

Peoples' Perception and the Role of Government towards Madrassha Education System after 9/11 in Pakistan:

By

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Abstract:

In Arabic literature the word madrassha means a place for the promotion of education. However, the contemporary world uses the term madrassha for a religious seminary. In Muslim world madrassha plays an important role in providing free education, food and lodging to poor students. In Muslim countries these madrasshas are custodians of Islamic core values. Madrasshas became a hot and imperative topic for world after 9/11 attacks on twin's towers of America that resulted in the death of 2700. Western media, policy makers and analysts blamed madrassha having links with militant organizations and deemed Madrassahs as nurseries for the production and growth of mujahdeen, who were the countering groups in war on terror post 9/11. Certain think tanks demanded reform in madrassha structure. The aim of present study was to know people perception about madrassha education and role of government regarding reform in madrassha education system. The locale of present study was Quetta city and 384 respondents were selected via Yamane formula for population calculation. Simple random sampling was used for collecting primary data in field. A close ended survey questionnaire and focus group discussion were used as tool for data collection. The collected data was statistically analyzed through cross tabulation and Chi-square test was applied to analyses the data. The present study reveals that madrasshas in Balochistan play vital role education in education in rural area than government school. The study further highlights that introduction of new subject like English, Science and computer in madrassha syllabus and adoption of modern educational techniques for teaching will bring madrasshas to mainstream education of country.

Keywords: Madrassha, Curriculum, mainstream education, Perception, violence, reform.

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Introduction:

Madrassha pluralmadrasshas, is an Arabic word, literally used for place of getting education in numerous field (Christopher, 2007). However, the contemporary world uses the word *madrassha* for those institutions which provide Islamic religious knowledge. In Islamic world *madrasshas* are flag bearers of Islamic religious knowledge and responsible for promoting and protecting Islamic ideology and religious core values in society. *Madrasshas* in Pakistan provide an alternative system of education in those areas where modern education system is not available. Furthermore, *madrasshas* in Pakistan also have been the centre of social welfare services, where poor students get free education, food and shelter (Butt, 2012).

Madrasshas have been part of Islamic education system in Muslim world for centuries. *Madrasshas* are considered most economical sources for education in Muslim world and more so in the subcontinent. In Muslim world *madrasshas* act as social welfare organizations where poor students get free education, food and shelter, In addition, *madrasshas* provide free societal services (Dogar, 2010).

The development process of curriculum of *madrassha* can be drew out for centuries. Initially, teachings of Holy Quran and Sunnah were the basic elements of curriculum of *madrassha*. These elements still have same position in curriculum. With passage of time new subjects were introduced in *madrassha* syllabus according to need of time. The standard syllabus for *madrassha* education system was introduced by Mullah Nizamuddin Sihlawi known as Dars e Nizami. Dars e Nizami (Shalby, 1954).

Madrassha became the center of attraction for the world after advent of 9/11 attacks on twins' towers of New York. Despite of the fact, that neither any one of attackers of 9/11 on the twin towers of New York belonged to Pakistan nor any student of Pakistani *madrassha*, but western media without any evident blame that *madrasshas* in Pakistan places, used for spreading terrorism. After the advent of 9/11, *madrasshas* were blamed that they are backward and attractive places for spreading terrorism and extremism. These traditional institutions of learning became famous for producing religious militancy and radicalism. The media and policy maker blamed *madrasshas* that they have linked with certain terrorists' organizations like *taliban*. The events of Lal Masjid and Army Public School (APS) attack also, added fuel to this issue.

A large number of studies were conducted by western and local academicians, journalists and government bodies to trace out link between

religious radicalism and *madrassha* education system in Pakistan. A huge number of books and articles were published by different western and local academia and print media. All of them reached to the conclusion that *madrasshas* in Pakistan are hot places for catering of religious militancy in mind of students. Law enforcement agencies, policy makers, western and local media, academicians, journalists and analysts demanded reforms in *madrassha* education in Pakistan.

The Government of Pakistan initiated all efforts to bring reform in *madrassha* education in Pakistan, but failed to bring a suitable reform policy for *madrassha* education system. Still a large number of *madrasshas* are neither registered with government of Pakistan nor regulate their operation under the supervision of government of Pakistan. The present study was conducted to find the perception of people about the *madrassahs* and communication gap between *madrassha* establishment and government, which did not let to bring a suitable reform in *madrassha* education system

Rational of the Study:

Madrassha is most economical source for education in Muslim world. The history of *madrassha* education system can be traced out for centuries. *Madrasshas* have been part of life in Muslim world for centuries. In Muslim world *madrasshas* perform social welfare services like free education, food and societal services. However, lack of modern subjects and modern techniques of teaching leg behind *madrassha* in global world. Due to lack of exposure to external world and social media, these students turn out with rigid mind-set. Furthermore, link of *madrasshas* with certain militant organization forced government to reform in *madrassha* education system.

