

In the name of Reformation- Critical Review on the Education Reformation in Pakistan through Historical Lens

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ABSTRACT:

Through the historical lens, this paper critically evaluates the reformation phases crossed by Muslims in the sector of education. The paper also throws light on the role of super power (USA) in funding our current education system. The Muslim education system was highly dominated during Pre-Colonial era, but gradually, British and American tried to control our education system with hidden motives. It is the need of an hour to take certain efficient measures to curtail the Muslims' deprivations in the areas of education

HISTORICAL REVIEW

Education is considered as the most powerful tool in solving many global issues. Any country with strong foundation of education leads towards prosperity and development.

Islam has always directed Muslims to acquire both worldly knowledge through the experiences as well as spiritual knowledge, revealed in the form of Holy Quran. Islam considers both to be of vital importance and directs its followers, both men and women, to go and seek knowledge (Helen, 2002). In the early days of Islam, mosque became the central place for the access to education. Our beloved Prophet Mohammad (SAW) also used mosque to assemble people to listen to his revelations and their interpretation (Munir, 1987).

If we look into the history of Muslim Education during Pre- Colonial era, the Muslim philosophy was influenced by religion. The whole infrastructure of education was highly dominated and based on ethical and moral values of Islam. Madrasahs, makhtabs, mosques, private houses, all kinds of institutions existed in harmony. Spiritual as well as worldly education (in the form of vocational training) was provided to the Muslims. Skills were taught to the Muslims in order to meet the challenges and to earn livelihood.

The Muslim education at that time passed through different phases. During that period, the education system in North India consisted of three stages: At the first stage, a child's education began with the teaching of Holy Qur'an (Gilani, 1982) followed by learning of Persian (the official language of the country) Prose and Poetry. These included the works of major writers such as Sa'di, Hafiz, Salman Saaji, Anwari, and others (Gilani, 1982). The second stage was dedicated to an intensive study of the Arabic language as well as fiqh (Al-Nadvi & Moinuddin, 1985). In the third stage, also called fadhilat, advanced books of each science, particularly principles of jurisprudence were studied. Rational sciences and kalam (dialectics) were not paid much attention in the regular curriculum. Only a few basic texts of logic and kalam such as al-Qutbi and Sharh as-Sahaif were studied (Gilani, 1982). The seekers of knowledge travelled far and wide. The well-to-do people of each town take care of these seekers of knowledge and consider it a great honor to serve them.

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During the Colonial era, British tried to dominate Muslims. Although the Mughal emperors were keen patrons of education, and there was a considerable development in the area of education, however social injustice and discrimination in education existed during the Mughal Era. The society of the Mughal period was categorized into the rich, middle and poor class. The difference between the richest sections of society and the poorest prevailed. There was an intellectual Bankruptcy as the Mughals failed to produce any intellectual leader who could teach the country a new philosophy of life. Sarkar (1938, p.8) points out that "There was no good education and no practical training of the Mughal mobility. They were too much patted by eunuchs and maid servants and passed through a sheltered life from birth to manhood. Their domestic tutors were an unhappy class, powerless to do any good except by love of their pupils, brow-beaten by eunuchs, disobeyed by the lads themselves and forced to cultivate the arts of the courtier or to throw up their thankless office".

The Madrassah played an important role in imparting Islamic education, increasing literacy, and strengthening Islamic consciousness and most importantly providing training to the prospective candidates of civil service. However, the policies of British colonial rule made the most indelible marks on madrassah education. From the policies to the structure of education and the curriculum of madrassahs, the Muslim education system was highly disregarded by the British. The Madaris were reduced by British when the education system was in their hand but the revivalist movements such as Faraizi Movement, Islamic movement of Syed Ahmad Shaheed Bareilly etc. played a crucial role in knotting Muslims during the downfall of the Mughal and it was because of these movements that the Madaris system was kept alive.

The tri-parallel schooling system was introduced throughout the colony by the British to train the natives with western education. Since British wanted to establish civil and military system, they preferred to recruit natives for which, it was necessary for the British to train the natives with Western education. The injection of foreign and alien interference started dominating Muslims.

