

EDUCATION IN PAKISTAN

a CASE STUDY

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Part One:

Pre Colonial era

Islam originally came to the Indian Subcontinent in the 7th century CE, but was institutionalized as the state religion by the Muslim rulers in the 11th century. Although Islam was the state Religion, it was not imposed on the population, which at the time was predominantly Hindu or its aligned religions. The ruling class was largely Muslim, but non-Muslims participated in the administration as well. Education, in those days, was imparted as per religion. Each Muslim community was centered on the local Mosque which was often accompanied by a *Madrassah*. One of the hallmarks of *Madrassah* system especially in South Asia is its independence of government maintenance, through its support from the community. Most Hindu temples were associated with *Gurukul* or *Pathshala*¹. These were run by the religious scholars of both communities and were autonomous bodies supported by the rulers and the local population. They had their own curriculum which they had designed by themselves and the state seldom interfered in their operations. The subjects taught in all such schools were primarily of the same nature, i.e. although they differed in beliefs, the philosophy behind them remained the same. Students decided their own religious doctrine, but this was accompanied by a mandatory vocational education. A student would approach different levels of divine teachings and at the same time, in order to earn a living would learn a contemporary skill. These included masonry, carpentry, wood work, medical sciences, arts, architecture etc. The masterful architecture of Mughal buildings is an example of the abundance of skilled labour at that time. Throughout India, there existed a great number of people who were famous for their skill and craftsmanship e.g. wood carving, metalwork and masonry in the world. Herbal medicine which is practiced even today is a remnant of Muslim medical schools in the India of the time. This educational system included not only people from all walks of life, but also a surprising high ratio of female students². High morals and values prevailed at that time³. Details about the strengths and shortcomings of the syllabi prevailing at that time are beyond the scope of this discussion. The only reference here is to point to the fact that Muslim education in the Mughal era was an organized discipline that was second to none throughout the world. Proof of this is also the statements and reports furnished by British Historians and administrators who had, in the early eighteenth century, begun to infiltrate

¹ A Hindu school

² Reports of Sir Thomas Munro, Governor of Madras Presidency; March 1826

³ Lord Macaulay: Speech to Parliament 1835

deeply into the political affairs of India. Mughal rule had lost its thrust and pull, paving the way for another nation to take its place. Once they tightened their grip, the colonial power commissioned a detailed study of the education system⁴, and then replaced it with one specially designed for India⁵. The extensive discussions and classified reports in the British Parliament of the time⁶, clearly spell out the importance they gave to ‘educating’ the Indians. Thus began the imperial mission of educating and civilizing colonial subjects in the literature and thought of England, a mission that in the long run served to strengthen Western cultural hegemony in enormously complex ways.

B. Colonial Era

Colonial powers heavily relied upon native recruits in both the civil and military establishment. As late as 1939, about 28 million Punjabis were governed by just 60 British civil servants. Lord Macaulay⁷, though preceded by several officials in this task, is the most outstanding figure in this regard. He was sent to India to study in detail the education system prevailing at the time, and to replace it as soon as possible. When objections were raised regarding the delay in Macaulay’s education reforms, he responded, “If I had shut down all the local schools, cancelled the Arabic script prevailing in the country, I would have failed. The effects of whatever I am doing, will become apparent in a few years. I have traveled the length and breadth of India, but failed to come across a single beggar or thief. The morals of these people are exceptionally high, and they hold their pure values very dear. We can never truly conquer India until we break its backbone. And that is their spiritual and social infrastructure, taught and strengthened by their system of education. Therefore I strongly recommend that their established system of education must be replaced. If we are able to convince the locals that English is the best language and we are the master race, they shall lose their self esteem. When that happens, they will submit to us absolutely”⁸.

For this purpose a **tri-parallel schooling system** was enforced throughout the colony.

⁴ Charles Wood’s Education Dispatch 1854

⁵ The Education Commission of India (also known as the Hunter Commission) was formed in 1882

⁶ Now declassified, albeit partially

⁷ Macaulay, Thomas Babington; (1800-1859) Member of the British Empire’s Supreme Council of India & Founder of the Indian System of Education (1834-1838).

