

Qawmi Madrasah: An Islamic Higher Institute in Bangladesh

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Abstract: This is a historical descriptive analysis of the Qawmi Madrasah in Bangladesh. This paper is a descriptive study. The purpose of the paper is to give a brief identity of Qawmi Madrasah in Bangladesh. In this study, qualitative research method with descriptive analysis has been used. The study mainly focuses on the management, educational systems, academic level and subjects. Finally, the funding sources of Bangladesh Qawmi Madrasah are discussed. This study generally examines the administrative regulations, their relationship with the government, the curriculum, the academic level, the subjects, and the sources of income of the Qawmi Madrasa, as well as the future of the graduates. However, the study finds that the madrasa administration follows its constitution and has no relationship with the government. In terms of curriculum, the Qawmi Madrasa adheres to the teachings of its traditional ideology, the Dars-e Nizamia of India. The research claims that the madrasah depends on donations for preparing funds and it is challenging for them to find employment because its graduates lack a modern education.

Keywords-Madrasah; Qawmi; History; Bangladesh; Curriculum; Management; Job; Income source.

1. INTRODUCTION

The largest Islamic private madrasa education in Bangladesh is Qawmi, one of the two main streams of the Madrasah system. It is a non-governmental institute of Islamic education. It is a for non-profit madrasah system. Religious education is their top priority. Along with various languages, including Bengali, Arabic, Urdu, and Farsi, they also put some effort into arithmetic and other social science topics (Ellis, 2007).

These madrasahs are operated independently of the government. In order to evade the secular education system, they operate their madrasah in accordance with their own system and reject all government help since they do not want the government to have authority over their education. These madrasahs rely on local contributions, charitable giving, money from various Islamic groups within the nation, as well as money from other nations (Mehdy, 2003).

According to the study, there are at least 1.4 million pupils enrolled in Bangladesh's 14,000 Qawmi madrasahs (Sarwar, 2017). In reality, Hathazari and Patiya in the Chittagong suburbs of Bangladesh are home to the largest and second-largest Qawmi madrasahs, respectively (Nikhil, 2014). The BANBEIS (2016) reported states that 1,209 of the Qawmi madrasahs are owned by women. Around 10,586,636 male and 3,39,616 female students have been enrolled in these madrasahs, which have 73,731 teachers on staff. These madrasahs are frequented by low-income children, particularly orphans and vulnerable youngsters who cannot afford to attend a regular school (Asadullah and Chaudhury, 2016).

1.1 MEANING OF QAWMI

The Arabic term "qawmi" comes from the word "qom," which means "public". This madrasah, which adopted the name al-Madrash al-Qawmiah after becoming Qawmi and rejecting government funding, offers free education to all Muslim people (Bano, 2008). Another name for this madrasah is Khariji Madrasah. As it rejects the government's norms and regulations in its educational system, the word "Khariji" means "rejection." The word "khariji" means "external" in English, which indicates outside of the state or uncontrollable by the state. So, whether Khariji or Qawmi, these two words have the same underlying connotation as they are against governmental authority. This madrasah continues to rely on local donations, charitable organizations, and community support. Karim (2018) stated that despite having the formal name of Qawmi Madrasah, Khariji Madrasah is more well-known in rural areas. Regarding Khariji, Nikhil (2014) said that in West Bengal, these unrecognized madrasahs are referred to as "khariji," and in Bangladesh, they are termed "qawmi." According to Asadullah et al. (2009), this madrasah was referred to as being "outside of government jurisdiction" when British ruled India.

1.2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF QAWMI MADRASAH

Over a century after Warren Hasting, the first British Governor-General of Bengal, established the Calcutta Aliya Madrasah in 1780, the Qawmi Madrasah was established in 1867. According to Ayub (1983), the British East India Company gained political and administrative control of India when the British assumed control of the country. Western missionary endeavors and educational institutions were first established by British administrators. Through the division of the Old Scheme and the New Scheme into several levels, their rule not only ended inside these educational activities but also poked its head back into Muslim Bengal's educational system. By separating education between religious and secular streams, British educational policy was anti-Muslim.

According to Riaz (2011), after British colonization poured over the Indian subcontinent, a modern education system was established to construct two systems of education that trained young students to transmit western culture through Muslim society. Religious education is for the underprivileged, whereas secular education is for the affluent and elite. The separation of state and religion, which was the ultimate objective of these two regimes, posed the biggest threat to Islam and Muslim society in Bengal.