Macaulay (1835) in his Minute on Education said "We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern; a class of persons. Indian in blood and color, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect".

The colonists perfected the mechanism of dismantling the old educational systems and replacing them with systems that served the colonial administrative machines. The Muslims who lost the power struggle with the British for control of India, had a deep distrust of the foreigners (Ahmed, n.d.). The British considered Muslims education as less productive.

After reading the Macaulay (1835) speech to Parliament, the researcher realized that he did not consider Indians as high moral and value based community rather he considered them as demoralized community. He felt that it is due to the high domination of Arabic and Sanskrit that Indians failed to acquire respect and high status jobs. Since the Arabic and Sanskrit languages were the main domain of learning for the Muslims and that Hindi, and Arabic literature was highly dominated at that time, the British were in fear that it may suppress English, so they wanted Sanskrit and Arabic to be abolished. In

short, the British wanted to dominate Indo-Pak through English but blamed that our education system was poor, which, in my opinion was not completely justified.

During that time, the investment of the British in the field of education, social work, providing grants and aids had some concealed motives. They played tactic to abandon allocation of stipends to the students of Arabic and Sanskrit to hamper Muslims progress. The British were in favor of teaching foreign language (English) to the Indians, which was the language of the ruling class, to promote the future vision, i.e., keeping in view of the rising demand of English to connect greater powers to India to flourish trade, business, etc. The Indians felt that the British wanted to mould Indians to be their slaves and wanted to break the unity of Muslims by attacking their spiritual and social infrastructure. Macaulay wrote in 1836 that 'No Hindoo, who has received an English education, ever remains sincerely attached to his own religion. Some continue to profess it as a matter of policy; but many profess themselves pure Deists, and some embrace Christianity. It is my firm belief that, if our plans of education are followed up, there will not be a single idolater among the respectable classes in Bengal thirty years hence' (cited as in Clive, 1987: 411). Western science and English literature, as Viswanathan (1998) argues that the British wanted to disseminate and secure not only the hegemony and legitimacy colonial power, but also of its religion.

The Missionary activity was activated in India whose work had been intimately interconnected with the British Empire in India. They were hired to extend the scope of British practices among the natives. The missionary schools were founded to prepare workers, for which Mathematics and English were taught to them as a strategy to be submissive to the British. It was also seen as having a role to play in its own right (as secular education) in preparing the minds of India's elites for the ultimate reception of Christianity. Duff (1839) provides an enthusiastic and revealing description, in his mammoth *India and India Missions*. He was conducting a junior class in which he asked, 'What is rain?' A student replied that it came from the trunk of the elephant of God Indra. Pressed for his source, he replied that he learnt this from his guru, whose authority in turn was a *Shashtra*, a Hindu text. Instead of directly contradicting the student, Duff describes how he led his students through the everyday example of rice boiling in a pot, the rising of steam, condensation, the re-formation of water—at each point, explaining the process and gaining the assent of students for the explanation. Thus, it was a gradual but a strong motive of British to mold young minds.

INTEREST OF USA IN PAKISTAN

America is a super power country who wants her domination over the weak nations. Today, our education system of Pakistan is improving at a gradual pace but since US is not satisfied, keeping in view their interest in suppressing third world countries, she feels that our education system should be reformed. Pakistan's *Madrasa* system of Islamic education has come under intense scrutiny, Congress, the Bush Administration, and the 9/11 Commission each have identified this issue as relevant to U.S. interests in South Asia to reform *Madaris* education system in Pakistan. In the post-9/11 period, U.S., as a part of their foreign policy efforts, assisted Pakistan in the creation of a more stable, democratic, and prosperous country actively combating religious militancy. Education was one of the most important areas, where the commitment of US to support Pakistan was on long term basis. The Americans are in fear that after 9/11, *taliban* is training young minds to become anti-Americans, and that it can only be controlled, if the Americans invest in the process of education reformation in Pakistan (Kronstadt, 2004).

