

# Madrasah Education in Pre-colonial and Colonial South Asia

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## Abstract

This paper traces the history of madrasahs (Islamic seminaries) in South Asia from their inception in the 12th century until the end of colonial rule in 1947. The paper argues that many of the pre-colonial rulers of South Asia, including the Mughals (1526–1857), played key roles in promoting education and providing patronage of various educational institutions, including madrasahs. The policies of British colonial rule (1757–1947), however, made the most indelible marks on madrasah education, not only directly, wherein their policies have impacted on the structure, functions and curriculum of madrasahs, but also indirectly, through the prompting of responses from the *ulama* and the Muslim community that determined the contours and the content of madrasah education. The paper examines the roles of various strands of madrasah education, and the interplay of politics and curriculum of various major madrasahs. The paper demonstrates that madrasah as a concept and as an institution has come a long way, that its contents and contours have undergone changes, and that as an institution it has largely remained embedded within the society.

## Keywords

Education, identity, madrasah, South Asia

## Introduction

Although institutions providing Islamic education, known by different names, can be found in many Muslim countries (for example, *pesantren* in Indonesia), South Asia, the home of the largest Muslim population in the world with a long tradition of madrasah education, has drawn more attention than any other region in recent years. In Arabic-speaking regions, the word *madrasah* does not specifically refer to a religious seminary; instead schools of various levels are referred to as madrasahs. However, in non-Arabic speaking societies this word has assumed a different meaning, and is often understood to designate a special kind of institution for the training of *ulama* (literally scholars, plural of *alim*). In the South Asian context, madrasah means an educational institution that offers instruction about the Qur'an, the sayings (*hadith*) of the Prophet Muhammad, jurisprudence (*fiqh*), and law. In other words, schools that promote Islamic curricula are called madrasahs. Although the word *madrasah* is used as a generic description of educational institutions covering elementary to university-level education, to Muslim scholars they represent the primary and secondary level of education up to the tenth grade. Educational institutions offering curricula equivalent to eleventh and twelfth grades are called *darul uloom* (literally, abode of knowledge), and *jamia* offer curricula equivalent to college and university. In this paper, I use the term *madrasah* to identify all of these educational institutions.

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This paper traces the history of madrassahs in South Asia (i.e. India, Pakistan and Bangladesh) during the pre-colonial and colonial eras. The history of madrassah education in South Asia is connected in many ways to developments outside the region, but the growth and role of madrassahs has been shaped by the historical and social conditions of the region. Many of the pre-colonial rulers of South Asia, including the Mughals (1526–1857), played key roles in promoting education and providing patronage of various educational institutions, including madrassahs. The policies of British colonial rule (1757–1947), however, made the most indelible marks on madrassah education, not only directly, wherein their policies have impacted on the structure, functions and curriculum of madrassahs, but also indirectly, through the prompting of responses from the ulama and the Muslim community that determined the contours and the content of madrassah education. These responses, in large measure, revolved around the concept of Muslim identity, and therefore, were laced with political activism.

This paper comprises four sections. In the next section, I look at how the institution began to take shape before the establishment of Mughal rule in India. In the following section I examine its development under the Mughal Empire. I then argue that the history of madrassah education in India under British colonialism is inextricably linked to the political dynamics of the country, particularly of the 19th century. It is my contention that the colonial administration's policies toward education, endeavors of Muslims to locate their position within the changing political structure after the demise of the Mughal Empire, and the rise of identity politics within the Muslim community in India are the key three factors in understanding the madrassahs under colonial regimes.

## **The Beginning**

Until the rise of the Mughal Empire in 1528, Islamic educational institutions including madrassahs were founded in India without any discernable pattern. The nature, scope and role of the madrassahs varied according to region, and depended on the mode of interactions between the Muslims and the local community, for Islam reached India through a variety of ways – trade, migration, preaching, and military invasions. The northern parts of the subcontinent, for example, were invaded by Muhammad bin Qasim in 711 and Mahmud of Ghazni in the early 11th century. The invasion of Sind by bin Qasim was prompted by an attack on Arab trading ships by pirates, evidence of trading contacts long before the military conflict. On the other hand, in the eastern parts of India, particularly in Bengal, Sufis, saints, and holy men began arriving as early as the late 7th century (Saklain, 1993: 3).<sup>1</sup>

Some historians contend that following bin Qasim's invasion Arab scholars migrated to well-known cities in Sind such as Debal and new cities such as Mansura, founded between 728 and 738.<sup>2</sup> According to some accounts, madrassahs were founded where 'scholars delivered lectures on Hadiths, Tafsir [Qur'anic commentary], and Fiqh literature, comparable with Damascus' (Kaur, 1990: 17). But little detail is available to support this claim. Muhammad Ghori, who laid the foundation of Turkish rule in India in the late 12th century, is credited with establishing a madrassah in Ajmer in 1191, considered the first institutionalized madrassah in South Asia (Kaur, 1990: 18; Sikand, 2005: 33).

