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# Curriculum and Career: Exploring the Influence of Madrasa Education on Students' Professional Growth in Quetta (Balochistan)

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*The study elaborates on madrasa education and professional growth of students there in Quetta city. Pakistan's madrasa education focuses more on Islamic education which inculcates spirituality and shapes religious knowledge. However, the absence of modern subjects like Information and Communication Technology (ICT), Mathematics, Science and vocational training created a gap between these students' skills and the requirement of today's job market. By using the Human Capital Theory as a framework the study has highlighted the issues faced by madrasa graduates especially with reference to job insecurity. The study reveals the unmatched relationship between the madrasa curriculum and professional growth and shows that the madrasa graduates have limited opportunity to survive in the society. The study recommends some measures to improve the curriculum of madrasa; add modern subject and to ensure vocational training that can help them to acquire jobs. Further, madrasas of Quetta city need the support of provincial government in building infrastructure. Such kinds of changes are due for the madrasas in Quetta, madrasa graduates for having an easy access to the employment opportunities and then to play their pivotal role in the development of Pakistan.*

**Key Words:** Madrasa Curriculum, Professional Growth, Madrasa Graduates, Quetta, Education.

## Introduction

Pakistan is an ideological country that was founded by the Muslims to protect Islamic values and culture. In Pakistan, the foundation of education lies on the ideology of Pakistan. Madrasas are the educational institutions that are working on student's growth and character building. Madrasa education plays an essential role in the Islamic countries and families. Madrasa education is also the important aspect in a child's life in learning because it provides Islamic education which is a necessary part of the life. In Baluchistan number of students avail the madrasa education, here families prefer madrasa education due to no fees, no uniform, stationary materials and food. Baluchistan is already deprived from the educational opportunities, and madrasa play significant role in Baluchistan to educate the children. Number of studies have been done on madrasa education perception in society, religious education instead of this, little attention given to madrasa curriculum and its role in building the students professional development, and due to this limited studies still it is not found that the madrasa's curriculum carries critical thinking, comprehensive education or not. The study will help the teachers, policy makers, stakeholders and the society to understand madrasa's curriculum role in professional growth of the learners of madrasa. Therefore, the current study aims to examine the level of madrasa education curriculum that influence the professional growth of students in Balochistan. The finding of this study is expected to improve the quality of madrasa education curriculum, that help the children of Balochistan to avail professional opportunities in the society.

Madrasa is a place where the Muslim children get the knowledge about Islamic teachings and values. Madrasa is the educational institute, just like schools, colleges and universities. It helps to learn all aspects of life like surviving in society, dealing with people, earning ethics etc., under the Islamic perspective and *Sunnah*.<sup>1</sup>

The history of madrasa education is quite different from today. In early days, the focus of madrasa education was only on teaching religious science and an individual's role in society according to *Sunnah* simply was to focus on the Quran and *Hadith*. Now the madrasas' role has been changed in every country; some follow the traditional religious teachings and some are following the modern techniques.<sup>2</sup>

In madrasa the curriculum is based on the traditional curriculum, which focuses on Quran, *Hadith*, Jurisprudence and spirituality. Further study has revealed that Madrasa education follows the teacher-centric approach in the classroom. This concept and the curriculum of madrasa need modification

and studies emphasized these changes can occur when the government and donors are asked to take part. There are some Madrasas in some countries bringing some positive changes in their curriculum, like languages, vocational training and introducing the basic subjects like Mathematics, Science and Pakistan Studies for the need of society so that they can get jobs easily.<sup>3</sup> However, Madrasa education and its role are debatable today, because many research scholars believe it needs to change and meet the criteria of society that alumni of madrasas can get employment. Many madrasas do not add Technology, Science and Mathematics in the curriculum and it due to this students' skills become limited to survive in society.<sup>4</sup>

