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Non-Academic Reforms for Madaris System in Pakistan

Abstract

This paper looks at the Madaris education system in Pakistan and analysis the facts how these Madaris can be managed in proper way so that they could produce vibrant economist, socially dynamic leadership, religiously well versed scholars and active administrators. It is dismal that the notion has developed that Islamic institutions are producing terrorists and white elephants for the society. No doubt, the education is the effective weapon against sectarianism and terrorism. If they are reformed, they may be a tool to save and transmit cultural heritage and traditional values for social changes and innovations. This paper gives suggestions and recommendations to the policy makers for reformation of Madaris system.

Introduction:

More or less, all studies emphasize the requirements of reforms for Madaris as education means to equip and facilitate the nation to chase national goals and reinforce its ideological foundations. Education plays an important role in political solidity, economic growth and social evolution of a nation; by which good environment is created for better implementation of the ideologies and policies. The confusion regarding education system may lead to destruction and poor management; may hurdle in physical and spiritual development. So Madaris should not be excluded from government policies. The unified system of education is the basic condition for uniform culture and national solidarity of Muslim Ummah.¹ During his Address at Institute of Policy Studies, on August 13, 2000, Dr. Khalid Alvi said that Madrassa is not the name of simple educational institute but it is the name of a system, consisting on Mohtamim as administrator and religious leader, teachers and students as workers of educational activities and donors as financers and supporters including civil society and clergy of the system.² Madaris that are supported by 97% community as religious institutions; are blamed for insecurity, sectarianism and many more; has been proved to be responsible for that to some extent. If they are reformed, they surely might be a tool to save and transmit cultural heritage and traditional values for social changes and innovations. No doubt, the education is the effective weapon against sectarianism and terrorism.³ The Pakistan along with other countries should make efforts backing the most susceptible in society. The "real war" should aim at

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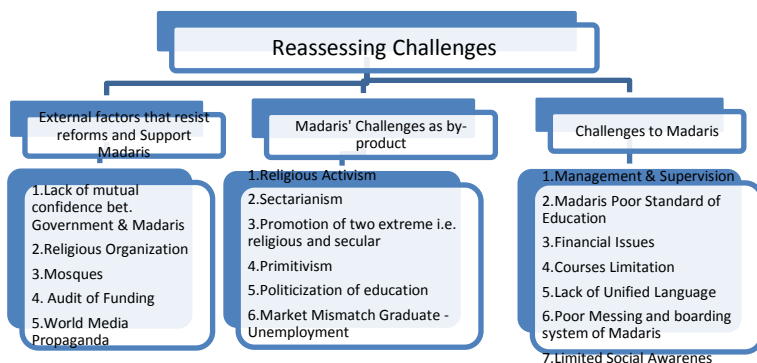
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controlling of “education and welfare services.” At the same time, the whole temperate Ulema and religious organization should try along with the government to check the succeeding cohort from being persuaded by the stern Wahhabi / Salafi dogma.⁴ The only way to solve the Madrassa challenges is to involve them in a course of reforms that emphases on multiplicity and conflict resolution that should be assisted by the Pakistani government with the support of other Muslim countries and Ulema.⁵

Pakistan is trying to solve its problems and reinventing itself both at state level as well as societal level. But more so, it requires implementation of a “top-down approach” to redefine and redevelop religious values. If the society looks unresponsive about the nature of religiosity as it is exposing to days; it may not only change cultural values but also caricature religion itself. The real clash is not between Islam and the modernists as projected; but it is indifferent attitude of the government towards religiosity; that requires some reforms and their strict enforcement. For the purpose, the mode and method of European secularism should not be conversed with extremists and it should not be unnecessarily exposed to local or international media that unconsciously favors ‘liberal’ ideology in the society that already have secular agenda to develop religious ideology into liberal one as “the equivalent of atheism;” that causes more resistance towards the west particularly, that expedites the recognition of extremism in the country.⁶

Madraris Challenges:

It is inevitable to mention here that the present study is not made on the basis of hostility between theologians and modernists or the East and the West but it is specifically made to find the impact of Madaris education over present scenario. The present study requires to be summaries here. History reveals that Madaris survived through critical time without any government help; resisted to un-Islamic ideologies and cultures through centuries; found renaissance only to promote religious instruction during the British period according to need of time and its under-cover utility against USSR get it blamed for militancy. Madaris have reasonable student strength; that depicts community strong support to them. Mohtamim, teachers and student’s characteristics are also portrayed there; that describes their intolerant attitude against their values and towards other sects and religions. This also illustrates the linkage between Mosques, Madaris and religious organizations as well as marks the vulnerable areas regarding sectarianism and terrorism. In the third chapter, Madaris are discussed deeply in four districts of Punjab and one district each from other three provinces. It details the Madrassa and student’s population ratio, teaching staff ratio, Students strength availing boarding facilities and learning courses, Madaris response to the government policies and Madaris involvement in militancy. Deoband Madaris are found involved in militancy; where there are more Deoband Madaris, there are more militancy. Challenges are abstracted from different studies, interviews and observations which are reproduced in accordance with their nature, activities and outcome in the under-given diagram.