When Ghazni was seized by the Turks in 1153–1154, large numbers of the elite fled from Ghazni and Khurasan, and migrated to the city of Lahore. The refugees included scholars. Their presence influenced the local culture and education (Siddiqui, 2005: 8).

Many of the rulers belonging to the Delhi Sultanate, which existed between 1201 and 1528 under various dynasties, displayed admiration for education and religious learning. A number of them built mosques and religious learning centers, and some built madrassahs in the areas they

ruled including the capital, Delhi. The first madrassah in Delhi was founded by Shams-ud-din Iltutmish (or Altamash, 1211–1236) in the early years of his reign and was named Madrassah-i-Muizzi. Among the rulers of the Tughluq Dynasty (1290–1302), Muhammad bin Tughluq (1325–1351) was the most enthusiastic founder of madrassahs. There were nearly 1000 madrassahs in Delhi during his rule (Ahmad, 1968: 44; Kaur, 1990: 21; Sikand, 2005: 33).

Although these madrassahs were not established by a single ruler, they generally served a similar purpose – educating people for state employment – and their pattern closely followed that of the well-established madrassahs in the Muslim world.

The important subjects of study, broadly speaking, were 1. Grammar, 2. Literature, 3. Logic, 4. Islamic Law and its principles, 5. Qur'anic commentary, 6. Hadiths, 7. Mysticism, 8. Scholasticism (religious philosophy). The books listed contained many of the original texts from the Baghdad schools, but also contained texts from the later scholars of Bukhara, and Khwarizm in Central Asia. (Nayyar, 2003: 219)<sup>3</sup>

The curricula of these madrassahs, particularly those located in the north, were influenced by the scholars who migrated to India following the demise of the Abbasid Dynasty, when the Mongols ransacked the main centers of Islamic rule and madrassahs. A significant number of these scholars belonged to the Hanafi school of thought, and thus established the character of many madrassahs (Sikand, 2005: 33). But this cannot be said of India as a whole, because, as noted earlier, the nature of madrassahs varied widely by region.

A number of regional kingdoms with distinct characteristics emerged as the Delhi-based rule weakened over time. In the south, the independent Muslim kingdom of Deccan was founded. The Bahmani Sultanate (or Bahmanid Dynasty), located in the northern Deccan, lasted for almost two centuries beginning 1347, and is known for establishing a number of madrassahs. The first of these madrassahs was built in 1378 by Mahmud Shah (Kaur, 1990: 24). The most prominent of the madrassahs was built in Bidar in 1472, under the direction of Khwaja Mahmud Gawan, the prime minister of Shams-ud-din Muhammad Shah Bahmani (also known as Muhammad Shah III Lashkari, 1463–1482). The reputation of this madrassah attracted the most eminent theologians, philosophers and scientists. An interesting aspect of this madrassah was that, unlike most of those elsewhere in India, it was built to reaffirm Shi'ism, which received state patronage. The madrassah, named after Mahmud Gawan, was the embodiment of the excellence of Persian architecture. The curriculum of the madrassahs in the south, various accounts indicate, included both religious and secular subjects. This is largely due to the rulers' patronage of education in general. For example, the first madrassah established by Mahmud Shah provided education to orphans; expenses for lodging and food were borne by the state, and government subsidies were provided to other educational institutions.

In Bengal, the institutionalization of Islamic education began during the period of the Delhi Sultanate, but its foundation was established in earlier days with the arrival of Sufis and saints. Sufis and saints used to travel from outside the region, and usually formed organized centers of learning in their *khanqas* (that is, their place of worship and residence) (Law, 1916: 19). These gatherings, akin to the *halqas* in Arabia in the early days of Islam, were primarily for adults and particularly to discuss the teachings of the Qur'an and Sunnah. These were not intended to provide literacy in any language, nor designed for elementary education. Lack of support from the rulers made these *khanqas* entirely dependent on individual Sufis and saints and support from their local followers; therefore, if the Sufi or saint moved, the *khanqas*, especially the educational gatherings, often ceased to exist in one place and began in another. Over time, some of these *khanqas* began to resemble regular centers of elementary education, called *maktabs*. *Maktabs* were also organized at mosques, and at the homes of Muslims who could afford to provide space.

It is worth mentioning that, prior to the introduction of maktabas, an indigenous system of education was thriving in Bengal. The institution central to the elementary education system was the *toll*, primarily to teach Hindu religious practices. These institutions were a community response to the needs of literacy and religious education of the children. Each of these institutions was organized around one person called a *guru* (teacher, in Sanskrit), and the students were supposed to spend a considerable time learning Sanskrit. Another institution that emerged after the twelfth century in Bengal was the *pathshala*. The pathshala curriculum was relatively secular: designed to teach language, basic mathematics and skills related to agriculture, boat making, and the like. Thus maktabas and subsequently madrassahs were established in various parts of Bengal well before the Bengali learning institutions came into existence. The maktabas and madrassahs remained community-based and community-supported institutions until they began to receive the support of the rulers, which occurred after Ikhtiyar bin Bakhtiyar Khilji's military expedition reached Bengal in 1197. Bakhtiyar Khilji, after expanding his rule in Bengal, founded a new city called Rangpura, where a number of madrassahs were established within a short span of time (Kaur, 1990: 30). His successors followed the practice and founded a number of madrassahs and extended support to various maktabas (Rahim, 1982: 164).

