

Curriculum Reform and Religious Education: A Study of Jamia Khair ul Madaris, Multan

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ABSTRACT

Islamic education is usually based on traditional educational system. The significance of this Islamic knowledge is judged and measured by the knowledge which is transmitted to the students in religious seminaries and colleges called madaris. The core focus of this Islamic education is to train the students in practical religion which they can later on practice in their lives and transfer that learning of madrasa life to further generations of students.

The paper highlights the development of Khair ul Madaris focusing on curriculum and education while explaining how its' students equip themselves with transferable skills and how the people who visited this madrasa have perceived it over the past few decades. This study also discusses the state of Pakistan's relationship with the religious education, ulama and madaris in particular and how the government has tried to revamp and remodel the madrasa curricula. One limitation of this study is using primary sources which were available only in madrasa archive and some of the government reports and statistics to bring uniqueness in this research.

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Introduction

Acquiring knowledge in a madrasa is like having a contract with knowledge itself or with the sources of knowledge.¹ Jamia Khair ul Madaris has been imparting religious education and preparing students for serving Islam and Islamic education since its establishment in 1931. The madrasa taught *Dars-i-Nizami* when it was in Jalandhar till 1947 and Maulana Khair Muhammad continued to teach in it after its relocation in Multan after the partition. The emphasis of Deobandi tradition in *Dars-i-Nizami* was on *manqulat* “transmitted” knowledge and in favour of *Hadith* to be the popular teaching² which Maulana Khair Muhammad also adopted in Jamia Khair ul Madaris. How the successive regimes in Pakistan posed threats to the existence of madrasa and Islamic education system while attempting to reform madrasa curriculum will be discussed in this paper. Besides, the madrasa curricula and its strategy and logic for imparting knowledge in restricted settlement inside four walls of madaris will also be explained.

Relevant literature for this research has been divided into two broad categories covering colonial period to the present. This includes thematic literature on history of madrasa establishment and education produced by Barbara Daly Metcalf, Francis Robinson and Muhammad Qasim Zaman which talks about the colonial epoch; the other set of literature is based on *ulama* and religious education in addition to few works on madrasa reforms and institutions dealing with Pakistan and present time which includes Sana Haroon, Ali Riaz and Saleem H. Ali.

Curriculum Reform Attempts by the Successive Governments

Learning in the madrasa became a tradition of leading *ulama* and religious scholars. All madaris are bound to follow the

1 Ebrahim Moosa, *What is a Madrasa?* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015), 60.

2 Arshad Alam, *Inside a Madrasa: Knowledge, Power and Islamic Identity in India* (London, New York: Routledge, Taylor and Francis, 2011), 16.

curriculum devised and prepared by their respective Boards. Before the establishment of individual Boards of each sect, each and every madrasa was following its own syllabus.

Reform Attempt under Ayub Khan

The first attempt to revise and reform the madrasa curriculum was made in 1961, and for it a committee was formed. The committee highlighted the importance and significance of Islamic education immediately after the foreword of the report. The foreword states that approximately there are 700 madaris.³ The committee further elaborated that various madaris have variations in following the *Dars-i-Nizami*.⁴ It projected its sole purpose of reforming the madrasa curriculum which was not done by *ulama* and educationists. The committee held 27 meetings at Karachi and Lahore.⁵ It established sub-committees to work in different directions and angles and these sub-committees held total 50 meetings.⁶ The representation of madrasa leadership was restricted to only three members out of total 11. This shows interest of the government in reforming the curriculum that the concerned madrasa representation was only of three individuals sitting in the committee.

This committee consisted of total 11 members, of whom three were madrasa leaders, six were from different universities having academic background and two were from the government side. The names of members are following:

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- 3 Government of Pakistan, *Report of the Committee set up by the Governor of West Pakistan for Recommending Improved Syllabus for the various Darul Uloom and Arabic Madrasas in West Pakistan* (Lahore: Superintendent, Government Printing West Pakistan, 1962), 1.
 - 4 Government of Pakistan, *Report of the Committee set up by the Governor of West Pakistan*.
 - 5 Government of Pakistan, *Report of the Committee set up by the Governor of West Pakistan*.
 - 6 Government of Pakistan, *Report of the Committee set up by the Governor of West Pakistan*.

