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6th Youth Parliament Pakistan

A Report on

Madrassa Education: 2014 Challenges, Reforms and Possibilities

March 2015

PILdAT
Pakistan Institute of
Legislative Development
And Transparency

Secretariat Youth Parliament Pakistan



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PILDAT is an independent, non-partisan and not-for-profit indigenous research and training institution with the mission to strengthen democracy and democratic institutions in Pakistan. It also serves as Secretariat, Youth Parliament Pakistan.

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CONTENTS

Table Of Content *Preface*

Dedication	
Executive Summary	
Members of Youth Parliament Standing Committee on Energy	08
Introduction	12
Chapter 1	13
Challenges	13
Numbers Game	13
Proposals For Reform	13
Registration	13
Funding	14
Reforms To Monitor Madrassa Funds	14
Human Resource Development	14
Reforms For Hr Development	14
Curriculum Development	15
Reforms For Curriculum Development	15
Chapter 2	17
Comparative Models For Inspiration	17
- Indonesia	17
- Cuba	17
Chapter 3	18
Policy Recommendations	18
Expert Opinions	18
Concluding Remarks By Committee Members	19
Bibliography	20
Annexure	21
Consultations With Policy Experts	21
Picture Gallery	22
Press Clipping	25

PREFACE

After the successful completion of 5 terms since 2007, the 6th Youth Parliament Pakistan was launched in June 2014. The specific objectives of the Youth Parliament Pakistan (YPP) programme are to inculcate democratic culture and spirit of tolerance for others views among the youth; to expose them to the political and parliamentary processes; to facilitate youth to express their views on various national, international, regional and local issues thereby helping the government and society at large to better understand the concerns of the youth; to groom the leadership potential of the youth of Pakistan by exposing them to peaceful and democratic resolution of differences especially at a time when various parts of Pakistan are suffering from conflict and extremism. Finally this provides a forum to the youth of Pakistan to understand how the Parliament works as the supreme public representative institution in a democracy.

The YPP has its own 2-party system, Leader of the House and Opposition, as well as an augmented system of Parliamentary Committees with Committee Chairpersons, Vice Chairpersons and Secretaries.

The Youth Parliament Standing Committees of the 6th Youth Parliament Pakistan (2014), as a part of the learning process, have been tasked with conducting reviews of national policies through research based analysis and with developing cogent policy alternatives for the Parliament and the Government of Pakistan. The six Youth Parliament Standing Committees for the current term are:

- Youth Parliament Standing Committee on National Security
- Youth Parliament Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs
- Youth Parliament Standing Committee on Energy
- Youth Parliament Standing Committee on Law, Justice & Human Rights
- Youth Parliament Standing Committee on Education & Youth Affairs
- Youth Parliament Standing Committee on Finance, Economic Affairs & Planning

The Committees have gone through a process of intensive research, consultations with policy experts and internal review within Committees before putting together their proposals. The initial findings were shared with the Secretariat Youth Parliament Pakistan and the Steering Committee Youth Parliament Pakistan who gave their comments on these drafts. After incorporating these inputs, the reports are finalized by individual Committees and thereafter presented on the floor of the House for further recommendations and feedback from the entire strength of the YPP. Going through this rigour the participants not only experienced the process of drafting policy in a democratic fashion but also formulated useful recommendation in the form of this report,

The reports are compiled and finally published for the purpose of dissemination through media briefing and report launch event at the closure of third YPP Session of the 6th YPP term. More importantly all the reports will be presented by the Members of YPP to the corresponding Standing Committees of the National Assembly and Senate, in the effort to incorporate the voice of the youth in the national policy making process. The authors of the reports, the MYPs, are to take the lead in lobbying for the recommendations they have devised, to civil society, media and to a greater audience. The reports are also available online at www.youthparliament.pk.

The 6th Youth Parliament Pakistan (2014-2015) is supported by the *Danish International Development Agency, Government of Denmark*, as recognition of the importance of young people's development in democracy and democratic practices.

Disclaimer

The Secretariat of Youth Parliament Pakistan has provided unbiased feedback in a timely manner on the research reports and the scientific value of the work done by MYP's. The Secretariat has given guidance in ensuring the content is clear, concise, and relevant to the current pool of knowledge in regard to originality, and interest to the readers. The opinions, findings or recommendations expressed in this report belong to the authors and do not reflect the views of PILDAT or DANIDA.

Secretariat of the Youth Parliament Pakistan
Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency
March 2015

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This research report is a sincere composition and hard work of many intellectual minds who earnestly want to amend Pakistan's madrassa education system and have given thoughtful recommendations and analysis on madrassa education.

I, **Mizghan Kirmani**, the Chairperson for (PILDAT) Youth Parliament Pakistan's Standing Committee on Education and Youth Affairs, would like to thank all my committee members who made this report possible with their ideas and planning. My appreciations go to my colleagues in developing the report with the best of their knowledge. Our Vice Chair **Ms. Anooshay Shaigan** and Secretary **Mr. Faisal Saleh Yaqub** made tremendous efforts in providing information during the drafting of this report. The Ministers for Education and Youth Affairs from Green Party, **Ms. Sammiya Mujtaba** and **Ms. Sakina Gulab** from Blue party executed work to the best of their abilities in this research report. Other Members from the Committee, **Mr. Darya Khan Pahore**, **Ms. Rahy Farooq**, **Ms. Amna Saeed Mughal**, **Mr. Akbar Khan** and **Mr. Younis Nawaz Bhatti**, brought the best of discussions in the committee meetings and drafted the report with their expertise over the issue.

I am highly indebted to President PILDAT **Mr. Ahmed Bilal Mehboob** for his guidance and constant supervision as well as providing necessary information regarding the project and for his support in completing the report.