⁸ Speech to Parliament 1835

School and colleges for the elite among the natives.

These schools known as ‘Chiefs colleges’ (a typical example is Aitchison College in Lahore), which were modeled on English public schools, and were meant for the children of “the middle management”. This was a class amongst the Indians created by the colonial power through which, they ruled the country. Macaulay told the British Parliament, “We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern; a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect”⁹. Therefore an education system was designed to establish colonial rule not only in the land but in the minds of Indians.

These were the political and financial elite of the local population, and the grandeur of the school buildings reflect the stature of the people they were designed for. The sons of Sardars, Nawabs and Rajas rubbed shoulders here in an environment of luxury and affluence bestowed upon them in lieu of their loyalty to the British. Like all elite schools, they created a class physically and emotionally separated from masses, primarily responsible for keeping the Empire in power.

The missionary Schools

These were funded and run by Christian missionaries. The education imparted in these schools was of particular nature, designed and implemented to provide the innumerable workers required by British to run the State machinery. These were the proverbial ‘clerks’, taught enough English and Mathematics with a smattering of other subjects, in order to equip them with the essentials of running the civil and military machinery. Religious education and institution of moral values were conspicuous by their absence, as the motive was to create a population loyal to India’s rulers but not necessarily to India itself. The political choices were spelled out in the most chilling terms: "The Natives must either be kept down by a sense of our power, or they must willingly submit from a conviction that we are more wise, more just, more humane, and more anxious to improve their condition than any other rulers they could possibly have."¹⁰

Religious instruction was conspicuous by its absence, so as not to be an influence in the students’ lives. In most missionary schools, there were no formal religious instructions except that of Christian rituals that took place on the premises (remember that the entire teaching staff consisted of missionaries and a Church or Chapel was part of every school). Attitudes were

⁹ Macaulay, Thomas Babington; Minute on Education, 2nd February 1835

¹⁰ J. Farish; Minute on Education; Bombay Presidency, 1814

shaped by the Evangelical and Utilitarian movements in Britain, neither of which had sympathy for Indian customs or religion(s). Many people dreamed fantastically of a mass conversion of Indians to Christianity. William Wilberforce¹¹ regarded the conversion of India as, "the greatest of all causes." And even though the number of converts turned out to be very small, the last Victorian bishop of Calcutta believed as late as 1915 that an Indian "Constantine" would emerge and bring his followers into the Christian fold. Nevertheless there was also a 'Plan B'. The principal of a Presbyterian College, Dr. James Ewing¹², when criticized for the low ratio of converts, defended himself by saying, "Yes, we may have failed in this regard, but we have succeeded in at least taking away from them their own religious identity. They have ceased to be Hindus or Muslims in spirit. That, in itself, is a great achievement."

In some places a subject called 'moral sciences' was introduced to instill some honesty in these government servants. It is to be noted here that such people were called as 'government' servants rather than 'public' servants. It can be safely said that although the subject taught by the British back home and in India were the same but the philosophy behind the instructions was the opposite. The schools in England produced the citizens of a master race versed in all modern sciences and arts, free in thought and speech. The philosophy of education in the colonies was to churn out peoples subservient to that master race. The study of Oriental arts and culture was fashionable for those at Oxford and Cambridge, but not for the Indian, who was barred from reading his own literature. When comparing the educational histories of England and India, the central paradox of British deliberations on the curriculum as prescribed at home and in the colony is startling; while Englishmen of all ages could enjoy and appreciate exotic tales, romantic narrative, adventure stories, and mythological literature for their charm and even derive instruction from them, their colonial subjects were believed incapable of doing so, because, they lacked the prior mental and moral cultivation required for it, especially their own, to have any instructive value for them. A play like Kalidas's *Shakuntala*, which delighted Europeans for its pastoral beauty and lyric charm, and led Horace Wilson¹³, to call it the jewel of Indian literature, was disapproved of as a text for study in Indian schools and colleges. This cut off the educated Indian from his own literature, making him more versed in British rather than Indian history, as if his own nation had not existed aforesaid. The term '**Macaulay's Children**' is used even today

¹¹ Anti Slavery Activist (1759-1833)

¹² Dr. Reverend James Caruthers Rhea Ewing, Principal of Forman Christian College in Lahore from 1888 to 1917

¹³ a major nineteenth-century Sanskrit scholar

to refer to people born of Indian ancestry who adopt [Western culture](#) as a lifestyle. The term is usually used in a derogatory fashion, and the connotation is one of disloyalty to one's country and one's heritage.

