

**QUALITY REFORM IN TRADITIONAL
MADRASAHS FOR SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT IN BANGLADESH:
AN OBSERVATION AND A STUDY FROM
THE BRITISH COLONIAL EDUCATION SYSTEM**

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The paper mainly examines how the former British education system can contribute to the present reform movement of madrasah education in Bangladesh, particularly of traditional Qawmi institutions to ensure sustainable development in the country. The study also explores how the British government took a reformed madrasah scheme to adapt to the modern education system in colonial Bengal. We argue that the reformed madrasah scheme was a modernised system for enhancing the education of material life in Bangladesh. In this context, the present paper takes a historical approach to see what the current old education system might learn from the British reformed madrasah education scheme. The present research method relies on official educational reports, records and contemporary books, periodical and newspapers analyses.

Key words: Quality Reform, Traditional madrasah, Bangladesh, British education system, Sustainable Development.

Introduction

Quality reform in traditional Madrasahs for sustainable development is a very conventional and discussed issue in the present global society. Because of this, the conscious sections of the current world begin to feel that old *madrasah* education needs to be modernised for the sake of

human resource development and then national and international prosperity. The system of *madrasah* education is divided into two prime levels in Bangladesh; one is called Qawmi as the old traditional system under the private sector, and the other is identified as Aliya a traditional modified system which is patronised by the government. Both originated from the traditional education of the Muslims in the subcontinent. However, the quality of old traditional *madrasahs* is beset with numerous problems like outdated curriculum, absence of quality educational environment, and unavailability of teachers with the knowledge of modern education, students' inability to mix with learners of mainstream institutions, fewer scopes and opportunities for employment. In this context, the old *madrasah* educational system is one of the major highlighted topics in the present modernisation movement in education in Bangladesh. Though the government of Bangladesh is trying to reform Qawmi *madrasahs* through different measures, no positive results have been yielded yet. Throughout the former British colonial time (1757-1947), initiatives were taken at various levels to reform this education system, and Calcutta Madrasah was established in 1780, with this end in view. Later, "Middle Madrasah Scheme" in 1905, and "Reformed Madrasah Scheme" in 1914 were the significant steps taken by the British Government in this regard. Personalities, educated in the reformed British Madrasah scheme, later, took the lead in the social, intellectual and political movement in Bengal and India. However, after the British had left in 1947, the system of the modernising process in *madrasah* education changed. The present paper explores the past and present of the traditional *madrasah* education in Bangladesh to make a thorough review of the British reform policies on *madrasahs*. The study examines the problems of the old *madrasah* education system and their current reform process in case of meeting the needs of human development in Bangladesh. The paper also examines how the British education system contributes to enhancing the quality reform in the old traditional *madrasahs* in Bangladesh. Finally, it has focused on drawing a comprehensive summary of the findings of the study to show how *madrasah* education can help to strengthen the sustainability of the development in Bangladesh. The study mainly takes a historical and analytical approach based on contemporary official, demi-official materials and secondary sources.

Brief historical background of Madrasah education in Bengal

"Madrasah" is an Arabic word that refers to a centre for Islamic

education or studies, instruction and research. Indeed, *madrasah* means an educational institution, like any school or college, and provides knowledge and education. The *madrasah* education system of the Muslims in Bengal is considered as the basic education of Islam.¹ Throughout the medieval era, Muslim monarchs, administrators, saints, *ulama*, philanthropists of Bangladesh dedicated themselves truly towards the progress of education, in varieties of ways. Resultantly, a vast numbers of Islamic educational institutions and other learning centres were established in various regions in the country. Each Islamic institute i.e. *maktab-madrasah* and other educational institutions utilized to come up primly to maintain the *masjid* as well as the places of instruction, as their centre. The Education Report of the Bengal Provincial Committee (1884) of the Hunter Commission (1882) reveals, there was no such mosque without such an education centre in the whole country.² Also, various sources suggest that there were 80,000 *maktab-madrasahs* in greater Bengal, on the scale of one Islamic educational institution for each four hundred people on an average, sustaining the teaching and offering of academic training to the learners.³ In this context, huge funds used to be managed for their maintenance and smooth working. All educational institutions were conducted by Muslim monarchs, leaders or affluent persons through tax exemption. As no tuition fee was taken from the pupils, all sections of citizens, wealthy or poor, did obtain an opportunity to teach their children.⁴ Moreover, to maintain all *maktabs-madrasah* as functional, Muslim administrators, *zamindars* and rich personalities of the society donated land free of tax for educational purposes.

Persian then the state language, was used as the medium of instruction and Arabic was taught at higher levels. The Urdu studies were also initiated since the 17th Century.⁵ Besides, as the medium of education at the primary level, Bengali used to be taught.⁶ The Muslims of Bengal and India had introduced the curriculum of Nizamiya Madrasah (generally known as the *Dars-i-Nizamiya* of Baghdad in educational institutions in the middle ages.⁷ However, the *Dars-i-Nizamiya*, launched by Mulla Nizamuddin FirangiMahal (1677-1748), began to flourish instead of *Dars-i-Nizamiya* of Baghdad, across India and Bengal.⁸ The curriculum of FirangiMahal garnered popularity in the whole subcontinent in the level of quality. Scottish missionary William Adam (1796-1881) very much admired in his report (1835-1838) regarding the quality of higher education in Arabic in the Muslim era in Bengal (1204-1757). He also revealed that “the whole of the curriculum of Arabic *madrasah* was

incorporated, very precisely, with the research-based materials of metaphysics to acquire a high standard of knowledge.”⁹ Besides, General William Henry Sleeman (1788-1856), an English scholar, greatly honoured the higher education stages of the Muslims and marked that they were receiving their knowledge and education in Persian and Arabic as were European scholars through Latin and Greek studies.¹⁰

Madrasahs under British colonial rule

In 1757, the reforms in the education sector in Bengal began gradually in this country after the Muslims had been defeated their political domination to the British Company, and steadily English education and native Bengali languages and literature took their place in the education management as a replacement of Persian and Arabic. On termination of administrative control, the Muslim rulers, courtiers, *philanthropists* and nobles started losing financial support. As a result, the source of profits for the traditional institutes of the Muslims squeezed and that learning and teaching arrangement for the common people countenanced vast complexity and ruined the majority of *maktab-madrasah* in the country.

Before the British rule in Bengal, Muslims dominated the military, administrative and landholding positions and these were the principal sources of income for them. But after the controlling of political power by the British, Muslims lost their jobs in administrative, land revenue, judiciary and other significant sectors.¹¹ However, due to initiative of different policy and plans of the Company government, principally, in 1793, after the resolution of the Permanent Settlement as well as the abolition of tax-free lands (*wakf* or *lakheraj* property) by Lord Cornwallis, began the downfall of Muslim aristocrats, philanthropists educationalist and noblemen and many Islamic institutes (*maktabs-madrasahs*) resultantly stopped forever. Those Islamic institutes were run mainly from the profits fetched out of duty-free lands of the Muslim wealthy people. But a deliberate policy of the East India Company was adopted to confiscate these tax-free (*waqf* property) lands, and resultantly many traditional institutions lost their endowments, and the educational establishments which had been supported by these tax-free properties ceased to function and a large number of teachers and others connected with them were thrown out of employment.¹² William Adam (1796-1881), a Scottish missionary, has seen a destroyable scenario on old traditional *madrasahs* such as Bagha Madrasah (Rajshahi), Mansoorganj

Madrasah (Murshidabad), Nawab Shaestha Khan Madrasah (Dhaka) and Pandua Madrasah while he was preparing an education report based on field survey in 1835.¹³ In this perspective, William Wilson Hunter (1840-1900), an English scholar and civilian, said “Hundreds of ancient families were ruined, and the education system of the Musalmans, which was almost entirely maintained by rent-free grants, received its death-blow”.¹⁴ In such a situation, to run Islamic higher educational institutions (*madrasahs*) was very difficult because the Muslims strove hard. However, the primary education of *maktabs* succeeded in keeping them alive to a certain extent by them.

Before the East India Company Government took up the power in Bengal, they sympathised with educational activities with the European Christian missionaries. However, the English were quite indifferent up to the first half a century more (1757-1813) regarding the education of people of this country after taking over the rule of Bengal. Moreover, English was believed to be risky for the British dominion and against their interest to provide any kind of knowledge and education to the local people of Bengal and India.¹⁵ The practice of Persian studies continued till March 7 in 1835 in the official language the Colonial Government needed to generate intellectuals in *madrasah* education. Under this circumstance, based on the request made by a section of elite Muslims, Warren Hastings (1754-1826), the then first British Governor-General in India established the “Calcutta Madrasah” in 1780.¹⁶ After one year, the colonial administration took over the governing liability of this institute by them. Thus, the modernisation of the system of *madrasah* education began first under the East India Company Government. The Company administration initiated a scheme of examination for the first time in 1821. Then a small number of other *madrasahs* of Bengal came forward to participate in the examination among anticipation to get Government support and service. In 1826, a medical class was initiated at this Madrasah headed by Dr Breton, Professor of Medicine.¹⁷ Therefore, *madrasah* education system sustained progress in two sectors, public and private.

Meanwhile, a setting up of English schooling institutions began in the various regions in Bengal through the European Christian missionaries and the native merchants of Hindus in the second part of the eighteenth century.¹⁸ Resultantly, in 1813, the Company government was also compelled to pay formal attention to the education of the Indians at first mainly because of the pressure created from the Christian Missionaries.¹⁹ It created an unavoidable situation to establish the Hindu College since increasing awareness in learning English among the Hindu society in

Bengal in 1817.²⁰ Besides, though an attempt was prepared to open English education in Calcutta Madrasah, no sustainable progress of its reform to adopt modern education was achieved due to a pathy of Muslim elites and inadequacy of response by a section of the Company Government.²¹ Moreover, at that time, in Hooghly Madrasah (established in 1817 by the endowment of the property of Haji Muhammad Mohsin (1732-1812) nothing was done to attract Muslim students to English education, and the students of the English department of Hooghly College (established in 1836) were mostly Hindus.²² In this situation, the necessity for *madrasah* had decreased as the use and popularity of modern Western education were extending in the different sectors of the society.²³ Besides, the British Government aimed to shape a servile and obedient class from amid its peoples in Bengal and India, who would only mind for their vested attention and interests.²⁴ As consequence, in 1835, when English declared as the official language as well as the medium of education, replacing Persian in 1837, the necessity of *madrasah* education for government jobs ceased.²⁵ But at the time, a strong arguments-discussion concerning the prospect of such education between Angophiles and Orientalists and finally Anglophiles won against their opposition in this debate.²⁶ The Government then closed economic assistance for traditional Islamic educational institutions in whole stages after it announced English as the medium of teaching and learning, and proposals from the various corners were demanded to cease of religious-based *madrasah* education. As a result, thousands of Muslim youths who had studied *madrasah* education with high interest became unemployed and developed a psychology of rebelliousness with the Company administration in their attitude after English had become the state language.²⁷

