

Challenges and opportunities in mainstreaming Madrassa education in Pakistan.

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(c) Madrasa education will reduce the barriers that hinders access to education.

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(e) Promoting religious harmony will reflect the true soft image of Pakistan and Islam to counter global narrative against madrasa education.

(b) Mainstreaming madrasa education will reduce uneven development and lead to sustainable economic growth.

5. Conclusion.

Quaid Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah said "Pakistan was created when the first person in subcontinent entered into Islam". This quote reflects the ideology of Pakistan. Pakistan, a population of 220 millions, divided into multiethnic, multi-linguistic and multicultural demography. However the ideology of Pakistan unites us as a nation. The ideology which created base for objective resolution and that ultimately became the preamble of the holy constitution of Islamic Republic of Pakistan. The constitution of Pakistan mandate the right to education for every Pakistani aged 5 to 16 years. Meanwhile, in Pakistan education classified in subcategories, which includes, formal education, informal education and madrasa education. Although, formal and informal education system also facing numerous challenges, but madrasa education facing recognition threat, specifically after 9/11 attacks. Pakistan is facing various challenges to mainstream madrasa education in Pakistan. After 9/11 attack, global powers affiliated

terrorism with Islam, and madrasa education often considered as religious (Islamic) education, that ultimately hinders the mainstreaming of madrasa education. Secondly, Sectarian divide remains a prominent challenge to mainstream madrasa education in Pakistan. Moreover, Pakistan currently facing real time data challenge to mainstream madrasa education. However, mainstreaming madrasa education will offer numerous opportunities, including religious harmony in the society, modernization of madrasa curriculum, addressing social inequalities and many more. In a country like Pakistan where access to education is difficult, the madrasa education will offer multiple opportunities despite facing challenges in mainstreaming.

Education system in Pakistan classified in sub categories, formal education which often considered as school, college and university educations, informal education, such as vocational trainings and Madrasa education, which is often linked with religious education, although some madrasa provides worldly education as well.

Sectarian divide is a prominent challenge to mainstream madrasa education in Pakistan. Islamic groups divided in four major school of thoughts. Although, Islam is a universal deen but interpretation of these school of thoughts differs. This sectarian divide sometimes causes social unrest and push government to implement strict rules. For instance, during religious events like, Aashoora and Eid Meelad, the religious groups creates a social unrest, ultimately that led to national security at risk. Ultimately, it hinders the religious education to be mainstreamed.

Secondly, conflict of ideas and difference in interpretation leads to extremism over several religious affairs. Extremism over any point is not good for social harmony as well as religious harmony. Not only this but, extremism leads to terrorism oftenly, that not only challenges Pakistan internal security law and order but also challenge to the sovereignty of Pakistan. In result Pakistan faces regional instability and that leads Pakistan to not mainstream madrasa education.

In addition, the global perception about madrasa education in Pakistan has been changed after 9/11 attacks. Terrorism has been linked with Pakistan and Islam. This incident has disastrously damaged the meaning of Islam as Peace. Before 9/11 attacks all suicide bombers were Tamil tigers but none of religion were blamed for terrorism, unfortunately Islam has been linked with it. Although this approach is a biased approach but, that pose a significant challenge in mainstreaming madrasa education in Pakistan.

Furthermore, the lack of accurate data of existing madrasa in Pakistan hindering the madrasa education in mainstreaming. There is no an accurate or official data which can show the exact numbers of madrasa in Pakistan. This leads to ineffective policies. Though the previous governments in 2018 issued policy for madrasa registration under government education ministry but a report reveals that only 190,000 madrasa were registered under the policy. Interviews and research shows that the accurate number of madrasa operating in the country

are two times more than registered madaras. Moreover, There is no proper mechanism of auditing the financial affairs of madarsa education. This risk leads to informal foreign funding and their usage. In addition, it strengthens global narrative of terror funding which is linked with Pakistan in general, specially with madarsa education in Pakistan. This ultimately resist the mainstreaming of madarsa education in Pakistan.

Regardless these challenges, mainstreaming of madarsa education will offer numerous opportunities to Pakistan. In other words these challenges can be converted into opportunities.

First of all, registrations of madarsa will provide accurate and presised data that how many madaras are operating across the country. This registration policy not only provide the data but also help in smooth governance. It will ensure one of the characteristics of good governance, inclusivity in the governance. This will help in

policy making and effective implementation as well.

Secondly, mainstreaming of madarsa will allow to the national government to update and modernize the madarsa curriculum. Madarsa students of ten considered as only religious educated as madarsa education is limited to religious education. Modernizing the syllabus and curriculum of madarsa education will help in the skill development of youth. Not only this but updated curriculum will ultimately reduce the modern knowledge gap between a university, formal education and in madarsa education.

Moreover, mainstreaming madarsa education will eliminate the barriers which obstruct the access to education. Madarsa is operating across the country, whether in rural areas or urban madarsa of various school of thought are operating everywhere. In addition madarsa education will indirectly ensures the implementation of Article 25A of constitution of Islamic

Republic of Pakistan", which deals with free education to all Pakistanis aged 5 to 16 years. Furthermore, mainstreaming madassa education minimize the social inequalities. Pakistan at present, facing highly social inequalities. Elite capture is predominant in the governance structure of Pakistan. A report reveals that most of government officials admit their children at prestigious private institutions. Madassa students of ten, considered as socially backward, as they lack the modern scientific education. However, mainstreaming of madassa education will reduce the gender gap as well as social inequalities in the society.

Additionally, mainstreaming madassa education will promote religious harmony in the society. It will promote the true and soft image of Pakistan in the world. It will be helpful to counter the western biased approach towards Islam and Pakistan. Religious harmony will strengthen the social fabric of the society.

Last but not the least mainstreaming of madassa education will reduce the uneven development of society. It will promote sustainable growth and lead to economic development. Madassa education provides the student a way of life, it promotes morality and ethical values. Students of madaris, after getting scientific education will surely support economic development and ensure a sustainable growth of society.

In a developing country like Pakistan, where education system thrives most, the madassa education will offer a numerous opportunities regardless a few challenges in mainstreaming. Mainstreaming of madassa education in Pakistan facing a few challenges includes, the lack of real time data about madaris operating in country. secondly the global narrative against Islamic education as they linked terrorism with Islam. Thirdly sectarian divide among Islamic school, that strengthens the barriers of mainstreaming

madrasah education in Pakistan. However these challenges can be converted into opportunities. mainstreaming of madrasah education offers numerous opportunities. Religious harmony in the society, reduced social inequalities and access to education. mainstreaming of madrasah education will result in sustainable growth of country. most importantly mainstreaming of madrasah education will allow government to modernize the curriculum as per modern needs. "Education is the pathway from darkness to light" said George Washington. Woodrow Wilson in his sayings "If you think education is expensive, then try ignorance".