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Challenges and opportunities in mainstreaming Madrasa Education in Pakistan

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Mainstreaming the Madrasa education in Pakistan means to integrate both religious education in its true sense and also scientific education in current madrasa education system

of Pakistan. ^{It also include chess and balance on Madrasas.} Mainstreaming the current

madrasa education in Pakistan is need of the hour; current prevailing political instability, economic crisis, security issues and environmental problems are detrimental of updating

the current Madrasa education system of Pakistan. There are certain challenges

in mainstreaming the madrasa education which includes conventional curriculum

and also old teaching methodologies alongwith infrastructural barriers and lack of funds from government

ends. Personal benefits of Madrasa owners and psychological barriers from

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both parental and student ends are also major barriers regarding mainstreaming the madrasa education of Pakistan. If these challenges are overcome; tremendous opportunities can be enjoyed by regulating the madrasa education system. It can minimize the governmental struggle towards adopting single national curriculum, promoting religious tolerance, countering terrorism financing, enhancing political and economic stability and reducing violence against children.

At first, one of the major issues in mainstreaming the madrasa education in Pakistan is conventional curriculum and outdated teaching methodologies. Since its origin, madrasa education has been a source of conventional teachings mostly just religion-centric. Even the curriculum is not updated according to modern societal needs like what religion guides people about use of modern technologies. What is stance of religion on social media earning, on Bitcoin or digital currency. Ijtihad is done but at major level where biggest

religious figure get involved, but modern issues and their solutions should also be indicated in madrasa education system. Another problem is regarding lack of modern scientific and social science knowledge in primary madrasa education system. In this technological world, advanced education is more necessary than any other thing, in order to survive in this dynamic world. Then main issue lies with teaching methodology; teachers are using old cramming techniques and physical punishments. They are least interesting in learning based outcome. They lack basic training as well. This is leading cause of ^{hindering} student-teacher good relation and enhancing learning capabilities. Thus, in order to mainstreaming madrasa education; curriculum and teaching methodology need special attention.

At second, infrastructural barriers and lack of funds are among major hurdles in updating madrasa education system. Majority of madrasas do not have proper class rooms and furniture. Students have to sit on floor despite the cold weather or

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they have to sit in rooms without fan or any air-conditioning facility in sweltering heat. Another issue is linked towards accommodation issues of students.

Children in madrasas are mostly from far-off villages; they can not go back to their home towns. Moreover, they mostly belong to poor families so they are unable to afford any transport fee. So, in order to mainstreaming madrasa education system there is dire need to upgrade the infrastructure of madrasas: by providing suitable buildings like modern day schools along with stationary and accommodation facilities.

But problem lies in allocation of funds to education in annual budget; the total allocated budget to education in 2024-25 is mere 1.5% of GDP. On average, just 2-3% of GDP is allocated to education per year. So, infrastructural and fund deficiencies are major challenges to upgradation of madrasa education.

At third, personal gains of madrasa owners and their influences over political class and clergy or religious

groups are among the major hindrances towards upgradation of madrasa system. Madrasas are source of economic and political gains for majority of its owners. There is less check and balance on the aid and charity money in Pakistan. Moreover, madrasa students are being used as political workers by owners. From the history of Pakistan, it is quite obvious that these students were ^{being} used in political demonstration and protest against government. So, if an attempt is made to mainstream madrasa; there would be check and balance on aid and limit on students activity as well. A resistance from ^{some} madrasa owners end could be a great challenge.

At third, children psyche and myths regarding school education system is another barrier towards upgradation. Mostly those students are enrolled in full time madrasa education systems, who found school education more complex and tough to

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understand. Some of them consider school education system a wastage of time. They believe that being muslims mean just to get religious education only while Holy Quran is clearly inviting us towards scientific education as well. For example it is connotation of an Ayat: "Verily, in the creation of heavens and earth and nights and days; there are signs for wise people". So, to change the thinking pattern and aggressive attitude of students towards modern education is major barrier towards modernizing the madrasa system.

At fourth, the backward or conventional mindset of some parents is another challenge towards advancement of madrasa education system. Societal appreciation and promising which in actual limited ^{career} opportunity serve as an incentives for parents. Moreover, parents consider modern scientific education purely a western type of things that may harm their or their children's basic faith.

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Moreover, as madrasa education is comparatively cheap and it also provides accommodation. So, economic factor could be an incentive if taken in consideration along with upgradation of madrasa system. Illiteracy in parents is major factor of parent's typical thinking regarding modern education system because parents divide education into religious education and worldly education while Einstein said; "Science without religion is lame, religion without science is blind." Thus uneducated and backward mindset is another challenge behind mainstreaming madrasa education system.