Madrasah education in crisis times

At that critical situation for the Muslims, most of the *ulama* (Islamic scholars) of Bengal rebelled against British rule and western civilisation, like the Faraizi movement led by Haji Shariat Ullah (1781-1840) and Dudu Miyan (1819-1862) and the Jihad movement (Holy war) headed by Titu Mir (1882-1831). According to their ruling called 'Fatwah' (decree), Bengal i.e. British India was a 'Darul Harb' (abode of war) under the Christian rulers. They believed and preached that learning English and Western education was 'Haram' (prohibited) for the Muslims and it was their responsibility to liberate this country from the Christian dominant rule.²⁸ On the other hand, in this situation of the Muslim society

and its education, Charles Wood's Despatch (1854) approved by the British administration, proposed the affiliation of the renowned Madrasahs of Bengal and India with the universities; however, the University of Calcutta did not recognize religious institutes in its arena.²⁹ Resultantly, *madrasah* studies faced a crisis and consequently, the Muslims were left without modern education for an extensive period. At that time, there was no British administrative endowment granted in support of updating the primary level of religious education (*maktab*) and there was no effort taken to reform *maktabs*, but *pathshalas* (primary school) of Hindus were modernised to some extent.³⁰ In addition, at the time of the Sepoy Mutiny (1857-1858), the Arabic Department of the Calcutta Madrasah was viewed as the raising ground of mutiny and ceased its educational activities upon by Frederick James Halliday (1806-1901), Lt. Governor of Bengal (1854-1859). At the moment, the very critical time of the *madrasah* education in the country, Nawab Abdul Latif (1828-1893), William Nassau Lees (1825-1889, then Principal of the Calcutta Madrasah), lifted their strong speech for the first time feeling the necessity of reforms in *madrasah* instruction and pressed the British colonial administration for the modernise of the traditional Muslim educational institutions by the logical dialogues and consultations held on the different meetings-seminars in 1867.³¹ Besides, Sir Syed Ahmed Khan (1817-1898) had played a significant role in cooperation with the British Raj by adapting the Western education for advancing the Indian Muslims. As a result, a mutual environment between British rulers and the Muslims was created. As a result, in 1871 Lord Mayo stated an announcement for the uniformed upliftment of traditional education of the Muslims in Bengal and India. In this perspective, the exceptional aspect of the declaration concerning education, in 1872-1873, stated by the Colonial Government of Bengal, was the whole reformation of the traditional Muslim education and a measure taken to modernise the *maktab* (primary stage of *madrasah* education) to reform a standard level of *madrasah* studies.³² Subsequently, the lower stages of traditional Islamic education (*maktabs*) sustained to draw extensive attentiveness. Within the first decade of the 20th century *maktab* education was extensively reorganized and a great many of them brought under the direct supervision of the government.³³ But still, there was no satisfactory development in *madrasah* education in Bengal. In 1884-1885, the Report of the Public Instruction in Bengal had marked that the Muslim students of *madrasahs* rarely obtained an opportunity in official jobs because of their lack of skill in Mathematics and English.³⁴

For this deplorable situation, adherence to religious belief, keenness for Persian and Urdu education and lack of interest in worldly life education in the Muslim society in Bengal was marked since the very important causes.³⁵ However, despite the suggestion for ending the *madrasah* education by a part of Muslim reformers including Nawab Syed Ameer Hossain (1843-1913) and Justice Syed Ameer Ali (1849-1928) the British Indian Government continued providing aid for traditional Islamic education based on the appeal of Nawab Abdul Latif. As a result, some notable *madrasahs* were founded in various cities (such as Dhaka, Rajshahi and Chittagong) by the Bengal Government with the endowment of the Haji Mohammad Mohsinfund. These new Islamic educational institutions pursued the curriculum of Calcutta Madrasah.³⁶ Besides, some *madrasahs* continued to pursue the aged *Dars-i-Nizamiya* funded by a nongovernmental or personal source and this institution did not follow the government curriculum and examination. They were designated as 'Qawmi (community) or old traditional Madrasah.³⁷ Even though these kinds of religious institutes were destroyed, after the Sepoy Mutiny, in 1866, a vast leading *madrasah* of this kind 'Qawmi' was founded in Deoband and later, many old traditional *madrasahs* were established in different places in Bengal.³⁸ Thus, different type of *madrasahs* were established in the British period and it was a main issue regarding the progress of Muslim education in Bengal at that time. But no sustainable progress of *madrasah* reform agenda was achieved for the country during the whole of the nineteenth century.³⁹

Reforms in Madrasahs in the early twentieth century

At the very earlier of the twentieth century, especially while the created of a new presidency named 'Eastern Bengal and Assam' in 1905, the case of modernisation of traditional *madrasah* studies including awareness in English education came under increasing scrutiny in Muslim society. As a consequence, the local Government of 'Eastern Bengal and Assam' took up a significant step by setting up the Middle Madrasah Scheme after the partition of undivided Bengal. The scheme of 'Middle Madrasah' was, however, allowed in the provincial educational conference at Barisal held in December in 1905 as the Muslim leaders demanded.⁴⁰ The aforesaid scheme aimed to provide religious education blended with modern secondary education in Muslim inhabited regions.⁴¹ This 'Middle Madrasah Scheme' was neither parallel to recognised 'Middle English School' nor like the conventional popular Junior Madrasah that was

unique for Islamic education i.e. Arabic-Urdu and Persian studies. However, this was an up to date upper-quality Middle Madrasah the main aim of which to achieve the pattern of a secondary English institution.⁴² The curricula here included Urdu, Arabic, Persian and English studies along with other secular courses of the then middle school grade. The first Middle Madrasah was set up in Dhaka division and followed by other districts and areas in the new province. In 1907-08, there were 32 Middle Madrasahs in Dhaka division in which there were 1885 students. These Middle Madrasahs secured high popularity and the students' figure increased to 4607 by 1911.⁴³ Being started as the Middle Madrasah Scheme at Rajshahi division in 1908-09, the number of the students rose to 1395 in 9 madrasahs in two years in this division. In the perspective of the enrolment, this Scheme had drawn a high reputation in the Muslims as well as Hindu and other communities.⁴⁴ As a result, to increase the popularity of *madrasah* education at junior level for all communities, a proposal was accepted for recruiting Hindu teachers as Headmaster in Middle Madrasahs.⁴⁵ In this scheme of *madrasah* education, the concerned Muslim leaders thought of the modification of *madrasah* education broadly, and a National Committee was formed to bring a qualitative reform in traditional Muslim education in the first conference of the 'Provincial Mahomedan Educational Conference' of Eastern Bengal and Assam held in 1906. Principal Abu Nasar Wahid (1872-1953, Dacca Madrasah) was appointed the post of secretary of this Committee.⁴⁶ This reform Committee strongly proposed to promote introducing English education, modern knowledge and science including other secular courses for the curriculum of Madrasah studies. As per the proposal of the Madrasah Committee, the Government of Eastern Bengal and Assam allowed the formation of another madrasah reform Committee headed by Sir Henry Sharp, the then director of the Education Department, which also included Abu Nasar Waheed (Secretary of Madrasah Reform Committee) in 1909. Indeed, the suggestion for the modernisation in a new dimension of the traditional *madrasah* instruction was presented first by Abu Nasar Waheed at the Conference of Dacca on January 24-27 in 1909, which was also recommended by the Muhammadan Educational Conference held in 1908 at Mymensingh. It was considered by some to be a 'revolutionary' in the proposed system of Islamic traditional education in the subcontinent. Sir Henry Sharp, Director of the Education Department, was disagreeable to create any advice to Eastern Bengal Government as per the proposal of the *madrasah* Committee of 1906. He was suggesting that first the reputed *ulama* (Islamic scholars)

of northern India and West Bengal, as well as the leader of *Anjumans* (Islamic organisations) of the Eastern Bengal and Assam province, should be consulted and their opinion obtained in writing on the proposal of *madrasah* reform Committee.⁴⁷

Therefore, as per the advice of Sir Henry Sharp, Abu Nasar Waheed, who was one of the members of *madrasah* education Committee formed by the Government in 1909 led by Henry Sharp, consulted with *ulama* in different areas in the Indian subcontinent, made and presented a modified curriculum for decision of the provincial Government.⁴⁸ Thereafter, a conference of the Education Committee headed by Sir Henry Sharp, held at Dhaka in March 1910, in which attended the representative of the Muslims of the new province (particularly those engaged with the Madrasah Education Committee of 1906). Thus, a modified curriculum on the base of earlier proposal was formulated as under:

1. The junior class courses: Persian was excluded while Secular teaching and a considerable amount of Bengali were included. Quran, Urdu, Arabic literature, English, Geography, History, Arithmetic, Handwork, Drawing and Drill were made compulsory.
2. The courses of the senior class: Concentration was emphasized on Arabic, Mathematics and English with another course keeping pace with the standard of the Matriculation of Calcutta University. The Islamic Law, Rhetoric, Logic and a native subject up to the grade of university examination (matriculation) were also included. The history of the Indian subcontinent was taught in the English language which covered the ancient ages, medieval ages and British times. (It was expressly stated, the passing of the examination of senior courses would in no feeling be a privilege to access into any equivalent of the University syllabus).
3. The syllabus of Title class: There was duration of course for the three years. The starting session year was designed with one of regular basic action. Alternative courses (Jurisprudence, Theology, Philosophy and Literature) were introduced in the second and third year of the Title class.
4. Especial English Lessons: There was two years duration for special English course. The syllabus was planned to be organized for those who had obtained the grade of the Senior or Title class.⁴⁹

However, Sir Henry Sharp argued that it has labored too much and

included a blending of heterogeneous courses in this proposal. He did not at first agree to recommend its general adoption for introducing the proposed Madrasah education. He forwarded the proposal to the government of the new province but suggested its implementation as a provisional appraisal. As consequences, in August 1910, the proposed *madrasah* scheme was first initiated in Dacca, Chittagong and Hooghly Madrasah experimentally.⁵⁰

In this situation, particularly after the annulment of the partition of Bengal (1912), Sir Robert Nathan was placed as the new Director of Public Instruction (DPI) and government gave him an especial responsibility to consider and judge the entire issue. As per the government education report: "The position which he assumed was that revised curriculum should be as simple as possible and should be introduced into as many *madrasahs* as financial considerations would permit. With this object in view, a Conference was held in Dacca on March 1912, when the proposals of the 1910 conference were taken as a basis of discussion, and such modifications in them were suggested as appeared likely to make the course simpler and more practicable".⁵¹

After that, the British government ordained a resolution regarding the recommendation of *madrasah* education and the establishment of a University at Dhaka through the 'Dacca University Committee 1912' led by Robert Nathan (1868-1921) to make a whole structure of a plan. This committee having four educated Muslim leaders of Bengal proposed that a Department of Islamic Studies must be opened under the 'University of Dacca', in which will encompass the courses of the various parts of Islamic knowledge and learning including English. Moreover, the Muslim leaders thought that the proposed University syllabus should have essentially been an expansion with Madrasah education. Therefore, to shape a Sub-committee to sketch up the final proposal had been set up to review the previously recommended curriculum of Madrasah education. The Sub-committee had also sent for the reviewing the proposed Madrasah Scheme and the syllabus of the Department of Islamic Studies to Nawab Imadul-ul-Mulk Syed Hossain Bilgrami (1842-1926) and Dr. Josef Horovitz (1874-1931), Professor of Arabic in the M.A.O. College, Aligarh.⁵² After their giving suggestions and in light of the advice of the Government, the process was reviewed further at a conference held in March 1913, headed by Sir Robert Nathan and in which accepted through minor revisions among the earlier recommendations of the Sharp Committee for Madrasah education.⁵³ Thus, the British Colonial Government introduced a 'Reformed Madrasah Scheme' in 1914 keeping English

mandatory while excluding Persian language and literature with a view to elevating the *madrasah* education modern standard as per claimed the Madrasah Reform Committee (1906). Afterwards, Madrasah education was affiliated with the 'Department of Islamic Studies' of the 'University of Dacca' (Dhaka) which established in 1921.⁵⁴ Eventually, the reformed madrasah education by the British government became part of the university education for the initial time in the Indian subcontinent. Later in 1927, the University of Calcutta also recognized the Reformed Madrasah Scheme. Therefore, the students of reformed *madrasahs* had got an opportunity to be inducted also in general and modern subjects of the University of Calcutta including the Department of Islamic Studies of the University of Dacca.⁵⁵ Later, in 1930 and 1938, the Education Committee for the Bengal Muslims formed by the Government, came forward to further modernize the *madrasah* education. Consequently, English education drew huge popularity among the Muslim students. The British educational report (1930) revealed that such popularity of English education in the Muslim society had never been observed during the last century.⁵⁶