I would also like to thank **Ms. Shandana Sajjad, Project Officer** for her steady hold up and assistance for this report.

I would like to articulate my particular appreciation and gratitude to **Mr. Hamad Ullah Mangrio, Assistant Project Officer**, **Mr. Khawaja Zaheer Ahmed, Special Assistant to Prime Minister** and **Mr. Ahsan Iqbal, Federal Minister Planning, Development and Reform** for taking time out for the Committee and acquainting us with madrassa education and national policies on education.

Thank You

Mizghan Kirmani
Chairperson, Standing Committee on Education and Youth Affairs

Members of Youth Parliament Standing Committee on Education and Youth Affairs



Mizghan Mehboob Kirmani
(YP54-SINDH07)
Chairperson



Anooshy Shaigan
(YP26-PUNJAB07)
Vice Chairperson



Faisal Saleh Yaqub
(YP30-PUNJAB11)
Secretary



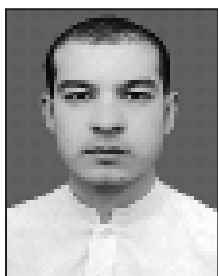
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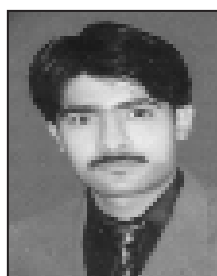
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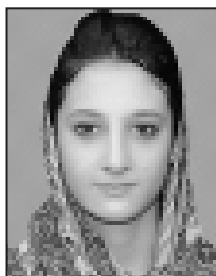
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Sakina Gulab Khan
Youth Minister for Education and Youth Affairs
(YP19-KP07)

DEDICATION

“We would like to dedicate this report to all policy makers, teachers and students of the madrassa education system, hoping for better future prospects and for an improved Pakistan.”

Members of the Standing Committee on Education and Youth Affairs,
Youth Parliament Pakistan, PILDAT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The report on 'Madrasa Education 2014: Challenges, Reforms and Possibilities' has been prepared during the period of June 2014 to August 2014 by the Members of Youth Parliament Standing Committee on Education and Youth Affairs.

The report strongly examines the challenges, much-needed reforms and future possibilities regarding the madrasa system in Pakistan. The objective of the report is to offer reforms to the main educational challenges of the madrasa structure. The report is drafted for reinvigorating the principles and eminence of the madrasa education sector in light of its existing challenges.

The initial chapter of the report carries detailed light on the madrasa challenges and recommendations and analyzes a number of issues like the number of madrassas, administrative flaws, registration, funding, budget allocation, human resource development, inequality of opportunity, stereotypical mindsets and curriculum development. Each problem is dealt with in order so that the follow up of one reform may lead to another.

The follow-up chapter contains models for madrasa education inspired by Indonesia and Cuba. Under the guidance of experts' opinions, the members analyzed the models and addressed the reforms to each challenge for the betterment of Pakistan's education and youth, in light of the above models.

This report was conducted via primary and secondary resources. The committee members conducted interviews with various policy experts on this topic and used their knowledge in drafting recommendations for the challenges identified. Policy experts including former and serving politicians and bureaucrats, academics, researchers and educationists have been consulted with regard to current government policy as well as further short-term and long-term initiatives that can be taken, thus addressing top-down policy-making along with bridging gaps in education systems at the local and grassroots level since education has been devolved as a provincial subject after constitutional amendments.

Further, secondary sources were used to study the background and to consume knowledge on the most important areas. The report evaluates the findings of national and international organizations and institutions, such as the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, UN, DFID, International Crisis Group, Brookings, etc. Statistics from their research papers were also used and are quoted in this research report.

The members carefully suggested that coordinated monitoring bodies should be formed at the federal level and at provincial and district levels to scrutinize the implementation of madrasa reforms and discuss the challenges being faced by the sector and that the madrasa boards should be regulated with periodic meetings and support from the Government and from amongst their own communities. The Financial and Budget sectors of the Government should raise the allocation percentage of GDP spent on education in order to facilitate each child with proper educational needs as per Article 25-A of the Constitution.

The restructuring of reforms is indeed much needed. It would be reasonable and feasible to follow Cuban and Indonesian models in the Pakistani madrasa system as they prepare their lot for better future prospects, like for commerce and industry, for philosophical degrees and for vocational learning, with emphasis on honesty and sincerity for work.

Given the political will and optimized utilization of resources, a reformed education system can not only empower people, produce a tolerant citizenry, reduce poverty, improve prospects for employment, but can also solidify foundations of democracy and good governance as well as promote social cohesion.

INTRODUCTION

Why have the madrassas become a theme of controversy?

Madrassas have been a foundation of all types of awareness for Muslims where tutoring, even in the science subjects, was provided. Over the years the role of the conventional madrassas has been confined to merely imparting religious education.

Due to a lack of restrictions and proper administration, madrassas in Pakistan are criticized by the west as religious hubs where conservative fundamentals are being fashioned.

The history of madrassas can be traced back to the independence of the subcontinent, followed by a sudden rise in numbers during Zia-Ul-Haq's era when these seminaries mushroomed and were funded on the philosophy of Jihad.

What role do madrassas play in participating in Pakistani traditions?

Their existence and workings in the country are still justifiable because Pakistan is a state high on poverty and low income survivors and these seminaries provide free education and free basic necessities to a large number of children. However the quality of teaching and unmonitored knowledge needs to be checked and addressed.