Table 1: MEMBERS OF MADRASA REFORM COMMITTEE

Sr. No.	Name of the Member	Affiliation	Status in Committee
1.	Dr. Mahmud Hussain	Vice Chancellor, Dacca University	Chairman
2.	Mufti Muhammad Shafi	President, Darul Uloom, Karachi	Member
3.	Maulana Muhammad Daud Ghaznavi	Nazim-i-Ala, Darul Uloom Taqviyyat ul Islam, Lahore	Member
4.	Allama Ala ud Din Siddiqui	Head of the Department of Islamiyyat, Punjab University, Lahore	Member
5.	Maulana Syed Ahmad Saeed Shah Sahib Kazmi	Madrassa Anwar ul Uloom, Multan	Member
6.	Maulana Muhammad Sadiq	Ex-Nazim Umoor I Mazhabiyya, Bahawalpur	Member
7.	Maulana Nurul Haq Nadvi	Ex- Dean of Theology, Peshawar University, Peshawar	Member
8.	Dr. A. J. Halepota	Head of the Department of Religion, Sind University, Hyderabad	Member
9.	Dr. Ghulam Jilani Burque	Campbellpur City, Campbellpur	Member
10.	Dr. Saleem Farani	Professor, Central Training College, Lahore	Co-opted Member
11.	Aziz ul Haq Masud, P.C.S.	Deputy Secretary Education, Government of West Pakistan, Lahore	Secretary

This committee traced the historical changes and tracks of madrasa curriculum while mentioning books and titles. It expressed its concern that as time has changed and the regimes have also changed over centuries, therefore, there is also a need for changing existing madrasa curricula.⁷ All madaris should focus not only on religious subjects and education but other worldly subjects should get attention equally to widen the outlook of madrasa students and to increase their mental horizon and all this is only possible with

⁷ Government of Pakistan, *Report of the Committee set up by the Governor of West Pakistan*, 6.

the introduction of new disciplines.⁸ The committee stressed upon the need of preparing individuals who can fit in all walks of life and therefore the need of the hour was not only to revise the course and curriculum but also training of *ulama* was required. It proposed that enlightened *ulama* should have command and knowledge of religious and worldly subjects.⁹ It further added that the revision in syllabus was required to equip individuals, who possess knowledge of other branches while being fully conversant of religious aspects, for the solution of problems of life.¹⁰ The committee emphasized that the old syllabus had to be revised with a view to eliminate some of the out of date and unnecessary teaching material.¹¹

The committee also showed its concern over the lengthy and voluminous syllabus followed and taught by the madaris. The committee, at the outset, explained its approach and said, "Religion has been the most vital civilizing force in the history of mankind; it broadens sympathies, inculcates a spirit of tolerance, self-sacrifice and social service and removes artificial distinctions between man and man. Religious education should, therefore, be an integral part of the educational system."¹² In 1959, already it was suggested that formal educational system should be enriched with Islamic rites and verses from the Quran, and as a subject, religion was to be made compulsory up to the eighth grade and optional in secondary education.¹³ The committee proposed changes to fill the gap between two educational systems like religious and contemporary world by recommending syllabus

8 Government of Pakistan, *Report of the Committee set up by the Governor of West Pakistan*, 7.

9 Government of Pakistan, *Report of the Committee set up by the Governor of West Pakistan*.

10 Government of Pakistan, *Report of the Committee set up by the Governor of West Pakistan*, 8.

11 Government of Pakistan, *Report of the Committee set up by the Governor of West Pakistan*.

12 Government of Pakistan, *Report of the Committee set up by the Governor of West Pakistan*, 11.

13 Government of Pakistan, *Report of the Committee set up by the Governor of West Pakistan*, 21.

including *Dars-i-Nizami*, religious books and few contemporary disciplines of general education as well.¹⁴

The committee proposed changes to the time duration of degree programs at madrasa to regulate them equal to the public-school education. It suggested *ibteddiyah* to be completed in five years and it will be equal to primary level school education, *thanawi tahtani* for three years and equal to lower secondary schools, *thanawi wustani* for two years and it is equal to middle secondary school, *thanawi fawqani* for two years and equal to upper secondary school level and *alaa* was for three years and equal to highest level of public education like Master of Arts.¹⁵

The committee presented primary education syllabus as model for acceptance to the government schools and madaris.¹⁶ It proposed that the reading of the Quran should be completed in five years and for this purpose an extra period should be added to the school timetable. It further suggested that Fridays should be full holiday and Thursdays as half holidays and no teaching on Thursdays after recess. This primary syllabus for Dar ul Uloom which was made compatible to that of general school syllabus was divided as following:¹⁷

Class I

In the first year there should be six periods instead of five which was the existing practice. A week for the religious education, one for *Talim-ul-Quran*, and five for *Aqaid*, *Ibadat* and *Akhlaq*.

14 Government of Pakistan, *Report of the Committee set up by the Governor of West Pakistan*, 8.

15 Government of Pakistan, *Report of the Committee set up by the Governor of West Pakistan*, 14.

16 Government of Pakistan, *Report of the Committee set up by the Governor of West Pakistan*, 12.

17 Government of Pakistan, *Report of the Committee set up by the Governor of West Pakistan*.

Class II

In this class, there should be two periods daily, each of half an hour duration. One for *Talim-ul-Quran* and the other for instructions in *Aqaid, Ibadat* and *Akhlaq*. In *Talim-ul-Quran* class *Qurani Qaida* or *Noorani Qaida* should be taught for learning Arabic. It was also proposed that instead of five periods a week to religious instruction as practiced in general schools, there should be seven periods a week.