It is needless to say that they succeeded wonderfully in this effort. Less than 65,000 white men, including both civil and military administration, were needed to control the subcontinent's population of 300 million, an area now controlled by five independent governments.

Madrassah

The Madrassah which had existed in pre-colonial times as *the* school---independent in philosophy and autonomous in thought and speech, teaching both religious and contemporary sciences, was the only remnant of Muslim supremacy in the Subcontinent. The Madrassah system and its champions have preserved the most prestigious and indispensable tradition that has kept the Ummah united on the right path. It has who supported the way of life that has personal and deep intimacy with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and his teachings. A reawakening of the Muslims was the biggest threat to the Empire, so it was *them* and *their* institutions that needed to be subjugated on priority. The *Ulama*¹⁴ were the first on the list. The last and hardest hurdle in the complete control over India, they instigated and led countless armed and social struggles, even at the time when most of the country was directly or indirectly under Colonial rule. Opponents to the *Farangi*¹⁵ from the very first time that the English, French and Portuguese had begun to frequent the courts of local rulers, they styled the defense of India into a religious obligation. In this manner, they managed to motivate a large block of followers, few of whom were trained fighters. They were no match for English strategy, weaponry, cunning, and deep rooted conspiracies supported by traitors within the ranks of Muslims. This resulted in humiliating defeats, mass arrests and innumerable capital punishments for the freedom fighters.

With the larger chunk of *Ulama* out of the way, the system of education became putty in the hands of the British. The *Madaris* were reduced to the consequence of divinity schools, gone were the autonomy and freedom they had enjoyed previously. They were no longer allowed their own independent sources of income, but were made forcefully dependent on the “middle

¹⁴ Sing. *Alim*, Islamic Religious Scholar

¹⁵ foreign traders

management class”. Exceptions existed, yet were few in number. These schools, stripped of their powers, barely managed to preserve and pass on religious knowledge and services.

Renaissance was thrust upon the Muslims without their own choice. Religion was separated from the mainstream, and religious instruction heavily scrutinized. Soon a new breed of *Madaris* began to emerge. Struggling to survive, they were marginalized into imparting only religious sciences. The vendetta between them and *Farangi* continued silently, and a cold war began. Even though unarmed and non-militant, these were a thorn in the side of the Raj, and were trodden upon at the slightest hint (sometimes imagined) of rebellion¹⁶.

Cut off from the mainstream (which was taught in English), the certificates of these institutions became pieces of paper, valuable to only those who obtained them. The qualified graduates of these *Madaris* could no longer find employment in society, whereas such people used to be the “intellectual elite” in times not long ago. Compared to the *Madrassah* of pre-colonial times, these schools lacked vocational and contemporary subjects and thus their graduates were pushed into the social background; forcibly, if required.

Then a contemporary school (which later became a university), was founded in Aligarh. This was an attempt to educate the Muslims in western arts and sciences, thus bringing them up to join the ranks of the intellectual elite of the period. Education obtained at this institution would fetch a graduate highly coveted professional employment, thus elevating their status in society.