A poor reform policy from government and resistance from *madrassha* organizers do not let effective reform in *madrassha*. The aim of current study is to find out the communication gap between government and *madrassha* administrators and suggest a reliable point for reform policy for short and long term reform

Research Objectives:

- To investigate out people perception about *madrassha* education system in Balochistan.
- To assess the role of government of Pakistan in mainstreaming the *madrassha* education system

Literature Review:

The 9/11 attacks on twin's towers of New York, opened a new door of debate for media analyst and bulk of literature was generated on countering terrorism and extremism in *madrassha* in Pakistan.

According to Fatima Sajjad, *madrasshas* in Pakistan are non-governmental organization (NGO) providing free education, lodging and food to poor students. This quality of free societal welfare services makes *madrasshas* unique in Pakistan (Sajjad, 2013). Waqas (2006) conducted study on *madrassha* reform in Pakistan. He explained that *madrasshas* in Pakistan are custodians of Islamic core values and ethos. The primary objective of *madrasshas* is to protect the Islamic religious integrity (Waqas, 2006). Sultan Ali in his book stated that *madrasshas* on Pak-Afghan border are proficient source of increasing literacy rate (Ali, 2012).

At the time of independence between Pakistan and India, a very few number of *madrasshas* were existed in Pakistan's territory. However, the number of *madrasshas* in Pakistan increased after Soviet Invasion into Afghanistan in 1979. Foreign aids from US-Saudi Arabia, neighbour countries and western countries made *madrassha* more powerful to use against Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. Therefore, increase in number of *madrassha* was perceived in Pakistan during 1980s (Rauf et al., 2015).

The existence of *madrassha* can be traced out for centuries in Muslim world. The current *madrasshas* in Pakistan and Afghanistan are associated with *taliban* and other militant organizations. *Madrasshas* on Pak-Afghan border are involved in spreading the extremism and supporting the militancy in Kashmir (Shabir et al., 2012).

The US secretary of state Donald Rumsfeld in an interview with Fox news in November 2003 said that; "In world still some small places are present, where radicalism and extremism are taught by clerics to young men and women. These clerics prepare young men and women for suicide attacks and target killing of innocent people.... In addition, he also suggested for to bring reforms in *madrassha* education system and encouraged to introduce modern subjects like science, math and English in *madrassha* syllabus".

The *jihadi* culture was introduced in Pakistan during the tenure of president Zia. The number of *madrasshas* was increased by three and half of its number in President Zia regime at the time of Afghan Soviet war. After getting victory in Afghanistan folds in numbers, these *madrasshas* turned down into militancy in Pakistan. It is undeniable truth that the students of *madrasshas* perceived Osama Bin Laden as their hero (Warren, 2009).

Shahid and Qasim (2017), concluded that ancient *madrasshas* were involved in producing intellectuals for serving the society. But, some of contemporary *madrasshas* forgot their due role and found in producing extremist and sectarian ideology in the mind of their students (Shahid et al., 2017).

The Crisis Group Report (CGR) declared America and Pakistan Inter service intelligence (ISI) being responsible for promoting not only Afghan *jiḥād* in Afghanistan, but also spreading sectarian violence in country. Moreover, special books for *jiḥād* were published in centre for Afghan studies in the University of Nebraska Omaha. The publication of these books was funded by USAID. Furthermore, these books were also translated into Pashtu and Dari language to promote *jiḥād* among Afghan young generation. About 13 million copies of this jihadist literature were distributed into Pakistani *madrasshas* and Afghan youth to promote *jihadist* culture. The basic math was taught to young youth of Afghan by counting the number of Kalashnikov rifles and dead Russians. For this project the University of Nebraska Omaha was funded by US\$ 51 million from 1984 to 1994 (ICG, 2002).

Suba Chandran describe, that militancy in *madrassha* thrived in Pakistani *madrasshas* after the end of Afghan war. The cause of flourishing of militancy in Pakistan was change of State stance on Kashmir issue (Chandran, 2003). Not all *madrassha s* in Pakistan and Afghanistan had links with militant organization, 10% to 15% of *madrassha s* had links with militant organizations (Singer, 2001).