But, the British colonial administration did not incorporate the 'Calcutta Madrasah' with the Reformed or New Scheme Madrasah course due to make-up pure Islamic scholars. The government also thought those Muslim pupils would not be attention to Calcutta Madrasah due to the material nature of education and career field benefit of reformed education scheme.⁵⁷ However, a group of orthodox Islamic scholars follow the Calcutta Madrasah and for this reason the followers of this Madrasah syllabus were designated as the 'Old Scheme Madrasah'. Besides, 'Qawmi' or old traditional Madrasahs of Bengal followed the syllabus of Deoband Madrasah. Thus, towards the end of the British period, principally three kinds of Islamic education were in run and 'Reformed Madrasah Scheme' was disapproved of by the followers of 'Old Madrasah Scheme' and 'Qawmi' institutes due to different reasons.⁵⁸ Resultantly, various kinds of problems arose in the way of perfect modernization of the traditional *madrasah* system. Despite all those impediments, the Reformed Madrasah Scheme progressed significantly. Many old or old traditional *madrasahs* affiliated with the Reformed Scheme emerged for the examination under the British government. Eventually, with the contributions of the British government, the number of students in the new *madrasah* scheme increased speedily, this is shown in the following statistics:

Table 1
Development of Reformed Madrasah Scheme in Bengal

Duration (1934- 1947)	Types of Reformed Institution	Statistics of Reformed Madrasah	Number of Student
1935	High Madrasah	37	6,284
Do	Junior Madrasah	546	50,885
1942	High Madrasah	46	9,866
Do	Junior Madrasah	678	70,678
1947	High Madrasah	69	11,798
Do	Junior Madrasah	938	90444

Sources: *Report on Public Instruction in Bengal, 1934-1935*, Alipore: Bengal Government Press, 1936, p. 27. *Report on Public Instruction in Bengal, 1941-1942*, Calcutta: Bengal Government Press, 1943, p. 26. *Quinquennial Review on the Progress of Education in West Bengal 1942-1943 to 1946-1947*, Alipore: West Bengal Government Press, 1951, p. 85. *Report on Public Instruction in East Bengal, 1947-1948*, Dacca: East Bengal Government Press, 1951, p. 28.

The above data shows the increase in the figure of *madrasah* students is substantially significant in the new reformed scheme education of Bengal. In the interest of the Muslim society in reformed *madrasahs*, in 1941, the inclusion of all the recognised *maktabs* (primary stage of *madrasah*) of the undivided Bengal into the universal primary schools by the British administration was a very wonderful attempt towards an update of traditional *madrasahs*.⁵⁹ But, it was remarkable that the advancement of the old traditional *madrasahs* continued through a competitive approach along with the newly reformed *madrasahs*. The charm of the old *madrasah* was on the increase without any governmental economical provide to institutes of the 'Old Madrasah Scheme' without the Calcutta Madrasah for a long time after the initiative of new scheme *madrasah* education in 1914. The next statistics would surface a concept created regarding the number of students of the old traditional *madrasahs*:

Table 2
Calcutta Madrasah Centred Traditional Madrasahs in Bengal

Duration (1934-1947)	Types of Old Scheme Madrasah	Statistics of Old Madrasah	Number of Student
1935	Senior Madrasah	48	6,204
Do	Junior Madrasah	82	4048
1942	Senior Madrasah	115	16060
Do	Junior Madrasah	94	6149
1947	Senior Madrasah	227	27,889
Do	Junior Madrasah	149	12,678

Sources: *Report on Public Instruction in Bengal, 1934-1935*, p 27. *Report on Public Instruction in Bengal, 1941-42*, p. 26. *Quinquennial Review on the Progress of Education in West Bengal 1942-1943 to 1946-1947*, p. 85. *Report on Public Instruction in East Bengal, 1947-1948*, p. 28.

The table above proves that the statistics of old *madrasah* and its learners had been raised substantially despite the inappropriateness of the syllabus followed therein, the low standard instruction and lessons qualities and small economical maintenance from the Government. Yet, the sustained political turbulence during the 1940s of the British period and the countrywide financial despair could not retard their growth. Indeed, before 1938 there was no financial provision from the Government for the Old Madrasahs excluding the one at Furfura. It suggests that these institutions were based on the firm and steady Islamic belief of the Muslims that displayed their obedience to their conventional instruction basis on religion.⁶⁰ Besides, although the complete figures of Qawmi or old traditional institutes could not be draws, it could be noted that the establishment of those was— Hathazari Madrasah (1896, Chittagong), Kanaighat Madrasah (1904, Sylhet), Unisia Madrasah (1907, Brahmanbaria), Patia Madrasah (1910, Chittagong), Chawkbazar and Lalbagh Madrasah (1931, Dhaka) and Gazalia Madrasah (1935, Bagerhat)

absolutely private and unrestricted during the 19th and the 20th century. The comment of the educational report by the British government (1937-1942) regarding this is a remarkable one:

But a great number of Muslims prefer to attend their own special institutions, in which the language, theology, and ritual of Islam form an important compulsory subject. They are happier in that orthodox atmosphere and feel that religion must play a great part in forming the mind and character of the young. The appeal of these schools is also due, in part, to the cheapness of their education. At any rate, there has been an extraordinary revival of their popularity in certain parts of the province. In one Division, the number of *madrasahs* rose from 78 to 126, in another from 167 to 233; ...that *madrasah* education is still in strong demand.⁶¹

So, in the above statement marked that principally three types of *madrasahs* had sustained despite different impediments in colonial Bengal. There is no denying the fact that *madrasah* education had great appeal in Bangladesh throughout the Colonial period. However, the introduction of a new scheme of *madrasah* was very noteworthy and significant in the perspectives of modernising in traditional Muslim education. In this reformed *madrasah* scheme, because of synthesizing both types of education curriculum, Islamic knowledge and Western science, a part of traditional education of the Muslims accomplished considerable modernisation in Bengal. It is notable that the Calcutta-centered Old scheme *madrasahs* had not included the reformed scheme due to creation for orthodox Islamic scholars. But the British Colonial government had tried to reform private Qawmi *madrasahs* or old traditional *madrasahs* to adopt their education policy. As a result, though a few old traditional *madrasahs* adopted the reformed scheme, any prominent Qawmi *Madrasah* was not included in the Colonial education system. The government tried to reform the scheme with at least one large Qawmi *Madrasah* as like Hathazari *Madrasah* of Chittagong, finally they failed in their endeavour due to conservativeness of the Muslim society, political unrest in the 40s and ceased the Colonial rule in Subcontinent.⁶² However, regarding the evaluation of the Reformed *Madrasah* Scheme, it can be said that it was very effective in progressing worldly life education in the Bengal Muslims. Unfortunately, after the British had left in 1947, this modernised system of *madrasah* education was changed.⁶³

Current situation of traditional Qawmi Madrasahs

Bangladesh now has two kinds of Madrasah: Aliah (formerly Old Scheme in British period) and Qawmi (Old traditional). The two categories of the number of madrasahs in Bangladesh: estimated at more than 23000 with about 3876214 students and 183649 teachers. A comparative data between Qawmi and Alia *madrasahs* from the following table derived from Government sources.

Table 3
Qawmi and Aliah Madrasahs students-teachers in 2015 and 2018 (accordingly)

Type of Institution	Total number	Boys Student	Girls Student	Total Student	Male Teacher	Female Teacher	Total Teacher
Qawmi (Secondary to higher level)	13902	1058636	339616	1398252	66902	6829	73731
<i>Aliya</i> (Secondary to higher level)	9294	1108762	1369200	2477962	95276	14642	109918

Sources: *Bangladesh Educational Statistics 2018*, Dhaka: BANBEIS Educational Database 2018, p.189. *Bangladesh Educational Statistics 2015*. *Daily Prothom Alo*, May ,21, 2015.

The above data shows the number of Qawmi and Alia *madrasahs* and their students, teachers including female students and teachers in detail. It can be said that there are a remarkable number of students studying in Qawmi institutes. Though data shows that Qawmi *madrasah* students are comparatively less than recognised Alia *madrasahs*, the total number of old *madrasah* are more. But they are completely private. It is noted that actual data of Qawmi *madrasahs* are not found because they are not registered either by the government or non-governmental agencies regularly. Nevertheless, many researchers think that the number of Qawmi institutes is increasing day by day.⁶⁴ Notably, only Muslim students are studying in traditional Qawmi *madrasahs*. These old traditional Qawmi *madrasahs* in Bangladesh, which are principal of

Deobandi affiliation, teach the usual Dars-i-Nizamiya prevalent in all Indian sub-continental old *madrasahs*. The system of education and syllabus in Deobandi structure Qawmi Madrasahs comprised Tafsir (explanation of Qur'an), Sirat (Life and work of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ)) Shariyah (Islamic law) Hadith (Practice and work of Prophet Muhammad sm.), Fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence), Arabic language and literature, Arabic grammar (Nahw), Usul- al-Fiqh (Principle of Islamic jurisprudence), Logic (Balaghat Mantiq), Sarf (Morphology) and a few Persian-Urdu studies.⁶⁵ The medium of lessons and teaching is Arabic and Urdu, however, Urdu is at the primary level and Arabic at secondary level of *Qawmi madrasah*. The Bengali language is also used to some extent. In almost old *madrasahs* there is no effective arrangement in these institutions to instruct their students' in modern knowledge and science education such as English, Mathematics etc. Teachers with no formal training mostly staff the Qawmi madrasahs in Bangladesh. It is known from the World Bank Report (2010) that a staggering 82 per cent of Math and English teachers in Qawmi madrasahs are untrained while it is 44 per cent in Aliyah madrasahs (government-supported and recognized) and 19 per cent in general Schools.⁶⁶ Moreover, there is no teacher and instructor for other Science and technical subjects such as Medical, Engineering, Law, Computer Science etc.