Types of madrassas

According to the Societies Registration Act madrassa refers to a religious institution that may include a Jamia, Dar-ul-Uloom, school, college or university, operated mainly for the purposes of imparting religious education and may even provide boarding and lodging facilities. The following schools of thought exist :

1. Wafaq ul Madaaris al Arabia (Deobandi)
2. Tanzeem ul Madaaris (Bareilvi)
3. Wafaq ul Madaaris al Salafia (Ahl-e-Hadith)
4. Wafaq ul Madaaris al Shia (Shia)
5. Rabita ul Madaaris al Islamia (Jamaat-e-Islami)

CHAPTER 1

CHALLENGES

The Members of Youth Parliament's Standing Committee on Education and Youth Affairs after thorough discussion highlighted the following challenges with analysis.

Numbers game

The foremost challenge that these seminaries in Pakistan are facing is the undetermined and questionable total number which is a root cause of many other problems that are stemming from this system.

Some 19,104 madrassas were registered with the government back in March 2010 but the common estimated range is around 20,000 – 30,000. A study was conducted by World Bank-Andrabi et-al in 2005 whose report evaluates that only a small proportion of children are enrolled in these schools and that madrassas are smaller in number as compared to public and private sector schools in Pakistan. However Christine Fair has criticized the limitations in these household surveys.

The number of madrassas was around 245 when Pakistan was drawn on the world map and the mushrooming continues yet the government is not prioritizing to take notice over this and the problems leading to this. Many unchecked and unregistered madrassas have been flourishing in the country for which no credible database is available. There are numerous madrassas which are unreachable because of their far flung locality hence accessibility to them is an issue. The number of madrassas, not being defined for a specific locality like public sector schools, is also a major reason why illegal and unregistered madrassas are rampant.

According to a report of the UK Department for International Development DFID, more statistical and systematic information is needed to address gaps in knowledge and curriculum and more accurate estimates are required for the number of madrassas, enrolled students, graduates and change in employability prospects after modernization.

The political and religious interest in the country is directly affecting these seminaries, at times creating a negative image, which must immediately be addressed by bringing into account unidentified madrassas.

Proposals for reform

- Government authorities should ensure a proper

registration website and rolls for the record of the enrolled students and the number of madrassas present in the country.

- Monitoring teams should be made within federal and provincial bodies to maintain a record of the existing and newly constructed madrassas.
- The government would need to further strengthen coordination with madrassas.
- Government should facilitate resourceful networking to account for the madrassas in the education system, like district level officers, executive district officers and supervisors should be appointed.
- Government should absolutely shut down illegal and ghost madrassas.

Registration

Registration may be greeted with hesitation by the madrasa owners who want to avoid regulations, monitoring and oversight. This is due to many reasons, the most serious ones highlighted as being disclosing the source of funding and follow ups after terrorism attacks.

In the 90s, madrassas registered under Societies Registration Act 1860 which was amended in Musharraf's era in 2005 after the terrorist attacks of 9/11. This amendment carried registration as an obligatory process in order to review the sources' of funding, maintain audit etc. Iqraullah Jan from Ministry of Religious Affairs then saw registration as an attempt to regulation and enhanced government control. However the registration process resumed and received impetus after 2007.

Rehman Malik said around 15,000 madrassas had registered themselves with the government with 5,000 more to follow soon. However, illegal madrassas continue to mushroom in the country while the administrative heads keep blaming each other for not taking an initiative to stop unregistered growth which might threaten civic life on the pattern of Lal Masjid if not checked in time.

Federal capital Deputy Commissioner Amir Ali Ahmad in 2011 said various madrassas boards, *wafaq* and *tanzeem*, had constructed over 295 seminaries in the city and the ICT administration had registered around 156. He pointed to CDA by-laws where only 8 to 10 mosques were allowed to be constructed within one sector, yet many seminaries had been constructed illegally and Capital Development Authority could not take action as there was reluctance for a reaction that might cause a law and order situation. Hence, the registration issues faced by the federal government are

quite apparent..

So, before the government formulates its policies, there is a dire need for valid and authentic data regarding these madrassas. Otherwise it would result in misallocation of resources and ineffective policies.

Moreover, the enrollment of foreign students in all the madrassas cannot be neglected. Their data should be entered accurately in the records of the authorities.

Reforms for strict registration

Societies Registration Act 1860 should be followed strictly and unregistered madrassas be discouraged.

- Government must take madrassa organizers into confidence and remove their reservations for opposing to integrate madrassa education with mainstream education.
- Madrassas shall not operate without registration. Those established after the enforcement of this Act, may be given a year's time to get registered. Madrassas having more than one campus shall need only one registration.
- All madrassas should submit an annual report of their educational activities as well as the audit report of their accounts, to the Registrar.
- No madrassa shall teach any text which promotes militancy, sectarianism or religious hatred; without hindering comparative study of other religions or schools of thought or other subjects covered by Islamic jurisprudence.

Funding

Monitoring the sources of funding is a great challenge faced by policy makers while drafting policies. The uncontroversial sources of funding maintain the day-to-day running of these seminaries. Madrassas mostly work as societies/NGOs and get their finances through charity and *zakat* (Islamic concept of obligatory charity) given by general public, through animal hide collections, through support of philanthropists, rich tycoons, landowners, traders and through aid given by overseas Pakistanis. According to the Special Branch of Police, the government does provide subsidies for improvement in madrassa education but its contribution is negligible in comparison to private funds for madrassas, 74 % of which come from foreign sources in Punjab alone, while 34% come from *zakat*.