Class III

In general schools, there are only four periods a week for religious study. For Dar ul Uloom schools, it was proposed that for *Talim-ul-Quran* and *Aqaid, Ibadat* and *Akhlaq* there should be two periods daily of 40 minutes each duration. In *Talim-ul-Quran* class, *Yas'er Al Quran* should be taught.

Class IV

In this class, there should be two periods daily for religious education. One for *Talim-ul-Quran* and the other for instructions in *Aqaid, Ibadat* and *Akhlaq*. The reading of 10 parts (*paras*) of Quran should be completed in this year. The teaching hours should be the same for class III and class IV.

Class V

In this class also two periods will be reserved and dedicated for religious instruction. One period for the reading (*nazra*) of remaining 20 parts (*paras*) of Quran. The teaching hours should be the same for class III, class IV and class V.

The committee proposed changes to all levels of degree programs for all the Boards throughout Pakistan. It suggested following changes at different levels: *ibteddiyah* should follow the direction of the Ministry of Education for making it compatible to that of primary level of education, for *thanawi tahtani*, it was suggested to focus more on the Quran and Hadith, Prophet's (PBUH) tradition and Islamic Law, Modern Arabic Literature, English, Mathematics, Social Sciences, Urdu and Sports but only English and Arabic were added and

preferred.¹⁸ The study duration for this level would be six hours daily and nine periods of 40 minutes each and time for prayer, rest and physical education will be not counted towards six hours of education.¹⁹

For *thanawi wustani*, there will be six papers of each 100 marks. There will be nine periods of 40 minutes each and six hours workload each day in addition to this time for prayer, rest and physical education will be not counted towards six hours of education. It was suggested to incorporate Islamic History, English, sports, elective subjects etc. The Committee proposed a long list of elective subjects which students can opt for. The elective subjects included Applied Electricity, Arithmetic, Animal Husbandry, Bengali, Business Methods and Correspondence, Building Construction, Bamboo and Cane work, Chinese, Civics, Chemistry, Clothing and Textiles, Confectionary and Bakery, Elementary Economics, Food and Nutrition, French, Fisheries, Geography, German, Hindi, Horticulture and Gardening, History, Health and Physical Education, Metal Work, Mathematics, Military Science, Persian, Physics, Pottery and Ceramics, Pashto, Punjabi, Physiology and Hygiene, Russian, Spanish, Sindhi, Soil Sciences and General Agriculture, Social Studies, Turkish, Tailoring, Urdu, Woodwork and Weaving.²⁰

The last but not the least stage would be of *Aa'la*. This stage will be of three years. There will be five papers of religious disciplines every year. Besides this, there will be one paper on English and one in a minor subject to be selected out of the list. In the final year instead of English, a paper on General Science will be there in addition to five papers on religious disciplines. The list of minor subjects included papers of 200 marks each on Economics, General History, Islamic History, Geography, Philosophy, Psychology, Political Science,

18 Government of Pakistan, *Report of the Committee set up by the Governor of West Pakistan*.

19 Government of Pakistan, *Report of the Committee set up by the Governor of West Pakistan*.

20 Government of Pakistan, *Report of the Committee set up by the Governor of West Pakistan*.

Islamic Civilization and Culture, Arabic, Persian, Hebrew, German, French, Russian, Sanskrit, Pali, Urdu, Sindhi, Pashto, Punjabi, Bengali, Mathematics and any two papers of 100 marks each from subjects like (a) Psychology of Religion and Spiritual Experience, (b) Ethics of Religion, (c) Sociology of Religion, (d) Philosophy of Religion, (e) History of Religion, (f) Comparative Study of Religions, (g) History of Scholasticism, (h) History of Theosophy with focus on Islam, Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism and Hinduism.²¹

The committee also proposed a Directorate of Religious Education to be established within the Auqaf Department to supervise madaris and to monitor and evaluate standards of work of students and teachers.²² The committee also recommended a board of education for madaris working under Department of Auqaf and Ministry of Education. All these proposals and suggestions were only short-lived. This was the same time when the government was bringing changes and reform plan to madaris and religious leadership of all the sectarian orientations were setting up their respective Boards serving as education boards between 1955 and 1960. This was the period of Green Revolution in which huge public subscription and wealth reached to all corners of the country and growth of madrasa happened.