The Americans consider madrassah education as a platform for preparing the people of Pakistan against America.

One of the main goals of America is to bring madrassa curriculum into the mainstream of Pakistan's general education system through the inclusion of secular subjects and to register all the madrassa. The government is also trying to persuade the schools to teach science, mathematics, English and Urdu. This would provide students with the option, now usually lacking, of eventually enrolling in professional schools' (Wall Street Journal, 2002). The government has gone so far as to suggest that Madrassas would receive government aid only if they begin providing what could be termed a "modern education (Rubin, 2002). This view was highly refused by many of the religious scholars as they were against the aid, provided by the U.S for the reformation of education in Pakistan. According to the International Centre for Religion and Diplomacy, the US-based conflict-resolution charity, only 10% of madrassas complied with the government's voluntary registration programme launched in 2002.

The Daily Times (2009) reported that, in his address to the National Assembly, the Minister for Religious Affairs, Hamid Saeed Kazmi stated "The government registered 9,866 madrassas between 2005 and June 30, 2009, taking the total number of madrassas registered across the country to 15,843... there were 5,355 madrassas operating in Punjab, 2,852 in Sindh, 1,242 in the NWFP, 297 in Balochistan, and 120 madrassas in the federal capital" .

According to the document, the Secretary of State Powell identified the madrassas as offering programs that do nothing but prepare youngsters to be fundamentalists and to be terrorists. The same is the concern of Pakistani Government. Many analysts view that although not all madrassas are directly links with Terrorism (Bergen & Pandey, 2006), but approximately 10-15 percent are (Singer, 2001). At the same time, madrassas' role in shaping radical views among the masses, and specifically among their students is a serious concern for many analysts and policymakers (Asia Report, 2004).

According to Farooq (2010) although critics accused madrassahs' curriculum as stagnant and static, however, contemporary Pakistani madrassah curriculum is not the same as it was earlier. After the technological and institutional changes introduced by the colonial administration in the nineteenth century, the South Asian madrassahs are constantly adjusting, readjusting and reviewing the curriculum according to the need of the time. However, the officials in Pakistan have confirmed that Taliban leaders are buying and selling children for use as suicide bombers.

The training of Taliban is preparing children for suicide attacks with the message that, "only jihad can bring peace to the world" (BBC News), which can only be countered with a solid education system that can provide a foundation of core values. This news has alerted America to control our education system and to modify the curriculum in compliance with America

To combat terrorism and dominating our education system, one of the strategies used by the United States was the announcement of foreign aid to the students. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) reestablished a permanent presence in Pakistan in 2002 as part of the U.S. Government's commitment to help Pakistan in the fight on global terrorism. The program is focused on four areas: education, governance,

health and economic opportunity. USAID implements most of the U.S. government projects in primary and secondary education. According to the U.S. Embassy in Islamabad, USAID has provided more than \$250million since 2002 to reform and revitalize Pakistan’s educational system (USAID, 2008).

The USCIRF Annual Report (2010) noted that: “In mid-2005, the Pakistani central government renewed its effort to require all madrassas to register with the government and to expel all foreign students. By that year’s end, despite an outcry from some violent extremist groups, most of the religious schools had registered. However, the registration process reportedly has had little if any effect on the curricula, which in many of these schools remains intolerant and includes exhortations to violence. The government also still lacks controls on the madrassas’ sources of funding. It remains doubtful whether these efforts to curb extremism through reform of the country’s Islamic religious schools will be accompanied by other measures that would make them effective” (p.93).

But why are we getting the grants, funds and scholarships from the US? The researcher view that it is the need of time to avail such opportunities with optimistic approach, as our government failed to improve the infrastructure of education. The National Education Policy (1972, 1979, 1998-2010) promised to improve our education system but failed to achieve basic goals. The Constitution of Islamic Republic of Pakistan (1973) guaranteed the access of free and compulsory secondary education to all but the access to education for all is still a dream. The Constitution of Islamic Republic of Pakistan (1973) clearly lays down the provision in Article 37 (b) that: **“The state of Pakistan shall... remove illiteracy and provide free and compulsory secondary education within minimum possible period”**. Despite the constitutional guarantee of free and compulsory secondary education as stipulated in 1973 Constitution, Pakistan has been unable to achieve targets of universal primary enrollment objectives in over four decades, which may be one of the reasons that USA started taking interest in the field of education in order to gain control over our Education system.