Reassessment of challenges divides them into three categories; first include those factors that provide hurdle in the implementation of policies and supports Madaris on their agenda; that highlights the lack of mutual confidence between government and the Madaris administrations, role of religious organizations and mosques, audit of funding to Madaris and world media propaganda. The second comprises such challenges that are being faced by society as by-product of Madaris education; that include religious cum sectarian extremism, politicization of religious and secular education and due to pure religious course that mismatch market requirements causes ultimate unemployment. Whereas the third are Madaris internal issues that include poor standard of education due to its multi-faceted problems like lack of competent teaching staff, poor checking and management system, financial resources, irrelevant syllabus and other relevant issues. Moreover, it finds that Ulema, Society, Madaris, religious organization and Governments - all are responsible for present critical situation and still contributing; requires immediate attention for reformation. In the fifth chapter, government role is discussed as what it is doing and where are weak areas; require attentions. It also exposes what should be done.

STRATEGY FORMULATION:

In order to counter the impacts of Madaris in present scenario, a comprehensive strategy demands a complete reforms package for Madaris as well as for all relevant stakeholders; that includes all banned and religio-political organization, mosques and all educational institutions i.e. schools as well as Madaris. The following strategies are recommended:

	Steps	Aims	Authority	Duration
1	Concrete Determination – Political Will	Requires clarity for decision making and implementation excluding fear	All Parties Committee (APC).	Adequate time but not more than three month
2	Preparedness – Homework	Collection of professional team with proper briefing.	National Religious Reforms Enforcement Authority (NRREA) with its Chairman supervised by PM	Adequate time but not more than three month
3	Developing Religious Reforms Program	To develop reforms packages for mosques, Madaris & Organizations and exclude hate materials.	NRREA	Adequate time but not more than three month
4	Defining Options and Negotiation	To ensure negotiation with all stakeholders.	NRREA	
5	Reforms Enforcement	Excluding volunteer, compel all through stick and carrot policies.	NRREA through LEAs and Distt. Administration	At least not less than three years
6	Survey for Success Analysis	To evaluate reforms effort.	By private surveyors	After every three year
7	Reviewing hurdles and Weakness	To remove hurdles and improve weakness.	NRREA	-
8	Control over Media & Campaign for Awareness	Control over live coverage of terrorist activities and shows for public awareness	NRREA may involve dignitaries, Ulema and Journalists.	Slow and long term.

1. Concrete Determination – Political Will:

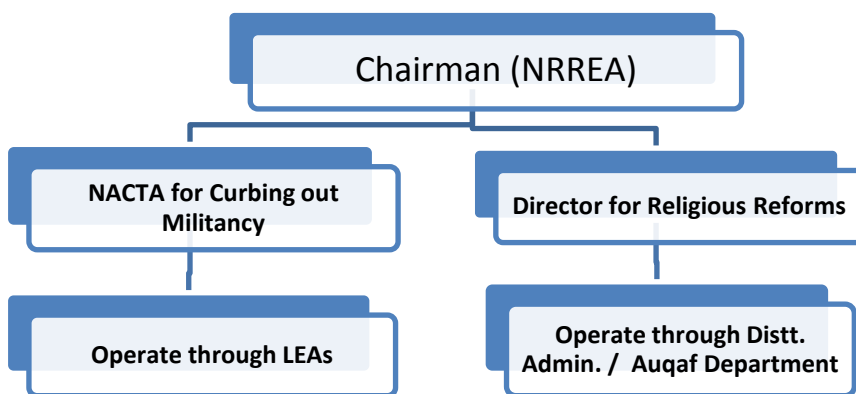
The government is confused and in fixes; unable to decide what he should do. Before taking any step, it requires concrete determination that meant to get involved whole nation and get them prepared for all consequences at any costs. When once the process is started; then there should be no reason to stop it till required results.

