “Dars-i-Nizamiyyah” in An-Nadwah, December 1910, referred in Ghulam Muhyid Din Sufi, Al-Minhaj, op. cit. pp 75-76.

29. Francis Robinson, *The 'Ulama of Farangi Mahall and Islamic Culture in South Asia*, op.cit. pp. 56-68, 251.
30. Ibid. p. 131.
31. Salafi means predecessors or early generations. Salafism is a generic term, depicting a Sunni Islamic school of thought that takes the pious ancestors -Salaf - of the patristic period of early Islam as exemplary models. Salafis view the first three generations of Muslims, who are Prophet Muhammad's companions, and the two succeeding generations after them, the Tabi'in and the Taba' at-Tabi'in, as examples of how Islam should be practiced.
32. On impact of print on South Asian Muslim society, see Francis Robinson, "Islam and the Impact of Print in South Asia," in, N. Crook, ed., *Transmission of Knowledge in South Asia*, New Delhi, 1997, reprinted in Francis Robinson, *Islam and Muslim History in South Asia*, Oxford, New Delhi, 2000. pp.66-104; Barbara D. Metcalf, *Islamic Revival in British India: Deoband 1860-1900*, Princeton University press, Princeton, 1982. pp. 198-234; Muhammad Qasim Zaman, "Commentaries, Print and Patronage: Hadith and Madrasas in Modern South Asia," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, Vol.62, No. 1, 1999. pp. 60-81.
33. Francis Robinson, *Islam and Muslim History in South Asia*, Oxford, New Delhi, 2000. p. 80.
34. Muhammad Qasim Zaman, "Commentaries, Print and Patronage: Hadith and Madrasas in Modern South Asia," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, Vol.62, No. 1, 1999. pp. 60-61.
35. Francis Robinson, *Islam and Muslim History in South Asia*, op. cit. p. 67.
36. Muhammad Qasim Zaman, "Commentaries, Print and Patronage: Hadith and Madrasas in Modern South Asia," op. cit. p. 76.
37. Yoginder Sikand, *Bastion of the Believers: Madrasas and Islamic Education in India*, Penguin Books, New Delhi, 2005. pp. 64-65.
38. Manazar Ahsan Gilani, Savanih Qasmi, ya 'ni Sirat-i- Shams ul-Islam: Sayyid Muhammad Qasim al- Nanautwi, *Maktabah-e-Rahmaniyah*, Lahore, 1980.
39. Manazar Ahsan Gilani, *Ahatah ' Dar ul-Ulum mein beetay ho 'y din*, ed. Ejaz Ahmed Azmi, *Maktabah-e- Tayyaba*, Deaoband, 1416 AH (1995?). p. 170.
40. Barbara D. Metcalf, *Islamic Revival in British India: Deoband 1860-1900*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1982
41. Francis Robinson, *The 'Ulama of Farangi Mahall and Islamic Culture in South Asia*, op. cit. p. 53.
42. For Aligarh Movement see, David Lelyveld, *Aligarh's First Generation: Muslim Solidarity on British India*, Oxford, Delhi, 1996
43. Manazar Ahsan Gilani, *Ahatah' Dar al-Ulum mein beetay ho'y din*, op. cit. p. 96. Sheikh ul-Hadith Maulana Anwar Shah Kashmiri, who was the student at Dar al-'Ulum Deoband in last decade of 19th century and taught there for six years as teacher and thirteen years as sadr mudaris, head teacher, before parting ways with Deoband, in early decades of 20th century. For detail see, Abdu ur-Rehaman

- Kondah, Al-Anwar: Sheikg ul-hadith Hadrat Allama Muhammad Anwar Shah Kashmiri ki Sawnih Hayat aur Kamalat wa Tajjaliyyat, Nadwat al-Musanayfin, Delhi, 1976.
44. Abdu ur-Rehaman Kondah, Al-Anwar, p. 95.
  45. Manazar Ahsan Gilani, Ahatah' Dar al-Ulum mein beetay ho'y din, op. cit. pp. 69-70.
  46. Ibid. p. 145.
  47. On house of Farangi Mahall and Dars-i-Nizami see, Francis Robinson, The 'Ulama of Farangi Mahall and Islamic Culture in South Asia, Permanent Black, Delhi, 2001; Muhammad Raza Ansari Farangi Mahalli, Bani-e-Dars-i-Nizami, Nakhass Press Lukhnow, 1973.
  48. Manazar Ahsan Gilani, Ahatah' Dar ul-Ulum mein beetay ho'y din, p. 157.
  49. As the biographer of Maulana Anwar Shah Kashmiri informed us that "in 1314 AH [1895 CE, his final year of education at Deoband], he [Maulana Kashmiri] in daurah hadith got one sanad from Sheik al-Hind Maulana Mahmud Hasan and other from Mualana Rashid Ahmed Gandohi." Abdu ur-Rehaman Kondah, Al-Anwar, p. 95.
  50. Manazar Ahsan Gilani, Ahatah' Dar ul-Ulum mein beetay ho'y din, p. 177.
  51. Jamal Malik, Colonialization of Islam: Dissolution of Traditional Institutions in Pakistan, Vanguard Books, Lahore, 1996. p. 125.
  52. Report of the Committee set up by the Governor of Pakistan for Recommending Improved Syllabus for the various Darul Ulooms and Arabic Madrasas in West Pakistan, Superintendent, Government Printing West Pakistan, Lahore, 1962 quoted in Muhammad Qasim Zaman, "Religious Education and the Rhetoric of Reform: The Madrasa in British India and Pakistan," Comparative Studies in Society and History, Vol. 41, N0.2, April 1999. p.312
  53. Jamal Malik, op. cit. p.128.
  54. The report of the 27-member committee with 15 'ulama called Halepota Report, which named after the chairman Dr. AWJ Halepota, the director of the Islamic Research Institute, who was also largely responsible for the report of 1961. The majority of 'ulama members were on good books of the government and were much concerned about protecting the interests of the state. They often served as legitimization of governmental policies.
  55. Report Qaumi Committee bara-yi Dini Madaris-I Pakistan, Ministry of Religious Affairs, Islamabad, 1979, quoted in Jamal Malik, Colonialization of Islam. . . op. cit.
  56. For discussion on two reports and 'ulama's reaction to them, see, Ibid. and Muhammad Qasim Zaman, "Religious Education and the Rhetoric of Reform: The Madrasa in British India and Pakistan," op. cit.
  57. University Grants Commission, Islamabad, Notification No. 8-418.Acad/82/128 dated November 17, 1982.
  58. Solah Salah Nisab-e-Ta'lim: Wafaq ul-Madaris al-Arbiah Pakistan (passed in Quetta), Wafaq al-Madris Multan, 1983. p.4.
  59. "Urgency for Reform" (Editorial), Dawn, Karachi, August 16, 2005.
  60. Dawn, Karachi, August 17, 2005
  61. Daily Times, Lahore, December, 12, 2005.