According to the Economic Survey, Government of Pakistan (2010), the Net Enrolment Rate (Primary) was only 57%.

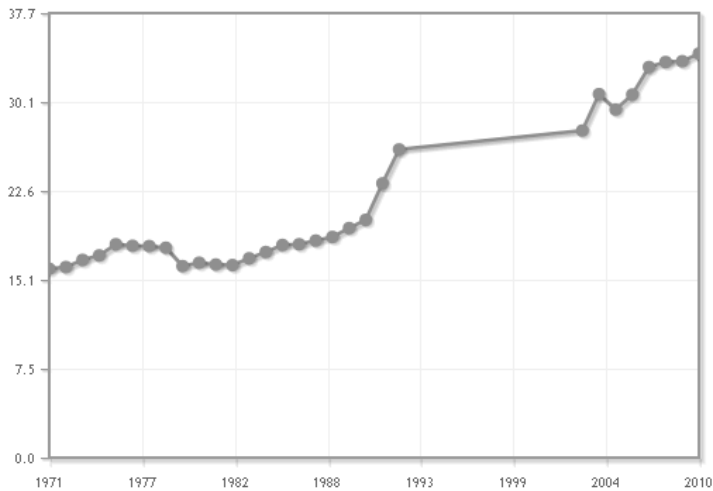
Figure 1
Net Enrolment Rate (Primary)

| Indicator/Area | Total | Rural Areas | Female |
|------------------------------|-------|-------------|--------|
| Literacy Rate (10+) | 57 % | 48 % | 45 % |
| Net Enrolment Rate (Primary) | 57 % | 53 % | 54 % |

Above statistics, released by the Govt. of Pakistan indicates that about 43% people in Pakistan are illiterate, and only 57% children of age 5-9 are enrolled in primary schools.

According to UNESCO (2010), the value for School enrollment, secondary (% gross) in Pakistan was 34.23. Still, our focus is not on practical implementation of education rather on the enrolment, which is one of the drawbacks of our education policies.

Figure 2
School Enrollment in Pakistan (1971-2010)



The report highlighted that the Education Sector Reform (2001) is providing universal education with increased completion rates which was based. According to (PILDAT, 2010), we can achieve 64% literacy (10+) by the end of 2015. The projected rate of literacy and net enrolment rate by 2015 is given below

Figure 3
Projected Rate of Literacy

| Indicators/Year | Rates as per PSLM Survey (Pakistan Economic Survey 2009-10) | | | Average Annual Growth Rate | Projected Rate by 2015 |
|---------------------------------|--|---------|---------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|
| | 2006-07 | 2007-08 | 2008-09 | | |
| Literacy Rate (10+) | 55 | 56 | 57 | 1.818% | 64 |
| Net Enrolment Rate (Primary) | 56 | 55 | 57 | 0.892 | 60.12 |

The above data reveals that Pakistan may need another 15 years to achieve 86% literacy rate and 38 years to achieve universal primary education (UPE).

USAID funded quality education in Pakistan with an emphasis on the Balochistan and Sindh province and also constructed schools particularly in the tribal areas of Pakistan. The education reformation was launched by government in 2001. The funds that were provided were designated for primary education, literacy programs, basic health, food aid, and support for democracy, governance, and elections, with almost all of the funds going through and disbursed by USAID (Ibrahim, 2009).

According to the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), between 2002 and 2007, the educational programs of the agency totaled more than \$255 million “to reform and revitalize all levels of Pakistan’s education system,” and currently these programs “benefit more than 600,000 children and 60,000 teachers.” The appropriation

for the education program in Pakistan until 2012 amounts to around \$90 million which is to be implemented by USAID's partner, the American Institutes of Research, spanning around 10,000 schools (<http://www.usaid.gov/pk/education/index.htm>).