According to Dawn, in 2023, Pakistan was facing a shortage of job around 8.5% because of economic issues and high inflation.<sup>5</sup> Another study of Farooqui highlights that in Pakistan 35,000 madrasas are present, in which only 12,500 madrasas are registered. Every year 1.5 million students are graduated from these madrasas and from them only 10% get the jobs in government sectors or any other private institutes, the other 86% graduates work in mosques, madrasas or do any other small business.<sup>6</sup> Another report given by Pakistan Bureau of Statistics in 2017 found that 63% of students of madrasas were jobless in 2015 to 2016. The World Bank did another survey and their report stated that only 1% of students at madrasas are capable of acquiring occupations in formal sector.<sup>7</sup> There is a huge gap between Pakistan's madrasa education and requirements of the employment market, so this problem needs serious attention to reorganize the curriculum of madrasas. This kind of incongruity between the madrasa curriculum and skill is harmful for the future of many children. The students of madrasas struggle for the jobs after graduating but according to their degree, they do not get their expected job, which is quite disappointing for them.<sup>8</sup>

Madrasa education is traditional Islamic education in Muslim countries like Pakistan. However, in previous centuries, Madrasa education was the main source of knowledge, but now it is the most criticized one because the madrasa education is not found to provide technical and practical education, due to which they get limited opportunity to get the job.<sup>9</sup>

Madrasa education has a prestigious history in the Muslim culture; the role of madrasa education is to spreading Islamic education. In Quetta, which is the capital city of Baluchistan, madrasa education consider valuable, here almost all families prefer madrasa education for their children and here number of registered madrasas are present to preserve Islamic traditions.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, the Madrasas of Quetta city need to an amended curriculum which not only focuses on religious subject but also focuses on the skills

essential for the professional growth. Madrasas in Quetta city already deprived of the opportunities such as teacher training, formal infrastructure and educational policies as compare to other urban cities in Pakistan. The current study aim at analyzing the curriculum of madrasa and its role in the development of professional growth.

### Literature Review

Madrasa education is one of the oldest form of education in the world of the Muslim. The madrasa education provides religious knowledge and ethics of life. Now in the society, many questions are raised about the professional growth of madrasa alumni. The question does not exist here whether we should get Madrasa education or not, but the challenge is how the Madrasa degree, curriculum, strategies need to be standardized inside and out of the madrasa.<sup>11</sup> A number of research studies in Asia have been done and these research articles focuses on several important questions, such as what kind of strategies, curriculum, opportunities and professional skills Madrasa education produces?

In South Asia from the eighteenth century, the *Dars-i-Nizami* scheme has been followed and this system is based on the Quran, *Hadith*, Jurisprudence, Arabic grammar and classical philosophy. This system was established for the purpose to obtaining religious knowledge and guidance not for obtaining any position in society.<sup>12</sup> This system produced so many religious scholars and leaders, even today this system gives strong religious reading and understanding of text.<sup>13</sup>

However, in the colonial time period, modern education took place, and then Madrasa education became less of a priority in society, because the British brought that concept that the people who got modern education would get good positions job in society and these people were earning well by these positions, so all society's focus shifted to modern education instead of Madrasa education.<sup>14</sup> According to Bano, Madrasa does not directly affect the career of an individual rather it depends on Madrasa curriculum, skills taught in Madrasa and local economy.<sup>15</sup>

There are a number of reasons behind facing job shortages for madrasa students. The first reason is that the madrasa curriculum emphasizes only on religious studies, the curriculum of madrasa education is not officially recognized by the Pakistan education system, and technical and practical skills are not provided.<sup>16</sup> Additionally, Ali explores how society treats madrasa students unfairly due to some negative image of the madrasa environment.<sup>17</sup> The study of Akbar states that public schools are providing the lower level of religious education due to which many poor families

prefer their kids to send to Madrasa.<sup>18</sup> Further, Goldberg expresses the thought after 9/11 about madrasa that they are preparing spiritual fighters under the shadow of religious education.<sup>19</sup> After 9/11, the concept of madrasa education in worldwide became negative, and people started believing they were creating violence.<sup>20</sup>

There are so many negative and positive things to witness about the madrasa individuals, and again this only depends on the madrasa's curriculum that what they learn, and who teaches them. The study of Rehman explored, madrasas are creating strict and violent leaders. In addition, some scholars' groups argue that in Pakistan Madrasa's system is the cause of producing violence, extremism, and conflict in the society.<sup>21</sup> Further critics think these madrasas are spreading strict religious concepts, which lead to the harsh issues. Brent says it would not be better to say that madrasas are producing terrorists, instead madrasas are not producing skillful individuals.<sup>22</sup>