Many of the *Madaris* now realized that Muslims could no longer achieve and restore their lost prestigious status unless their young men acquired these modern skills, while at the same time adhering to their religious, cultural and historical identity. The contemporary *Madrassah* system is the beneficiary of great tradition, yet in recent years, its role has been reduced from pioneer and catalyst, to preserver of religious sciences. Our latest study of various traditional *Madaris* system across the world has revealed two facts: first in many parts of the world this tradition had declined and abandoned due to the pressures of modern education and the hostile attitudes of certain governments; second, in parts of the world where it is left untouched, the *Madaris* are teaching a common curriculum and classical text that they have inherited from their forefathers. Many attempts were made by those *Madaris* to include the contemporary subjects, including the

¹⁶ Note: The danger was felt on account of the Muslims because power had recently been snatched away from them, rather than the larger Hindu community, for whom the Raj was just a change of masters. Also, the Hindus were exalted by the new rulers, who sought to use them to dominate the ousted ruling class.

instruction of English as a language¹⁷, but were unable to do so for several reasons, largely for lack of teaching faculty. Then it was decided that student exchange programs be initiated between Aligarh and some of the larger *Madaris*¹⁸. There was talk even of a merger of certification, allowing students to obtain dual degrees, i.e., one (in contemporary learning) from Aligarh and the other (in religious sciences) from a *Madrassa*. These efforts failed notably because of the incompatibility of many on either side. The Colonial blueprint had remarkably succeeded in creating canyons of mistrust between the ‘modern’ and the ‘traditional’ segments of society. These differences, a side effect of which was mistrust, not only remain to date, but have rather deepened with time in ways that shall be further discussed in the later part of this discourse.

Part Two: The Current State of Affairs

A cross section of the schools system prevailing in the country is not simple to elaborate, because it is probably the most multi-dimensional and chaotic in the world. First, let us look at the types of curricula taught.

Official Syllabus (Matriculation)

Foreign Examinations. (O Level Exams Conducted by boards in the UK)

Dars e Nizami (The Curriculum of the Religious Seminaries)

Official Syllabus (Matriculation)

This is official system of education in the country, run by State run schools (charging nominal or no fee at all) and the major chunk of privately run schools. This is a remnant of the colonial era and has shown little improvement since Independence. Although several National Education Commissions have been formed, no independent curriculum has been designed, nor any National Learning Objectives decided upon. Rather the curriculum was in a way, ‘carried forward’ by the

¹⁷ *Tareekh Dar ul Uloom Deoband, Idara e Islamiyat, Lahore, Pakistan, 2005*

¹⁸ *Tareekh Dar ul Uloom Deoband, Idara e Islamiyat, Lahore, Pakistan, 2005*

newly founded state in 1947¹⁹. Since then, short of a few cosmetic changes, the fourth generation of Pakistan's youth is meted with the same scheme of studies as the first.

What is meant by cosmetic changes? Division of time schedules, addition of regional languages, combinations of subjects offered and administrative changes have been considered as 'improvements' in the education system.

The only notable change was in the 1980's when the then government decided that Islamic Studies and Pakistan studies be made a compulsory part of the curricula at not only school but also at university level. This also included an effort to 'Islamize' and 'Pakistanize' the prevailing system. Efforts were made to integrate Islamic values into language subjects and the effects of these, if any, didn't seem to serve any practical purpose.

The medium of instruction is mainly Urdu, English being introduced in the sixth standard. Students studying under this system rarely study beyond the twelfth standard, as after that professional studies commence, for which English is the medium of instruction. Hence these students are seldom able to excel academically since the late introduction of English hinders their comprehension of it. Proof of this is that an overwhelming majority of drop outs fail in only one subject, i.e. English. Some of the private schools offer the entire curriculum in English, but this fails to contribute remarkably to the student's academic ability.

The result: if a student isn't proficient in English, s/he is doomed to the lower strata of society.

The product of this syllabus and these schools usually ends up in blue collar jobs. They are condemned to remain in such jobs and are unable to rise beyond the level of low cadre machinery in the public or private sector. The point of importance is that it is not by choice, rather it is this 'class' system of schooling that defines the parameters of their career. Exceptions to this rule do occur, however rare, and have produced many outstanding professionals in various fields.