Douglas M. Johnston, the organization's president, urges USAID and international donor support for madrassa reform saying: "To prevent Pakistan's slide toward a failed nuclear state, broad educational enhancement of the madrassas will be essential" (<http://www.cfr.org/pakistan/pakistans-education-system-links-extremism/p20364>).

Many of the religious scholars and madrassa leaders are not in favor of taking US grant as they consider it as a tactic to gain control over our country. Dr Sarfraz Naeemi¹ said, the U.S. is behind the move to suppress the growing Islamic influence which is resiliently rising after the U.S. aggression on Afghanistan and has now gained momentum after the recent war in Iraq. Maulana Abbas Naqvi² is in view not to accept any conditional aid that amounts to interference in our independence and sovereignty which is supreme for us.

In view of some analysts that the US and other donors may direct their resources at reform of Pakistan's public education sector, as it is the most effective and least controversial means of reversing the influence of Islamic extremists and their threat to Pakistan stability. I disagree with the views presented for the public education sector about preparing extremist; however, I agree that since the public education system looks after the education of the large proportion of the school-going-age population, education reform should take place. Most of the schools are poorly managed, impart education of poor quality, use poorly written textbooks and use curricula that are not relevant for the needs of the 21st century. Reforming the entire system, therefore, is of critical importance. The statistics give below shows the enrolment comparison of educational institutions.

Figure4
Education Comparison

| Institutions Type | | Enrolment by Stage* | | | | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------|---------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| | | 2006-07 | | | 2007-08 | | |
| | | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total |
| Pre- Primary | Public | 2,504,636 | 2,051,082 | 4,555,718 | 2,512,292 | 2,000,406 | 4,512,698 |
| | Other Public | 49,107 | 48,608 | 95,715 | 50,580 | 47,074 | 97,654 |
| | Private | 1,523,730 | 1,247,999 | 2,771,729 | 1,532,113 | 1,260,481 | 2,792,594 |
| | Total | 4,077,473 | 3,345,689 | 7,423,162 | 4,094,985 | 3,307,961 | 7,402,946 |
| Primary | Public | 6,689,572 | 5,037,961 | 11,727,533 | 6,744,320 | 5,136,353 | 11,880,673 |
| | Other Public | 138,116 | 132,652 | 270,768 | 139,498 | 135,307 | 274,805 |
| | Private | 2,797,795 | 2,245,841 | 5,043,636 | 2,808,988 | 2,263,808 | 5,072,796 |
| | Total | 9,625,483 | 7,416,454 | 17,041,937 | 9,692,806 | 7,535,468 | 17,228,274 |
| Middle | Public | 2,184,306 | 1,432,483 | 3,616,789 | 2,154,209 | 1,439,198 | 3,593,407 |
| | Other Public | 49,217 | 49,578 | 98,795 | 50,200 | 50,568 | 100,768 |
| | Private | 892,973 | 759,051 | 1,652,024 | 901,902 | 766,641 | 1,668,543 |
| | Total | 3,126,496 | 2,241,112 | 5,367,608 | 3,106,311 | 2,256,407 | 5,362,718 |
| High | Public | 970,638 | 602,318 | 1,572,956 | 1,025,221 | 643,399 | 1,668,620 |
| | Other Public | 26,718 | 26,379 | 53,097 | 27,520 | 27,169 | 54,689 |
| | Private | 368,465 | 320,668 | 689,133 | 375,835 | 327,111 | 702,946 |
| | Total | 1,365,821 | 949,365 | 2,315,216 | 1,428,576 | 997,679 | 2,426,255 |
| Higher Sec/ Inter Colleges | Public | 349,921 | 366,111 | 716,032 | 357,897 | 370,536 | 728,433 |
| | Other Public | 13,037 | 8,519 | 21,556 | 13,428 | 8,691 | 22,119 |
| | Private | 83,612 | 81,248 | 164,860 | 88,118 | 82,873 | 168,991 |
| | Total | 446,570 | 455,878 | 902,448 | 457,443 | 462,100 | 919,543 |