Soon after the episode of 9/11, the Government of Pakistan announced a plan for reform *madrasshas* in Pakistan. For this purpose, the government of Pakistan decided to monitor *madrassahs* and renovation the administrative, financial and educational structures of *madrasshas* in Pakistan. In August 2001, the Government of Pakistan established *madrassha* Educational Board. The purpose for establishment of *madrassha* education board was to establish network of *madrassha* and to regulate these *madrasshas* under the supervision government of Pakistan (Shabir, et al., 2012).

Methodology:

Quantitative research approach was used in this research. District Quetta was selected as universe for this study. Quetta is the capital city of Balochistan and covered all ethnics group. So, the research selected Quetta as universe of current study. A sample of 384 male respondents from different segments of the society was selected by using Simple random sampling. A structured questionnaire that contained close ended questions was used as tool for collecting data. The collected primary data was statistically analyzed using cross tabulation and chi square statistical method was applied for analysis of collected data.

Results:**Cross tabulation and Chi Square Analysis:****Table No. 1****Level of satisfaction from *madrassha* education system**

Categories	Frequency	Percent	Chi Square Calculated Value	P value
Agree	316	82.3	5.764	0.014
Disagree	68	17.7		
Total	384	100.0		

Note: Denotes significance at 5% level of significance

Table No. 1 revealed that 316 (82.3%) of respondents were of the view that *madrassha* education system has great level satisfaction among people. However, only 46 (17.7%) of respondents were disagree with opinion. Therefore, it is said to be that people are satisfied with *madrassha* education system. The chi square results are significant and show significant difference as p-value is less than 5% level of significance.

Table No. 2**People perception about *madrassha* education system more appropriate than government school**

Categories	Frequency	Percent	Chi Square Calculated Value	P value
Agree	251	77.9	0.569	0.408
Disagree	133	22.1		
Total	384	100.0		

Note: Denotes significance at 5% level of significance

The table No. 2 showed the comparison between *madrassha* and government school. The 299 (77.9%) of respondent were of the viewed that method of education system in *madrassha* is more appropriate than government school. Whereas, only 85 (22.1%) of respondents were disagree. This showed that *madrassha* education system id better than education system provided in government school. The chi square results are significant and show significant differences at 5% level of significance (i.e., $p < 5$).

Table No. 3
***Madrassha* provide a sound good atmosphere of education to face global challenges and secure good career**

Categories	Frequency	Percent	Chi Square Calculated Value	P value
Agree	39	10.2	3.560	0.040
Disagree	345	89.8		
Total	384	100.0		

Note: Denotes significance at 5% level of significance

Table No. 3 explained the atmosphere provided by *madrassha* to their student for facing global challenges and securing good job opportunities. The number of respondents were 39 (10.2%) who agree that *madrasshas* provide good atmosphere of education to face global challenges and secure good jobs market. However, 339(89.8%) were disagree. The above statistical data showed that *madrassha* syllabus and atmosphere are unable to provide a good opportunity to face the challenges of global world. The chi square results are significant and show significant difference at 5% level of significance (i.e., $p < 5$).

Table No. 4
Registration and regulation under the supervision of government of Pakistan

Categories	Frequency	Percent	Chi Square Calculated Value	P value
Agree	360	93.8	25.608	0.000
Disagree	24	6.3		
Total	384	100.0		

Note: Denotes significance at 5% level of significance

Table No. explained registration and regulation of *madrassha* under the supervision of government of Pakistan. The above table revealed that 360 (93.8%) of respondents were in favour of *madrassha* registration and regulation under the supervision of government of Pakistan. However, only 39 (6.3%) of respondents were disagree with opinion. The above statistical table revealed that for sake of reform in *madrassha* education system it is necessary that *madrassha* operations should be regulate under the supervision of government. For this purpose, *madrasshas* should be registered with government. The chi square results are significant and show significant difference at 5% level of significance (i.e., $p < 5$).

Table No. 5

Induction of science subjects in madrasshas syllabus and modern atmosphere will bring madrasshas students to main streamline level of education of country

Categories	Frequency	Percent	Chi Square Calculated Value	P value
Agree	360	93.8	25.608	*0.000
Disagree	24	6.3		
Total	384	100.0		

Note: Denotes significance at 5% level of significance

The table No. 4 represents the summary about people perception about induction subjects like English, Science and Computer in *madrassha* syllabus and adaptation of modern technique of teaching in *madrassha*. According to the table No. 4 results 360 (93.8%) of the respondents were agree with introducing of English, Science and Computer in *madrassha* syllabus and adaptation of modern technique of teaching in *madrassha*. Conversely, 24 (6.3%) of respondents were disagree. The table concludes that induction of modern subjects and adoption of new techniques of teaching in *madrassha* education system will make *madrassha* students able to face the global challenges. The chi square results are significant and show significant difference at 5% level of significance (i.e., $p < 5$).