The problem linked with controversial funding, called into question by our society's current security situation, is that various sectarian madrassas are getting their funding and backing from Saudi Arabia and Iran and these unmonitored funds may be encouraging social

conservatism, extremism or even militancy among the various sects of Pakistani society, also causing many riots during traditional religious festivities or mourning. Many political and religious groups invest high amount of capital in these seminaries for their own vested interests to mobilize vote banks for power-hungry politicians. If the funding is not monitored by the state, the receiving audience can easily be imparted with anti-state sentiments and hatred towards other non Muslim countries.

Upon search, many unfiltered madrassas have revealed explicit material guised as jannat/heaven to provoke innocent minds into committing vices, like suicide bombings and killings, which ruins the reputation of Islamic teachings. Foreign media has also used this to exploit the credibility of madrassas, overshadowing their goodness.

Reforms to monitor madrassa funds

- The funds and donations should be strictly monitored by the government authorities and the regulatory bodies.
- An auditing team should be made for madrassas' expenditure to account for their activities and spending.
- Funding should come from the general education budget, as program specific funds from Western donors may generate distrust. Official fund-raising may be organized annually, the collection of which be allocated properly among madrassas.
- Funds should be disbursed proportionately in the divisible pool so that no vacuum is created for factors like militancy.
- Madrassas may be exempt from utility bills and other expenditure so that they are not burdened for extra generation of capital.

Human Resource Development

Every human being needs development via socialization and training. The capacity building of madrassa teachers is a big challenge the policy of which needs revision. Teachers are not well aware of the changing global patterns and educational trends. Immediate human resource development is needed to maintain better teaching standards.

Most madrassa teachers lack critical thinking skills owing to lack of clear guidance and training. Moreover, the facilities that a teacher should receive are scarce which can lead to frustration and zero tolerance among teachers, hence lashing out an unfriendly attitude and even severe corporal punishment towards students. Corporal punishment is widespread in Pakistani madrassas but is often under-reported. It badly

damages students' self-confidence and they feel hesitant to share their views. According *SPARC (Society for Protection of Rights of Children)* madrassas witness 83% of corporal punishment. This vulnerability is due to non-registration of madrassas which fall outside of the grip of laws of the state on corporal punishment. An unreasonable justification given for the beatings and physical punishment in madrassas is that they are essential for suppression of satanic influences on children.

The teaching methodology mostly covers one-way communication rather than being more interactive which should be one of the most important components of learning. They resist the change in curriculum because that will require an extra effort on their part.

One of the plights encountered by religious teachers is that they are not provided adequate salaries and incentives which could have yielded better output. It is because of the government's neglect that madrassas are predominantly self-owned. Due to non-availability of adequate funds for the fulfillment of even basic amenities, the religious academia and their households face financial insecurity as the remuneration for their services may be a paltry sum of 3000-5000 rupees. It also results in their children not going to school which is an additional burden on state. For survival they can resort to earning through illegal means.

Reforms for HR development

- Proper teacher-training should be ensured by the government with the best teachers' training methodology and literature.
- Instead of parroting the books, teaching methods which promote critical thinking, dialogue, debate and religious tolerance need to be adopted. Visiting faculty may be recruited for teaching newly introduced subjects (e.g. Science, Mathematics, English and Computing).
- Better incentives for hard work should be provided to the teachers so they work more efficiently. Government should encourage registration so laws of corporal punishment may also be applied.
- High penalties should be ensured to serve as a deterrent for violations and evasions.
- Adequate portion of the education budget should be allocated for financing teachers and graduates.
- Make them financially secure by constructing shops and markets for madrassas, rents of which be earmarked for them.
- Feelings of tolerance, harmony and amiability towards other sects and religions should be inculcated in teachers as well as students.

Curriculum development

The madrasa boards are equally responsible for influencing young minds with manipulated curriculum which indirectly hampers the sensibility to think critically and keep up with global trends. The syllabus taught at many madrassas without supervision can then promote extremism. The Boards should revise the educational conditions with effective control over examination techniques.

Curriculum content plays an important role in shaping young minds. Individual madrassas should not decide autonomously what to teach and preach and should not force the students to learn according to the master's wishes. Many of the madrassas teach only religious subjects, with the entire focus on rote memorizing Arabic texts. Resultantly, minds are not exercised in critical thinking which in the long-term affects their intellectual development in the religious as well as temporal sphere. This takes place to the complete exclusion of basic skills such as simple math, science or geography. As a result they are not so equipped to meet the demands of the market in acquiring jobs. The non-liberalization of the madrasa curriculum, especially exclusion of non-religious subjects which train minds in thinking, stalls the madrasa students in adopting a creative mind.

According to the *U.S Commission on International Religious Freedom*, research on Pakistan madrasa textbooks found religious bias in every madrasa. Unlike Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Kuwait have state-dictated curriculum in madrassas in order to avoid religious disharmony and sectarian conflict.

If madrassas could be used as the bases of promotion of hatred for other sects and religions it would pave way for fragmentation of society. It is due to the negligence of government for not giving due attention to them i.e. to devise state-sponsored curriculum and also because of pre-dominantly self-owned madrassas coupled with unchecked registration and teaching their own curriculum containing mostly hate material for other sects and religions. The government is not censoring the curriculum of madrassas and because of this free hand our society witnesses the menace of sectarianism and disharmony.

Reforms for Curriculum Development

- The madrasa boards should be given the status of an independent examination board but these boards or '*wafaaq*' may be affiliated with the federal Ministry of Education or federal Ministry of Religious Affairs. The implementation of 18th Amendment decentralizes and devolves education

to provinces but madrassa education could still link up with the Higher Education Commission. Madrassas must be given the status of schools and be registered with the education boards of Pakistan so as to tie them with the mainstream education system.

