

1.2.1. Pre-Partition History and Background of our Education System

Before the establishment of the English medium public schools and universities, children of Muslims families had to rely on the Madaris for the religious as well as the earthly modern studies. According to the historians, the first known Madrassa is said to have been established in 1005 AD by the Fatimid caliphs in Egypt. It had all the ingredients of the modern educational institution of that time. It had a library, teachers for different subjects were appointed and students who were admitted were provided with ink, pens, and papers free of charge. An interesting fact about these Madaris called as “Nizamiah”, is that a catalogue of inventory of this Madrassa prepared in 1045 revealed that it had 6500 volumes on different subjects, including astronomy, architecture, and philosophy. When Egypt was reconquered, the whole system was replaced and revamped. The old versions of teaching techniques in those Madaris were replaced by the latest versions and techniques. The books and manuscripts that seemed contradictory or ambiguous according to their belief were destroyed and the volumes that related to the earthly knowledge were preserved. A huge number of books were taken to Baghdad where a Seljuk Vizier called Nizam-ul-Mulk Hassan Bin Al-Tusi, established the first organized Madrassa (Nizamiah) in 1067. In the new Madrassa established by Nizam-ul-Mulk two types of education were provided:

1. Scholastic theology to produce spiritual leaders, and
2. Earthly knowledge to produce government servants who would be appointed in various countries and the regions of the Islamic empire.

Later, Nizam-ul-Mulk established numerous Madaris all over the empire, in addition to providing Islamic knowledge imparted education in the fields of sciences, philosophy, public administration and governance. Nizam-ul-Mulk is considered to be the father of the Islamic public education system offering free food, education, and lodging inside the premises under one roof. He himself is the author of a renowned book (among early Muslims) on public administration called “Siyasat Nama” (the way to govern). At first, during Akbar’s reign (1556-1605) the Madaris curriculum was redesigned by Fatah Allah Shirazi (1589), a great Iranian scholar of Akbar’s court. Being himself a great scholar of rational sciences, Shirazi put emphasis on the rational sciences (Maaqulaat) by adding more books on logic, philosophy, mysticism and scholasticism. On the other hand, the tradition of teaching religious and spiritual sciences also flourished at that time. This tradition was nourished by Sheikh Ahmed Sirhandi (1624), Sheikh Abdul Haq Muhadith Dehlvi (1641), Maulana Abdul Rahim (1718) and his son Shah Wali Ullah (1762). Imam Shah Wali Ullah Muhaddis Al-Dehelvi (R.E) (1702–1762) was considered as the founder of these religious schools “Madaris” in this area, which are still following the syllabus which was formulated during his lifetime by one of his eminent followers Shaikh Nizam Uddin Al-Ansari of Farangi Mahal, Lucknow, during 1748 and later it becomes known as Dars-E-Nizami, which includes subjects of Islamic Sciences i.e. Morphology, Syntaxes, Logic, Philosophy, Jurisprudence, principal of Islamic jurisprudence and theology. Shaikh Nizam Uddin tried to keep it in a neutral tone, so it could not develop sectarian base among the students. It contained reformist elements and aimed at purging out, what these scholars thought, the un-Islamic practices among the Muslims and propagating scriptural Islam, with emphasis on religious sciences.

Dars-E-Nizami became a landmark in the history of Muslim education in India and was adopted by most of the Sunni Madaris of the Subcontinent; though with some amendments, particularly after the second half of the nineteenth century. Dars-E-Nizami was basically a standardized method of learning rather than a list of books taught to the students and was meant to train administrators and to fulfil the need of ‘increasingly sophisticated and complex bureaucratic system’ of India. Dars-E-Nizami, itself, did not demand rote learning, though it preserved the centuries-old tradition of oral communication and the memorization of texts. Being tilted in favour of Maa’qulaat, the curriculum developed the habit of self-thinking. The number of books on sciences, which strengthened the power of thinking such as scholasticism, mathematics, philosophy, and logic, was higher than any other branch of learning such as Tafseer (exegesis of the Quran), Hadith (tradition of Prophet Muhammad Peace be upon him), and Fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence).

Keeping the holistic view of education, Mulla Nizamuddin did not base the Dars-E-Nizami on the dichotomy of the religious and the secular – the colonial notion which the colonial and post-colonial ‘Ulama adopted. It is true that Dars was more inclined towards rational sciences, but it could not be termed as secular. Later, changes in late 19th and 20th centuries, however, made it more religious but the basic framework for the formulation of learning remained the same.