There are different challenges regarding upgradation and modernization of madrasa education system but if these challenges are overcome with practical solution like more budget allocation for education, educating the parents and changing children psychology, promoting teacher training programs and ^{initiating} accountability and transparency for owners can lead towards following promising opportunities for prosperous.

Pakistan.

Firstly, the mainstreaming of madrasa education in Pakistan could serve as a very close step towards single national curriculum. There are different education systems in Pakistan like Cambridge, public school education system and madrasa education system^{etc}. Madrasa education system is more isolated as it has different curriculum as compared to other education systems because of lack of scientific or modern education. They lack skill-based learning as well. On the other hand, in school system; scientific and advanced education system is compulsory along with some school providing opportunities for career counselling as well. At this stage, madrasa education system feel isolated and out of the race. By introducing modern and scientific education in madrasa system can bring the gap of educational systems and their outcomes close to each other and it can

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create equality and it could also serve as one of the golden steps towards single national curriculum.

The second promising opportunity lies behind mainstreaming madrasa education system is religious tolerance. Religious intolerance including mob lynching, sectarianism and misuse of blasphemy laws have become the hot issues of Pakistan. It is one of the leading cause of bad image of Pakistan across the world. Either it is incident of Sri-Lankan manager's mob lynching in false accusation of blasphemy or murder of Mishal Khan in blasphemy allegations by his fellow or arabic word imprinted on dress of a woman in Ichra; mistakenly understood as ayat of Holy Quran; all are cases of extreme religious intolerance and violence. Moreover, ongoing sunni-shia conflict in Parachanna is a constant form of sectarianism. Mainstreaming the madrasa education in Pakistan and updating curriculum by adding

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and focusing on psychological advancements; bringing religious tolerance through faculties and training programs.

Third golden opportunity in mainstreaming the madrasa education of Pakistan is that it could be a measure towards terrorism financing and terrorism acts. Pakistan is facing biggest threat of terrorism. Pakistan has lost about 83 thousand lives from 2001 to 2022 and it has also lost 35 trillion rupees in war against terrorism. From the past, it is quite obvious that madrasas had been used for militant purposes. For example, in Lal Mosque operation; a massive amount of weapons and militants along with students who were under training were captured. The ~~the~~ imam of mosque Maulvi Abdul Aziz and his brother were backed by Al-Qaeda. Same goes for Mulla-Fazlullah alia Mullah-Radio's Swat operation. When there is a new surge of terrorism raised in Pakistan; by main

streaming madrasa education of Pakistan could bring transparency and accountability for owners. So, ultimately it could hamper the participation of madrasa end towards terrorism.

At fourth, mainstreaming the madrasa education system in Pakistan can leads towards political and economic stability. By limiting the political involvement of students and teachers; a step towards political stability can be obtained. Another benefit is economic prosperity. Students will be more inclined towards other golden opportunities along with carrying religious responsibilities. For example, imams and also some people only linked towards religion and their sole source of earning is very minimum salary so they have to live a hand to mouth life. By modern education they can have more advanced opportunities and moreover can not be used for the gains of single dominant sect. As one of prestigious scholar

of Islam. Dr. Syed Ahmad said: "Who created this Maulvi profession? There is no such profession in Islam; Every person should be able to lead prayer and every man should be able to offer funeral of his father." Thus mainstreaming the madrasa education system in Pakistan can lead towards political and economic glory.

At fifth, mainstreaming the madrasa education system in Pakistan can be a good step towards countering one of the major ~~causes~~ places of sexual and psychological abuse against children. According to Al-Jazeera: Islamabad-based NHR recorded 2,227 cases of child sexual abuse in the country between January and June ²⁰¹³. An average of 12 children per day - or one every two hours - were subjected to sexual abuse in Pakistan in 2013. This sexual abuse is leading cause of childhood trauma and violence in later periods.

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of life. very strict punishments in madrasas at very young age can be a key factor behind intolerance at very young age. By mainstreaming the madrasa education system, the ^{affectionate} policy of government which was already implemented in other schools of countries i.e. "Mat nahi pyar" can be introduced in madrasas as well. The culprits of child sexual abuse can be severely punished in this way. So, by mainstreaming madrasa education in Pakistan, social evils can be eradicated to some extent.

In conclusion, mainstreaming the madrasa education system in Pakistan can bless the country with golden opportunities in educational growth, social benefits, political and economic advancements. All these opportunities can be enjoyed by overcoming the conventional curriculum barriers, lack of funds issues and psychological barriers of madrasa owners and conventional mindset of parents and children.