After the independence of Bangladesh, traditional Qawmi madrasahs are still private, approve no economic sustain from the recognize agencies of the administration, and are maintained by Islamic donations or by sadaqa, zakat and endowments from any faithful wealthy persons but formerly old scheme Alia madrasah became recognized and equivalent to the general education system by the government gradually. This economic independence of the madrasah arrangement has been a vital resource of the autonomous religion-political control support of the Islamic scholars (ulama) in the country. It has more facilitated the Islamic scholars to oppose the attempts of the government to initiate modernization in the old traditional madrasahs and to connect the gap among the conventional structure of the Islamic education system and worldly education. As a result, the majority of the graduates obtained from old traditional Qawmi institutes are unsuccessful to achieve a well-recognized job of the government or elsewhere of occupation. Almost ten percent of the graduates from Qawmi madrasahs get the opportunity of jobbing in religious or spiritual institutes or related old traditional madrasahs and their incomes are extremely low. The other whole percentages of students continue without a job. In this regard, in 1993, Ms. Umme Salema Begum

organized a research on selected officials, demo-officials, independents, private agencies for her Master's thesis on Religious Education under the University of Durham. The study proved that 90 per cent of the employees in those organizations came from mainstream education, while just 8 per cent came from Madrasah education.⁶⁷ But the situation has not been changed yet. Prof Abul Barkat, a prominent scholar of Bangladesh, recently conducting a research and it is known from his statement in 2018 that "Around 75 per cent of *madrassa* students now remain unemployed in different forms as they have no opportunity to engage in jobs based on their education and skills."⁶⁸ The actual scenario is seen that majority of the students passing from the Qawmi institutes engages such as khadims (Caretaker) or leaders (Imams) at Masjids, speaks at Islamic conference (Waz-mehfils), religious teachers (Maulvis) at schools, organised in spiritual or religious activities in occasions like as deaths or circumcisions, leaders of Janazah (prayers for the dead), *monajat* (particular prayer), *aqiqah* (Naming celebration), organizers of registered marriages and home instructors. Accordingly, they are unsuccessful in performing themselves as civilized people in the global society, and students of old *madrasahs* are unable to play any role in the development of the country or the modern world.⁶⁹ That is why the issue of old *madrasah* education became increasingly a most discussed subject repetitively in the field of educational reformation in Bangladesh. But the argument issue could not be solved comprehensively yet. In this context, the Madrasah education in the country followed through concentrated scrutiny. As can be understood, it got renewed serious awareness in the awake of the 9/11 invasions. The issue there-after landed into more difficult phase after 2005 bombings across the country and the attack at Holey Artisan Restaurant in 2016. It led many in civil society in the country, as well as the wide spread universe, to realize that old *madrasah* students are responsible for terrorism and generating hatred. Besides, a part of the thinkers started demanding the total abolition of religion-based instruction in Bangladesh.⁷⁰ The general Muslims and ulama society (Islamic scholars) on the other hand, think that madrasah educated learners are pouring positive contributions to the progress of the nation instead of being a threat to safety.⁷¹ This section of society feels that, besides giving *honest* leadership, *religious* instruction is also supplying ethical ground professionals in different walks of life. This kind of polarization suggests that the reform of madrasah education structure is highly needed.

In this context, in recent times the Government of Bangladesh

shaped a commission headed by the distinguished *ulama* to make the modernize *madrasah* education, Qawmi or old traditional institutes in particular. After the different survey and inquiry, in 2012 the Commission has composed a report on old *madrasah* education policy in Bangladesh with some recommendations of future development for Qawmi institutes.⁷² Accordingly, in April 2017, Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister of Bangladesh, through a convention with the leaders of *Qawmi Madrasah Education Board* and *Hefazat-e-Islam* (A biggest religious association of old traditional *madrasahs* of Bangladesh), declared that *Dawra-e-Hadith* of Qawmi *madrasahs* (Higher level of old *madrasahs*) would be recognized as a post-graduate grade to equivalent with the degree of University education. In this context, the parliament of Bangladesh granted the grading the highest level of Qawmi: *Dawra-e-Hadith* as the degree of post graduate in Islamic Studies and Arabic of general higher education in August 2018.⁷³ However, though the government has approved a part of the higher level of Qawmi equivalent to an M.A degree, no effective results have been yielded yet in any sectors (education or job sections) of the country. After the government recognized highest Qawmi degree 'Dawra-i- Hadith' as a master's degree, prominent educationalists of the country believe it will be a fruitless practice unless the syllabus of such casual old *madrasahs* are energetically modified and reformed with its incorporation into the general education. In this regard, Dr. Anisuzzaman (1936-2020, former national Professor of Bangladesh), said, "I think the standard of education of Qawmi madrasah and mainstream educational institutions is not equal to give Dawra-i-Hadith the status of master's degree. If the government has different information and statistics, that's a different matter."⁷⁴ Emeritus Professor Serajul Islam Choudhury, University of Dhaka, said "Qawmi and general education are two different streams of education system as their syllabuses and style of education are also different. So the recognition of Dawra-i- Hadith certificate as master's degree status will only create confusion instead of bringing anything good for the country and people."⁷⁵ Dr. Abul Barkat, a prominent economist and Professor of University of Dhaka said, "It is not clear to him how the government recognizes Qawmi's top class certificate without recognizing its other levels equivalent to Junior School Certificate, Secondary and Higher Secondary School Certificate and Degree ones" He also said "an education commission needs to be formed with Islamic scholars and noted educationalists urgently to modernize the Qawmi *madrasah* education and formulate time-befitting curricula for the students so that they can get quality education and diversify their professions

through receiving government approved certificates”.⁷⁶ Dr A. K. M. Abdul Quader, Professor, Department of Arabic, University of Chittagong, also explained almost the same opinion that government should start first the reform from the primary level of Qawmi *madrasahs*, and there after on the basis of that progress, the reform work should be continued to the higher level of old *madrasahs* through affiliating with any recognized University to achieve the equivalence between the highest degree of Qawmi institutes and a Master degree of University education.⁷⁷ A few intellectuals think that *madrasah* education should be opened for all communities. In this connection, Dr. Jafrullah Chowdhury, Public Health Founder and Trustee in Bangladesh said, “Madrasah education system should be opened for all. Minorities will also be able to take education there. They do not have to change their religion but take an education. It will be good for Muslims. They (minorities) can see good sides of Islam. Their Islamophobia will decrease.”⁷⁸

On the other hand, Qawmi students do not find interest in government or administration jobs although they obtained degrees from recognized universities.⁷⁹ Besides, an inaccurate idea among the Qawmi institutes teachers and scholars regarding the modernization of *madrasah* education. The significant cause of it is the indifference of most Islamic scholars of old *madrasahs* to merge modern education with their traditional system as in their view that the English and Western education system meant following Christian civilization and modernization means a threat to Islamic character and values. Consequently, they aren’t interested in modern science and knowledgeable curricula at all.⁸⁰ Also, many of Qawmi *ulama* feel suspicious about the recognition of old *madrasahs*. They believe that there is a political motive connected with the government plan.⁸¹

Challenges for quality reform of old Madrasahs to sustainable development

Therefore, it was observed that the old traditional madrasah education comes across a multitude of problems to prepare students for connection with worldly life due to different reasons. Because of their inappropriate syllabus, madrasahs often generate pupils who feel detached from or even frustrated by the rapid-transforming world in which they live. These students have suffered from an intense smallness complicated, despising everyone who is involved with mainstream education. Another hand, it is a significant issue of vast regret that the working chance

of madrasah educated people is very inadequate. The majority of graduates of the Qawmi institutes get occupied in teaching an old *madrasah* or Masjid as the Muazzin or Imam or home tutor of religious instruction. Those who achieve the highest diploma from the modern higher institutes can provide in honourable status, or pass the Bangladesh Civil Service examination. But, just traditional Islamic institutes do not allow going for the civil service under the government rules and regulations. Therefore, it is not achievable for the *madrasah* students to acquire governmental posts under the present system of the Qawmi institutes. In addition, because of old *madrasah* inappropriate syllabus, private organizations, commercial institutions and other related companies do not show any curiosity to students who are passing from Qawmi institutes.⁸²

In the course of time, the status and quality of madrasah teachers are downward. Because madrasah teaching is a non-government job, their salary is not adequate to enhance social status. Only three Alia madrasah are public and all Qawmi madrasahs are private. For that reason, they feel their own identity through migration or jump school-college. But another government occupation is very hard for them. There is a chance for Bangladesh Civil Service job and Qawmi madrasahs no opportunity to apply for any government or non-government job. In addition, the number of female students and madrasah is not satisfactory in comparison with male madrasahs and as a result, traditional education cannot sustain in all societies of the country. Besides, non-Muslim students are totally absent, in this regard; many in civil society think that Madrasah education is creating a divided society based on religion. Moreover, it is often argued that there is an unhealthy antagonistic relation between the *madrasah*- extremism group and the Western anti-Muslim campaign.⁸³

How is it possible resolving the challenges in the perspective of the colonial system?

We think, for the reform of the present educational movement in Bangladesh, it is very much important to see and overview what the current old conventional education system might learn from the British *madrasah* system. It is seen to British policy, the aim and object was the Government that a student of reformed *madrasah* would have the opportunity of becoming an intellectual and a guy of civilized and peaceful minded who will build himself as a good quality official or proper cultured person for a nation.⁸⁴ It is observed that for establishing a reformed

madrasah scheme, the first initiative for the epoch-making plan was organized with the different conferences in Dhaka and Kolkata in 1899-1914 by the Colonial government and Muslim Associations. After that, the government formed a couple of committees headed by *ulama*, educated Muslim leaders and representatives of British administration for reforms in Madrasah education. Besides, it is seen that the British government tried first to reform traditional Islamic education in Bengal from the grass route level i.e. primary stages of *madrasahs* (*maktabs*) in 1872 and in later, which was a remarkable success through the whole adaptation of all the recognised reformed scheme *maktabs* in Bengal into general primary schools. In consequence, the government applied a scheme at mid-level introducing the Middle Madrasah Scheme, step by step, at a higher stage. Finally, *traditional Islamic education* was incorporated with the University system intended for the first time in Bengal and India in 1921. It is notable that English and other modern subjects were introduced with the Reformed Madrasah Scheme in 1914 excluding Persian studies. Moreover, the government has tried to include professional courses such as modern medical class in Calcutta Madrasah in 1826, although this institute was out of the reform scheme. However, in 1946, Government took initiatives to introduce technical science courses in this Madrasah in the context of a recommendation of a Syllabus Committee.⁸⁵ It was unfortunate for Calcutta Madrasah, before any sustainable step could be initiated on the proposed scheme by the Committee for curriculum reforms, enormous legislative and administrative changes had happened in the whole India at the termination of British rule. As consequence, naturally the all recommendations of the Syllabus Committee for Calcutta Madrasah centred old institutes had been suspended.

However, after observation on the British policy, it can be said that the present Bangladesh government should go for dialogue first with old traditional madrasahs through conducting the historically based conference-seminar to explore options such as introducing modern curriculum. The aim and scope of the dialogue will have to discuss and analyse the British education system, particularly on the reformed madrasah scheme. The government should start a reform scheme from the primary level, not higher level. In the perspectives of Bangladesh also, in recent times the *ulama* have publicized notable willingness in adapting to the transforming economic, social and political situations, as is evident in the important changes in the religious and educational associations or groups of old *madrasah* education. It is seen in the different discussions of the Islamic conferences held in Bangladesh at the recent time that the *ulama* are

now very concerned about the progress and prospects of old *madrasah* education. Any dialogue or argument regarding any socio-educational issues between old *madrasah ulamas* and representatives of the government had never been seen before. But now-a-days, the situation is gradually changing. The Qawmi *ulama* have desired to discuss with the civil society or government about the future of the old *madrasah* education policy. As a result, different associations or academic board of old *madrasahs* already have conducted seminar-conferences with the representatives of government including Prime Minister Sheik Hasina and are continuing their combined efforts to find out the sustainable way for the reformation of Qawmi *madrasah* education.⁸⁶ So, overall perspectives, the following recommendations are forwarded to bring a positive change in old *madrasahs* for sustainable development in Bangladesh.