Reform Attempt under Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto

The next attempt to reform and bring changes in the madrasa education and curriculum was made by the Bhutto regime. Bhutto tried to bring Islamic principles into reality and never bothered religious elites or leaders and all this was done by him in his last year in office. His idea was to modernize the country, and, in this regard, he went for centralization of everything by offering nationalization of politics, economy, administration and educational system. This also led to a

21 Government of Pakistan, *Report of the Committee set up by the Governor of West Pakistan*.

22 Government of Pakistan, *Report of the Committee set up by the Governor of West Pakistan*, 34.

reorganization of the *Tanzim al-Madaris Al Arabiah* in 1974.²³ Bhutto regime also gave official recognition to madrasa degree programs with justification of providing them more socio-economic mobility.²⁴

Bhutto's government was aiming at the Islamization of Pakistan's society and changing dynamics of governing the masses. It strengthened the Council of Islamic Ideology (CII) and its members' strength was raised from a minimum eight to a maximum of 15 to ensure efficient performance.²⁵ Bhutto regime was successful in bringing about 31 proposals for integrating modern sector to that of Islamic traditions and some of the examples are introduction of the national dress, rules of prayers for the civil servants, annual secret reports on the Islamic conduct of civil servants, examinations in Islamic subjects for the public service, penalty in case of adultery (*zina*), prohibition, Friday to be holiday, Zakat and Usher, interest free banking as well as the elimination of prostitution etc.²⁶ For all these changes, proposal and amendments, Bhutto authorized and used the platform of the Council of Islamic Ideology (CII) to which no one can object because all different schools of thought (*makatib-i-fikr*) have representation in the CII.

Reform Attempt under Zia ul Haq

Zia ul Haq regime also used religion, religious education and madaris for his political motives. He ordered Ministry of Religious Affairs to prepare a survey of madaris which resulted in 1979 report of madrasa. This report was compiled by different sub-committees entrusted with different duties like one committee for doing a national survey of madaris, one was tasked with collecting the curriculum, one with financial

23 Jamal Malik, *Colonialization of Islam; Dissolution of Traditional Institution in Pakistan* (Lahore: Vanguard Books, 1996), 129.

24 Malik, *Colonialization of Islam*,

25 Malik, *Colonialization of Islam*, 37.

26 Malik, *Colonialization of Islam*, 50.

aspect and statistics, and one suggestion committee etc.²⁷ All the attempts of the government were helping the successive regimes to restore themselves and having more base in the public while using religion as tactics.

The committee was established in Islamabad on January 17, 1979 for looking into the prospects and future reform to bring into madaris and their curriculum.²⁸ This 1979 report was named after the chairman Dr. A. W. J. Halepota, the then Director of the Islamic Research Institute and a former member of the Council of Islamic Ideology (CII).²⁹ The National Committee comprised 27 members. This main committee created five subcommittees to assist them in their task. The *Kawaif Madaris Committee* consisted of four members. The *Nisab Committee* was having 14 members. The *Tahaweez Committee* had eight members. The *Jaiza Madaris Committee* was consisted of two members and the *Tadween Kawaif wa Shumariat Committee* was having five members. Total 60 members worked for compiling the 1979 report.

This report consisted of eight chapters. The first chapter explained aims and objectives of this report and details of the members. Chapter two gave details of the sub-committees. The third chapter gave insight into a short historical overview of the genesis of madaris and religious education system during the colonial rule. Fourth chapter of the report talked about post-partition madrasa establishments. The current situation of madrasa had been focused as the theme of chapter five. Chapter six dealt with suggestions and recommendations of the committee about madrasa curriculum. Suggestions and recommendations about madrasa system were given in chapter seven. Chapter eight

27 Malik, *Colonialization of Islam*, 132-133. See also, Government of Pakistan, *Qaumi Committee Brae Deeni Madaris* [Urdu: National Committee of Religious Schools] (Islamabad: Ministry of Religious Affairs, 1979), 13.

28 Government of Pakistan, *Qaumi Committee Brae Deeni Madaris*, 113.

29 Malik, *Colonialization of Islam*, 132.

explained about suggestions and recommendations regarding betterment and welfare of madaris and students.

The committee proposed, for the integration of two systems of education, to insert modern subjects into the *Dars-i-Nizami*. It referred to the curriculum of Ministry of Education which included:

- a. All *ibtedai* up to grade five levels of all Boards will be of five years.
- b. The *nisab* of five years will consist of *Nazra Quran, Namaz wa Deeniyat, Ibt dai Farsi*, Urdu, Mathematics, Social Studies and General Science.
- c. A child must be of five years at the time of admission into *ibtedai* level.³⁰

At the secondary level up to grade ten, subjects which were proposed included Urdu, Mathematics, Social Studies, General Science and English. At the graduation stage, leading up to B.A and M.A., two out of four optional subjects: Economics, Political Science, Sociology and English were to be taken.³¹ According to the report, at M.A. level Comparative Religions, Islamic History, Islam and Economy and Islam and Politics were to be offered as subjects.³²