This too is achieved when the 'English' class barrier is broken. For such individuals, high ranking and prestigious civil service awaits. These 'government officials (mark the words: not public servants), must adopt the mentality and manners of the class through which Britain ruled India. This is because the civil service of Pakistan has even preserved the celebrations of the long

¹⁹ Almost the entire framework of government was adopted by the new state; so much so that it seemed as if the 'white' man was merely replaced by a 'brown' man.

gone imperial power. To quote one such example, it was only recently that the ‘Toast to the Crown’ was discontinued in the armed forces.

Teacher training is minimal, and the teaching quality is so poor that almost all students need to seek private tuition after school hours to get through the exams. These academies have themselves become a standard part of almost every student’s life.

To nourish moral values and national spirit, they must exist in the teacher first. As teachers of these schools themselves are the product of the same schooling, character building does not even exist in letter, let alone spirit. What can be said of a nation which has failed to come up with an independent policy of educating its masses in sixty years of sovereign rule?

This entire system is in shambles. Lack of funds, poorly trained teachers, corruption and nepotism in the administrative wing, and meager salaries have eaten away at whatever good was ever present in the system. The ‘Commission for Evaluation of Examination System and Eradication of Malpractices’ of the Government of Punjab, formed in 1992 stated:

“A situation has now reached where unscrupulous students, parents, teachers, paper setters, invigilators, examiners, Board officials have joined hands for obtaining higher number of marks with the minimum of effort. This rat race has received great fillip through exercise of temptations and patronage on the one hand, and pressure and intimidation on the other exerted by elected representatives and business community, members of civil and military bureaucracy and anti-social elements.”

Moreover, it is one of the rare examination schemes in the world which rely on mere retention of facts rather than comprehension. The examination papers are prepared from the textbooks, and if a candidate manages to rote learn his/her books, without comprehending a single word, high grades are guaranteed. Educationists will agree that nothing can deform learning abilities more. The world is talking of eliminating textbooks entirely, and here students are forced to learn them by heart to get through the exams!

‘O’ & ‘A’ Levels.

This is elite class schooling. Founded on the principle of the elite schools established by the British for their ‘middle management’²⁰. There has been a mushroom growth of such schools as their certification is more acceptable when seeking employment in foreign countries or foreign

²⁰ Refer to Part one, Page 5 of this report.

companies in Pakistan. As these foreign companies are themselves founded on the principles of the East India Company²¹, candidates who have studied this curriculum are ideally suited for serving them. It is to be noted that although these examinations are conducted by UK based educational institutions, they are highly commercial in nature and this attitude has trickled down to those who impart its teaching. The most important feature of the syllabi of these exams is that they are not the ones taught in the countries of their origin. Lack of relevance to the native population, they continue to serve the ideals set by the Indian Education Commission²² in the 1800s.

The examination scheme is far better than the Government syllabus, and the examination scheme is relatively modern. Most students studying in these expensive private schools already belong to the upper middle class financially, and this education cements their standing in it.

The product of this curriculum is a young man or woman who resents his/her own nationality. S/he will seek further education abroad, as the local system is too backward to challenge their minds, and later also seek employment in a foreign country or a foreign based company in Pakistan. Wherever they may be, one finds in them the practical explanation of the word, 'Macaulay's Children'²³.

Even tutoring is a big business here as well, and such academies have now become bigger than many schools.

This is the main drawback of private schools in Pakistan. A lucrative investment opportunity, education has become a purely commercial enterprise. Schooling is a business, and not a mission for these so-called 'educationists'. Pakistan proudly boasts of having the largest chain of private schools in the world, whereas it is extremely shameful that the State is unable to provide quality schooling to the masses.

Competing for more and more 'customers', these private schools have no moral teachings or discipline in their curricula. They cannot 'afford' to annoy their 'clients' and the instruction of values too as long left the premises. The management cannot dare to introduce *Tarbiyah* in any sense, for the fear of losing student strength. It is sad that the 'success' of an educational institution be measured by its balance sheet, not by contributing outstanding individuals to society.

²¹ The original form in which the British infiltrated and eventually controlled the subcontinent.

²² See Part One page 4; Footnote 5; Page 5 line 4

²³ Part One, Page 9

At the same time, it must be admitted that these schools are providing instruction that can somewhat compete at least in content with international standards.