In order to develop masterly skill, the students used to learn one or two relatively difficult books on discipline. However, their mental ability was put to analysis before initiating them into that process. After completing the study they were able to comprehend other books on that discipline also. In order to promote logic and philosophy in the Madaris along with religious sciences, the Dars-E-Nizami was heavily loaded with the books on grammar and syntax which were necessary to develop language skill in Arabic, the language of the textbooks and a means for the transmission of the heritage of the Islamic tradition. All these subjects which include logic, philosophy, grammar or syntax were considered “Uloom-E-Aaliyah”, instrumental sciences.

During the colonial period, as Christian missionaries intensified their work, and as ‘Ulama and Muslim education were deprived of state patronage coupled with Anti-Muslim (endowment) policies of the colonial state, the second half of the 19th century observed the surfacing of different Maslak/School of Thoughts (factions) in the South Asian Islam as well as Madaris related to these Maslak/School of Thoughts, which claimed as protecting the Muslim identity and preserving Islamic tradition. The most renowned of these Madaris was Dar-UI-Uloom at Deoband, a town in Northern India. The Deoband Madaris founders accepted the British rule, at least in the last decades of the 19th century, as a fait accompli and by acknowledging the colonial notion that religion was a private matter, they manoeuvred to reach common Indian Muslim through controlling private sphere and by replacing Persian with Urdu as a medium of instruction in the Madaris. Deoband Madaris educational movement was reformist in its orientation but reformist not in the sense that it was promoting the learning of modern sciences among the Muslims rather tried to eradicate the un-Islamic practices in the community of believers. Although ‘Ulama at Deoband adopted basic premises of Dars-E-Nizami for the curriculum of Dar-UI-Uloom, however, they injected some crucial changes that changed the texture of the Dars. The Dars emphasized on rational sciences, a fact which was readjusted in the curriculum of Deoband and other Madaris, which emerged after 1857, now, in the favour of “Manqulaat”, i.e., religious sciences.

Until the second half of the 19th century, Persian was the language of the Muslim court and culture. After the British ascendancy, it remained the language of colonial administration until 1835, when it was replaced by English. Later on, it was replaced by provincial vernaculars. In Northern India, vernacular meant Urdu/Hindi. With this replacement, Ulmaa, from last decades of the 19th and earlier decades of the 20th century, switched over from Persian to Urdu as the language of communication, both in print and in the Madaris. The Persian commentaries and glosses on Arabic texts that were published in the early 19th century, were gradually replaced with their Urdu translations. A considerable number of religious and non-religious works were published, in the last three decades of the 19th century, in the Urdu language, the lingua

franca of the Muslims of the North and North-Western India. Soon Urdu became the mark of identity among the Muslims of India. For educated Muslims, especially of Northern India, the decline of Persian was accompanied by the increasing prominence of Urdu throughout the 19th century as the language of literary and religious expression. Urdu became the medium of instruction in most of the Madaris, and it was principally in this language that Ulama preferred to debate, write and publish for all-purpose. Numerous translations of the Qur’an and of other religious classics were printed in Urdu, which contributed to the development of this language. Language, print and improved means of communication reinvigorated the learning environment of the Madaris and contributed towards the strengthening of religious identity among Muslims in colonial India.

Before the creation of Pakistan, during the British Colonial Era, the main source of education for the people of Indo-Pak Sub-continent was also “Madaris” for Muslims and temples for the Hindus which were mostly associated with “Gurukul or Pathshala”. These both types of institutions were run by the religious scholars and were supported by the local communities. Lord Macaulay was sent on a special task to study the educational system of this continent and change it or replace it according to their plans and he reported back as:

“If I had shut down all the local schools, cancelled the Arabic script prevailing in the country, I would have failed. The effects of whatever I am doing will become apparent in a few years. I have travelled the length and breadth of India but failed to come across a single beggar or thief. The morals of these people are exceptionally high, and they hold their pure values very dear. We can never truly conquer India until we break its backbone. And that is their spiritual and social infrastructure, taught and strengthened by their system of education. therefore, I propose that we replace her old and ancient education system, her culture, for if the Indians think that all that is foreign and English is good and greater than their own, they will lose their self-esteem, their native self-culture and they will become what we want them, a truly dominated nation.”

