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CHALLENGES OF MADRASA EDUCATION SYSTEM

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ABSTRACT

Madrasa graduate after passing out roam around for his survival, and it takes time for him to adjust himself in a world different from his own utopian one. It is just like a man who comes out of his air-conditioned room he feels the weather hotter than those who were already in normal temperature. And due to sudden change of temperature he may get sick.

Gone are the days when madrasa graduates were appointed as judges in the courts, ministers in the Cabinet, Vice-chancellors in the Universities, professors of Islamic studies, Islamic history, Islamic law in the colleges etc and hold the key posts during the Muslim rule in India. They enjoyed the high standard of life with the handsome salary. The people used to offer their daughters in marriage.

KEYWORDS: Madrasa, Muslim, Education

INTRODUCTION

Now the situation is changed altogether. This is all but natural that any system which, if an when, does not keep its pace with the fast moving wheel of the world at one point of time it becomes redundant, because change is the law of the nature. On the basis of this logic world has to finish some day or the other. It is a well-known theory of logic that , "Everything changes and whatever changes has to die some day, Thus, the world can not be an exception. On this logical foundation one should analyse the madrasa system of education also. All the

more it has become static. The fountain of ideas has dried up. There is dire need for further dig up. If the ground is irrigated on the modern line the fountain will start functioning once again. Hence, to make it viable and dynamic modernisation is inevitable.

They also witness some of the families (anonymous) that have been producing nothing except Ulemas for generations. They are more interested in madrasa education than any other prevalent mode of study. Does it mean that they have stuck to it due

to its significance. Obviously it may not so. To the mind of this group they may be continuing with the system just to maintain their hegemony-material as well as spiritual. So long as they are able to retain their authority they will continue with the system.

Partial assessment of a thing will lead one to astray. And the partial assessment of madrasa system will leave the entire Muslim community groping into the darkness. Madrasa without linking it to the day-to-day's requirements can't yield any good result and meet the challenges of the time. Thus, modernisation is the only answer to the problems and crisis Madrasa has been passing through for centuries.

Not only the Muslim community as a whole but the Government also should take greater interest in Muslim educational affairs than they have done so far. They should not sit back and rely upon the Deoband Ulemas who, though nationalist in pre-independence days, manifest today the revivalist tendencies which also come quite naturally to those graduating from such madrasas.

Not to speak of the materialist, the Ulemas themselves don't like to offer their daughters to a madrasa graduate. On the basis of a general observation and the assessment of the society one estimates that even Ulemas do not prefer to send their children for madrasa education. How one can expect the same from the the general masses who never had any truck with the madrasa education.

So far we have been dealing with the views emanating from the writings and speeches of those Muslim scholars who are trying to

champion the cause of madrasa modernisation scheme. The call for modernisation of madrasa is not a new phenomenon. At the individual level the issue has been taken up at various stages of history. The move, however, on the collective and official level, was launched with the declaration of independence of the country. And more recently, it was Mr.P.V. Narasimha Rao under whose regime the issue was initiated, promoted and publicised, but without any concrete results. Now we must take into account the concern of those Muslim scholars who resist such moves with full possible might.

The issue of prime concern before them is the direct interference and keen interest evinced by the administration at both state as well as central level. The ever-growing curiosity of the Government in the issue causes doubts and suspicions in the minds of these scholars and throw before them a plethora of questions, which have to be answered before stepping into such initiatives.

Indian media both electronic and print also played not less negative role than others in the projection of Islamic madrasas as centres of militancy and terrorism. To substantiate the statement one can refer to some of the incidents took place recently. The collapse of a roof of madrasa in western Uttar Pradesh was widely publicised by our television network. The murder of a madrasa student by his two madrasa mates in the state of Madhya Pradesh was given much prominence.

CHALLENGES OF MADRASA EDUCATION

The adverse remarks across the borders in regard to madrasas, were given due place. The partial projection of madrasa system of education has become a favourite task of Indian medias. The Govt initiatives for the modernisation of madrasas, with whatever sincere intentions, and the bias and partial projection of madrasas by medias, however, did not auger well to the Muslim mind, instead, added to their apprehensions.