It is important to mention the upcoming trend of 'Islamic Schools'. This is a generic term that applies to the English and Urdu Medium private schools that are trying to amalgamate contemporary knowledge with Islamic values. These schools suffer from a host of problems, yet they are the only real effort in the betterment of education. They are the only ray of hope so far, albeit a dim one. Based on the concept of Islamic schools in North America and Europe, they are struggling with demons that outnumber and outsize them. Using the freedom awarded to private schools in Pakistan, they are able to adjust and amend syllabi/curricula to cater to their individual philosophy. This philosophy may differ from institution to institution, but the basic objective is the same: to produce well-rounded personalities that are versed in the secular and religious sciences. The ratio these schools may award to either stream may vary; however, the general direction is very encouraging. We may find them playing a very important role in the future of education in Pakistan.

Dars e Nizami

This is taught only at the Madaris (Religious schools).

It comprises of instruction in only religious subjects. Although its roots are embedded in the oldest Islamic schools in the world, the current curriculum is more recent. It was instituted past the mid 19th century, a time when the socio-economic status of the Muslims in British India was the lowest. With the majority of *Ulama* martyred, jailed or exiled, the responsibility fell on the remaining few to preserve the teachings of Islam. A simple yet effective syllabus was designed, and instruction and training began at a handful of locations. These institutions slowly spread over the entire subcontinent, and were the fountainheads of peace and learning. Muslim students, native and foreign have benefited from these schools for the last 150 years.

These are purely non-commercial institutions run by the religious leadership; their expenses are met by donors that include the State. Because of this lack of monetary greed on their part, these may be called as the only truly educational institutions in Pakistan. Not only they are free, many provide free board and lodging to their students. Medical facilities and stipends are also given at certain well to do *Madaris*. The teaching methodologies, though traditional, are most effective

here and graduates are willing to live and die for the beliefs taught here²⁴. It is no wonder that the world has seen the teaching of Islamic belief sprout from Indian *Madaris* and it is the light of these that has maintained the crown of religious leadership for Pakistan & India.

It may have become fashionable to criticize these institutions, but the fact remains that the world cannot site a better example of selfless devotion to imparting knowledge.

Madaris, like society in general, also have seen a decline in standards. The Quran and Sunnah being the foundation of the curriculum is not enough to ensure quality learning outcomes. Teaching methodology, instruction tools, etc., all need to be re-evaluated. Internalization of knowledge has a low average and learning outcomes aren't what they used to be.

The very size of this segment is a hindrance in organization of its components.

Today, some of the *Madaris* are beginning to introduce the latest technology and methods in their syllabus along with the classic books. It must be remembered that the *Madrassah* was not designed to be a 'complete' schooling system; rather it was a specialist institution for religious instruction only. Only recently has the management of these institutions started to include subjects beyond the scope of divinity studies.

Many *Madaris* in other countries have experimented successfully with this concept and Pakistan is also beginning to open up to the idea.

Summary

The education policies and system in Pakistan has divided the country into 5 classes

Absolutely illiterate

Having no access to any form of education, found in mostly in rural areas, unable to even join a *Madrassah* (although they are all free). These are more than 80% of the population and of course have no say in whatever goes on around them.

Low-end educated

State schooled and unable to access higher education, thus unable to secure positions of any importance; they are doomed from the very beginning to only 'serve' those above them. Banished from betterment, they remain confined to the class they were born in.

²⁴ It is also the reason why conspiracies against Islam have used some of them to hatch evil campaigns.

Middle Class educated

Having attended missionary schools or expensive private schools, they shall attain important jobs serving large local and foreign corporations, or the government. They have the opportunity to move up in life, at least materially. The elite class will allow some of them in eventually into their circle; however, some affluence and significance is their lot nonetheless. Unfortunately, loyalty to Pakistan's tradition and culture has not been part of their education and many even deviate completely from them in the race to achieve acceptance in the class above theirs.