The preceding discussion demonstrates that Islamic educational institutions, which began to spread under the rulers of the Delhi Sultanate, continued despite the gradual weakening of the sultanate and the emergence of various political structures. Patronage from regional Muslim rulers was one of the reasons for the expansion, but not the only reason. In some instances madrassahs emerged due to the presence of preachers, and in other situations as a community response to the needs of providing education to the children.

It is noteworthy that no single model of madrassah was replicated, that these madrassahs enjoyed autonomy in their operation, and that they had complete freedom in deciding their curriculum. Additionally,

both 'transmitted' as well as 'rational' sciences were taught at the madrassahs, for the notion that the two were somehow opposed to each other or that there was a clear distinction between religion and the secular world was, as in other contemporary Muslim societies, quite foreign to the medieval Indian Muslim educational system. (Sikand, 2005: 34)

Emphasis on both sciences helped the madrassah graduates acquire employment in royal courts and various branches of administration. In addition to the madrassahs, the opening of maktabas has also been discussed. These institutions were equivalent to preschools or kindergartens, but usually taught only the memorization of the Qur'an.

### **Madrassahs under the Mughals (1556–1858)**

The number of madrassahs increased manifold during the Mughal Empire (1556–1858), which was at its height for almost two centuries and was spread through an area no smaller than a continent. This was primarily due to the support provided by the royal courts, irrespective of the ruler. Two other factors contributed to the growth of the educational institutions under the Mughals, especially in the 16th century; first, the political stability owing to the consolidation of power at one center, resulting in a centralized bureaucracy; and second, the growing influence of the ulama vis-à-vis the Sufis as the dominant religious figures. Overall, madrassahs received patronage and respect from the emperors and common people alike.

Two features characterize the Mughal period, however – the presence of two conflicting trends within the education sector, and the consolidation of one tradition within the madrassah curriculum. Within the education sector one trend was to expand educational opportunities for a large number of members of the society while the other was to isolate itself from contemporaneous developments in technology elsewhere, particularly in Europe. Within madrassah education, the tradition of *manqulat* (revealed/transmitted knowledge) was consolidated over time at the expense of the tradition of *maqulat* (rational sciences). Interestingly, in the early days of the empire, it was the study of *maqulat* that spread widely.

Dominant historical narratives suggest that spreading education was high on the agenda of the Mughal rulers. Narendra Nath Law, in his seminal work on education under Muslim rule in India, concluded that ‘almost all the Mughal Emperors took much interest in the education of the people and the diffusion of learning’ (Law, 1916: 190). Educational institutions of various levels were founded by these rulers. Royal documents of Babar (1526–1530) reveal that education was considered a duty of the state to its subjects. Akbar (1556–1605) was at the forefront of making education available to a large number of people; he established a ‘department dispensing state patronage to educational institutions’ and embarked on significant educational reforms (Ikram, 1964: 154).

Jahangir (1605–1627) introduced a law that stipulated that if a rich man or a rich traveler died without heir, his property would be transferred to the crown and be utilized for building and repairing madrassahs and monasteries. Jan Jahan Khan in his *Tarikhi-Jan-Jahan* states that Jahangir repaired ‘even those madrassahs that had for 30 years been the dwelling places of birds and beasts, and filled them with students and professors’.<sup>4</sup> The most celebrated act of Emperor Shahjahan (1627–1658) in the field of education was the establishment of the Imperial College in Delhi, around 1650 (Law, 1916: 190). During Mughal rule, the royal support for education was matched by individuals belonging to the nobility and by well-to-do members of the society. Thus, educational institutions grew phenomenally and the ulama held a respected position in the royal courts. Often scholars accompanied emperors on their military expeditions.<sup>5</sup>

The close relationship between the state and the ulama was not unique to the Mughal Empire but was also a characteristic of the Ottoman and Safavid empires, and neither was it solely due to the emperors’ proclivities for patronage. The ulama were also interested in being a part of the state, not only to have successful careers but also to oversee the implementation of their religious ideas and interpretations (Metcalf, 1982: 21–22). This is not to say that the relationship was always comfortable; indeed, occasionally tensions between the ulama and the emperor surfaced.

Although patronage of education, arts, music and architecture was the hallmark of the Mughal emperors, they seem to have been reluctant to embrace new knowledge and technology, and lagged behind in the adoption of contemporaneous inventions. Saiyid Naqi Husain Jafri insists, ‘in so far as reception of new ideas and technologies was concerned, the Mughals ... were not much interested’ (Jafri, 2006: 46). The examples Jafri cites in support of his argument are the refusal of Akbar to adopt a printing press when a delegation of Portuguese missionaries presented printed papers, and Jahangir’s indifference to a mechanical clock presented to him by the French royal delegation. ‘These two instances have been cited only to suggest how the rulers and powers that be guided and shaped the priorities of a nation’ (Jafri, 2006: 47). Jafri also believes that this was a serious anomaly compared to earlier Muslim rules elsewhere (Jafri, 2006: 47).