The call for the modernisation of madrasas, is not something new in India. It has been echoing in the atmosphere since independence or even well before that. Maulana Azad, Maulana Manazir Ahsan Geelani, Allama Shibli, Allama Iqbal and many other Muslim thinkers have already talked much on the topic.

With the introduction of modernisation, Azhar could neither transform Moulvis into Misters nor Vice Versa. The dream for the transformation of madrasas into modern Universities on the line of oxford and Cambridge in England, could not find an expression in the practicality. On one hand the modernisation of madras a programmes is being much publicised by the Government through media, and on the other, the Government reduces grant to madrasas.

All boards of madrasas are running in almost similar pathetic condition. The employees in madrasas, running under Bihar Madrasa education Board, don't enjoy even the fourth pay commission. The teachers in these madrasas are not sure wheather they

will get thier salaries even after a year. Thus for them, madrasa teaching has become a side business. The madrasas which dont have their specific boards and run under Waqf Boards, are also undergoing almost the same fate.

We also have to see the kind of madrasas which are being put under modernisation process Those who have some affinity with madrasa education can understand that most of the madrasas selected by the Governments are Maktabs (Primary seats of learning). And modernisation is not possible unless Governments involve the real madrasas in the process. Without the involvement of the ulemas in the process the whole efforts will tantamount to building a castle in the air.

If the purpose of modernisation is simply to open the door of worldly opportunities to madrasa graduates then the purpose may not be achieved even after the execution of the scheme, as evergrowing un-employment is a common phenomenon. And smce these opportunities could not be ensured to those who have graduated from modern scheme of thing, how one can expect that these new comer madrasites would be able to avail such promised facilities. When one talks about worldly opportunities, it does not mean the Government employment alone, rather it covers the whole spectrum of the opportunities.

With whatever economic conditions the madrasa graduates are leading their lives, they are more contented and more satisfied than their counterparts. One can prove this point by just looking at the growing

dissatisfaction in the modern educated persons. Their resentment and disenchantment are evident in day-to-day's occurrences. If somebody just takes into stock the number of annual processions, suicidal cases, burning of degrees and all, he will realise the amount of dissatisfaction among the modern educated persons or degree holders. Neither, these helpless people are being accommodated nor have they some scope in the private services. Finally they are left with nothing except frustration and mental depression.

To find out the reason again one has to look back to the aims and objectives of both the streams. Madrasa education aims at spiritual development, while its counterpart's prime motive is purely materialistic progress. The result is obvious. The modernisation process initiated by the Government and being championed by progressive educationists is already on in Indian madrasas since many decades. The frequent changes in madrasa curriculum in consonance with the requirement, indicate to this fact.

DISCUSSION

Madrasas, the traditional centres of Islamic learning, are going in for a complete change of face. Having doggedly resisted reforms all these years, today they are introducing modern scientific education in their curriculum and getting ready for the next millennium." It says, "Students passing out of these modern madrasas have emerged as shining examples of what a judicious mix of modern education and streams of ancient wisdom can do to an individual.

However, the Muslim community, has been progressively reforming the madrasa system since the beginning of the century. Many madrasa without official support, teach English, the principal language of the state and elements of Arithmetic, History, Geography and even sciences. But madrasa education has a basic purposes to produce not only religious functionaries but experts in the Qur'an and the traditions and the Shariah. If madrasas burden themselves with dual courses in the quest of clerical jobs, they lose their reason. However, it is possible to reorganise madrasa education in a manner that at various terminal points, a student may switch to general educational stream and vice versa.

Despite all sorts of stagnation mainly intellectual the madrasa system of education has not yet lost its utility. For instance, the insight a madrasa gives to a student it can be achieved from nowhere. The punctuality in life, the sincerity in study, and the honest attitude towards labour are exemplary even today in the declining phase of madrasa education system. It has no parallel.

In the Islamic system of education 'Tarbiyat' has been emphasised more than education itself. That is why there is no concept of education without Tarbiyat, and both the words Taleem and Tarbiyat had become inseparable. Whenever we want to say Education Ministry we have to use the word "Wizarat-ut-Taaleem wat Tarbiyat", because there is no concept of education without Tarbiyat (Pedagogy). Etiquette is another characteristic of madrasa education. Etiquette polishes man's character, creates human values and equips with admirable

qualities. Without etiquette, one can become lberles, with treasure of knowledge, but at the same time bears haughty and arrogant character. The etiquette however, in the modern system of education, either has no significance or holds a secondary position. Knowledge, no doubt, is an essential requirement but etiquette is more in demand ~or character and personality building.