- To form a reform *madrasah* committee consisting of members of the intelligentsia (who are experts on former British education policy), Islamic scholars and government representatives. (May be two or three committees for primary to a higher level).
- To organize fruitful seminars conference between the modern institute and major old traditional *madrasahs* in collaboration with government agencies and intellectuals. The aims and scope of the seminar will have to discuss the British reformed scheme.
- The initiative should be taken from the primary level of old *madrasahs* to introduce the attempted sustainability.
- After observing the success and failure at the beginning level, after attempts to be taken at both secondary and high or university stages to reform existing *madrasah* education.
- The government can apply proper policies in selective old *madrasahs* as like the New Scheme of Colonial system (For an example, in 1909, the British exercised the reform system for a high level at Dacca, Chittagong, Rajshahi and Hooghly Madrasahs only).
- To prepare an updated syllabus for the all level of Madrasah studies to be appropriate and time-honoured in the worldly life.
- For sustainable development in old *madrasah* education, the preference should be certain global languages, particularly English,.
- All types of up to date conveniences such as computers, internet, book, library and other necessary materials of learning and teaching should ensure.

- To make sure extra and co-academic works and activities in old Madrasahs like modern institutes.
- For the straightforward implementation of educational work and supervision, infrastructural services should be provided certainly i.e. required classrooms, accommodations, and study materials and office rooms for all *madrasahs*.
- The existing method of subject-wise evaluation, setting the question paper and examination system should be reformed.
- To ensure employment eligibility, salary and other facilities of the traditional Islamic education graduates and teachers to be equivalent with the mainstream education scholars and teachers in terms to reduce their identity crisis.
- Teachers' Guide should be prepared for effective teaching.
- To attempt essential measurements to generate employment facilities for old traditional *madrasahs*.
- An adequate training institute for *madrasah* teachers should establish.
- To create the Bangladesh Civil Service (Madrasah education) posts like modern science and technical instruction.
- To set up an individual Board for old Qawmi education to continue of the reform of curriculum and textbooks.
- To initiate at least one government Madrasah from old Islamic institutes in every district.
- To create an opportunity of higher study, training and research for the old traditional *madrasahs* scholars and teachers through the scholarship facilities.
- To establish separate research and training institutions for Madrasah graduates and teachers.
- The suitable and consistent policy should prepare for the recruitment of Islamic institute's staff and teachers.
- To introduce a uniform system informing the managing committee and other members of such committees.
- To set up a separate directory panel to manage and organize the whole *madrasah* education as per British policy.
- To create a suitable academic and social environment for all communities to knowledge and education with ethnicity forming a civilized society for sustainable development.
- Special arrangements for female students should be created to increase their enrolment in *madrasahs* and to introduce an appropriate syllabus for women education.

- Scope of madrasah education should be created for students of other communities to ensure overall improvement for sustainable development in the country. In this context it can recruit non-Muslim teachers in madrasah education as per the percentage of the religious community. {Notable that the Hindu students (and teachers as well) were a remarkable presence at madrasahs during the Mughul and British period}

Conclusion

It is evident from the above discussion that during the British colonial rule, the process of modernization of the traditional madrasah has attracted much attention in both governmental and non-governmental agencies in Bangladesh. After taking over the rule of Bengal by the East India Company, the English were quite indifferent to the education of people of this country up to the first half a century more (1757-1813). As a commercial company, its main aim was to earn money and make profit by trade. Though the Company government established the Calcutta Madrasah, English needed some Persian scholars who would help to survive their administration and did not include English education in this Madrasah for a long time. Because of this, the business of revenue and judicial administration was still conducted in the Persian language. There was no attention to the whole traditional education system in the country by the Government. But there were many English Schools established by the Christian missionaries and native Hindu merchants during the late eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth century. In the perspective of the spread of English education, a new aristocracy developed among the Bengali Hindus under British patronage. Then this elite society and Christian missionaries strongly demanded to introduce the English education in place of Persian as official and medium of instruction. As a result, in 1835, English was declared to be the official language as well as the medium of education as a replacement of Persian studies in 1837, as a consequence of which the necessity of madrasah education for government jobs ceased. But the Muslims of Bengal did not find interest in going for English education quitting their religious and cultural heritage; there were political reasons as well. However, it is seen that the Muslim backwardness in education had been existing since the beginning of British rule. The Muslims, being politically powerless, had been deprived of all the financial support and resources. Although the Government did not eradicate the entire religious-based madrasah education, they stopped all administrative

or financial support to this section. As a consequence, the Muslims lagged far behind in modern society and developed a mentality of hostility against the colonial government after English had become the state language. However, after the Sepoy Mutiny in 1857-1858, a section of Muslims like Nawab Abdul Latif felt the necessity of modern education among Bengal Muslims through the reforms of their traditional madrasahs. Nawab Abdul Latif had played a remarkable role in cooperation with the British Government through the adoption of English education for developing Muslim society in Bengal. In this situation, a bilateral relation between British administrator and the Muslim leaders improved. Basically at that time, in the perspectives of the appeal of the Muslim leaders, in 1872-1873, the Government took special measures at removing the educational backwardness of the Muslims and steps were taken to bring the traditional maktab-madrasahs under the supervision of the Education Department with the introduction of some secular courses. But, unfortunately, no significant development of the madrasah reform program was achieved for the country during the whole of the nineteenth century despite different steps by the British Government.

After the partition of Bengal in 1905, the British colonial government took some noteworthy steps with the help of contemporary Muslim leaders in reforming and modernizing Madrasah education which was proved to be much effective later. Of those, a very significant plan was formulated during 1905-1914 by which the Middle Madrasah Scheme and traditional education curricula of Reformed Madrasah were included with the University education as recommended by the Bengal British Government. Subsequently, the subject of Islamic Studies was introduced in the 'University of Dacca Act of 1920'. Though the colonial government failed to bring all old types of traditional *madrasahs* under the 'Reformed Madrasah Scheme' of 1914, their reform-initiative was certainly remarkable and laudable. At that time, the reformed *madrasahs* were provided with imperial grants by the government. But a part of intellectuals in Bengal had criticized the patronization of *madrasah* education by the British. They considered being a kind of political motivation of the government in this reformed *madrasah* policy.⁸⁷ However, whatever be the motivation by the British in this, the Muslim did not fail to benefit from the new madrasah scheme. As consequences of the new madrasah programme, a large number of prominent leaders and reputed intellectuals under the British 'Reformed Madrasah Scheme' turned up in the Bengal Muslim community who later led the socio-political development in the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent.⁸⁸

Having passed a long arduous journey, *madrasah* education has currently entrenched in the country's present education system. But there is still a part of secular head workers who are not interested in this system of education, especially after the liberation of Bangladesh in 1971. They are continuously pressing successive governments to abolish *madrasah* education by establishing a combined education scheme in the country. However, such claims neither drew popular support nor got approval from consecutive governments of Bangladesh.⁸⁹ Consequently, *madrasah* education still exists in the country. Realizing this variety, the British administration also did not cease the religious instruction entirely. It has been referring above that a significant number of eminent leaders and intellectuals arose in the Muslim society of Bengal under the colonial rule, who were educated in Reformed Madrasahs. Thus, despite the indefatigable steps of the colonial administration to resist the old Islamic institutes in different ways, these traditional Madrasahs have not only uplifted but also garnered popularity and progressed in statistics. Even today, the progress of this increase continues.

But during the recent time, old traditional Qawmi *madrasahs* in Bangladesh have crammed with multiple changes and challenges. The present condition of old *madrasahs* of the education system in Bangladesh is not satisfactory at all. Though the old traditional *madrasah's* (Qawmi) degrees (Dowra-i--Hadith equivalent to be an MA degree only) have recently been approved by the Bangladesh government, there is no consideration in quality reform and change in old *madrasah* studies. As a result, no real progress has been made yet of the government programme for the Qawmi Madrasahs which continues the existing division in all sectors in the society and country among *ulama* and modern people. Meanwhile, many in Qawmi *ulama* and students are not interested in adapting to mainstream education as well as a modern society. Old *madrasahs* graduates are more interested in jobs in religious establishments and private professions instead of government service. For this unpleasant condition, liability to the historical trend (anti-government mentality since the British era), erroneous thought about the modernity and Islam, family tradition, social impediments, existing old traditional education system and impact of teaching method and religious superstition in the Muslim society are significant reasons. In this purpose, the government should attempt to take the necessary steps to reconcile between *ulama* and concerned persons such as counselling, dialogue, seminar-symposiums and training collaboration with national and international organizers. A quality reform for old *madrasahs* is the demand of the era. There is no alternative to

quality education for the development of the nation. If the recommendations mentioned in our discussion are implemented from the British perspective, Bangladesh, as well as the Muslim world, will be advanced by quality education in old traditional *madrasahs* for sustainable development.

We can conclude by saying that a Muslim majority country like Bangladesh can draw much of significant instructions from its traditional education system in developing its society. The picture of the education system, particularly of Madrasahs, is assumed to be of prime help their society to progress. It can also be expressed that the educated human resource that will emerge from reformed and modified madrasah would be able to remove the existing impediments to the advancement and turn the nation truly into a developed one. Presently, Aliah madrasahs (formerly known one types of old madrasah and currently government recognised institution) are teaching all the necessitated modern courses like Bengali, English, General Science, English, Mathematics, History, Geography, Computer Science etc. alongside the modified edition of Dars-i-Nizamiya. On the other hand, most of the graduate students of Aliah madrasahs merge into modern recognized instruction by switching their study to mainstream College or University. Despite the various obstacles, a portion of approved madrasah students is playing vital contributions in the government as well as non-government establishments and other corporate fields. It is noteworthy to mention a recent report which shows that 32% of learners of the university faculties of the department of humanities and social sciences in the country obtained degrees from Aliah Madrasah.⁹⁰ So, it suggests that a section of Islamic Madrasahs is continuing the education system of modern citizens. They can produce better results if the reform plan would be done by introducing a uniform curriculum of worldly life subjects with science, engineering and technology in all types of madrasahs (Aliah and old Qawmi). Then the students of madrasah would be able to keep pace with the modern world to ensure sustainable progress in the country. In this regard, it is significant to see what the current system might learn from the British Reformed Madrasah Scheme because religious and modern education both systems were included in that scheme.

Notes and References

1. Education is mandatory compulsory for all in Islam. Please note that the first verse of the Holy Quran is to read in the name of the God who made the entire world and the human beings. *Al Quran* 96:1-5, 39: 9. In these perspectives,

Scottish missionary William Adam (1796- 1881) described in his education report: "... many private Mahomedan schools begun and conducted by individuals of studious habits who have made the cultivation of letters the chief occupation of their lives, and by whom the profession of learning is followed, not merely as means of livelihood. But as a meritorious work productive of moral and religious benefit to themselves and their fellow creatures." James Long (ed.), *Adam's Reports on Vernacular Education in Bengal and Behar Submitted to Government in 1835 1836 and 1838: With a brief view of its present condition*, Calcutta: Home Secretariat Press, 1868, p. 215.