Since that time, Muslims in India have had serious challenges in the areas of education, the arts, culture, tradition, and Muslim belief. Even Muslim families have come under attack from the West. They were aware that this approach was an effort to undermine the unity of the Muslim ummah and restrain the political, cultural, and intellectual clout of the Bengali Muslims.

Because of the Muslim aristocracy donors' shortage, Muslim religious institutions could not counter them. The Calcutta Aliyah Madrasah also failed to achieve the goals that the Muslim community of the Indian sub-continent looked forward to, as it was established and run by the British government's design (Al-Hasani, 2017).

The Muslims of the sub-continent were in excruciating fear and had no idea what to do or where to go to escape this predicament. This situation led to the creation of a brand-new madrasah system. As a result, in 1866, the eminent ulama Mulana Arshad Ali Gangohi and Maulana Mohammad Qasim Nanawatawi called for a seminar known as the "Deoband Seminary." Establishing a school that will introduce Islamic religious ideas and serve as a leader against the British is the major goal of this program (Nikhil, 2014). Following the conference, Maulana Hossain Ahmad Madani built a new madrasah in 1867 in Deoband, a small town in the northern region of Saharanpur (the distance from Delhi is about 147 km). Later, this dispersed to various locations of the Indian subcontinent (Al-Hasani, 2017).

Maulana Hossain Ahmad Madani, according to Riaz (2011), was anti-British. He made a vigorous push for the British to leave India. To create a religious educational organization to oppose the British colonization of India, the Madrasah Darul Ulum Deoband was founded. Given that the Deoband Madrassa has safeguarded the core Islamic legacy on the Indian subcontinent, it has played a crucial historical role (Ahmad, 2004). This Madarsa Darul Ulum Deoband was the first Qawmi Madrasah in history, and it inspired the Waliullah school of thought to reform a new madrasah structure. This is because the people who founded this madrasah were followers of Waliullah (Mehdy, 2003).

2. HISTORY OF QAWMI MADRASAH IN BANGLADESH

The development of the Qawmi Madrasah in Bangladesh is linked to the famous Madrasah Dar ul-Ulum Deoband, which was located in northern India (Al-Hsani, 2017). It was anti-British as it was established to defend the religious practices of Muslim cultures and the economic exploitation of the lower class by the ruling class during the British colonial rule in India. The foundation of this madrassa has as one of its main objectives the preservation and continuation of Islam and its faith. They believed that if religious awareness, information, and attitudes spread among the population, it would be easy to build a new society following their philosophy (Ahmad, 2004). Due to British colonization, the education, culture, and social condition of East Bengal Muslim society have been demoralized to the point of destroying the Muslim belief and creed. To protect Islam, Islamic education, culture, and young Muslim society from Shirk, Bid'at, and western cultural aggression, a group of Muslim Ulama from East Bengal decided to establish a madrasah at Hathazari in Chittagong, Bangladesh, like Dar ul-Ulum Deoband, which was founded in India in 1866 (Al-Hasani, 2020).

On the basis of that choice, they founded Dar ul-Ulum Moinul Islam at Hathazari under the patronage of Hakimul Ummat Ashraf Ali Thanubi, his disciple Sheik-ul Islam Maulana Habibullah, and a group of Deoband-trained Bengali scholars, including Maulana Abdul Hamid, Maulana Abdul Wahid, and Sufi Maulana Azizur Rahman. It is referred to as Hathazari Madrasah in Bangladesh and Al-Jamiatul Ahlia Darul Ulum Muinul Islam Hathazari in Pakistan, India, and other Muslim nations. It was first founded in 1896 CE, and in 1901 it moved to its current location in Hathazari (Bano, 2008). Dar ul-Ulum Moinul Islam Hathazari, Potia Madrasah and Mekhol Madrasah in Chittagong, Lalbagh and Malibagh Madrasah in Dhaka, Balia Madrasah in Mymensingh, and Jmiah Emdadiah in Kishoregeng are well-known and prestigious Qawmi madrasah in Bangladesh as well as in the Indian subcontinent, and these all were established by Deoband fashioned (Al-Hasani, 2017).