The issue should be debated in APC avoiding point scoring; practical and good suggestions from all corners should be welcomed. The tasks and procedure should be defined; this process may be completed within three months. Moreover, media must be taken into confidence.

2. Preparedness – Homework:

According to the objectives, a dedicated team should be appointed on long-term basis with the mandate to prepare a package of reforms in the light of previous Madaris demands that are considered as practical and negotiable.

The Chairman and its team must have education from both institutions i.e. from Madrassa as well as from school; it requires the experience and inner knowledge regarding them so that they may be on same vibe with stakeholders and may develop and enforce required reforms to attain objectives. The proposed structure for NRREA is given as under:



Before introducing or enforcing reforms, NRREA should study the psyche of religious clergies and complete their homework. During field studies by Researcher, the religious clergy enjoys prophetic respect by their students and devotees whereas the negotiation teams, generally consisting on bureaucrats or politicians, are not capable to understand their mindset and culture; and they desire to be respected and obeyed as by subordinate or worker; so all efforts remain in air and required results are exposed as unsatisfactory. So the NRREA must get aware about Madaris culture and clergies' mindset. During field study, it is observed that the boarding and messing system of Madrassa turn the institute into a family and Mohtamim, being the head of institute, is considered and respected as father; that do increase his importance. For staff and pupils, he is the most successful persons and is going to be followed as "role model". It is further found that pupil's express intolerance, turn irritated and ready to across limit on any adverse remark against the said figure. To fulfill his command is not less than to perform religious duty. It is not due to any command or pressure from Mohtamim, teacher or other staff but extreme level of devotion and love. Even that any verdict uttered by him is attained as sacred saying without any verification or justification from Islamic reference or text. Moreover, practices started and adopted by him are treated and followed as Islamic tradition. As he attains such worth, reverence and respect; he promotes himself as authority and desire routine life around him to be so-called "Islamic one" (according to his own version and agenda) in locality; and in any critical situation, use pupils as his force. Some of them spend glorious life with magnificent homes, luxury cars and VIP protocol. They make use of pupils as their personal servants. Owing to these reasons, he is used to face submissive attitude. When government try to undertake negotiations for some reforms, they expect the same attitudes and resist over personal interests; desiring all reforms and financial assistance may be implemented through them without any check and balance system; just considering Madaris as their personal property while they (Madaris) are public property because they are developed and run by public donations. So NRREA must keep in mind the psyche and interests of clergies before negotiations.

3. Formulation of Reforms Program:

No doubt, Madrassa reforms are causing severe difficulties to policy makers and LEAs in Pakistan, and serious issue not only for the Pakistani government, but also for governments in adjoining societies.⁷ NRREA should be given full mandate

to design reforms programs for all relevant fields. In my opinion, reforms should be multi-faceted; NRREA should precede legal procedure against militants at one side and guide them to be good citizens at the other.

3.1. Curbing Out Militancy (com):

With concrete solution to curb out the hindrance that are shaking the writ of the state, Pakistan will effectively treat with the agenda implementation that is required for the smooth functioning of the state.⁸ Leaving external security with Army and other defense forces, NRREA should only pay attention to its internal problems. Militancy should be dealt by NRREA through NACTA (created in 2009) that should be provide human, financial and technical resources as required to improve performance. To eliminate militancy, NACTA should formulate counter insurgency strategy, having proper emphases in such area that have reasonable level of extremism and militancy, along with national de-radicalization policy that focus imprisoned militants who may cause the threat of radicalizing other prisoners.⁹ For the purpose, consensus should be made over condition of Jihad.

3.2. Definition And Propagation Of Conditions Of Jihad:

A consensus 'Fatwa' regarding requirements and conditions of Jihad and against suicide bombings may be propagated through electronic media as starting point over this campaign. Furthermore, some firebrand speakers may be managed by intelligence agencies on payroll to redress Jihad ideology as campaign was launched for Jihad during Zia era.

Further, different modules that have been successfully implemented in the world; should be considered and most suitable may be followed in the prevailing situations. In my opinion, certain steps may be opted given as under:

3.3. Law Enforcement Module (LEM):

Generally special laws are passed and implemented in special circumstances in the world. So special laws must be passed on the recommendation of NACTA, LEAs, Courts and Law Consultancy Firms. The procedure and requirements must be simple and easy to prove. These laws should be enforced through police; that must be reinforced by provision of new technology, proper weapon and ammunition. Necessary training should be imparted to them. Special courts should be established with the direction for quick disposal of the cases. LEAs and Courts should be on same wives in order to get terrorists concluded.