Thus, despite the expansion of education during the Mughal Empire, the content did not reflect available up-to-date knowledge, especially in technology, primarily owing to the educational institutions’ reluctance to teach European languages.

Equally important is the trend that the royal patronage of education for all in the early days of the Mughal Empire changed over time and became skewed toward coreligionists in the late Mughal period. 'We see in Akbar, perhaps for the first time in [Indian] history, a Muslim monarch sincerely eager to further the education of the Hindus and the Muhammadans alike' (Law, 1916: 160). Akbar created and supported institutions, including madrassahs, where Hindu and Muslim children learned together. Systematic policies were followed by the royal court to ensure that Hindu children and youth were educated about their religion and culture. Hindu scholars received royal patronage almost in equal measure with Muslim scholars. These actions were consistent with Akbar's other policies and his attitude toward religion; for example, the abolition of pilgrimage tax on Hindus, and of *jizya* (per-head tax on non-Muslims), and the encouragement of debates among scholars of various religions in the Ibadat Khana (House of Worship) founded by him. Akbar's attempt to introduce a new religion called the Deen-i-Ilahi (Divine Faith) indicates his desire, among others, to bridge the differences between Hindus and Muslims (For details of Akbar's rule, see the three volumes *The Akbar Nama of Abul-Fazl* translated by Beveridge [1977]).

Changes in the educational curriculum, particularly the emphasis on rationalist content, continued under Jahangir's rule; but faced resistance from orthodox ulama. Some ulama, for example Shaikh Abd ul-Huq during Akbar's reign, attempted to revive the *manqulat* tradition. Shaikh Abd ul-Huq later fled to Hijaz 'to escape the lax atmosphere of Akbar's court' (Robinson, 2001: 14).

In contrast with Akbar and Jahangir, Aurangzeb's rule reveals a less tolerant face of the Mughal Empire. Aurangzeb not only cared little about the education of Hindus but also ordered the provincial governors to destroy Hindu schools and temples in 1669 (Faruki, 1935: 117, quoted in Ikram, 1964: 199). He eagerly tried to foster the education of Muslim youth and spread Islamic learning (Lane-Poole, 1990). Muslim students received royal support in the form of stipends, and the emperor provided monetary help to educational institutions, sometimes in the form of jagirs for perpetual support of the institution. Aurangzeb, known for his dissatisfaction with the education imparted by his teachers, founded innumerable madrassahs during his reign (Bernier, 1914: 156).

The most significant steps in the education sector during the reign of Akbar were changes in the learning method at the elementary level, and the revision of the madrassah curriculum under the auspices of Mir Fateullah Shirazi. The former were intended to shift the focus of education in mak-tabs from rote memorization to learning by practice. Akbar, in his *Ain-i Akbari* (1907) proposed a system which gave emphasis to understanding: 'Care should be taken that he [the student] learns to understand everything himself, but the teacher may assist him a little'. The reform of the madrassah curriculum was chiefly the contribution of Mir Fateullah Shirazi, a scholar who initially migrated to one of the southern Muslim sultanates from Shiraz, a town in Iran, sometime in the mid-1500s. As a result of the revision, the madrassah curriculum included courses on ethics, mathematics, astronomy, agriculture, medicine, logic and government; the study of Sanskrit including *vyakaran* (grammar), *vidayanta* (philosophy), and the teachings of Patanjali (yoga) was prescribed (Law, 1916: 161–162; Sufi, 1941: 53). Eighteenth-century historian Ali Azad Bilgrami states that after Shirazi's arrival in Akbar's court, 'the study of maqulat took great strides towards popularity', and, according to Ikram, 'during Akbar's reign the "mental sciences" – logic, philosophy, and scholastic theology – had taken on new importance' (Bilgrami, quoted in Husain, 2005: 25; Ikram, 1964: 238).

The tradition of syncretism promoted by Akbar was reversed by Aurangzeb during his rule, as he tried to conduct the affairs of state according to traditional Islamic policy, and 'in some of his letters written during the struggle for the succession he claimed that he was acting "for the sake of the true faith and the peace of the realm"' (emphasis added) (Ikram, 1964: 189). Yet a development

during the reign of Aurangzeb provided a leap to the tradition of studying rational sciences: the establishment of Farangi Mahall in Lucknow as an institution of learning.<sup>6</sup> The building in which it was housed, previously owned by a European merchant, was donated by Emperor Aurangzeb to the family of Mullah Qutubuddin Sihalwi. Sihalwi, a leading scholar of rational sciences, was consulted by the royal court on many occasions. After he died as a result of a land dispute in the late 17th century, the emperor bequeathed the compound to his family. The third son of Sihalwi, Mullah Nizamuddin Sihalwi, turned the place into a seat of learning in the early 18th century. Mullah Nizamuddin laid down a curriculum, later named Dars-i-Nizami, which made the study of rational sciences central to education. Robinson underscores the salient features of the Dars-i-Nizami, saying that:

By encouraging students to think rather than merely to learn by rote the syllabus enabled them to get through the usual run of madrasa learning with greater speed, while they came to be noted for their capacity to get to the heart of the matter, to present an argument, and to be flexible in their approach to jurisprudence. (Robinson, 2001: 14–15)

Two points are worth noting here. First, Farangi Mahall was not organized as a madrasah (until 1905); instead, the members of the Farangi Mahall families ‘simply taught in their homes those who came to them’ (Robinson, 2001: 71). And second, revealed knowledge – *manqulat* – was not excluded from the curriculum, but ‘the religious part of the curriculum consisted of classical texts’ (Nayyar, 2003: 223).

Considering Aurangzeb’s avowed adherence to a puritanical version of Islam, his support for the establishment of Farangi Mahall is intriguing, to say the least. Equally remarkable is the role of the nawabs of Awadh, who made the continued existence of the Farangi Mahall and particularly the adoption of the Dars-i-Nizami curriculum possible. It is well to bear in mind that the nawabs were Shi’a. It must also be acknowledged that Aurangzeb’s initial support was pivotal in bringing the institution to life, and that the lodging expenses of students who studied in the Farangi Mahall were paid by the Mughal emperor.

By the early 18th century, the Farangi Mahall had become one of the largest centers of learning in India, and students from outside Lucknow were attending this institution in great numbers. Throughout the 18th and early 19th centuries the rationalist tradition, espoused by the Farangi Mahall, spread, and the Dars-i-Nizami became the *de facto* standard syllabus of madrasah education. The wide acceptance of the Nizami syllabus since its inception was due to two factors: first, it enabled the students to gain employment, especially in government – ‘the skills it [Dars-i-Nizami] offered were in demand from increasingly sophisticated and complex bureaucratic systems of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century India’; and second, that members of the Farangi Mahall families traveled throughout India ‘from court to court, from patron to patron, in search of teaching opportunities’ and devoted themselves to teaching. This increased the number of students exponentially (Robinson, 2001: 53, 23).<sup>7</sup>

The popularity of the study of rational sciences began to wane in the later days of the Mughal period, and the *manqulat* tradition – the tradition of emphasis on revealed sciences – began to regain its position in the eighteenth century. This was, in large measure, a contribution of the thought of Shah Waliullah Dehalvi (1703–1762) and the Madrasah-i-Rahimia, a madrasah where he taught for more than 12 years.<sup>8</sup> The madrasah, however, attracted attention when Shah Abd al-Aziz (1746–1823), son of Shah Waliullah, became its head.

After his father’s death in 1719, Shah Waliullah took charge of the madrasah at the age of 17. Shah Waliullah was capable of becoming the head of the institution at such an early stage of his life

because by then he had demonstrated high qualities of scholarship. After completion of his elementary education, Shah Waliullah acquired the knowledge of logic, fiqh, hadith, *tib* (Eastern medicine), algebra, mathematics and oratory from his father. (For the life and work of Shah Waliullah, see Jalbani [1967], Rizvi [1980] and Ghazi [2004]. For a shorter discussion, see Metcalf [1982: 35–43]). After 12 years of teaching, he went to Arabia in 1731, where he stayed for about two and a half years and studied under Medinese hadith scholar Muhammad Haya al-Sindi (d. 1750).<sup>9</sup> Upon his return to India, Waliullah taught at the Madrassah-i-Rahimia for about three years before devoting himself to writing.

Shah Waliullah was a product of the Madrassah-i-Rahimia, but it was his ideas that shaped the madrassah's curriculum and made indelible marks on the Muslim scholarship of his time and beyond. He is one of the few scholars whose ideas are debated among both Islamic activists and scholars to this day. Waliullah's primary concern was the decline of the Muslims, moral and political, in his time. Waliullah viewed the disintegration of the Mughal Empire after Aurangzeb, the rise of smaller states, the invasion of Nadir Shah (1739), and the lack of religiosity among Muslims as a crisis of the Muslim community, and examined the causes of this decline. He wrote extensively on issues related to jurisprudence, Sufism, hadith scholarship, and the relationships between the scholars (ulama) and the state, to name but a few subjects (Dallal, 1993). He also translated the Qur'an into Persian. His insistence on studying hadiths, his complete rejection of *maqulat*, his criticism of the influence of Greek philosophy on the ulama, and of the local customs of Muslims as *bida'at* (wrongful innovations) strengthened the study of revealed sciences among his followers and in the Madrassah-i-Rahimia under the stewardship of his son Abd al-Aziz, who declared India under British rule a *Darul Harb* (abode of war).