Pakistan is currently facing a number of issues related to madrasas because their education mismatches the job criteria. Everybody knows this is the thoughtful matter but still it is not the priority of the Government.<sup>23</sup> Moreover, the education of madrasas does not prepare students for the better jobs in different sectors, due to limited opportunities; they turn towards radical ideas. Further, after the government of Zia, madrasa education was neglected by Pakistan. In 1998, almost 2,800 madrasas grew and in 2002, the number increased up to 9900.<sup>24</sup>

During the Zia ul Haq government, madrasa education spread rapidly and this was the time when 7000 *Deobandi* madrasas increased.<sup>25</sup> From 1972 to 1981, Pakistan's population grew by 29%.<sup>26</sup> This time in Pakistan, a number of graduates came out from the madrasa, but they were unable to know the business and job in society. It was hard for them to get jobs in the competitive society where people prefer modern education to understand business and modern jobs. In 1982, Zia-ul-Haq prepared the policy and made the rule, that madrasa degree would be equal to the MA degree in Arabic or *Islamiyat*. This rule becomes helpful for the madrasa students to avail good opportunities in society.

In the study conducted in Peshawar by Aziz et al. , the students of madrasa have hurdles in finding jobs because of their lack of command on English language and fewer professional contacts.<sup>27</sup> On the other side, studies have shown the students of madrasas are found with good qualities like discipline, patience, deep religious knowledge, and strong dedication, which are helpful for any job. Moreover, another study by that the students of madrasa do not get jobs in any sector in Pakistan due to their negative

stereotypes, but it also needs to be acknowledged that they are hard workers and disciplined. This quality helps madrasa students to work in any social place.<sup>28</sup>

### **Research Methodology**

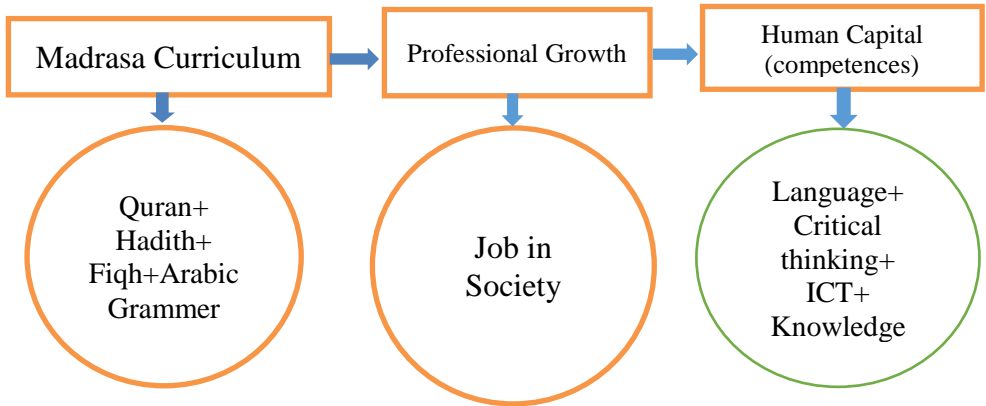
The study has opted survey research design under the Quantitative mode. Survey method is one of the traditional methods in the field of research that is used to describe the situation. A quantitative study manages to take only numbers, it does not deal with the thoughts, assumptions and observations. In addition, Research population is the essential part of the any research. Population is the huge individuals' group from where researcher hand-picked few persons for the purpose of collecting data. The sample of the study comes out from the population. Population has two types, which are accessible population and target population. The population for the current research has been selected is accessible population, accessible population can be easily generalized, and can easily access them. The population of the present study are the students and teachers of the Quetta city Madrasas, the male and female both Madrasas are included. The sampling technique of the current study is convenient sampling technique. Moreover, there are several tools for the quantitative research, but the tool that has been used for the existing study is Structured Questionnaire to gather the data and was based on the 5 points Likert Scale, to gather the data. The obtained data has been entered into the SPSS (Statistical Packages for Social Sciences) version 23 and the questionnaire was analyzed through Pearson's Correlation.