- The education being imparted in madrassas must not be limited to religious scripts. There is a need to form a balanced and unified syllabus that includes both religious as well as scientific knowledge, to enable madrassa students to pursue higher education, compete in the global world and become productive citizens.
- Keeping up with technological advancement, computer literacy is necessary for madrassa students as well. Government can make agreements with public and private companies for imparting computer education at registered madrassas. The Education Ministry (2009) claims to have introduced latest computer technology to 30 madrassas and paid the salaries of 950 teachers on a three-year scheme .
- Unemployment is prevalent among madrassa students nowadays. Madrassa graduates when equipped with contemporary education would have good future prospects of employment and help themselves in raising their standard of living.
- Introduction of science subjects in the madrassas requires qualified teachers. As madrassas have limited budget, government must provide them with funds, competent teachers and other necessary facilities to teach those subjects.
- State-dictated curriculum should be taught in madrassas and it should be monitored by authorized teams so that no offensive material is taught.
- The curriculum should be designed as to induce critical and analytical thinking in the students.
- Evolve an integrated system of national education by bringing religious institutions and modern schools closer in curriculum and content. In 2010, the Ittehad e Tanzeemat Madaris e Deeniya (ITMD) and the Minister of Interior accorded to collaborate and address uniform curriculum standards, introduction of contemporary subjects, madrasa registration and standards for awarding madrasa degrees .
- Secular subjects should be included in the madrassa curriculum to bring them into mainstream and cater to the needs of the job market.
- Technical plus vocational training should be provided for the acquisition of skills to earn livelihood.
- Government should provide skills-development

trainers and capacity builders for madrassa students.

- Medium of instruction should be defined e.g. Urdu or English. Quran is taught in Arabic, though students are not taught how to speak Arabic and this gives the administrators freedom to interpret the text in their own version .
- Madrassas should be monitored by the education department and must be visited on a regular basis by special teams consisting of educationists.
- Media and civil society can play a positive role in educating the society regarding the importance of spiritual as well as worldly education.
- Madrassa boards may modernize the curriculum inspired from the Cuban and Indonesian models where recommendations are made owing to the demands of the chambers of commerce and industry and other official networks since this improves employability prospects of madrassas students.

CHAPTER 2

COMPARATIVE MODELS FOR INSPIRATION

- Indonesia

According to the Asian Development Bank's project on Madrasa Education Development in Indonesia 2014, the madrasa education system in Indonesia is under the responsibility of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, while the general education system is decentralized. Madrasahs were formally integrated into the national education system, and now follow the national curriculum and education standards set by the government. Madrasahs mostly serve disadvantaged communities and attract more female students so targeting them through education programs helps promote economic growth and improve civic knowledge. The Project aims to improve teacher professionalism, upgrade teaching and learning resources and facilities and strengthen governance, management and sustainability to keep up with national standards. Highlights include:

- Improved education management information system and district education statistics of schools and madrasahs. With decentralization, local governments also need to pay significantly more attention to madrasahs in remote areas.
- Increased enrollment rates, reduced dropout rates and improved academic performance of students in the national exams, providing the foundation for better employment and advanced education opportunities and identifying candidates for overseas training programs.
- The project improved salaries and provided resources for teachers and principals to upgrade their qualifications and undertake professional certification programs and trainings focused on subject content in the sciences, mathematics and English, teaching methodologies, implementation of new curriculums, after-school remedial programs and scholarships for disadvantaged students. Capacity building programs are required to further improve teaching methods and madrasa-based management.
- A community-driven development approach has been adopted for channeling project funds directly to madrasahs based on jointly developed Madrasa Development Plans (MDPs) prepared in close

consultation with all stakeholders including senior officials from the Ministry of Education and Culture and Ministry of Religious Affairs, madrasa principals and teachers, parents and community members. Madrasa committees, central project management unit and provincial and district coordinating units have been established to collaborate with the MOEC to ensure more efficient use of government resources, including performance-based planning and budgeting.

- Cuba

Cuban model for education can also be comprehensively applied to our madrasa education system in order to provide worldly as well as religious-oriented education, ultimately providing young minds with healthy future prospects. It entails that all children between 5-16 years should be given free and equal education, while the State monitors the education system and grooms the future generation as productive citizens. After the completion of high school the children should be given a choice of a degree or a line of career. The children may opt for either a Philosophical Degree or Vocational Training, before embarking on their future career paths. The State can then pick professionals and skilled persons from this lot and integrate them into the economic, social, industrial or political sector. This way the gaps in unemployment and inequality in the education system may also be bridged.

CHAPTER 3

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Expert opinions

1. **Khawaja Zaheer Ahmed**, *Special Assistant to Prime Minister; Former Civil Servant; Member of Asian Development Bank's Madrassa Education Development Project 2002.*
 - He regarded madrassa as an old but prestigious institution of religious education in the subcontinent and proposed that the Indonesian model of madrassas could be implemented in Pakistan, highlighting the key features of the model and how it became a success in Indonesia by managing to combine religious education with rigorous, scientific education. He explained that in Indonesia, Education Ministry and Religious Affairs Ministry work together to provide the best education for students of madrassas. He further apprised that the syllabus of Indonesian madrassas is in line with the needs and demands of Indonesian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) and that the graduates of these madrassas are readily employed by the industry as they are considered to possess great personality traits, well regarded in the job market and are highly competent. He pointed out the problem of registration of madrassas in Pakistan due to which no exact figure of madrassas in Pakistan is available till now. He was of the view that madrassas in Pakistan are funded from various sources such as Iran, Saudi Arabia, philanthropy, etc. but madrassa administrators are reluctant to register because that would draw undue attention of the government towards their administrative and financial affairs. He also pointed to the government's lack of will to regulate these madrassas as the backlash could become a nuisance for the authorities. He stressed to formulate laws to monitor the affairs of madrassas, e.g. under Article 25A of the Constitution, the government should ask all the schools and children of school-going age to apply to the federal government for their right to free and compulsory primary education, thereby also enabling the government to maintain oversight. With regard to syllabus being taught in the madrassas, he was of the view that it needs to be updated so that madrassa students could be well integrated in mainstream education.
2. **Ahsan Iqbal**, *Federal Minister Planning, Development & Reform*
 - Expressed his views on Vision 2025 as a part of