Thus, by the end of Mughal rule, the tradition of *maqulat* within the madrassah education curricula had regained its dominant position. This is not to say that the *maqulat* tradition was obliterated, for the Farangi Mahall existed and variations of the Dars-i-Nizami curriculum were followed by many madrassahs, but Shah Waliullah's ideas began to find more adherents within the Muslim community. It is, however, necessary to acknowledge that the madrassahs and ulama during Mughal rule made a remarkable contribution to the discipline of revealed knowledge; 'their contribution is indeed significant in the Islamic world' (Jafri, 2006: 51).

## Madrassahs under British Colonial Rule

The nature, scope, and role of madrassahs in colonial India were significantly shaped by the colonial administration's policies toward education, endeavors of Muslims to locate their position within the changing political structure after the demise of the Mughal Empire, and the rise of identity politics within the Muslim community in India. Therefore, the history of madrassah education in India under British colonialism is inextricably linked to the political dynamics of the country, particularly of the nineteenth century, and must be discussed in the context of these three factors.

The British East India Company assumed political power in Bengal in 1765, nine years after the Battle of Plassey, which saw the defeat of the nawab of Bengal at the hands of British soldiers led by Robert Clive and marked the beginning of British colonialism in India.<sup>10</sup> After the death of Aurangzeb in 1707, the Mughal Empire centered in Delhi was in serious decline and was virtually ineffective as a political power. Thus, the East India Company's policy measures, initially effective for the eastern part of India (Bengal, Bihar and Orissa), laid the groundwork for future rule throughout India.

Although the colonial administration's direct and protracted involvement in education began in 1813 with the Charter Act, it came after considerable debate and various other measures. The



Company's policy of maintaining distance from the educational sector in the early days of its power allowed the continuation of traditional educational institutions such as *pathshalas*, *maktabs* and *madrassahs* established during Mughal rule with state patronage, and as community responses outside state involvement. There were also initiatives to introduce new educational institutions. These initiatives largely came from the Christian missionaries. For example, the first missionary school was established in Calcutta in 1702, before the East India Company emerged as a formidable political entity. Soon after the Battle of Plassey, Robert Clive invited a missionary activist from Madras to open a school in Calcutta. The number of students of the school rose to 174 in the second year, in 1759, from 48 in its first year (Islam, 2002: 27).

However, the East India Company maintained a distance from missionary activism, opposed proselytizing, and restricted missionary activities within Company-controlled territory (Ali, 1965; Laird, 1972). Missionaries not only needed permission from the Company to conduct their activities but were also discouraged through various means. Undoubtedly this policy was deliberate:

Afraid of the reaction that meddling in the religious beliefs of its Indian subjects might provoke, the East India Company made it clear to these subjects as well as to its own British officials that it was not in India to challenge or undermine existing religious beliefs. (Seth, 2007: 27–28)

Nevertheless, the missionaries influenced educational policies in later years, especially with regard to the medium of instruction. Additionally, the presence and activities of these missionaries engendered reactions from both Hindu and Muslim communities, and helped reform movements to gather pace.

Despite the pronounced religious neutrality of the Company, the first direct involvement of the Company in education came at the auspices of Warren Hastings, the governor general of Bengal, in 1780 with the establishment of the Calcutta Madrassah. Hastings's statement delineating the rationale for the establishment of the madrassah indicates that political consideration was the driving force behind the decision. The madrassah was established

to conciliate the Mahomedans of Calcutta ... to qualify the sons of Mahomedan gentlemen for responsible and lucrative offices in the state, and to produce competent officers for Courts of Justice to which students of the Madrassah on the production of certificates of qualification were to be drafted as vacancies occurred. (Quoted in Naik and Nurullah, 2000: 30)

The decision to establish the Calcutta Aliya madrassah followed the decision to employ different laws for Muslim and Hindu communities. In 1772 Warren Hastings and William Jones had decided to apply 'the laws of Koran with respect to Mohammedans and that of the Shaster with respect to Hindus' (quoted in Rudolph and Rudolph, 2001: 33–36).

The Calcutta Aliya madrassah adopted the Dars-i-Nizami curriculum and continued to follow the curriculum until 1790. Adoption of the Dars-i-Nizami in the Calcutta Madrassah was a vindication of the utilitarian value of the curriculum introduced by Farangi Mahall in the early 18th century. In 1791, however, with the dismissal of the first principal, changes were made in the curriculum. The company also provided support to the establishment of the Sanskrit College in Benaras in 1791, and Fort William College in Calcutta in 1800. These measures were not official requirements for the East India Company.