Speech to Parliament - 2nd February 1835.

To implement those policies the new English Medium Public School system was introduced throughout the continent and still, we can see an example to such an institution as “Aitchison College of Lahore”. Along with those, the missionary schools were also established which were under the direct supervision of Bishop (father) of that area and entire teaching staff consisted of the Christian missionaries and church or chapel were the part of the school. The main objective of those teachers was to teach their pupil the manners which they brought from Britain and brainwash a young generation of that time so they become part of their system in the name of so-called better education. That was also part of the mind control agenda. The Kinnaird College for Women, St. Stephen School, St. Andrew's High School and St Anthony's High School Lahore are the examples of such system.

On the other hand, Madaris was also functioning as the full-fledged educational institutions. Those Madaris were playing a vital role in the unity of the Muslim Ummah. The main infrastructure and the system of those institutions were based on the traditional system of institutions at the time of Khilafat-e-Rashida. Along with the religious studies, spirituality, and contemporary sciences, multilingual manners were also the part of their teachings, which were taking the part of the revival and awakening of Muslims enormously throughout the Indo-Pak Subcontinent. Those institutions were managed by the “Ulmaa and Sufi” (Religious & Spiritual Scholars), who were not only teaching the exact and modern way of life according to the Quran & Sunnah but were also the hurdles in the cunning and deep-rooted satanic conspiracies of British Think Tanks to destroy the Islamic culture and manners since the 7th century. The basic languages in those Madaris were Arabic or Persian. They started to reduce the Madaris along with the killings of Ulmaa & Sufi, the people knowing or having educational medium as Arabic and Persian were discouraged in all manners of life and were forced to realize that the English language is superior language and it is the necessity of this modern era to penetrate in the society designed by the foreign rulers. The Britishers not only reduced the count of the Madaris but also the religion was taken out from the mainstream education system and was marginalized into imparting only religious sciences. The degrees got from those Madaris were no longer valuable and students educated and graduated from there were unable to get the employment and prominent place in the society.

Someone has rightly said

“If you want to destroy the future of any nation, no need to wage war with them; defunct their education, they will remain no more live on the map of the world.”

At the time of educational slump, Hindus took more readily to the new education than did the Muslims. Muslim leaders such as Sir Syed Ahmad Khan saw the danger that their co-religionists would fall behind the Hindus and be kept out of the bureaucracy if they did not prefer the modern educational system over the traditional. Under Sir Syed's leadership, the Anglo-Oriental College (later upgraded to Aligarh Muslim University) was founded in 1875. It did not eliminate the traditional system of education, but there is no doubt that it seriously undermined its standing and standards. The Anglo-Oriental College provided higher education on the British pattern (more particularly that of Cambridge University) and produced a remarkable leadership for the Muslims of the subcontinent, particularly in present-day Uttar Pradesh, for educational, social, and legal reform and promoted the Muslim nationalist movement, which eventually led to the partition of the subcontinent and the birth of Pakistan. It also produced brilliant graduates, who went to England for higher education, some of them serving in the Indian Civil Service, which prided itself on being the iron framework of the British imperial edifice in India.

In 1947 when Pakistan emerged as an independent nation, breaking apart from India on the ideology of two-nation theory and in the name of Islam, it had a poorly educated population, only 189 Madaris or according to another estimate 245, very few schools and only 1 institution of higher education, “The University Of Punjab”.

The literacy rate of women was the lowest in Pakistan as compared to the rest of the developing countries of the region and at the time of independence, it was only 16 % and has been increasing approximately at the rate of 4 % per decade after an increase in population. The female literacy rate in 1947 was around 2.8 and has been increasing at the rate of approximately 2 per cent per decade till 1961 and about 5 per cent since 1961.

In the year 1947-48, there were in all 644 students including 56 girl students on the role of two universities located in Lahore and Karachi. The level of acquiring higher education was very low among youth in this region prior to the partition of sub-continent. The number of enrolment started increasing gradually among girls and boys with an increase in the number of universities. The total number of enrolment increased from 644 to 799215 (122 times) during the period from 1947-48 to 1996-97. The girl's enrolment increased by 316 times and boys enrolment by the 103 times during this period. The trends in enrolment indicated that the gap between girls and boys was slowly narrowing down which was a good sign for a recently born developing country.