Table No. 6

Do you think that hate speeches against other religions or sects and any efforts to spread extremism must not be tolerated in madrasshas?

Categories	Frequency	Percent	Chi Square Calculated Value	P value
Agree	357	92.97	21.763	*0.000
Disagree	27	7.03		
Total	384	100.0		

Note: Denotes significance at 5% level of significance

Table No. 6 shows connection between hate speeches against other sects in *madrassha* and spread of extremism in *madrassha* students. 357 (92.97%) of respondents were agreed that hate speeches against other sects in *madrassha* cause of creating extremis and hate for other sect in mind of *madrassha* students. However, only 27 (7.03) respondents were disagree. The above table concluded that hate speeches in *madrasshas* cause of spreading extremism and hate in mind of *madrassha* students for other sects.

Table No. 7

**Foreign and local funding being offered for *madrassha* reformation
should be administered**

Categories	Frequency	Percent	Chi Square Calculated Value	P value
Agree	357	93	1.345	.282
Disagree	27	7		
Total	384	100.0		

Note: Denotes significance at 5% level of significance

Table No 7 shows respondent's perceptions about local and western funding for reformation of *madrassha* in Pakistan. The statistics 357 (93%) showed the response of respondents who were in view of that foreign and local funding to *madrassha* should be administered by government of Pakistan. On other hand, 27 (7%) of respondents were disagree. The above table concluded that funding in ship of aid to *madrassha* should be administered by government. The chi square results are significant and show significant difference at 5% level of significance (i.e., $p < 5$).

Table No. 8

***Madrassha* education system promote violence in society**

Categories	Frequency	Percent	Chi Square Calculated Value	P value
Agree	288	75.0	2.341	0.084
Disagree	96	25		
Total	384	100.0		

Note: Denotes significance at 5% level of significance

The table No. 8 describes peoples' perception about *madrassha* education as source of promoting of violence and extremism in society. 288 (75%) of respondents were of the perceived that *madrassha* education promote extremism in society. Whereas, 96 (25%) of respondents were disagree. The perception of peoples' in above table concluded that there is connection between *madrassha* education system and spread of violence in society.

Table No. 9

Do you think that government has good reform policy to merge *madrassha* education system in mainstream education of the country?

Categories	Frequency	Percent	Chi Square Calculated Value	P value
Agree	109	28.4	0.613	0.257
Disagree	275	71.6		
Total	384	100.0		

Note: Denotes significance at 5% level of significance

The table No. 9 showed statistics of government reform policy for merging of *madrassha* education system into mainstream education of country. Among 384 respondents only 109 (28.4%) of respondents were agree that government has good reform policy for *madrassha* to merge *madrassha* education system into mainstream education system of country. On other hand, 275 (71.6 %) were disagree. The table No. 9 showed that government reform policy for *madrassha* is very poor and unable to merge *madrassha* education system into main streamline education system of country. The chi square results are significant and show significant difference at 5% level of significance (i.e., $p < 5$).

Conclusion:

Madrasshas in Balochistan are common and economic source of education in those rural areas where school system is not functional. *Madrasshas* provide free educational and societal services to the society. People believed that *madrasshas* in Pakistan are effective source of education than government school in rural areas. In rural areas parent who are unable to afford the expenses of private schools send their children to *madrasshas*. *Madrasshas* follow traditional syllabus and teaching methods which are not sufficient to fulfil the demands of global world. To face global challenges and secure good job market in future, it is necessary to introduce modern subjects like English, science and computer in *madrassha* syllabus. Furthermore, induction of modern subjects like English, science and computer in *madrassha* syllabus and adoption of modern techniques for teaching will bring *madrassha* education system to mainstream educational of the country. Hate speeches delivered by *madrassha* administrators in *madrasshas* spread violence and hate for other sects in mind of *madrassha* students. People perceived that poor reform policy of government of Pakistan and resistance from *madrassha* organizers do not bring *madrassha* education system to main streamline.

Suggestions:

- A research study on relationship between *madrassha* and society will help to understand the nature of *madrassha* either a source of education or violence.
- It might be more preferable to conduct study on local interpretation of religious belief among *madrassha* scholars and students in Pakistan. This study will help out to understand the mind set of *madrassha* scholars and students and make reform policy for *madrassha* education system according to needs.
- A research plan on curriculum and teaching method in *madrassha* will play positive role to bring reforms in *madrassha* education system.
- Researcher paper on comparison of male and female *madrasshas* in Pakistan will be more helpful to understand the phenomena of *madrassha* and extremism and make suitable reform policy for both male and female *madrassha* education system in Pakistan according to their needs.

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