

MADRASA EDUCATION IN SOUTHERN KERALA: NOVEL STRATEGIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO MODERNIZE THE SYSTEM

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Abstract

Madrasas are functioning as the essential centre of Islamic civilization. These are educational, cultural, religious and community centers. As an educational centre, Madrasas have been playing key role in spreading of education. According to the Sachar committee Report (2006), “Madrasas (though not a substitute for regular schools) is obligatory for Muslim as, apart from providing basic education, they indulge as an important device of identity maintenance for the community”. The functioning of Madrasa has its own history of slow changes. A lot of steps have been taken to modernize the curriculum, structure, administration, planning and functioning of the Madrasas. The present study thinks about enriching the quality of education through enriching the various strategies of updating the knowledge level of teachers in the teaching-learning process by applying new strategies and techniques of teaching. The process of modernizing Madrasa is slow as the required changes are not taking place on time. Because of this, Madrasas couldn't raise their quality to meet the challenges of the community. There is a need for restructure the functioning of Madrasas to keep them gorgeous for the children. There is a need for more and more use of modern technologies in administration, curriculum, teaching-learning, methodology, financing of Madrasa etc.

Key words : Madrasa Education, Modernization, Strategies and Recommendations, teaching- learning methodology.

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Introduction

“Allah will raise up those of you have *eman* and those of you who have knowledge, in ranks and Allah is fully aware of whatever you do”. (Quran 58:11)

In the domain of Teaching and learning are an integral part human life and that started from the dawn of living beings on this sphere. As far as Islam is concerned, education has been given uppermost precedence. The notion of lifetime education was specified by the Prophet Muhammed long before the west appropriated this indication. A *hadith* (sayings of the Prophet) says, “Seek knowledge from cradle to grave”. Madrasas have been the chunk of the Islamic learning system since very early epochs and they were customarily the very part of mosques. These mosques became social pivotal points for budding communities; they doubled up as schools for learning the Quran, basic coaching in Muslim ritual practices, and language instruction in Arabic, with accommodations for education and social needs.

Othupalli and *Dars* are the two distinct styles of Madrasa Education. The primary one, *Othupalli*, is a sort of principal school for religious and Arabic education. It is meant for Muslim boys and girls. *Othupallis* are single teacher schools which established adjacent mosques. The Imam of the mosque also performs as the teacher of the *Othupalli* and bounces rudimentary Islamic education to the Children of that region. The later one, *Dars* system of Kerala's is inimitable. Its design is prodigy and it operates the possessions accessible in the community for the proliferation of acquaintance. The progressive religious classes which were accompanied esoteric the mosque were entitled as *Dars*. *Dars* structure manufactured many great scholars, theologians, religious leaders and reformers. It lend a hand in the dissemination of Islamic information in diverse parts of Kerala.

By the beginning of the 20th century the enlightened Muslims of the south who had realized the serious deterioration of the Muslims in the field of education started taking steps for their uplift. Inspired by the proceedings of the conference, Muslim leaders of the south formed, ‘The South Indian Mohammedan Association’ for the promotion of western education among the Muslims of the south. In 1911 the Malabar Muslim Educational Association was formed at Cochin and its branches were formed in the different parts of the Cochin. The general awakening that followed resulted in the forming of the organization like the Muslim Educational Society, Muslim educational Association, and more recently, the Muslim Service Society all of which have centers in different parts of Kerala.

The Samastha-Kerala- Jame-at-Ulama is the pioneer position in the Madrasa field of education. They have established several Madrasas throughout Kerala. The Ulemas understood the problems of traditional Madrasa education and formed the Samastha Kerala

Islam Matha Vidhyabhyasa Board which is trying to solve the prevailing glitches face by the Madrasa system in Kerala.

In 1968, Dhakshina Kerala Jame at Ulama procured the resourcefulness to consolidate an Educational Board in order to remedy the religious educational teething troubles of south Kerala. The constituents of the Dakshina Kerala Jame at Ulama evidently shapes the accomplishments and unprejudiced actions of the board.

The main tenets of the board were,

- a. To make up Muslim students under the teaching of Ahlu Sunnathu Wal Jama at.
- b. To coalesce the activities of Madrasa under one syllabus.
- c. To institute Madrasas wherever obligatory.
- d. To concoct syllabus and textbook for Madrasa education.
- e. To engross supervisors to crisscross the efficacy of Madrasa activities.
- f. To launch training centres for teachers.

It has introduced several policies for the educational progress of the Muslim community. The educational board has prepared a new syllabus incorporating the psycho-social aspects for the Madrasas and new academic calendar for the religious educational activities. They organize training classes also for the Madrasa teachers to improve their standard. These kinds of activities have brought new trends in the Islamic educational system.