several larger governance initiatives being undertaken for public sector reform projects of the current government. Building better institutions and improving our current ones to become more inclusive, sustainable and effective is the first part of making Pakistan a developed country. All recent case studies of the economic successes around the world have two things in common; a collective vision for what the country must achieve and the continuity of governments. China, Turkey, Singapore, Malaysia are all examples who have developed with these basic foundations in place and he hopes to make Pakistan a part of this league.

According to the seven Pillars of Pakistan 2025: "Priority is on the strengthening of social capital, improving human skill and providing access to more opportunities by investing in education, health and social development, generating jobs and prospects for the youth, inclusion of vulnerable segments, religious diversity, interfaith harmony and moving towards a knowledge-based, ethical and values driven society".

3. **Shaigan Shareef Malik**, *Former Secretary Ministry of Education.*
 - Expressed his views on education and budget allocation. While execution could be handed over to the federating units, policy regarding education should be national so that there is uniformity within the country. Since we are an ideological State bound to follow Islamic tenets for life, core curriculum should have been retained by the federal government. Similarly, standards of education and centralized examinations would have been preferable. In a federal system, the best approach to allocation of resources should be based on the principle of 'subsidiarity'. This principle means that if a function can be discharged by more than one level of government, it is best discharged by the lowest. This implies that decision-making and control of resources should be at the lowest level. In the context of education, secondary education should be entrusted to the local levels (we are without a local government system in 3 provinces).
4. **Asim Ijaz Khawaja**, *Professor International Finance & Development, Harvard.*
 - Was enquired regarding his work in 2003 on madrassas in Pakistan. He pointed out the problem in database regarding numbers and registration and gave his opinions on bridging the gap between private and public schools and madrassas.
5. **Taimur K. Bandey**, *Head International Baccalaureate Primary/Middle Years Program*
 - He emphasized on bridging gaps in the education

systems through teacher training, uniform curriculum, world history to be made compulsory in order to develop critical thinking, utilization of education budget and stronger political will for not just achieving a target for literacy but sustainable development.

6. **Imran Sarwar**, *Co-Founder Rabtt*
 - He demonstrated the efforts of his organization that aims to promote critical thinking, empathy and creative expression over rote-learning, via educational camps for different classes of the society.
7. **Retd. Brig. Shaukat Qadir**, *Risk & Security Analyst, WIKISTRAT; Columnist, Express*
 - Expressed his views that madrassas can flourish given their graduates have employment prospects.
8. **Maira Omair Rana**, *Educationist, Administrator at Lahore Grammar School.*
 - Expressed her views on bridging the gaps by emphasizing on teacher training and curriculum reform based on the Aga Khan model for primary education.
9. **Shahida Saeed**, *Assistant Professor; Government Degree College for Women.*
 - Expressed her views on bridging the gap between private schools, public schools and madrassas.

CONCLUDING REMARKS BY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The Members of Youth Parliament's Standing Committee on Education and Youth Affairs joined heads for many continuous strenuous meetings and reiterated much needed reforms for the afore-identified challenges faced by madrassa education.

1. The government should own and give heed to religious institutions as they do to public and private schools. It is because of this that madrassas may consider themselves deprived of social acceptance and marginalization, sowing seeds of frustration and resulting in activities on their part that may be in complete contrast of the present modern society.
2. There should be sufficient allocation for them in the national education budget so that they can run their institutions without resorting to questionable means of sustaining themselves from foreign funding.
3. National curriculum for madrassas should be compiled by the government in order to discourage hate material and mainstream it with the pace of contemporary global trends. Liberalization of curriculum is imperative for they are exposed to rote-learning without allowance to question the subjects they are taught.
4. The teachers need to be recruited through a proper recruitment channel devised by the government since many of them in these institutions are predominantly not well versed.
5. While many madrassas receive some funding from the government, this funding is not typically their mainstay. They have repeatedly been highly resistant to any involvement by the government in their running. Political parties, the current provincial and federal government included, are known to frequently disburse zakat funding to madrassas and other religious establishments to garner votes. It is unlikely they would be willing to heavily upset this relationship.
6. While some potentially significant reform work is taking place with madrassas, this mostly seems to be coming from within the religious community. It seems that this community is unlikely to engage and we propose that we look into reform of the national curriculum. Altering subjects such as Pakistan Studies and Islamiyat seems problematic because of their highly politicized nature and the accompanying corrupt nexus that exists between publishers, syllabus setters, textbook boards and authors. Instead we propose introduction of a new compulsory subject based on ideas of social justice and highlighting issues of significant social importance. This approach should have reasonable political capital as it is hard for anyone to deny that we have significant social issues and something must be done about them, awareness being a first and major step. It is also likely to sit well with the publishing nexus as it provides greater opportunities for them. This subject could deftly and attractively provide an alternative framework.
7. National curriculum should also aim to improve student's employability thus there is a need to get in touch with people in the relevant sectors to assess feasibility, to put together a team of educational experts to create a curriculum or adapt to an existing curriculum, to have it run in several schools for a sufficient trial period and to lobby to get this curriculum nationalized and made mandatory. This program could have a wide-ranging impact on social conservatism and a host of other significant issues in the coming years.