3.4. Military Operation Modules (MOM):

This module may be opted as second in those particular areas where police is considered to be failed and may not achieve required results. For the purpose, areas may be marked where the military actions are required. NACTA should avoid availing this option frequently. It may lead to civil war as it has been experienced in Baluchistan and Swat.

3.5. Identification Of Militants, Mosques And Madaris:

Mosques and Madaris involved in violation and conducting militancy courses should be forced to stop their activities immediately and may be handed over to Aqaf Department. Moreover, ban must be imposed on fund raising by

them. In this regard, NACTA with the help of Muthida Ulema Board may be tasked to oversee the above mentioned proposed action through Intelligence Agencies. Any Madrassa which fails to stop running militancy courses will be closed down and taken over by the Muthida Ulema Board. Policy makers should realize that reforming Madaris is a slow and delicate process so engaging is more effective than marginalizing them. Madaris leaders should be approached as partners through trust building measures. Ground reform within progressive Islamic principles rather than concepts of secularism and modernity (as interpreted in the West) should be encouraged.¹⁰

3.6. Issuance Of Blue Book:

The educators whether they belong to school or Madrassa found involved in militancy must be booked and kept under strict surveillance as required under ATA. Their entrance into educational institutions must be banned and they must be kept away from educational activities.

3.7. Rehabilitation Of Militants:

NRREA should design rehabilitation programs that help those militants who desire to spend peaceful life. Government should preferably accommodate them according to their capabilities and desires. Moreover, informal de-radicalizations centers should be established at provincial level and run by the Ministry of Interior under intelligence cover. In addition, the government should engage the local and international experts and scholars to evolve comprehensive de-radicalization and rehabilitation programs which best suit to local socio-cultural realities.

3.8. Minimizing Radicalization And Extremism:

Pakistan sociocultural realities impact radicalization (to be sectarianists and extremists) indirectly whereas governmental policies, political expediencies and international actors influence it directly. Sociocultural depends upon educational, religious and economic culture. Undemocratic attitudes and authoritarianism also contribute for its proliferation. Religion, education and media serves as tool by the state and non-state actors.¹¹ De-radicalization is more recommendable than defeating the Taliban and other extremists in the country. To minimize radicalization, the best way to fight bad theology is with good theology.¹² Through intelligence agencies, fire brand speakers of different sects may get inducted with the task to abridge gap between sects and induce de-extremism and de-radicalization.

3.9. International Campaign For Interfaith Harmony:

To check the incidents of caricaturing the character of the Prophet Muhammad and burning of the Holy Quran in other countries that contribute in religious activism, NRREA should monitor anti-Islam activities in the world and moved to exterior and religious ministries to promote interfaith harmony according to activity and country.

3.10. Unifying Sects By Introducing Religious Reforms:

Along with COM, religious reforms are inevitable to introduce and implement for controlling promotion of sectarianism / extremism. Religious organizations, mosques and Madaris belong to same sect are working for further

sectarian promotions; that are required to be minimized gradually. Further, they are inter-supportive; so reforms are inevitable to democratize them. Some proposed reforms are as under:

3.11. Reforms For Religious Organization:

Religious organization that are not militant but have some separate identity like different cap, *Pagri*, cloth or their colors must be controlled at their early stages whether by negotiation or by law enforcement. In the beginning these organizations preach their agenda; when they find reasonable strength; they try to impose it by all means. Moreover, they extort funding through their workers by hook or by crooks (by strict imposition). In other words, the establishment of religious organization with some identity is the first step towards extremism. So the culture for establishing separate identity should be discouraged. Those who don't comply with law must be banned and their workers' activities must be kept under strict surveillance.

3.12. Reforms For Mosques:

Mosques are the social places which provide self-employment to Madrassa graduate at one side and become bone of contention between different sects at the other as discussed in chapter second and third. I suggest:

- i. Mosques should be registered on population but not on sectarian basis. They should not be possessed by any sect but by community dignitaries who are not influenced by any sect. A slogan "mosques for all" should be propagated by all means. No Molvi or Imam should have courage to refrain any Muslim from entering into mosques. For the purpose, if required laws are available; they should be implemented equally otherwise special laws should be made and enforced in letter and spirits. Misuse of Mehrab should be checked severely.
- ii. For above mentioned purpose, MUB should be established at union level and on performance base, they may be promoted to district level and so on. They must be bound to play their role to mitigate sectarianism. Further MUB should be motivated to launch campaign for same Khutba Juma; that must be without hate materials and sectarian prejudice.
- iii. Community should be motivated to get services of such graduates who are taught at school. They should not allow any Molvi or Imam to utter single word against any sects. In cities, population trends are converting into housing colonies; the organizers of housing colonies must be bound to appoint Imam in their mosques; who have reasonable school education along with required Madaris courses.
- iv. Mosques provide employment to Madrassa graduate. Until it is managed, Madaris cannot be controlled; as they uninterruptedly are running their system by public bounty. Madaris are established and run by public donations; their graduates are employed in mosques by public donations; so without government interference how they can be streamlined? So mosques must be taken into government custody gradually. For the purpose, at first step the religious education graduated from school must be inducted as Imam in all government department mosques and then public should be moved to do so.

3.13. Control Of Hate Speeches And Materials:

As discussed in chapter four, Jihadi ideology and sectarian extremism and militancy get promotions through hate speeches and material. Zero tolerance policy is required to control it. As proposed above, MUB may be tasked. Effective law may be made and enforced in consultation with Ulema, lawyers and LEAs.

3.14. Control Over Misuse Of Loud Speaker:

LEAs are already working to control misuse of loud speakers. It also requires the involvement of MUB and public. They should be incited to allow the use of loud speaker as required. Moreover, the Amplifier Act requires some enhancement in punishments.

Defining Options And Negotiation:

Madrassa graduate are specially trained in Ilm-ul-Kalam and may negotiate in better way as compared to school graduate. So before negotiation, NRREA must define maximum and minimum options as there should be no chance of failure. As shown by figures, more than 50% (that are already registered) must agree with government. In Chapter three, it is observed that in Sunny (Brelvi, Deobandi and Ahle-Hadith) Madaris, 60% are days and around 80% are memorizing the Holy Quran; shows that majority students want to memorize the Holy Quran in only nearby Madrassa. In other words, it may be said that they have no alternative religious education institute; so they are compelled to join them.

Before enforcing reforms, the government should take them into confidence over its reforms programs but should not be blackmailed by them. Whether they get agreed or not, the government should provide religious education in school without any delay; with the passage of time they must realize their mistake and follow government. If the government commences religious education, these students must join government schools; means to check the influence of Madaris in public that ultimately affect their means and fund collection and they get compelled to follow government.

Reforms Enforcement:

Implementation of reforms should be ensured within stipulated time instead of introducing new ones year by year. There should be consistency in these reforms which can provide gradual steps for one another for better implementation as they are suggested. All enforcing department must get educated about the reforms program from top to bottom level. Generally observed that top level of bureaucracy gets educated about policies whereas the bottom level that are to enforce agenda in real sense keep them unaware; due to which required results could not be attained. Particularly those departments or teams, who are mandated to register education institutions, must be properly briefed and trained. Further those teachers who are appointed for religious education must be kept under strict surveillance so that they may not pollute their students with sectarianism. In enforcement process, the district level officers / officials play very important role. If they are properly briefed and trained regarding the targets and aims of reforms, they may implement them more effectively otherwise there is little hope for required results; the failure may lead to more de-fabrication of society. As their role is more effective, they should be awarded with proper privileges.

Survey For Success Analysis:

A study must be worked out regarding the effectiveness of reforms from some private firms. The study should include reforms impact over society in different areas, its weaknesses and hurdles, suggestions to remove them and new proposals from stakeholders for further improvements. The study should be made from at least two firms so that by comparative analysis, the real facts may be abstracted.

Reviewing Hurdles / Weakness:

The hurdles must be analyzed whether there are flaws in reforms or in implementation; further it is managerial, communicational or operational in nature. After thorough study, the required directions should be issued. The procedure should be repeated till required results.

Control Over Media & Campaign For Awareness:

Media should be directed about coverage of terrorist incidents. There should be difference between coverage and proliferation of news. Media liberty should not be allowed at the cost of national interests. Moreover, it should be monitored whether anyone is working on foreign agenda or against national interests. Likewise, a campaign should be launched for public awareness. Public should be categorized on the basis of education and understanding. So accordingly media should be utilized. The promotions should be made through dramas, documentaries, films, talk shows through media. Besides it the Ulema and dignitaries should also be moved to play their role in this regard.

3.15. Conclusion:

Only Madaris reforms do nothing; all the above stakeholders must be reform to achieve objectives. This paper ensures the devised reforms and implementing strategies provide guidelines to policy makers to include them in the normal course of life.

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