Modern education was a taboo in almost all Muslims houses; women's education was considered something heretical. Superstition and un-Islamic practices ruled the scene. Instead following the direction of Quran and tradition of the prophet, Muslim found satisfaction in reciting Quran and without grasping the meaning of its contents. As a result, modern education spread among them is creating an atmosphere that is conducive to religious and social reform. In this reform movement, Travancore and Cochin led Malabar account of the spread of education in these areas earlier than in Malabar. Among the earlier educational, social and religious reformers were Sayyid Sanaullah Makthi Thangal, Shaykh Mohammed Hamadani Thangal, Vakkom Abdul Qadir Moulavi, Chalilakath Kunjahamed Haji and K.M. Moulavi.

Need and Significance of the study

In the present study, Madrasa Education in Southern Kerala: Novel Strategies and Recommendations to Modernize the System, there is a high need to find solutions to modernize the current system of education to get the system more meaningfully.

Objectives

1. To investigate novel inclinations and research in Madrasa Education.
2. To search out operative tactics for curriculum transaction.
3. To acknowledge the recent trends and integrate the present system with sufficient addition of new methodologies and strategies in his arena.

Methodology

The aim of the study was to analyze new trends and experiments critically which help to modernize Madrasa education. The following tools, methods and procedures were employed during the investigation.

1. Visited various Madrasas and had informal discussions with Imams.
2. Survey of related literature; reports of the evaluation of student performance done by Madrasas.
3. Used the questionnaire contained open ended questions for recording additional information.
4. Survey of related articles and literature in the current newspapers, journals and souvenirs to gather information regarding the new trends and experiments to empower madrasa education.

Sample

A sample of the study consists of 65 students and 15 Imams in different Madrasas in Kerala.

Tool

A general Data sheet was used to collect the personal background of the students and institution. A questionnaire was used to collect the responses. An interview schedule was prepared to interact with the officials.

Procedure for data collection

For collecting data the investigator visited various Madrasas in Thiruvananthapuram, Kollam Districts. The investigator visited each Madrasa and using a questionnaire interacted with the learners and teachers collected the entire data.

Analysis of Data

The data collected were analyzed to find out the current novel trends and experiments in the field of Madrasa education. Islamic education system in Kerala has undergone rapid

scientific changes for the last two-three decades, particularly due to the efforts of Islamic reformist movements, who were instrumental in transforming the Dars system into a modern Islamic education system covering various aspects of educational philosophy. They adopted educational psychology and incorporated different subjects more scientifically.

Table 1.1

Student's views towards the quality of Madrasa Education

Criteria	Not satisfactory	Average	Good	Very good	Total
Number of students	22	25	10	8	65
Percentage of students	33.84	38.46	15.38	12.30	100

Table 1.2

Teacher's views towards the quality of Madrasa Education

Criteria	Not satisfactory	Average	Good	Very good	Total
Number of teachers	3	5	5	2	15
Percentage of teachers	20	33.33	33.33	13.3	100

As per the criteria assigned for the study, the varied views(not satisfactory, average, good and very good) of students and teachers towards quality in Madrasa Education are shown in the tables 1.1 and 1.2 respectively.

Discussion of Results

As per the table 1.1 out of the 65 respondents 33.84% perceived quality of education as not satisfactory. About 38.46% found it as average while 15.38% responded as good and 12.30% as very good.

As per the table 1.2 out of the 15 respondents, 20% remarked as not satisfactory and 33.33% responded as average. About 33.33% opined as good and 13.3% as very good. It reveals the need of implementing novel strategies to enhance the quality of Madrasa Education.

Reformist movement understood the need to revise the curriculum and started the combination of Islamic modern education system. The core curriculum of Madrasas was at liberty from any irreconcilable difference. It was wide-ranging and collective in oddity. They amalgamated secular and religious acquaintance and generated a curriculum which availed for the prerequisites of Muslims. The present educational scenario and the modern system of education demands a timely change in the madrasa stream of education in relation with quality improvement.

Conclusion

This paper was an attempt from the part of the investigator to look at the efficacy of novel drifts, methodologies and ways and means to implement modernization in Madrasa education system. This dome of education is in very need of great devotion and teaching skills and study skills should be advanced as far as the Muslim education system is concerned.

So a fresh educational environment may be provided to develop the potentialities of the Madrasa students particularly in the field of art and culture. It is also desirable for the centres of Islamic learning to provide opportunity for non-Muslim pupils who are interested to learn more about Islamic education. Timely updating of the curriculum of Madrasas should be reorganized and renovated. Novel methodologies should be espoused in teaching learning process and ICT should be executed in Madrasa education. It is high time to deliver adequate training for teachers of Madrasas to win potential outcome and rich teaching-learning experiences to the learners.

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