¹ Dr Sarfraz Naeemi is a Principal at Jamia Naeemia Lahore and Secretary General of Tanzimul Madaris Pakistan

² Maulana Abbas Naqvi is a Secretary-General at Wifaq-ul-Madaris-al-Shia

| | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Degree Colleges (XI-XIV) | Public | 112,830 | 189,123 | 301,963 | 113,959 | 191,014 | 304,973 |
| | Other Public | 12,591 | 3,066 | 15,657 | 12,716 | 3,097 | 15,813 |
| | Private | 11,308 | 19,896 | 31,204 | 11,422 | 20,095 | 31,517 |
| | Total | 136,729 | 212,085 | 348,814 | 138,097 | 214,206 | 352,303 |
| Non-Formal Basic Education | | 123,850 | 237,897 | 361,747 | 236,446 | 301,031 | 537,477 |
| Technical & Vocational Institutions | Public | 56,642 | 29,598 | 86,240 | 54,927 | 33,039 | 87,966 |
| | Other Public | 13,192 | 9,507 | 22,699 | 14,457 | 8,896 | 23,153 |
| | Private | 86,659 | 55,025 | 141,884 | 90,239 | 54,278 | 144,517 |
| | Total | 156,493 | 94,130 | 250,623 | 159,623 | 96,013 | 255,636 |
| Teachers Training Institutions | Public | 413,896 | 208,093 | 621,989 | 418,033 | 210,174 | 628,207 |
| | Other Public | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| | Private | 2,439 | 1,962 | 4,431 | 2,464 | 2,013 | 4,477 |
| | Total | 416,335 | 210,055 | 626,420 | 420,497 | 212,187 | 632,684 |
| Universities | Public | 285,949 | 232,626 | 518,575 | 325,777 | 311,260 | 637,037 |
| | Private | 64,241 | 23,069 | 87,310 | 73,190 | 30,865 | 104,055 |
| | Total | 350,190 | 255,695 | 605,885 | 398,967 | 342,125 | 741,092 |
| Deeni Madaris | Public | 27,968 | 12,096 | 39,794 | 25,049 | 15,143 | 40,192 |
| | Other Public | 2,766 | 2,392 | 5,158 | 3,247 | 1,983 | 5,210 |
| | Private | 959,278 | 583,845 | 1,543,123 | 971,343 | 587,211 | 1,558,554 |
| | Total | 989,742 | 598,333 | 1,588,075 | 999,639 | 604,317 | 1,603,956 |
| Total | Public | 13,719,938 | 10,399,388 | 24,119,326 | 13,968,130 | 10,651,553 | 24,619,683 |
| | Other Public | 304,744 | 278,701 | 583,445 | 311,646 | 282,565 | 594,211 |
| | Private | 6,790,500 | 5,338,664 | 12,129,164 | 6,853,614 | 5,395,376 | 12,248,990 |
| | Total | 20,815,182 | 16,016,753 | 36,831,535 | 21,133,390 | 16,329,494 | 37,462,884 |

(Source: <http://www.moe.gov.pk/Pakistan%20Education%20Statistics%2007-08.pdf>)

Many people who oppose foreign aid say that America should poke nose in their own matter and let the rest of the world take care of their own. Foreign aid should be accepted without conditions. It should be better distributed and not scrapped.

America was founded upon the idea that all men are created equal and that any people living under any oppressive government has the right to alter or abolish that government and form a new government. Such equality must be appreciated in Pakistan. We are by far the wealthiest nation in the world with ample resources. We need to recognize our own potential in order to become an egalitarian state.

CONCLUSION

All in all, once, the British wanted to dominate us through education and today, the U.S is dominating us through funding and reforming our education system, according to their strategic needs.

We must try to identify our own human resources and recognize the loopholes to bring changes in the infrastructure of education without accepting the dominance of any other nation in our education system.

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