The committee further proposed the establishment of an autonomous National Institute for *Dini Madaris*. The objective of the institute was to conduct examinations of all Boards up to M.A. level, to declare results, to award the certificates and to compile and revise curriculum.³³ The institute would have a permanent secretariat and the renewal of the term of members of the institute would be after each three years.³⁴

30 Government of Pakistan, *Qaumi Committee Brae Deeni Madaris*, 147.

31 Malik. *Colonialization of Islam*, 132; and Government of Pakistan, *Qaumi Committee Brae Deeni Madaris*, 153.

32 Government of Pakistan, *Qaumi Committee Brae Deeni Madaris*, 77.

33 Government of Pakistan, *Qaumi Committee Brae Deeni Madaris*, 90.

34 Government of Pakistan, *Qaumi Committee Brae Deeni Madaris*.

Table 2: NAMES FOR THE INITIAL COMPOSITION OF THE INSTITUTE TO THE GOVERNMENT AS PER THE FORMULA

Sr. No.	Name of the Member and Affiliation	Designation
1.	Dr. Abdul Wahid Halepota Director, Islamic research Institute, Islamabad.	Chairman
2.	Maulana Muhammad Ubaid Ullah <i>Muhtamim</i> , Jamia Ashrafia, Ferozepur Road, Lahore.	Member
3.	Maulana Muhammad Idress Meeruthi <i>Shaikh ul Hadith</i> , Jamia Arabia Islamia, Binori Town, Karachi.	Member
4.	Maulana Sami ul Haq <i>Muhtamim</i> , Dar ul Uloom Haqania, Akora Khattak, Peshawar.	Member
5.	Maulana Allama Syed Mahmood Ahmad Rizvi <i>Muhtamim</i> , Dar ul Uloom Hizb ul Ahnaf, Ganj Bakhsh Road, Lahore.	Member
6.	Maulana Ghulam Rasul Rizvi <i>Muhtamim</i> , Jamia Rizvia, Jhang Bazar, Faisalabad.	Member
7.	Maulana Syed Ahmad Saeed Kazmi <i>Muhtamim</i> , Anwar ul Uloom, Katchery Road, Multan.	Member
8.	Maulana Moin Uddin Lakhvi <i>Muhtamim</i> , Jamia Muhammadiyah Ahl-i-Hadith, Okara, Sahiwal.	Member
9.	Maulana Muhammad Siddiq <i>Rais</i> , Al Jamia Al Ilmia, 558- D Block, Satellite Town, Sargodha.	Member
10.	Mian Fazal Haq <i>Rais</i> , Jamia Al Salafia, <i>Nazim</i> , Jammiat Ahl-i-Hadith, 111 Multan Road, Faisalabad.	Member
11.	Maulana Shabih ul Hussain <i>Muhtamim</i> , Muzaffar ul Madaris, Empress Road, Lahore.	Member
12.	Maulana Syed Safdar Hussain Najafi <i>Muhtamim</i> , Jamia Al Muntazir, H block, Model Town, Lahore.	Member
13.	Maulana Mohsin Ali Jamia Ahl-i-Bait, Sector F-7, Islamabad.	Member
14.	Secretary, Ministry of Education, Government of Pakistan.	Member
15.	Secretary, Ministry of Religious Affairs, Government of Pakistan.	Member
16.	Prof. Ismail Bhatti, Vice Chancellor, Peshawar University, Peshawar.	Member
17.	Chairman, Inter Board Committee, Islamabad.	Member
18.	Muhammad Yousuf Goraya Director, Ulama Academy, Auqaf Department, Government of Punjab, Badshahi Mosque, Lahore.	Secretary

It was to consist of 18 members, i.e., three representatives of each of the four schools of thought, one representative each from the Ministry of Education, Religious Affairs and University Grants Commission (UGC) and the Inter Board Commission, the chairman and secretary.³⁵ The committee proposed the following names, see Table 2 above:³⁶

The committee further proposed improved economic conditions of teachers and students to enhance their financial resources and suggested that the government would provide lands or properties to madrasa through Auqaf and would make sure supplies of water, gas and electricity to madaris.³⁷ The committee also proposed that the financial assistance would come from *Zakat* fund of the government and *zakat* fund would finance if there would be some other projects of madaris like procurement of furniture, books, expansion of libraries.³⁸ The madaris under the umbrella of this proposed national institute would be exempted from income tax.³⁹ The committee's performance was slow and its report was submitted with delay of six months on December 17, 1979.