### **Conceptual Framework**

The current study is based on the Becker's Human Capital Theory. This theory presents the clear perspective that education improves individuals' skills and knowledge that help to get jobs in society.<sup>29</sup> Madrasas' curriculum focuses on the religious content only, and it depicts that it is the main source to build skills in madrasa students. Moreover, this framework seems to indicate that society accepts those individuals who have skills in language, ICT, critical thinking, and knowledge. These skills increase the chances of professional growth and contribute positively to their role in the society. Therefore, some research studies argue that the curriculum of Madrasa in Pakistan does not focus on these skills, but if modern subjects included in their studies, they can have opportunities of jobs.<sup>30</sup> Another study by Asadullah and Chaudhury shows that, on an international level it is suggested that if Islamic schools add vocational and general subjects to the

curriculum, then graduates can get better access to higher education and jobs.<sup>31</sup>

### Conceptual Framework



### Findings and Discussion

#### Correlations between Madrasa Curriculum and Professional Growth

		Madrasa Curriculum	Professional Growth
Madrasa Curriculum	Pearson Correlation	1	-.033
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.640
	N	200	200
Professional Growth	Pearson Correlation	-.033	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.640	
	N	200	200

The above table reflects the negative relationship between the madrasa curriculum and the professional growth of the madrasa’s students in Quetta city. The value -.033 depicts the negative relationships between the dependent and independent variables. The table further revealed the madrasas of Quetta city have a good curriculum, but it does not influence

their professional growth. Moreover, society does not accept their degree for the job, and particularly in the government sector. The graduates of madrasas are limited to teaching jobs in Islamic schools or modern schools, such as Quran teacher, Madrasa teacher, and Islamiyah teacher. Further, the students of madrasas curriculum do not work on any special skill that helps them to survive in the society, like ICT skill, a good command on Urdu and English language as this is the main source of communication in professional places, any vocational training and professional ethics. The most important thing came out during this study is that the students of madrasas are not getting good opportunities for jobs due to their physical appearance too.

Ali et al., study reveals that the madrasa graduates faced number of challenges in seeking jobs both in private and in public sectors.<sup>32</sup> In the labor market madrasa, graduates face discrimination because people have a negative perception about them that they are not able to perform any position. Even madrasa graduates face obstacles due to their dress code and religious values. So, the adjustment in the marketplace is the biggest challenge for them. Another barrier has been found that the government rules and policies are too difficult to match for the madrasa graduates that they cannot fulfil the criteria. Like if, the madrasa graduates wants to apply in police, military and civil sectors they have enough capability to apply in these departments. The other major problem found that in madrasa, teachers are not well qualified and trained; they do not focus on the skills of students, which is another cause of not getting good job in society for the madrasa graduates.

Additionally, the study reveals that the madrasa graduates are not judged negatively in the society due to their religious perspective on every matter. The curriculum of madrasa does not work on the personality of madrasa graduates, due to which people do not treat them gracefully. The graduates of madrasa are facing fewer opportunities to earn a good amount of money because their skills are enough to influence. The study of Blanchard find out, that the madrasa curriculum focuses on religious education, due to which students have limited opportunity to learn modern skills, which help them to survive in today's era. That is the reason they have single option of teaching.<sup>33</sup>

### **Recommendations**

The research recommends some important steps which need to be taken by society and the government. First, the government of Baluchistan needs to focus on the curriculum of Baluchistan's madrasas. It needs some important

changes like awareness of ICT, Critical Thinking, Philosophy, Languages (Urdu and English) and Ethics of professional and personality growth. Madrasas of Baluchistan need proper infrastructure and trained teachers to build their professional skills. In different departments, the government must provide opportunities to the madrasa graduates. It is important to own them; they are the important graduates of our society. Madrasas of Baluchistan needs positive change for this education minister need to check madrasas' progress on a yearly basis and the study further suggests that if madrasa education is converted to a semester instead of an annual system it will improve the curriculum and professional growth of madrasa students.

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