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ANNEXURE

Consultations with Policy Experts

Ahmed Bilal Mehboob, President PILDAT

Khawaja Zaheer Ahmed, Special Assistant to Prime Minister; Former Civil Servant; Member of Asian Development Bank's Madrassa Education Development Project 2002

Ahsan Iqbal, Federal Minister Planning, Development & Reform

Shaigan Shareef Malik, Former Secretary Ministry of Education

Asim Ijaz Khawaja, Researcher, Professor of International Finance & Development at Harvard

Taimur K. Bandey, Head of International Baccalaureate's Primary Years Programme and IB Middle Years Programme

Imran Sarwar, Co-Founder Rabtt, an organization that aims to promote critical thinking through educational camps for students and mentors from different classes of society

Retd. Brig. Shaukat Qadir, Risk & Security Analyst at WIKISTRAT; Columnist at Express

Maira Omair Rana, Educationist, Administrator at Lahore Grammar School

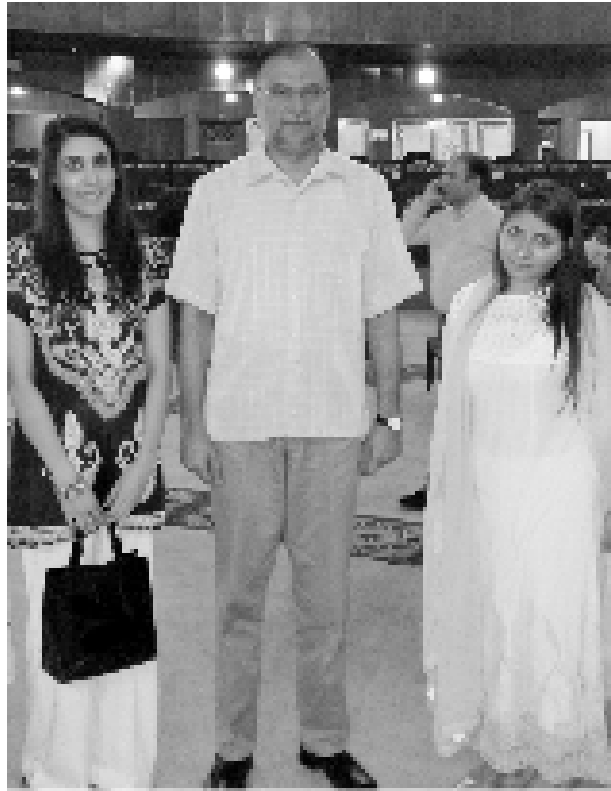
Shahida Saeed, Assistant Professor, Government Degree College for Women

The details of the meetings can be found in “The Policy Expert's Opinion” Section.

PICTURE GALLERY



Members of the Committee with Kh. Zaheer Ahmed, Special Assistant to Prime Minister



Members of the Committee with Ahsan Iqbal, Minister Planning Development & Reform



Members of the Committee with Ahmed Bilal Mehboob, President PILDAT

Press Clipping

Published in The Express Tribune, December 26th, 2014.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/812306/need-of-the-hour-youth-parliament-chalks-out-strategy-for-madrassa-reforms/>

Need of the hour

Youth Parliament chalks out strategy for madrassa reforms

The suggestions, if implemented, could serve as an antidote for Pakistan's militancy crisis

by NOUMAN AHMED
KARACHI

When it comes to offering an antidote to the country's grueling problems, the members of Youth Parliament Pakistan seem to be one step ahead of their seasoned counterparts in the country's parliament.

Over the past few months, while politicians across the country kept themselves embroiled in geo-and anti-dharma politics, the Youth Parliament's 10-member standing committee on education and youth affairs held brain-storming sessions, carried out painstaking research and met policy experts, including politicians, bureaucrats, academics and researchers.

In addressing the issue of growing extremism in the context of over 30,000-odd madrassas in the country, the young members of the model parliament, which is patterned after the National Assembly of Pakistan, have issued a thorough report, titled *Madrassa Education: Challenges, Reforms and Possibilities*, that was prepared between June and August and finally published around two weeks before the Peshawar school carnage.

As a result, they were able to propose a well-rounded strategy to amend the Pakistani madrassa education system, which is often generalised as a breeding ground for terrorists.

The report

The report highlights that between 20,000 to 30,000 seminaries are operating in the country and claim association with five seminary boards based

The report demands the govt to compile a national curriculum for madrassas to discourage hate material

on mainstream schools of thought or sects, including Wifaqi Madaris al Arabia (Deobandi), Tanzeemul Madaris (Barelvi), Wifaqi Madaris al Salafia (Ahl-e Hadith), Rabbani Madaris al Islamia (Jamaat-e-Islami) and Wifaqi Madaris al Shia (Ahl-e Tashli).

Registration

"The government should own and give heed to religious [educational] institutions as they do in the case of public and private schools," demands the report. It suggests a stringent mechanism of supervision and registration where monitoring teams within federal and provincial bodies should maintain a record of the existing and newly constructed seminaries.

Administration

The report suggests that existing madrassa boards be given the status of independent examination boards. They should, however, be affiliated with the education or religious affairs ministries so as to connect them to the mainstream education system.

Citing the example of madrassa education system in Indonesia that is under the responsibility of the religious affairs ministry, the report adds that seminaries in Indonesia were formally integrated into the national ed-

ucation system to follow the national curriculum and education standards set by the government.

Under this arrangement, all madrassas in Pakistan will be required to submit an annual report of their educational activities as well as the audit report of their accounts.