All these reform attempts received positive response from madaris and their leadership but successive governments in all these three epochs failed to bring uniformity among different schools of thoughts. These reforms were aiming at unification of all schools of thoughts, reformed and modernized curriculum, and integration of modern subjects into the traditional syllabus of madrasa which totally failed. These attempts were also planning to provide opportunities to madrasa students and teachers to be part of formal educational system and vice versa which never happened till today. These reforms were labelled as coercive state power to control religious institutions and education set up.⁴⁰ The

35 Government of Pakistan, *Qaumi Committee Brae Deeni Madaris*, 89.

36 Government of Pakistan, *Qaumi Committee Brae Deeni Madaris*, 91-93.

37 Malik, *Colonialization of Islam*, 135.

38 Malik, *Colonialization of Islam*.

39 Malik, *Colonialization of Islam*.

40 Malik, *Colonialization of Islam*, 136.

Deobandi leadership had serious concerns and reservations over these reform attempts because they would see their predominance in the traditional religious education sector affected.

Maulana Muhammad Yusuf Ludhianvi criticized Zia's reform agenda and said the government was trying to control religious institutions and would make them toys of state power.⁴¹ He pointed out that there would be countrywide resistance against any such action and plan of the government against madaris. In addition to this, government would have to pay considerable amount for the implementation of this reform project and there would be strikes and demonstrations to stop the government.⁴²

Curriculum and Examination in Jamia Khair ul Madaris

Here, I have recollected few personal opinions and narratives from *Kitab ul A'ara* of Jamia Khair ul Madaris which help us in understanding how the curriculum and education and examination process distinguished Jamia in the eyes of leading figures before and after 1957. Following is a glimpse of what was taught there and how the visitors and examiners have overall perceived the madrasa education.

Jamia Khair ul Madaris established a good reputation within no time after it settled in Multan in 1947. Maulana Shabbir Ahmad Usmani wrote about the educational contribution of Jamia Khair ul Madaris in these words:

Jamia Khair ul Madaris has established a good reputation within two years of its establishment. I and Mufti Muhammad Shafi are invited to examine 88 students of Arabic *Darja* and 53 students appeared for the examination of *Daura i Hadith*. All the students performed very well and I can say that Maulana Khair Muhammad and teachers of this madrasa are serving and strengthening Pakistan through their service of religion.⁴³

41 Malik, *Colonialization of Islam*.

42 Malik, *Colonialization of Islam*, 137.

43 *Kitab ul A'ara of Jamia Khair ul Madaris*, 1949 Vol. 1, 2.

Mufti Muhammad Shafi also wrote about the educational quality and standards of Jamia Khair ul Madaris. Invited as an examiner in 1950, he wrote in his letter to Maulana Khair Muhammad:

I have examined written papers of *Jamia Tirmizi*. Students have shown good knowledge and secured good marks. In my point of view, there is no other madrasa available which is providing such high standards of education. I also pray for the success of madrasa and wish its staff and leadership may attain more progress.⁴⁴

Syed Jamil uddin Ahmad, Inspector Madaris *Arabia wa Deeniyat*, Bahawalpur came for inspection of Jamia Khair ul Madaris on January 4, 1952. He wrote:

After the partition in 1947 Jamia Khair ul Madaris migrated with Maulana Khair Muhammad without anything in hand. It was very unique that Jamia Khair ul Madaris was allotted a land that used to be a Hindu temple before the partition. In short span of four years, madrasa has twenty-one teachers teaching four hundred and forty-eight students. Out of these four hundred and forty-eight students, one hundred and thirty students are boarders and madrasa takes care of their boarding and lodging requirements. The Bahawalpur State provides five hundred rupees as annual fund to Jamia Khair ul Madaris and some well-off people support the other needs and necessities of madrasa. Madrasa teachers have mainly focused on pronunciation and accurate reading of *Darja Quran* students. It is not only that madrasa has focused on education of students but also a proper training of *adab* (Urdu: Manners) like sitting, leaving or entering room, moral conduct etc.⁴⁵

The Inspector Madaris also noted the salaries of teachers are not upto the standard and they should be paid well. Everyone needs money to fulfil their daily needs and requirements and there should be a proper grade system and annual increment and promotion of teachers.⁴⁶ In a short span of four years, library of madrasa has acquired five to seven thousand titles which is remarkable.⁴⁷ In four years' time period, 119 students

44 *Kitab ul A'ara of Jamia Khair ul Madaris*, 1950 Vol. 1, 3.

45 *Kitab ul A'ara of Jamia Khair ul Madaris*, Vol. 1, 4.

46 *Kitab ul A'ara of Jamia Khair ul Madaris*, Vol. 1, 4.