The responsibility for the education of Indian subjects was included in the renewed charter of the East India Company in 1813, which stipulated that although not a replacement for indigenous languages, English would be taught in the Indian education system. The expectation was that

English would coexist with Oriental studies as a means by which moral law could be reinforced. This inclusion was the result of Charles Grant's study conducted in 1792 entitled 'Observations on the state of society among the Asiatic subjects of Great Britain, particularly with respect to morals, and the means to improving it' (published in 1793). Grant, in his report, insisted that darkness had fallen on India, and Hindus (by which he meant Indians) were to be blamed for their plight. Grant suggests, 'the communication of our light and knowledge to them would prove the best remedy for their disorders' (quoted in McCully, 1966: 11). By 'light' Grant meant Christianity, and by 'knowledge' English education. Thus, his suggestions included the introduction of English as the medium of instruction, the establishment of schools to provide education to local elites who would then pass on the education to the commoners, and the replacement of Persian with English as the official language (Garg, 2003).

Although the Board of Directors of the East India Company entrusted the responsibility of providing education to the Indian subjects of the Company, Grant's proposals were not approved by the directors. One of the key elements of Grant's proposals, the theory of 'downward filtration', was, however, adopted and followed until 1854. The encouragement to the establishment of the Hindu College in 1817 and the Sanskrit College in 1824 in Calcutta – both to attract the children of elites and to teach English, among other subjects—reflects the policy of filtration. The decision to introduce an English course in the Calcutta Aliya madrassah in 1824 (which was implemented in 1826) demonstrates the administration's gradual move toward the introduction of English in schools. The Calcutta Aliya madrassah continued to offer an English course until 1851.

The proposals presented by Charles Grant finally became a reality in 1835, thanks to Thomas Macaulay's Education Minute. Of course, the Education Minute also resulted from the broader Anglicist/Orientalist controversy, marking the victory of the Orientalists (for the controversy see Zastoupil and Moir, 1999). Two central issues of the debates were the system of education (local versus Western) and the medium of education (local languages versus English). The Minute favored Western education and English. It clearly stated the goals of administration with regard to education:

We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions who we govern; a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinion, in morals, and in intellect. (Macaulay's Minute on Education, 1835: 14)

The Minute was approved immediately by Governor General William Bentinck, making 1835 a watershed in the history of education in India.<sup>11</sup> The immediate consequence of the adoption of this policy was the discontinuation of government support to madrassahs and other traditional educational institutions.

But the most serious blow came when English replaced Persian as the official language and medium of the higher courts of law in 1835, and regional languages became the medium of the lower courts in 1837. These two decisions in succession reduced the employability of those educated in Persian in madrassahs. In 1844, when Governor General Henry Hardinge declared that only those with Western-style education and knowledge of English were eligible for government employment or for a career in public life, the utility of Persian ceased immediately, and the employability of madrassah-educated youth became almost non-existent. With little success in spreading education among the elites, let alone the common people, the policy of filtration came under scrutiny in the 1850s, and a shift ensued. In the wake of the renewal of the charter of the East India Company in 1853, the British Parliament conducted an enquiry into the state of Indian education, the first of its kind. This resulted in Wood's Despatch of 1854. Wood's Despatch, named after

Charles Wood, the president of the Board of Control for India, not only expressed dismay at the limited success in the education sector, but also recommended a scheme for education from the primary school to the university level. The proposed scheme suggested an end to the filtration policy, recommended that the government take responsibility for education at all levels, and proposed a transformation of the indigenous schools into Western-style institutions through grants-in-aid to private schools. These recommendations were implemented without much delay, and they transformed the education landscape of India. The Westernization of education became the 'public agenda' rather than a 'government initiative,' English education proliferated, and the structure of educational institutions changed. These changes marginalized the traditional educational institutions, particularly madrassahs, because eligibility for grants-in-aid

required adoption of a curriculum focused on math, science, and language, and removal of all reference to religion to a discrete 'religion' class. It also required that educators receive formal teacher training, which gradually shifted teaching from respected local figures, often religious authorities who did not teach as a primary occupation, to full-time educators with teaching certificates issued by colonial authorities. (Langohr, 2005: 162)

In the early years, however, the lion's share of the new grants-in-aid went to the missionary schools, which posed another kind of threat to the madrassahs. The impact was also felt in the traditional secular educational institutions such as pathshalas in Bengal. This was particularly important because missionary schools were functioning as secular institutions. It is now well documented that missionary activists deeply believed that 'education might serve to prepare young minds for a conversion' (Seth, 2007: 30). In other words, to the missionaries, education was a *praeparatio evangelica*.

The decision to introduce English education is indicative of the influence of the missionaries on the administration's education policy. Alexander Duff of the Church of Scotland, after his arrival in Calcutta in 1830, insisted on English as the medium of education and was critical of rote learning. The school founded by him, which eventually developed into the Scottish Church College, not only set the standard for other missionary schools but also influenced the decision of 1835 to devote state funds to Western education through the medium of English.