Elite Class

These are the inheritors of the middle management class of the British Empire. These are a class of persons, Pakistani in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect²⁵. Little do they have in common with their own country, let alone patriotism. The only love they possess for Pakistan is embedded in the fact that they cannot live like Sardars and Nawabs in any other country. Where else shall the entire village be at their mercy? Life and death of the peasants under their rule is their privilege.

These rule Pakistan today. The masters left behind by the departing imperialists. Their prime objective is the maintenance of the status quo. Initially this exclusive club included only the feudal, but over the decades has spread its tentacles into the military, the establishment and the financial community. Membership is only by birth or marriage, no other door leads in. It provides comforts beyond the imagination of an average Pakistani, not to mention the fact that they are above the law. The executive branch of the government as well as the elected parliament is where they rub shoulders.

This paradise on earth shall be shattered if quality education becomes available for all. It suits them the most, the status quo.

Religious education only

The Madrassah graduate. He was pushed down to the lowest socio-economic status by the Colonial powers, and this has continued since. The most important figure of the Islamic culture, has been reduced to a no body. One primary reason is that he lacks contemporary knowledge,

²⁵ See Page 6, quotation by Thomas B. Macaulay

and is forced to repeat the enclosed life that was thrust upon him by the British Indian way of life. As their curricula is classic in nature, it is far removed from subjects that may allow them to compete in areas that matter in today's world. They (the British) wanted only monks and abbots for the Muslims, and that they have achieved so well even today the *Ulama* are primarily kept away from mainstream life. Although many are now entering banking and other corporate sectors, this number is very small. Having been cut off from the majority of the society, it will take a while for them to be accepted completely.

These classes of people comprise the population of Pakistan today. Exceptions to each have, and do occur, but of course, they don't make the rule.

Education is everything to a nation. It is the mix in which the mould is set for its future generations. It is the food for thought which nurtures the minds of its members. The destiny of a nation is written in its textbooks. What more can be said about education that Allah began His greatest gift to mankind with the word, *Iqra* (read). The holy Quran is abounding with the instructions of thinking, pondering and understanding. The *RasulAllah* ﷺ made obligatory on every Muslim man and women to be educated.

The importance of education in Islamic teachings can go on and on, but that it not the scope of this discussion. The purpose of this paper is to bring to mind the history and status of education in Pakistan, the only state (after *Madinah*) to be founded in the name of Islam. Its failure to lead the way in Islamic education would be failure in the original objective.

Part Three: What the future holds?

The world is changing at a pace unprecedented in the history of mankind. Ever since Adam's children have begun to walk the earth, never have they had to face a new world each day. Whatever course we may chose for ourselves, we must think of what will be say, twenty five years from now.

9/11 has changed everything everywhere. In Pakistan, there is a mega drive by the government to 'change' curricula of all the institutions nationwide. It is speculated that the new world order has a lot to do with this.

New curricula, once again developed by individuals and organizations from far away lands are being introduced. The objectives, under the surface, shall further eat away at the self identity of this country. The self identity, or what's left of it, is the only hope on which we can build on. The very first Education Conference in November 1948 was ordered by Muhammad Ali Jinnah,

“If we are to make real, speedy and substantial progress, we must bring our educational policy and programme on the lines suited to the genius of our people, consonant with our history and culture and having regard to the modern conditions and vast developments that have taken place all over the world. The future of our State will and must accordingly depend upon the type of education we give to our children, and the way in which we bring them up as future citizens of Pakistan. We should try, by sound education, to instill into them the high sense of honour, integrity, responsibility and selfless service to the nation. There is an immediate and urgent need for giving scientific and technical education to our people in order to build up our future economic life and to see that our people take to science, commerce, trade and particularly well-planned industries. We should not forget that we have to compete with the world which is moving very fast in this direction.”

Since then, nearly a dozen such commissions have made inconsequential contributions to the education policy. Yet the problem remains the same. But this time a powerful new method empowered with the incoming aid is leading the way. State schools can of course do little to resist this change. But neither can they make a great deal of difference to the situation. The schools which house the individuals that 'matter' are the ones which are the most affected. Steps

must be taken to resist this change; otherwise, it could mean the end of Pakistan as a sovereign nation on the face of the earth.