Funding

The seminaries work as non-government organisations and get their finances through charity and rikat, animal hide collection, philanthropies and overseas Pakistanis. However, the problem is linked with what the report terms 'controversial' sources of funding. These include foreign donors that help foster the sectarian divide as well as various political and religious groups that make massive investments in these seminaries for their own vested interests.

The report calls for sufficient allocation for seminaries in the national education budget with special emphasis on avoiding the funds from Western donors that may generate mistrust. "Sufficient government funding can help these institutions function without resorting to questionable means of sustaining themselves," adds the report.

Curriculum

On curriculum content, the report blames the unmonitored seminary boards that influence the young minds with manipulated curriculum.

It demands the government to compile a national curriculum for madrassas to discourage hate material while

THE YOUTH PARLIAMENT A democratic approach

Since its inception in 2007 by the Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency (PILDAT), the Youth Parliament, as part of a learning process, has been tasked with conducting reviews of national policies through research-based analysis and with developing policy alternatives for the parliament and the Government of Pakistan. "We try to raise our voice and share our findings and analyses on various regional, national and international issues," Maghribi Khariri, chairperson for the Youth Parliament's standing committee on education and youth affairs told *The Express Tribune*. "Regrettably, the parliamentarians hardly give attention to our findings or perhaps they think our democratic exercise is not worthy of their attention."

aiming to induce critical and analytical thinking in the students as well as improve their employability.

For this reason, the report emphasises that the education being imparted in madrassas must not be limited to religious scripts. There is a need to form a balanced and unified syllabus that includes both religious as well as scientific knowledge to pursue higher education or vocational training for the acquisition of skills to earn livelihood.

Roznama Jang

http://e.jang.com.pk/01-26-2015/Pindi/pic.asp?picname=07_07.gif

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la Croix

Le Pakistan s'interroge sur sa politique antiterroriste

Un mois après l'attaque d'une école à Peshawar, le gouvernement a élaboré un « plan d'action national ».



HASHAM AHMED/AFP

Des élèves retournent en cours après l'attaque d'une école à Peshawar par un commando de talibans qui a fait 150 morts le 16 décembre 2014.

Il prévoit l'instauration de tribunaux militaires antiterroristes et une réforme des écoles coraniques.

Une onde de choc a ébranlé le Pakistan après l'attaque d'une école à Peshawar par un commando de talibans qui a fait 150 morts, dont 134 enfants, le 16 décembre 2014.

Un mois après le massacre, de nombreux Pakistanais, généralement silencieux face aux violences quasi quotidiennes qui ensanglantent leur pays, s'interrogent sur la politique de lutte contre le terrorisme.

Ils dénoncent le laxisme des autorités face aux extrémistes et l'influence des madrasas – ces institutions religieuses privées qui attirent les enfants les plus démunis en leur offrant abri et nourriture.

> À lire aussi: **Au Pakistan, les talibans mènent une attaque sanglante dans une école**

Tribunaux antiterroristes

En réponse, le gouvernement a commencé à mettre en place un « plan d'action national ». Entre autres mesures, il prévoit l'instauration de tribunaux militaires antiterroristes, qui permettrait de désengorger les tribunaux civils et d'accélérer les procès des suspects.

Le 6 janvier, le Parlement a approuvé l'amendement de la Constitution qui valide la mise en place de ces tribunaux exceptionnels. Un vote qui fait grincer des dents, en confirmant au premier plan le retour des militaires.

> À voir aussi: **La corruption, véritable fléau au Pakistan**

Le pays, habitué aux coups d'états militaires et à l'influence de l'armée, a connu sa première transition démocratique entre deux gouvernements civils lors des élections de mai 2013.

« Grâce à sa rhétorique, l'armée a réussi à convaincre l'opinion publique qu'elle était la seule institution capable de gérer les affaires du pays. Elle va se substituer aux responsables politiques, qui eux, ont été élus... », note Farooq Yousaf, analyste au Centre pour la recherche et les études sur la sécurité à Islamabad (CRSS).

> À (re) lire: **Au Pakistan, les autorités tolèrent les radicaux islamistes**

Des madrasas très conservatrices

Dans son « plan d'action national », le gouvernement annonce également vouloir se pencher sur la question des madrasas. La société civile dénonce ces zones de non-droit, où sont parfois prônés des discours fondamentalistes qui participent à la radicalisation des esprits.

Le mouvement « Reclaim your mosque » (« Récupérez votre mosquée »), apparu après l'attaque et suivi par quelques centaines de citoyens, enjoint aux responsables politiques de reprendre le contrôle des mosquées et des madrasas.

« Les madrasas ne sont inscrites sur aucun registre et les fonds qu'elles reçoivent, qui proviennent souvent de pays extrêmement conservateurs comme l'Arabie saoudite, échappent à tout contrôle de l'État », explique Mizghan Kirmani, membre du Parlement des jeunes et auteur d'un rapport sur les madrasas.

En 2002, l'ancien président Pervez Musharraf avait promis une vaste réforme de ces institutions, qui devaient à terme adopter un programme scolaire validé par le gouvernement. La résistance des responsables religieux avait fait échouer l'entreprise.

Aujourd'hui, il y aurait entre 20 000 et 40 000 madrasas dans tout le pays. Dans la seule capitale, 160 d'entre elles ne seraient pas enregistrées par les autorités. *« Ces institutions sont un terreau fertile pour le terrorisme, »* constate Mizghan Kirmani. *Certains professeurs y enseignent la haine et dans le pire des cas, cela conduit à des attaques comme celle de Peshawar. »*

MORGANE PELLENEC (à Islamabad)

<http://www.la-croix.com/Actualite/Monde/Le-Pakistan-s-interroge-sur-sa-politique-antiterroriste-2015-01-15-1268087>



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