47 *Kitab ul A'ara of Jamia Khair ul Madaris*, Vol. 1, 4.

graduated from madrasa and now serving religion at different places.⁴⁸

Maulana Ihtsham ul Haq Thanvi visited Jamia Khair ul Madaris on December 1, 1952 and wrote:

It was nice meeting qualified and hardworking teachers and simple and down to earth students of madrasa. I have seen registers and financial record of madrasa and find it up to date. One thing about financial registers is that they can be improved more if some professional service is hired for this purpose, or some advice sought about it. Madrasa is carefully fulfilling students' needs of residence, food and clothes. All this arrangement is done with the help and support of public funding coming from well-wisher community.⁴⁹

Maulana Abdul Haq, *Muhtamim*, Dar ul Uloom Haqqania, Akora Khattak visited Jamia Khair ul Madaris on the occasion of *Salana Jalsa* (Urdu: Annual Congregation) in February 1959 on the invitation of Maulana Khair Muhammad. He wrote a letter on his return and observed wider infrastructure and impressed by the wonderful discipline and educational services. He wrote:

Jamia Khair ul Madaris needs no introduction and praise because it has Maulana Khair Muhammad as its leader who was *khalifa* of Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanvi. This madrasa is not only enlightening Pakistan but before partition it served United India as well. This madrasa is of well reputation and I pray to Allah that this madrasa may grow and flourish with each passing day.⁵⁰

Maulana Izhar Ahmad Thanvi of Madrasa Tajwid ul Quran, Lahore came as an examiner of *Darja Tajwid* on November 8, 1959. He narrated that:

I am impressed with the performance of students and appreciate the teaching quality of staff training these students at Jamia Khair ul Madaris. Learning *Qirat* (Urdu: Recitation) of Quran is not an easy task. It needs a lot of practice, guidance and careful supervision and Jamia Khair ul Madaris is providing efficient training to students.⁵¹

48 *Kitab ul A'ara of Jamia Khair ul Madaris*, Vol. 1, 4.

49 *Kitab ul A'ara of Jamia Khair ul Madaris*, Vol. 1, 8.

50 *Kitab ul A'ara of Jamia Khair ul Madaris*, Vol. 1, 10.

51 *Kitab ul A'ara of Jamia Khair ul Madaris*, Vol. 1, 11

Maulana Muhammad Taqqi Usmani while expressing his views wrote:

After the death of Maulana Khair Muhammad, I am visiting madrasa now. I am happy to see that madrasa is running very smoothly under the leadership of Maulana Muhammad Sharif after the death of Maulana Khair Muhammad. I have had the opportunity of talking to students and teachers and I find them engaged and busy in learning and excelling religious knowledge. I can say that teachers and students of madrasa are real torch-bearers of teachings and training of Maulana Khair Muhammad. I hope madrasa will grow further with each passing day.⁵²

On April 19, 1996, Maulana Muhammad Rafi Usmani, Vice President of Dar ul Uloom Karachi visited Jamia Khair ul Madaris. He expressed his views that:

After twenty years today I came to Jamia Khair ul Madaris. I used to visit Jamia Khair ul Madaris with my father Maulana Mufti Muhammad Shafi and I am very happy to see madrasa running on same pattern and lines which I have seen two decades back under Maulana Khair Muhammad. *Talim un Nissa* is much focused here, and one cannot find any example of such struggle anywhere in Pakistan. I met students and teachers of madrasa and found them ready to learn and listen which is a consistent quality of good learner.⁵³

Toheed ur Rahman, Administrator Auqaf, Multan visited Jamia Khair ul Madaris on October 10, 1977, and expressed:

I met Maulana Muhammad Sharif, *Muhtamim*, Jamia Khair ul Madaris. I have visited library and other departments of madrasa. At present madrasa has a strength of one thousand students and two hundred students are living on campus. Madrasa is fulfilling the religious needs of the local community since 1947 and in this way, it's also serving Islam.⁵⁴

Dr. Abdur Razzaq Sikandar of Madrasa Arabia Islamia, New Town, Karachi visited Jamia Khair ul Madaris on October 30, 1977. He wrote:

Today I am happy to see that a garden which was sown by Maulana Khair Muhammad has started given fruits to Muslims and its graduates are also serving the Muslim community. May Allah give

52 *Kitab ul A'ara of Jamia Khair ul Madaris*, Vol. 1, 14.

53 *Kitab ul A'ara of Jamia Khair ul Madaris*, Vol. 1, 14.

54 *Kitab ul A'ara of Jamia Khair ul Madaris*, Vol. 1, 16.

progress and prosperity to this madrasa under the leadership of Maulana Muhammad Sharif.⁵⁵

Maulana Saleem ullah Khan, Nazim, Wifaq ul Madaris visited Jamia Khair ul Madaris on December 7, 1982. He expressed that:

In the recent tour of madrasa of Punjab, I was surprised to see a very huge number of Khair ul Madaris graduates serving in the province of Punjab in various madaris. Many of its graduates are serving as *muhtamim* of *Darja Quran* and *Dars-i-Nizami* too and it shows how much influence Khair ul Madaris has on the religious education given throughout the province.⁵⁶

Maulana Abdullah Salafi, *Amir, Markazi Jamiat Ahl Hadith* visited Jamia Khair ul Madaris on June 12, 1989 on the invitation of Maulana Muhammad Hanif Jalandhari. He praised the performance of madrasa and said:

This madrasa is struggling and producing individuals who can preach and Islamise the society very well. He further said that this institution is a manifestation of real teachings of Islam but an advice for administration of this madrasa is to focus on formal school education of students and equip them with religious and worldly education simultaneously.⁵⁷

Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan visited Jamia Khair ul Madaris on April 4, 2000. He expressed his views:

This madrasa has not only developed itself from scratch but also produced thousands of students serving Islam in different corners of the county. I also came to know that madrasa has introduced mathematics and computer teaching to its students for bringing them at par with students of other educational systems as well. Furthermore, a public schools is to be established where students will learn the Quran by heart and also get education up to O-Levels.⁵⁸

Jamia Khair ul Madaris has attracted attention of the government and leading madaris of Deobandi orientation since 1947. This support was further strengthened after the establishment of Wifaq ul Madaris. The successive regimes in

55 *Kitab ul A'ara of Jamia Khair ul Madaris*, Vol. 1, 16.

56 *Kitab ul A'ara of Jamia Khair ul Madaris*, Vol. 2, 2.

57 *Kitab ul A'ara of Jamia Khair ul Madaris*, Vol. 2, 3.

58 *Kitab ul A'ara of Jamia Khair ul Madaris*, Vol. 2, 5.

Pakistan tried to change and reform the education and curriculum time and again. The First Education Conference was held in 1947 and it was decided that an educational system inspired by the Islamic ideology should be adopted.⁵⁹ For a decade, the religious curriculum was not even reformed and touched upon by the government and *Dars-i-Nizami* was followed by all the religious institutions. Ayub Khan established a National Commission on Education in 1959 whose report was adopted as Education Policy later. This National Commission laid much emphasis on the religious education and Islamic studies to be taught at all levels starting from primary to secondary and higher level. This was the same time when madaris all over the country were feeling insecure of the government's attempts to reform them and forming its own madrasa education boards to administer their policies, rules and regulations regarding registration and curriculum etc.

The state intervention into the religious spaces like madaris and their curriculum created a strained and tangled relationship between the government and madrasa education boards and religious leadership. The new education policy brought changes in 1969 and this attempt again was to minimize gap between the traditional madrasa education system and the general education system.⁶⁰ Bhutto brought a new reform agenda which was aiming at designing curriculum relevant to nation's changing social and economic needs compatible with state ideology and this was again an experiment through which state was planning to control *ulama* and reforming religious education but again different sectarian orientations and their respective education boards came to the forefront and state could not achieve its goals.

This restrained relationship continued under Zia regime too. Zia was confronting his own problem of legitimacy which he

59 Nasir Jalil, "The State and Education: The Political Economy of Education Development in Pakistan from 1958 to 1988," (Ph.D. thesis, Harvard University, 1996), 10.

60 Jalil, "The State and Education," 167.

tried to cover through Islamization of state and society. Education in general and religious education in particular became victim of his policies. He convened a National Education Conference and aims were set for the reformation of education, choosing basic strategies, addressing the main problems in education which nation was facing and bringing education in line with Pakistani faith and ideology.⁶¹ He said in his inaugural speech:

Our curriculum must ensure that our children are brought up educated as good Pakistanis and good Muslims. They must imbibe the lofty ideals and principles of Islam.⁶²

Under the new policy, the subject Islamic Studies was made compulsory at all levels of education up to B.A. and teaching and learning of Arabic was also made compulsory for all levels. Madrasa education system was encouraged and was made equivalent to Masters of Arabic and Islamiyat. Religious political parties became enthusiastic partners in this quest of Zia ul Haq. The efforts formed part of the larger project of Islamization, in which government introduced several laws and introduced reforms in *Ushur*, *Zakat* and established Sharia Courts. These reforms of Zia regime, to some extent, attracted smaller portion of madaris but major Deobandi madaris were not happy with these reforms and never accepted *Zakat* fund to support their madaris.

Conclusion

All the successive regimes tried their best, one way or the other, to reform and revamp madrasa education and curriculum, but they faced severe criticism and many of the state reforms were not materialised. The state and the *ulama* relationship remained tangled and were tested time and again. The government of Pakistan remained concerned with the Deobandi *ulama* and always tried to take them on board for many inputs and feedbacks for policies, rules, reforms and consultations and regulations regarding religion and law.

61 Jalil, "The State and Education", 272.

62 Zia's Inaugural Speech, 1977.

Jamia Khair ul Madaris and Wifaq ul Madaris both were at the frontline for all these consultations and feedbacks starting from constitution-making, constituent assemblies and Islamic laws and regulations. Jamia Khair ul Madaris contributed in developing a linkage between religion and society and above all the motto of serving Islam through the production of graduates who spread all over the world. The state apparatus was not successful in bringing change but only produced couple of madrasa reform reports i.e. one in 1962 and other in 1979.