In the last part of this case study, we outlined the different streams of school education in the country. Now let us try to peep in to the future and assess what roles will / can they play for Pakistan's coming generation. Also we shall make recommendations for each of them.

The very first step must be to standardize and implement a single curricula policy in the country. There is nothing new about this concept. It was one of the main recommendations made by the Department of Islamic reconstruction in 1947. The standardization of syllabi may seem like a task of immense magnitude, but it is the only way out. We must do away with the decadent Colonial philosophy and breathe in the fresh air of modern teaching methodologies that will nurture a new breed of Pakistanis that are, well, truly Pakistani.

Haphazard procedures cannot do this. A twenty five year plan must be formulated and honestly implemented to such a change to be beneficial. Also, all stakeholders must be taken into confidence and must work concertedly to ensure its success.

Alas, governments that come and go as quickly as new computer models cannot be expected to do this. All they do and have done is to provide 'imported' solutions dreamt up by half baked 'experts' that are as unaware of the issues as the proverbial queen who said, "Let them eat cake.....".

Another 'change' is brought about by incompetents who want to bring in radical changes 'overnight', or maybe before the next election/promotion. Again these changes tend to be even more cosmetic than the imported solutions mentioned earlier. 'Lets train 30,000 teachers in 3 months' and such unrealistic slogans become their objectives.

As we mentioned earlier, a long term plan must be initiated that should rise over and above political interests to serve national interests. Perhaps this might be expecting too much, so let us talk about what each individual segment can do to improve things.

The state run schools follow state policy; hence a change in policy must be made. This has already been discussed earlier, so let us move on to those institutions that are somewhat autonomous in their operations.

The *Madaris* can play the lead role in the reform. They are the fountainhead of all religious and ethical instruction. By making some primary changes in their methodology and mechanics, they can be in a position to turn out individuals who can spearhead the infusion of ethos in the mainstream. They are the inheritors of the Messengers of Allah, and hence have the primary responsibility of bring reform in society at all levels. It must be remembered, that in order to do that, they themselves need to undergo reforms. These reforms must be well thought and planned; also they must be made with full heart and soul of the leadership, who must understand the need(s) of the hour.

The private schools must also recognize the need of blending ethics and character building with instruction. Already the ill effects of not doing is being felt everywhere. Gang wars, lack of respect for rules and teachers, and the use of drugs in even elite schools has become the norm. Is the problem rectifiable? Of course it is. They need to switch from being education ‘supermarkets’ to personality building institutions, from fee-grabbing ‘educationist’ to inspiring teachers and from commercial businesses to investments in our future. Unless they do so, they shall be never be forgiven by the annals of time, for corrupting the very holistic nature of teaching.

We spoke earlier of ‘Islamic Schools’ and the fact that they are a ray of hope for Pakistan. The current situation of these schools is beyond the scope of this case study; however we shall conduct a quick analysis of their condition.

First of all, these schools must concentrate on research and development. This being an expensive exercise, they must unite under a single platform to be able to concert their individual efforts towards their common goals. Many of these schools are run by non-profit trusts, which in it self is a big plus. Money must be pumped in to design curriculums, develop textbooks, and provide teacher training to their faculty, many of the being highly motivated individuals. They must provide not only Islamic environment, but also the highest standard of contemporary education and thus perhaps become a model for the government sector. Such working models are desperately needed to ‘show’ everyone that improvement is a very achievable goal. Many such schools are on this track and although there is still a long way to go, there is great hope that the journey will take them and the nation at least in a direction never assumed before. May be it

seems that too much is being expected of them, but perhaps greatness will have to be thrust upon them, for there aren't many options out there.

Are we condemned to live in the past? The *RasulAllah* (Allah's peace & blessings be upon him) said, "Educate your children, for they shall live in a time different from yours". How superbly he summed up the basis of education policy! But are we up to it?

Let me quote again the Founder of Pakistan,

"The future of our State will and must accordingly depend upon the type of education we give to our children"

Let us ask ourselves, "What kind of future do we want for our country?"