Humanity and politeness come through indoctrination of etiquette and can not be produced by instilling a bunch of book in the minds of the students. Contentment, forgiveness, peaceful co-existence, respect, truth, and human sympathy are the essential elements of Islamic teachings, which are tried to be inculcated as aims and objectives of learning in madrasas, as they embellish human life. While in modern system of education, these qualities are taught as policies and strategies but not as aims and objectives. Practicality is much emphasized in the modern system, while honesty is the focal point of madrasa education. As a result the above qualities, for the products of modern system of education, stand fairly good if they suit the purpose, and become meaningless, if they prove to be obstacles in the achievement of immediate gains. While for madrasa products, the suitability of above qualities hardly matters.

The economic system of Islam does not correspond to either of the two. It talks about equilibrium not equality. Neither it goes along with the socialist economy which wants to bring out equality per force, nor it agrees with the capitalist system where collective interests of the society is sacrificed at the altar of unreined individual

aspirations. Islam though talks about the differences in the rights of owners and labourers, but at the same time it puts some restrictions on the rights of owners. It also talks about freedom of earnings but puts some restrictions on the ways and means.

It condemns the hoarding system and accumulation of wealth through illegal means, When it talks about equilibrium, it does not mean equilibrium through resorting to coercive measures. It wants to establish this balance through mobilisation and attitude motivation. Islam mobilises the people to spend in the path of Allah through giving alms to the beggar, charity to the needy and helpless people, cooperating orphans and even those who are in the pursuit of divine knowledge. For the virtuous deeds one does in this world will get better reward in the life hereafter.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The art of painting also, some times, proves to be catalyst to idol worship. And last but not the least, dance, song and music also provide some kind of demoralising enjoyment. Islam, despite having strong aesthetic sense, can not approve the nudity, the demorality and inhumanity in the name of fine arts. Hence, introduction of such Fine Arts in the madrasa curriculum will affect the very outlook of madrasa and spoil their spiritual dynamics. In the name of amusement activities chess, is gaining currency in schools and colleges day by day, which is no way acceptable to Islamic doctrine.

Finally, the modernisation of madrasas will give a new bend to the relations between the teacher and the taught. The close and intimate relations between the teacher and the taught will be transformed into a formal and secondary relations on the line of schools and colleges. The spiritual bond will be changed into material one. The punctuality, sincerity, dedication and commitment of teachers towards study and teaching will undergo radical changes. Similarly, the respectful attitude of the students towards their teachers as spiritual guides, will also change considerably. The dress and food will also not remain unaffected. Though Islam does not have a defined dress code, but all the more, it puts certain conditions for dress which ultimately paves the way for Islamic uniform. With the modernisation of madrasas, the Islamic uniform may not resist the storm of modern uniform come through schools and colleges. Likewise, Dining style also will have to change on the line of modern institutions. And in the end, even the outlook of madrasa students may get affected.

Now under the given scenario what is to be done with madrasas. To my mind madrasas must welcome modern disciplines (subjects) to equip their students with latest information so that they can defend, preserve and protect Islam in more sophisticated and comfortable way. But at the same time, the contents of all subjects, should be prepared instilling Islamic point of view and as per the requirements of Muslim Society. This also should be kept in mind that the very system of madrasa should be intact. And the changes in the curriculum

should not be governed by the wills and wishes of the Government.

CONCLUSION

Maulana's views on education are scattered. His contribution to the education is more pronounced than his ideas on the topic. His ideas on the traditional Muslim education or madrasa system of education can be extracted from the speech he delivered at Nadwatul-Uloom, Lucknow as first Education Minister of India. During his speech he raised the question of modernisation of madrasas to link it up not only with the issue of bread and butter but for all round development of the community. His whole speech centered around the synthesis of the two diagonally opposite streams. To him, madrasas must be confluence of both- traditional as well as modern education system. He opposed vehemently the confinement of madrasas to the Greek branches of learning because they will lead them to no where.

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