2.2 ADMINISTRATION OF QAWMI MADRASAH

Al-Hayat al-Uly lil-Jmit al-Qawmiyyah Bangladesh is the supreme authority for Qawmi Madrasa in Bangladesh (Al-Hasani, 2020). Befakul Madarisil Arabia Bangladesh, Befakul Madarisil Qawmia Gohardanga Bangladesh, Anjumane Ittehadul Madrasah Bangladesh, Azad Deeni Edaraye Talim Bangladesh, Tanjimul Madarisid Deeniya Bangladesh and the National Deeni Madrasa Education Board Bangladesh are the six Qawmi Madrasah Education Boards that make up this country. It is the combined Qawmi Madrasah Education Board of Bangladesh recognized by the government. To ensure a single curriculum and to provide centralized examinations for all the institutions of the six Qawmi Madrasa Education Boards, the Haiatul Ulya was established (Bangladesh Qawmi Madrasah Education Board [BQMEB], n.d.).

3. EDUCATION SYSTEM OF QAWMI MADRASAH

3.1 CURRICULUM

The curriculum of this Madrasa was *Dars-i-Nizami* curriculum to teach the students of that Madrasah (Al-Hasani, 2017). This curriculum has nothing to do with the curriculum of the Madrasa Nizamiah, which was founded in the eleventh century in Baghdad by Nizam al-Mulk, but this curriculum was elaborated by the great scholar Mullah Nizamuddin Siharvi (Ahmad, 2004) and implemented in the Madrasa-i-Farangi Mahal, which was founded in 1693 in Lucknow in India (Al-Hasani, 2022).

Modern subjects were not included in the curriculum until recently, when the Bangladesh Qawmi Madrasah Board took over management of the majority of the Qawmi Madrasahs. Since then, the general/secular curriculum has been introduced, though the portion is still quite small in comparison to the Aliya madrasah (Karim, 2018).

3.2 ACADEMIC LEVELS

The educational system regulated by Bangladesh Qawmi Madrasah Education Board- BEFAC is divided into three levels

3.2.1 FIRST STAGE

This stage consists of two levels.

3.2.1.1 First level: primary education. Mathematics, Bengali, English and Social Sciences etc. up to 5th grade along with Quran recitation and Islamiyat. It is called Al Marhalatul Ibtidayyah or Qawmi Primary / Primary Madrasa.

3.2.1.2 Second level: It consists of general education along with Islamic education. That is, Arabic language, Arabic grammar and jurisprudence, mathematics, Bengali, English and social sciences. This is called Marhalatul Mutawassitah. It comprises - 3 years, i.e. 6th to 8th grade.

3.2.2 SECOND STAGE

There are 4 levels in this stage:

3.2.2.1. Level one:- Al-Marhalatus Sanabiyah (Secondary Stage): It consists of two years (9th-10th grade).

3.2.2.2. Level two:- Al-Marhalatus Sanabiyah Al Uliya (Upper Secondary): It consists of two years (11th grade to 12th grade).

3.2.2.3. Level three:- Marhalatul Fazilat (Higher Secondary). It lasts two years (grade 13 to grade 14).

3.2.2.4. Level four:- Marhalatul Takmil (Master's degree). It lasts for two years. This level is called Dawraye Hadith.

Daurah-e Hadith is the final grad of these Madrasah systems. Certificate is given to a student upon a completion of the grad Daurah successfully. Even, sometimes student can continue their further higher specialized degree like Ifta (Shariah Specialization) spending another 2/3 years in some of the Qawmi Madrasah. After finished this levels people call them Muhaddith, Mufti or Maulana as a title using with their name before called (BANBEIS, 1987). Daurah is equivalent to the Kamil in Aliya system and Masters degree in general education system. In the Qawmi education system, Daurah is the highest and final degree (Mehdy, 2003).

3.2.3 THIRD STAGE

This stage consists of specialized diploma and research courses. Namely: Hadith, Tafsir, Fiqh, Fatwa, Tajwid, Arabic literature, Bengali literature, English, Urdu and Persian language, History of Islam and Sirat, Ilmul Kalam, Islamic philosophy, economics, political science, urban studies and social sciences, etc.

3.3 ACADEMIC SUBJECTS IN QAWMI MADRASAH

Up to 8th grade, including religion and science, and the remaining 6 years, i.e., religious education only, until the last Dawraye Hadith.