2. *Education Commission: Report by the Bengal Provincial Committee with Evidence taken before the Committee and Memorials Addressed to the Education Commission*, Calcutta: The Superintendent of Government Printing, 1884, p. 51.
3. William Adam estimated 1,00,000 schools were operating in greater Bengal for native education. James Long (ed.), *Adam's Reports* p. 18-19. Some scholars opined that the estimate by Adam is not completely right. However, Dr. M. A. Rahim said, "...though these calculations were based on uncertain premises, still, it would appear from these that the desire to give education to their children must have been deep-seated in the minds of parents even of the humblest classes. Even up to the middle of the nineteenth century, Muslims maintained the old system of education in Persian and Arabic at the makhtabs and madrasas. So the primary schools noticed by Adam were mostly old makhtabs established in the Muslim time." Muhammad Abdur Rahim, *Social and Cultural History of Bengal* Vol. II (1576-1757), Karachi: Pakistan Publishing House, 1967, 306-307.
4. W.W. Hunter, *The Indian Musalmans*, Reprinted from the First Edition Lahore: Premier Book House, 1964, 137-138. Obidullah al Obaidi, 'Muhammadan Education in Bengal', *The Bengal Magazine*, January 1873, p. 307. Kondker Fuzli Rubbee, *The Origin of the Musalmans of Bengal: Being a Translation of Haqiqate Musalamn-I Bengalah*, Calcutta: Thacker, Spink & Co., 1895, p. 70. Also see please, James Long (ed.), *Adam's Reports*, p. 29-30.
5. *Report of the Moslem Education Advisory Committee*, Alipore: Bengal Government Press, 1934, p. 72.
6. N.K. Bhattasali, *Coins and Chronology of the Early Independent Sultans of Bengal*, Cambridge: W. Heffer & Sons, 1922, p. 170.
7. Some scholars opined that during the Muslim time, the system of education is nothing to do with Baghdad. But it is known from prominent writers and British education reports that Bengal and Indian Muslims followed the syllabus of knowledge and education that was obtained in the time of Caliphate of Baghdad. Muhammad Abdur Rahim, *Social and Cultural History of Bengal* Vol. I (1201-1576), Karachi: Pakistan Publishing House, 1963, p. 197-198, Vol. II (1576-1757), p. 278. Shibli Numani, *Maqalat-e-Shibli Numani (Volume-III)*, compiled by Sulaiman Nadvi, Azam Garh: Dar-ul-Musanafeen, 1936, p. 43. Report on the Progress of Education in Eastern Bengal and Assam 1901-02 to 1906-1907, Volume 1, Shillong: The Eastern Bengal and Assam Secretariat Printing Office, 1907, p. 103. Even the initial course of Calcutta Madrasah was based on the *Nizamiya* curriculum of Bagdad. In this regard, M. Azizul Huque (later Sir) mentioned, "The course of instruction adopted in the newly established Madrasah was the Nizamiah course, based on the imitation of the curriculum taught in the Nizamiah

College, Baghdad.” *History and Problems of Moslem Education in Bengal*, Calcutta: Thacker, Spink and Co., 1917, p. 5. Report of the Moslem Education, 1934, p. 72. However, “...the first universities in the modern sense, namely institutions of higher education and research, which issued academic degrees at all levels (bachelor, master, and doctorate), were medieval madrasahs known as Jami’ah founded in the 9th century. The University of Al Karaouine in Fez, Morocco is thus recognized by the Guinness Book of World records as the oldest degree-granting university in the world with its founding in 859 by the princess Fatima al-Fihri.” Abul Barkat, Rowshan Ara, M. Taheruddin, Farid M Zahid and Md. Badiuzzaman, *Political Economy of Madrassa Education in Bangladesh: Genesis, Growth, and Impact*, Dhaka: Ramon Publishers, 2011, p. 62. But the curriculum of the *Dars-i-Nizamiya* of Baghdad was much popular in the contemporary traditional Islamic institutes since Abbasid Caliphs were more respected amongst the majority Muslims in the world.

8. Mulla Qutubuddin (d. 1691) was the real initiative person of the syllabus of Dars-i-Nizamiya of Lucknow. He had constantly kept a close connection with the Moghul Court of law in Delhi. Emperor Aurangzeb had appointed him for the assignment of gathering Islamic edicts on different matters affecting the Muslims which come up to be identified as *al-Fatawa al-'Alamghri*. After the death of Qutubuddin, Mulla Nizamuddin (1677-1748), son of his, attempting to make a curriculum compiled the instruction of Shah Waliullah (1703-1762) and his father for Islamic studies, which came to be known as the Dars-i-Nizamiya of Lucknow or Firangi Mahal. This syllabus became popular all across the Indian subcontinent. During the eighteenth century Abdul Ali Bahrul Uloom, son of Mulla Nizamuddin (Firangi Mahal), who was invited by a *zamindar* of Buhar in Burdwan district to establish a Madrasah and introduced the Dars-i-Nizamiya of Lucknow at the first time in Bengal. Though both Dars-i-Nizamiya at Baghdad and Lucknow were different systems, the similarity was remarkable among them in the fundamental Islamic education. It included topics such as Mathematics, Chemistry Medicine, Astronomy, Geography, Philosophy, Logic, Literature, as well as the Qur’an, Hadith, Fiqh (Islamic Jurisprudence), Sufism and so on like others. G. M. D. Sufi, *Al Minhaj: The Evolution of Curriculum in the Muslim Educational Institutions of India*, Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1941, p. 72. Shibli Numani, *Maqalat-e-Shibli Numani (Volume-III)*, p. 43. G M D Sufi, *Al Minhaj: The Evolution of Curriculum in the Muslim Educational Institutions of India*, Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1941, p. 72. Shibli Numani, *Maqalat-e-Shibli Numani (Volume-III)*, p. 43. Syed Murtaza Ali, ‘Muslim Education in Bengal 1837-1937’, *Islamic Studies*, Islamabad, Vol. 10, No. 3, September, 1971, p.181. A. K. M. Ayub Ali, *History of Traditional Islamic Education in Bangladesh (Down to A.D. 1980)*, Dhaka: Islamic Foundation Bangladesh, 1983, p. 129.
9. James Long (ed.), *Adam’s Reports (1835-1838)*, p. 215.
10. W.H. Sleeman, *Rambles and Recollection of an Indian Official*, Vol. II, London: J. Hatchard & Son, 1893, pp. 270-271.
11. For example, after the battle of Plassey, 80 thousands army forces had been suspended whose the majority were Muslims. J. C. Sinha, *Economic Annals of Bengal*, London: Macmillan, 1927, p. 95-96. Indeed, British policies succeeded in destroying the former three main structures of the Bengal Muslims power such

- as military command, collection of revenue, and judicial or political employ. Tazeen M. Murshid, *The Sacred and the Secular: Bengal Muslim Discourses 171-1977*, Dhaka: UPL, 1996, p. 46. Rafiuddin Ahmed, *The Bengal Muslims 1871-1906: A Quest for Identity*, Second Edition, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1988, p. 136. Heena Ansari and SZH Jafri, 'Muslims of Bengal: An Analysis of Some Perspectives (1870s-1990s)', *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bangladesh* (Hum.), Vol. 64 (2), 2019, p. 251-254.
12. Syed Ameer Ali, 'Mussalmaner Sarbhahnas' (Totally ruin of Mussalman), *Nabnur* (A monthly periodical), Vol. VIII, Argoyhayan, 1312 (Bengali year), pp. 365-379. Abdul Karim, 'General Memoranda-Madrasah', *Calcutta University Commission, 1917-1919*, Vol. VII, Calcutta: Superintendent Government Printing India, 1919, p. 171. P. Hardy, *The Muslims of British India*, Cambridge: At the University Press, 1972, p. 42-43. Jawaharlal Neheru, *The Discovery of India*, Calcutta: The Signet Press, 1946, p. 352. After taking over the rule of Bengal by the East India Company, the English were quite indifferent for half a century regarding the education of people of this country. As a commercial organization, the motive of earning more was the only aim. Naturally, as the body of English merchants, trading to this country and acquiring rights over its land revenue, did not interest themselves in the education of the people. So they took over the tax-free land and abolished the *waqf* system. Azizur Rahman Mallick, *British Policy and the Muslims in Bengal 1757-1856*, Second edition, Dacca: Bangla Academy, 1977, p. 191.
 13. James Long (ed.), *Adam's Reports (1835-1838)*, p. 195-199.
 14. W.W. Hunter, *The Indian Musalmans*, p. 139.
 15. *Education Commission: Report by the Bengal Provincial Committee* 1884, p. 3. In this regard, in 1793, Mr. Randle Jackson, a British parliament member, declared that "They had just lost America from their folly in having allowed the establishment of Schools and Colleges, and it would not do for them to repeat the same act of folly in regard to India. If the natives required anything in the way of education, they must go to England for it." Quoted in Syed Mahmood, *A History of English Education in India, Its Rise Development, Progress, Present Condition and Prospects (1781 to 1893)*, Aligarh: M. A. O. College, 1895, p. 2. As a commercial organization, the motive of earning more was the only aim. Warren Hastings, *Memories Relative to the State of India with an Introduction* by Anil Chandra Banerjee, First Indian Education, Calcutta: M. L. Ghosh & Co., 1978 (First Published, 1786), p. 23-30.
 16. In complying with this request, Hastings seems to have been inspired to some extent to the traditional Islamic education, but it was then still needed trained Muslim young men to fill subordinate positions in the administration of the Courts of Judicature. C.E. Trevelyan, *On the Education of the People of India*, London: Orme, Brown, Green & Longman, 1838, p. 2.
 17. S. C. Sanial, 'History of the Calcutta Madrassa', *Bengal Past and Present* (Journal of the Calcutta Historical Society), Vol. VIII, January-June 1914, pp. 83-84. Please also see, H. Sharp (ed.), *Selections from Educational Records Part I, 1781-1839*, Calcutta: Superintendent Government Printing, 1920, pp. 7-8.
 18. Because, they felt that the *madrasah* education of the Muslims could not give any success in their life. Their activities were against Muslim reign in India and

- madrasah* education. But their aims were to remove all religious evils from the society particularly in Hindus and spreading Christianity. Joshua Marshman, *Advantages of Christianity in promoting the establishment and prosperity of the British government in India, containing Remarks occasioned by reading a Memoir on the Vellore mutiny*, London: Printed at the Smith's Printing Office, 1813, p.6. Also see in detail, Lord Thomas Babington Macaulay, *The Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay*, Vol.1, London: Longmans Green & Co., 1880. Mohammad Mohar Ali, *The Bengali Reaction to Christian Missionary Activities (1833-1857)*, Chittagong: The Mehrab Publication, 1965, p.3-4.
19. M.A., Liard, *Missionaries and Education in Bengal, 1793-1837*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972, 10-15.
 20. Surendranath Banerjee, *Lord Macaulay and Higher Education in India: Being an address delivered at the Thirty-Fifth Anniversary*, Calcutta: Stanhope Press, 1878, p.7-9.
 21. *Report of the General Committee of Public Instruction of the Presidency of Fort William in Bengal 1835-36*, Calcutta: Military Orphan Press, 1836, 27-28. S. M. Hussain, 'Islamic Education in Bengal', *Islamic Culture*, Vol. II, July 1934, p. 440. Also see please, Azizur Rahman Mallick, *British Policy and the Muslims in Bengal 1757-1856*, p. 214-216.
 22. During the first half of the nineteenth century, the British policy on education was in the worst state of confusion among the Hooghly Madrasah and College. Although Muhammad Mohsin left a considerable fund for religious and Muslim educational purpose, after his death in 1817, the Government then assumed the Trusteeship of the Endowment. As a consequence, in 1836, a College was opened along with a department of English through this fund in which students were mostly Hindus. At that time, the Madrasah department was most indifferently maintained up. In 1836, the time of annual examination of English department, of 1013 students, 31 were Muslims, 34 Christians and 948 Hindus; of 219 in the Madrasah, 138 were Muslims and 81 Hindus. Thus, the endowment meant specifically for the education of the Muslims went to institutions thrown open to all classes. Azizur Rahman Mallick, *British Policy and the Muslims in Bengal*, p. 295-296. "The problem here was that the college was established not in the capital city of Calcutta where an English college was much needed, or even in an area like Jessore where the trust estates were suited and where the proportion of Muslim and Hindu populations was fairly balanced. But it was opened at Hugli which was predominantly a Hindu area with Muslims numbering not more than 2-3 percent of the total population. It was extremely difficult for the (economically ruined) Muslims of the other districts to send their children to Hugli or to provide for their maintenance at the college." Heena Ansari and SZH Jafri, 'Muslims of Bengal: An Analysis of Some Perspectives (1870s-1990s)', *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bangladesh (Hum.)*, Vol. 64 (2), 2019, p. 259-260.
 23. *Calcutta University Commission 1917-19*, Vol. II, p.111. S. C. Sanial, 'History of the Calcutta Madrassa', *op.cit*, p. 5.
 24. T.B. Macaulay, *Minutes on Indian Education, dated 2nd February, 1835*, Calcutta: Central Printing Office, 1835, p. 7.

25. *Report of the General Committee of Public Instruction of the Presidency of Fort William in Bengal 1835-1836*, p. 60-61. J. A. Richey (ed.), *Selections from Educational Records (1840-1959)*, Part II, Calcutta: The Superintendent of Government Printing, 1922, p. 90. The demand for the replacement of Persian by English in the law courts outside Calcutta were grown among the Bengali educates Hindus vastly. It was only after this kind of public opinion was created in Bengal for the abolition of Persian that the Company government finally decided to act. Please see in detail, A. F. Salauddin Ahmed, *Social Ideas and Social Change in Bengal 1818-1835*, Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1965, p. 147-158.
26. Azizur Rahman Mallick, *British Policy and the Muslims in Bengal*, p. 221-253. Please also see, B. K. Boman-Behram, *Educational Controversies in India: The Cultural Conquest of Indian under British Imperialism*, Bombay: D.B. Taraporevala Sons & Co., 1943, Part 1, p. 259-416.
27. *Calcutta University Commission 1917-1919*, Vol. III, p. 37-38. However, in the meantime, it is observe that Muslim rule and their socio-economic status in Bengal were gradually eroded from the eighteenth century due to different plan and policy by the East India Company and Muslims were became to jobless and poor.
28. P. Hardy, *The Muslims of British India*, p. 50-57. Also, the chief innovations of Islamic reforms movements were the non-observance of Friday prayers and the two Eids as such prayers could only be performed in a land ruled by Muslims. Azizur Rahman Mallick, *British Policy and the Muslims in Bengal*, p. 79.
29. *Despatch from the Court of Directors of the East India Company, to the Governor General of India in Council on the subject of the Education of the people of India*, (No.49, dated 19th July, 1854), Reprint, Shillong: Eastern Bengal and Assam Secretariat Printing Office, 1907, pp. 2, 6.
30. Kazi Shahidullah, *Patshalas into Schools: The Development of indigenous elementary education in Bengal 1854-1905*, Calcutta: Firma KLM, 1987, p. 50-60.
31. Abdool Luteef, 'A Paper on Mahomedan Education in Bengal', *Transactions of the Bengal Social Science Association* (Edited by General Secretaries), Vol. II, Part I, Calcutta: W. Newman and Co., 1868, p. 45-64. In 1870, Keramat Ali (1800-1873), an influential Islamic scholar, declared that British India was a 'DarulAman' (peaceful country) and English education was not prohibited for the Muslims according to the Islamic law. *Abstract of Proceedings of the Mahomedan Literaray Society of Calcutta at a meeting held on Wednesday, the 23rd November, 1870* (Lecture by Moulvi Keramat Ali), Calcutta: 1871, p.151-152.
32. *Review of Education in India*, Calcutta: Calcutta: Central Printing Office, 1886, p. 317. Abdul Karim, *Muhammadan Education in Bengal*, Calcutta: Metcalf Press, 1900, p. 8.
33. Joshep Andrew Taylor, First Assistant Director of Public Instruction (for the Muslims), estimated that in 1916 more than 4000 *maktabs* of different descriptions were operating in Bengal proper as primary schools for Muslim education. *Government of Bengal: General Department, Education, September 1916*, Calcutta: 1917, Appendix 1, p. 34.
34. *General Report on Public Instruction in Bengal, 1884-85*, Calcutta: Bengal Secretariat Press, 1885, pp.153-154. *Review of Education in Bengal, 1892-93 to*

- 1896-97, *First Quinquennial Report*, Calcutta: Bengal Secretariat Press, 1897, p. 150.
35. *General Report on Public Instruction in Bengal, 1890-1891*, Calcutta: Bengal Secretariat Press, 1892, p.93. Besides, the British Government systematically changes the curriculum and job requirements, so Muslims were unable to compete and qualify the available position.
 36. *General Report on Public Instruction in Bengal, 1880-1881*, Calcutta: Bengal Secretariat Press, 1881, p. 96-97. Also see please, *Report of the Indian Education Commission, 1882*, Calcutta: The Superintendent of Government Printing, 1883, p.505-507.
 37. *Report of the Moslem Education 1934*, p. 90-91. *Report of the Madrasah Education Committee*, Alipore: The Bengal Government Press, 1941, p. 59.
 38. As the Sepoy Mutiny in 1857, the British Government wanted to demolish many *madrasahs*. However, at that time, *madrasah* education had a severe set-back in North India. Once the mutiny had failed, a section of the Muslim ulama in India understood that it should not rely on the British administration for their Islamic learning. Therefore, the *ulama* had attempted to have established their own institution so that future generations would carry out religious studies. The orthodox *ulama* led by Maulana Qasim Nanotvi (1833-1880) declined everything English education and Western civilisation and established a traditional *madrasah* identified as “Darul Uloom Deoband” at Deoband in India in 1863. Later on a lot of old types, Islamic institutes spread up all over India including Bengal based on the Deoband pattern which is known as ‘Qawmi Madrasah’. Abul Barkatet. al., *Political Economy of Madrassa Education*, p. 65.
 39. Syed Murtaza Ali, ‘Muslim Education in Bengal 1837-1937’, *Islamic Studies*, p. 182-194, *Moztaba Kotha O Onanyo Prosongo*, Dhaka: A.B. Book Store, 1976, p. 65-66. Please also see in detail, Rajesh Kochhar, ‘Muslims and English education in colonial Bengal: Calcutta Madrasa and Hooghly Mohsin College in a historical perspective’, S. K. Mukhopadhyay (ed.), *Hooghly College 175, 175th Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, Hooghly: Hooghly Mohsin College, 2011, p. 17-39.
 40. *Report on the Progress of Education in Eastern Bengal and Assam, 1907-1908 to 1911-12*, Vol. I, Calcutta: Bengal Secretariat Book Depot, 1913, pp. 112-114. *Report of the Second Session of the Provincial Muhammadan Educational Conference, Held at Mymensingh on the 18th & 19th April, 1908*, Calcutta, 1908, p. 52.
 41. *Report on the Third Session of the Provincial Muhammadan Educational Conference, 1910*, Held at Bogra on the 26th and 17th March, 1910, Calcutta, 1910, p. 43. *Report on the Progress of Education in Eastern Bengal and Assam, 1907-08 to 1911-12*, Vol. I, p. 115.
 42. *Progress of Education in Bengal, 1912-13 to 1916-17, Fifth Quinquennial Review*, Calcutta: Bengal Secretariat Book Depot, 1918, pp. 135-136. *Report on Progress of Education in Eastern Bengal and Assam, 1907-08 to 1911-12*, Vol. I, p. 115.
 43. *Ibid. Report of the Third Session of the Provincial Muhammadan Educational Conference 1910*, p. 43.
 44. Regarding the contribution of Middle Madrasah, the educational report of the Eastern Bengal and Assam mentioned: “There can, however, be no doubt that

these institutions, whether they do or do not conform to the original scheme, have done more than any class of schools to help forward the cause of Muhammadan education.... in Faridpur, is reported to have brought education to the stronghold of the *Ferazis*, a sect of Muhammadans who, until five years ago, were certainly more backward than any other section of the Muhammadan community.” *Report on the Progress of Education in Eastern Bengal and Assam, 1907-08 to 1911-12*, Vol. I. pp. 115-116. It is also known that 15% students of Hindu and Ethnic communities are studying in Middle *madrasahs* of the Dhaka division in the session of 1911-12. Please see in *Ibid.*, p.244-245.

45. *Report of the Second Session of the Provincial Muhammadan Educational Conference*, 1908, Calcutta, 1908, Appendix, p. xxxix.
46. *Proceedings of the First Provincial Mahomedan Educational Conference of Eastern Bengal and Assam, Held in Dacca on the 14th and 15th April, 1906*, Dacca, 1906, pp. 13-26. *Report of the Moslem Education 1934*, p. 76.
47. *Report of the Moslem Education 1934*, p. 76. *Report of the Madrasah Education 1941*, p. 15. In this perspective, Abu Nasar Waheed had consulted with the ulama of Rampur, Lucknow, Deoband and other places. He took advice from Maulana Mahmud al-Hasan (1851-1920), Maulana Anwar Shah (1875-1933), Islamic scholars of Deoband in particularly regarding the reform *madrasah* scheme. As a result, they had approved this new *madrasah* scheme. Please see, Syed Murtaza Ali, *Moztaba Kotha O Onanyo Prosongo*, p. 68.
48. In this regard, then the suggestions were taken from Shams-ul-Ulama Maulvi Shibli Numani (1857-1914, Lucknow) and Maulvi Shah Syed Sulaiman Nadvi (1884-1953, Patna). *Report of the Dacca University Committee, 1912*, Calcutta: Bengal Secretariat Book Depot, 1912, p. 97.
49. *Report of the Third Session of the Provincial Muhammadan Educational Conference 1910*, p. 34-35. Also see please, *Eastern Bengal and Assam Education Proceedings*, August, 1910. *Report of the Dacca University Committee, 1912*, p. 97.
50. *Report on the Progress of Education in Eastern Bengal and Assam, 1907-1908 to 1911-12*, Vol. I. p. 117. *Report of the Moslem Education 1934*, p. 76-77.
51. *Report of the Dacca University Committee, 1912*, p. 97. *Report of the Moslem Education 1934*, p. 77.
52. *Report of the Dacca University Committee, 1912*, p. 97-98.
53. *Report of the Moslem Education 1934*, p.77. *Report of the Madrasah Education 1941*, p. 16. Please see in detail regarding the approved curriculum of the reformed *madrasah* scheme and Department of the Islamic Studies of the ‘University of Dacca’ as well. *Report of the Dacca University Committee, 1912*, p. 98-108, Appendix 1.
54. *The Quinquennial Report on the Dacca Madrasah 1917-1918 to 1921-1922*, Calcutta: The Bengal Secretariat Book Depot, 1922, p. 1.
55. *Report of the Madrasah Education 1941*, p. 30-31.
56. *Report of the Moslem Education 1934*, p. 83-84.
57. *Report on the Calcutta Madrasah for the Quinquennium ending the 31st March 1917*, Calcutta: Bengal secretariat Book Depot, 1918, p. 1. *Report of the Moslem Education 1934*, p. 76.
58. *Report of the Moslem Education 1934*, p. 90-91. *Report of the Madrasah Education 1941*, p. 59.