Religious Subjects are:

Arabic language, Nahab, Saraf, Balagat and Aruz, Fiqh and Uzule Fiqh, Tafsir and Uzhul Tafsir, Hadith and Uzhul Hadith, Tajweed, Faraiz, Political Science and Sirat of Islam, Islamic Economics, Social Science and Sirat of Islam, Philosophy of Islam and Family Science.

Science Subjects are:

Bengali Language and Bengali Grammar, English and English Grammar, Urdu and Urdu, Kawaed, Persian and Persian Kawaed, Mathematics and Geometry, History, Geography, Natural Sciences, Logic, The Debate and Western Philosophy.

Religious Education:

The general science major is Dawraye Hadith through the master's degree. There are also diploma programme. For example: Hadith, Tafseer, Fiqh, Arabic Language, Islamic Economics, Islamic Political Science and Muqaranatul Adyan etc.

3.4 JOB SCOPE OF THEIR GRADUATES

Due to the lack of modern education, job prospects for Qawmi graduates are quite limited. They can work as lecturers in their own madrasahs or as imams in mosques (Al-Hasani, 2020). They can only work as religious teachers, private tutors, qadis for marriages, imams for Friday prayers, and leaders of other ceremonial events. After completing their studies at the madrasah, some qawmi students open their own madrasah and become its muhtamim (leaders) (Mehdy, 2003). Asadullah et al. (2009) claim that Qawmi graduates have the opportunity to work with a variety of religious institutions, non-governmental Islamic NGOs, and Islamic NGOs to provide exclusively religious education.

4. SOURCE OF FINANCE

Qawmi madrasah are not subject to official regulations and are not supervised by the Bangladesh Ministry of Education. The constitution of the madrasah governs how it is organized and administered. It is a higher Islamic institution under sole private management (Al Hasani, 2020)

Qawmi madrasahs, which are private institutions, are largely financed through donations. Qawmi Madrasah's income sources depend on only charity and donations to raise the funds and run their organization.

To supplement their funds, they rely solely on donations from individuals, local or international charities, the public, Sadakah offerings, and the price of cow hides collected during Eidul Adha (Ahmad, 2004).

Data on the annual income of Qawmi Madrasah provided by Abdalla et al. (2004) showed that 57% of Qawmi's income comes from Zakat and contributions, 11% from student tuition fees, and the other 30% from various sources.

5. QAWMI MADRASAH COMMISSION AND RECOGNITION OF DAWRA-E HADITH CERTIFICATE

The Bangladesh Qawmi Madrasa Education Commission is a commission established by the government of Bangladesh on April 15th, 2012 to officially recognize the education certificate of Qawmi Madrasahs. This commission consisted of 17 members, with Shah Ahmad Shafi as the chairman. On September 27, 2016, the government took the initiative to recognize Marhalatul Takmil (Master's degree) or Dawra-e Hadith certificate of Qawmi Madrasah. A 9-member examination commission is formed for this purpose. On the recommendation of the commission, the Equivalent of Master's Degree in the Certificate of Dawra-e Hadith (Takmil) of Qawmi Madrasahs under 'Al-Haiatul Ulya Lil-Jamiatil Qawmia Bangladesh' is recognized in 2018 (Prothom Alo, 2018).

6. CONCLUSION

The tendency of crime is rising nowadays as a result of the improper application of Islamic teaching in our culture. The effect of immorality has almost completely eradicated morality. The absence of Islamic instruction is the only cause. The madrasah system is the sole place to receive this Islamic education. Islamic education is the primary goal of madrasah education. The most comprehensive private Islamic madrasah in Bangladesh is Qawmi. It is a non-governmental Islamic educational institution. It is a madrasah system that is for non-profit. Their number one priority is religious education. These madrasahs are run privately rather than by the government. For this Madrasah, Al-Hayat al-Uly lil-Jmit al-Qawmiyyah Bangladesh is the highest authority. They operate their madrasah according to their own plans and refuse any assistance from the government in order to avoid the secular education system. These madrasahs rely on local donations, altruistic giving, funding from various Islamic organizations domestically as well as funding from foreign countries. The Dars-i-Nizamih curriculum was used in this madrasah to instruct the pupils there.

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