59. *Report on Public Instruction in Bengal 1940-1941*, Calcutta: Bengal Government Press, 1943, p. 9.
60. *Report of the East Bengal Educational System Reconstruction Committee*, Dacca: East Bengal Government Press, 1952, pp. 104-105.
61. *Tenth Quinquennial Review on the Progress of Education in Bengal, 1937-1938 to 1941-1942*, Alipore: Bengal Government Press, 1944, p. 77.
62. *Report of the Madrasah Education Committee 1941*, p. 90-91.
63. After the colonial rule is over, the Muslim leaders and the representatives of the Government of Pakistan realized the précis of retooling the existing education system including former British modernized Madrasah scheme. But at the primary stage, the issue of the closing down of one or other of the *madrasah* education (Reformed and Calcutta centered Old Scheme) did not arise at all. The only option, as per the recommendations of instructions of the education conference of Pakistan 1947, and the Advisory Board of Education of the country, was to include reformed Madrasah education into line with the modern school's syllabus without changing up the necessary rudiments of the religious courses. The Government of Pakistan then began to execute the proposals subsequently. It is noted that in 1941 the British Government had introduced a unified syllabus of recognized primary schools and *maktabs* of the reformed scheme. Thereby, *maktabs* of reformed courses took the shape of modern primary school which made the pupils fond of English High School replaced by reformed High Madrasah. Basically, as a consequence, in 1959, a further National Education Commission declared that the Government of East Pakistan was determined to combine the Reformed Madrasah system and modern education. Finally, the whole Reformed Scheme Madrasah(1914) was transformed into the mainstream education system in 1965. *Report of the East Bengal Educational System Reconstruction Committee*, 1952, p. 114-116. *Report of the Commission on National Education, 1959*, Dacca: Government of Pakistan Press, 1960, p. 279. Abdul HaqFaridi, *Madrasah Siksha: Bangladesh*, Dhaka: Bangla Academy, 1985, p. 65. But, the other two system *madrasahs* (Calcutta and Deband centred old *madrasahs*) were continuing in the education structure of the country.
64. Professor AbulBarkat, Department of Economics, University of Dhaka, is researching Madrasah education. According to his view of research, in 2008, the number of all level Qawmi *madrasah* was 39,612 where 52,47660 students studied in different classes. His study points out that the statistics of *madrasahs* increased speedily from 4,430 to 54,130 including both Aliya and Qawmi institutes during 1950-2008 with a 13 times increase of Qawmi *madrasahs* and 11 times increase of Aliya. Dhaka *Tribune*, January 16, 2018. Also, see in detail please, AbulBarkat. al., *Political Economy of Madrassa Education, op.cit.*
65. Syed Mahbulul Alam, Al-Hasani, Ab Rahim Ismail, Bakare Kazeemkayode and Daud Abdul Quadir Elegu, 'Creating a Practicing Muslim: A Study of Qawmi Madrasah in Bangladesh', *British Journal of Education, Society & Behavioural Science*, 20(3): 2017, p. 5.
66. Muhammad Golam Azam and Tatsuya Kusakabe' 'Improving the Efficacy of English Instruction at Qawmi Madrasahs (Islamic Seminaries) in Bangladesh', *SAGE Open*, journals.sagepub.com/home/sgo, April-June 2020, p. 1-15. 'Madrasah teachers mostly untrained', *The Daily Star*, August, 2010.

67. *Umme Salema Begum*, A comparison between pupils who attend madrasah and other type of schools in Bangladesh: their reason for going, their employment prospects and contrasting systems of education, *Durham theses, Durham University, 1993*, p. 122-126.
68. Quoted in *The Daily Star*, January 28, 2018.
69. Azam Md Golamand Tatsuya Kusakabe' Improving the Efficacy of English Instruction at Qawmi Madrasas (Islamic Seminaries) in Bangladesh', *SAGE Open*, 2020, p. 4-6. M.N. Asadullah & N. Chaudhury, 'Religious schools, social values, and economic attitudes: Evidence from Bangladesh', *World Development*, 38 (2), 2010, p. 205–217. Mujib Mehdi,, *Madrasa Education: An Observation*, Rokeya Kabir (Ed.), Dhaka: Bangladesh Nari Progati Sangha, 2003, p. 65-67.
70. *Dainik Samakal*, Dhaka 7 April,10 June, 2006. Please also see, 'Do militants generally come from madrasas?' *Dhaka Tribune*, January 21, 2018.
71. Mumtaz Ahmad, 'Views from the Madrasa: Islamic Education in Bangladesh', *Islamic Education in Bangladesh and Pakistan: Trends in Tertiary Institutions*, NBR Project Report, Washington: The National Bureau of Asian Research, 2009, p. 33-34.
72. *Qawmi Madrasah of Bangladesh Shikhaniti 2012*, <http://bdloan.net/qawmi-madrasah-of-bangladesh-shikhaniti-2012.html>. Retrieve online: 05-08-2016.
73. *The Daily Star*, Dhaka, June 9, 2000, August 14, 2018.
74. *The Financial Express*, Dhaka, October 06, 2018.
75. *Ibid.*
76. *Ibid.* Please also see in this regard, *Dhaka Tribune*, October 7, 2018.
77. *Dr A K M Abdul Quader*, Professor and former Chairman, Department of Arabic, University of Chittagong. Interview to the author, September 16, 2020.
78. *Daily Nayadiganta*, Dhaka, December 12, 2020.
79. *Dainik Manab Zamin*, Dhaka, August 24, 2019.
80. Source: *Zunaid Babunagari*, a famous Islamic scholar and Assistant Director, Hathazari Madrasah, a largest Qawmi Madrasah of Bangladesh. He is also Amir (President) of Hefazat-e-Islam Bangladesh, a largest religious organization of Qawmi ulama. Aninterview by the Author, Chittagong, January 15, 2018.
81. In this regard, Mufti Harun Izhar, Director of Education, Jamiatul Uloom Al-Islamia,Lalkhan Bazar, Chittagong, and Education and Cultural Secretary, Hefazat-e-Islam Bangladesh said that the reorganization of Qawmi institutes by the Government has not got a success actually, it is not made properly. Still, no *qawmi* student gets an opportunity for any government job. This situation has divided *ulama* and Qawmi Madrasahs. According to his view, the Government wants to get only political support from *ulama* through the recognition of old *madrasahs*. But he said that the majority of *qawmi* students are also not interested in a good government job. They are interested only in religious jobs and activities. He believes that it is true that there are many superstitions in the *qawmi madrasah* students, but both the government and *ulama* could not successfully create a mutually effective environment in the perspective of adjusting the traditional *madrasah* with mainstream society. *Interview*, Chittagong, 25 October, 2019.
82. So, 'as the career path of this large number of students are limited to religion based professions as a whole, the job field for madrasa educated students is

narrower comparing to that of the general education students.” Quoted in “What are the career prospects for a madrasa student?” *Dhaka Tribune*, January 17, 2018.

83. Mumtaz Ahmad, ‘Views from the Madrasa: Islamic Education in Bangladesh’, *Islamic Education in Bangladesh and Pakistan: Trends in Tertiary Institutions*, 2009.
84. *Report of the Moslem Education 1934*, p. 100.
85. *Report of the Madrasah Syllabus Committee 1946-1947*, Alipore: Bengal Government Press, 1947, p.1.
86. Please have a look at *The Daily Star*, April 11, 2017, November 05, 2018. In very recent, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has given financial assistance of Tk 8,31,25,000 to the Qawmi *madrasahs* of the country on the occasion of the holy Ramadan. *Dhaka Tribune*, April 30, 2020.
87. They opined that this combined system instruction (religious and modern education) was very difficult to adapt for the Muslim students, and demand was only the modern education can regain the disparity of Muslim education with the advance Hindu society. According to them, it would not be possible to make real progress for the Muslims through the new *madrasah* scheme. Through this policy, the Government had frustrated their modern educational condition further. Abul Hossain, *Bangali Mussalmaner Shikshah Samssaya [New Scheme Madrasah Shikshar Sangskar Prostab]*, Dhaka: Modern Library, 1928, p. 22, 31-33. Muhammad Wazed Ali, ‘Mussalmander Shikshah- Samssaya’, *Probasi*, 28th issue, Vol. II, Chaytro, 1335/1929, p. 846-849.
88. Some mentionable scholars and leaders come out from Reformed Madrasah Scheme is as follow: Professor Dr. Syed Moazzem Hossain(1901-1991, Former Vice Chancellor, University of Dhaka), Professor Abul Fazal (1901-1983, Former Vice Chancellor, University of Chittagong), Professor Dr. Serajul Haque (1905-2005, A prominent scholar and former president, The Asiatic Society of Pakistan), Shah Azizur Rahman (1908-1988, Former Prime Minister of Bangladesh), Professor Dr. Abu Mohamed *Habibullah (1911-1984, Former Chairman, University Grants Commission Bangladesh)*, Professor Muhammad Abdul Hye (1919-1969, A prominent educationalist and litterateur), Professor Dr. Syed Sajjad Hossain (1920-1995, Former Vice Chancellor, University of Rajshahi), Professor Golam Azam (1922-2014, Fomer president, Bangladesh Jammaet-e-Islami), Tazuddin Ahmad (1925-1975, Former Prime Minister of Bangladesh), Professor Mafizullah Kabir (1925-1986), A famous historian), Professor Dr.Kazi Din Muhammad (1927-2011, A prominent educationalist, litterateur, linguist and former Director-General, Bangla Academy Dhaka), Professor Dr. Abdul Karim (1928-2007, A prominent historian and former Vice Chancellor, University of Chittagong), Sanaullah Nuri (1928-2001, A prominent Journalist, litterateur and writer), Professor ATM Musleduddin (1929-2013, A prominent Islamic scholar), Professor Golam Samdani Quraishy (1929-1991, A prominent litterateur, writerand linguist), Professor Abdul Gafur (1929, A famous teacher, journalist, writer and language activist), Professor Dr Safar Ali Akand (1930-2018, A prominent historian and former Director, Institute of Bangladesh Studies), Professor Dr Muhammad Abdullah (1930-2007, A prominent Islamic scholar and historian). *Hooghly Madrasah Patrika*, 2001-2002, pp. 43-44, Muahammad Zinnatulla Sheik,

'Shikhsha BistareYtijjabahi Hooghly Madrasah (1817-2006): *Dhisotoborsher Alope Ferey Dekha*', *Itihas O Sanskriti*, Vol. II, 2016, p. 1066. Syed Murtaza Ali, *Moztaba Kotha O Onanyo Prosongo* p. 71. Field survey by the author.

89. Considering all the facts, we can come to a conclusion that Muslim students will not agree to accept modern science and knowledge, if their traditional education system is suddenly abolished. Because of the fact that religious education for the Muslims is much more pertinent to them than that of Sanskrit studies of their neighbouring Hindu society. In this context, the comment of Mr Chapman, former principal of the Calcutta Madrasah and an English intellectual, is very important: "...the Muslims religious education is more important than that of the neighboring Hindu Sanskrit." Quoted in *Report on the Progress of Education in Eastern Bengal and Assam, 1907-08 to 1911-12*, Vol. I, p. 159-60.
90. *The Daily Star*, Dhaka, June 9, 2000.