In the long run, the education policies of the colonial administration, especially its insistence on Western education (labeled as secular education), had an impact in two ways: first, it bifurcated education into two realms – secular and religious. By instituting what Yoginder Sikand has aptly called educational dualism, religion was pushed to the private sphere and was identified as a 'distinct sphere of life and activity, neatly separate or separable from other similarly defined spheres' (Sikand, 2005: 65). By implication, the madrassah was consigned to provide religious education as opposed to general education. This bifurcation – religious versus secular – was also interpreted as sacred versus profane, and within the discourse of the ulama this translated into education of *deen* (religious/sacred) and *duniya* (temporal). It is interesting to note here that essentially both the colonial administration and ulama subscribed to the post-Enlightenment Western approach of rigid compartmentalization between these two, although in reverse order of importance. But for ulama this was also a mode of resistance to colonialism: 'the din-duniya separation should be construed as a form of cultural resistance, an effort to protect the "inner world" from Western intrusion' (Hassan, 2006: 61). The defense of the inner world is based on an understanding of its superiority, its sovereignty and its primacy in life. This attitude has remained unchanged to date throughout South Asia.

The second impact is the creation of a new social space for religio-political activism. The marginalization of religious education and the exclusion of overt religious texts in schools created a

space for religious movements to reach a new public through their own educational institutions. In the 19th century, madrassahs played the role in the identity politics of the Muslim community.

The question of identity as a distinct issue appeared at the middle of the 19th century in India, as a section of the Muslim community began to lament the disintegration of the Mughal Empire and to endeavor to locate their position within the changing political structure. In many ways, the process began with the intellectual tradition of Shah Waliullah, but gained salience within the Muslim public discourse as a result of the failure of the Mutiny of 1857. Even for those who disagreed with the approach of Shah Waliullah and approached the issue from an entirely different position, the questions were similar and simple: Why has Islamic rule collapsed? How to regain the 'lost glory of Islam'? These questions privileged religion in general and particularly Islam as identifier and social demarcator of identity, but this was nothing exceptional because, 'times of crisis breed religious reform movement, as people ask why the temporal glories of their religious community have faded' (Langohr, 2005: 172). These reform movements often take various shapes and employ various methods. In the case of 19th (and 20th) century India, the Muslim reformist movements took the shape of sectarian and revivalist activism, and educational movements, among others (for detail see Reetz, 2006: 52–81). These movements were connected in many ways, but for our purposes the educational movement, particularly madrassahs, as a vehicle of Muslim awakening and identity politics, is important.

Although the founding of the Calcutta Aliya madrassah in 1780 can be described as the beginning of the modern era of madrassah education in South Asia, its role in producing Muslim consciousness and encouraging political activism was limited, especially in comparison to other community-initiated madrassahs such as the Deoband Madrassah and the Darul Uloom Nadwatul Ulama, established in the mid 19th century in north India. The primary objective of the Calcutta Madrassah, as discussed previously, was to enable Muslims to join the colonial administration. Since its inception, the madrassah followed the curriculum known as Dars-i-Nizami. Some changes were made in the curriculum in 1853 following the recommendations of an inquiry committee appointed by the government to look into its management; but in the main the focus remained the same, leaving very little room for the institution and its ulama to play any role in social activism.

Four other madrassahs replicating the Calcutta Madrassah were established in the later part of the century – at Hughli in 1871, and at Dhaka, Chittagong and Rajshahi in 1873. In the early 20th century, the number grew significantly. Primarily as a result of the drive to include English in the school curriculum and to continue providing financial support to these madrassahs, there was a major change in their curriculum in 1915 – inclusion of English as a mandatory subject, replacing Persian, and the introduction of mathematics, geography, history and physical education to the curriculum. Madrassahs that adopted the reformed curriculum were called reformed (or new-scheme) madrassahs. This change created two separate trends within the institutions that followed the Calcutta Madrassah curriculum as the old-scheme madrassahs and the new-scheme madrassahs followed different curricula. The government policy was to assist the new-scheme madrassahs with financial aid.

These changes, however significant they may be, were received with very little enthusiasm by the ulama, because by then a distinct tradition of the madrassah with an agenda of Muslim consciousness, empowerment, and activism, which originated in Deoband, had already made its mark.

Darul Uloom, commonly referred to as the Deoband Madrassah, was founded in Deoband, a small town about 100 miles north of Delhi in 1866 – 10 years after the historic rebellion against British colonialism. Maulana Muhammad Qasim Nanautawi (1833–1877) and Maulana Rashid Ahmed Gangohi (1829–1905) were the founders of the institution. In large measure, the establishment of the Deoband Madrassah in 1866 and raising it to an uloom in 1867 were calculated

responses of the orthodox ulama to contemporaneous politics. Although the madrassah adopted a revised version of the Dars-i-Nizami curriculum, it was intended to continue the intellectual tradition of Shah Waliullah and therefore emphasized the *manqulat* (revealed knowledge) rather than *maqulat* (rational sciences) in its curriculum: 'fiqh formed the core of the curriculum' (Sikand, 2005: 74). Whether Deobandi ulama were opposed to modern education, especially English, is a matter of debate, but what is beyond doubt is that they were not willing to compromise the integrity of what they considered 'Islamic education'. The founders and supporters of the Deoband Madrassah envisioned a spiritual awakening of individual Muslims as well as a politically emancipatory movement for the community at large. Scripturalist in their orientation, the ulama of Deoband considered that the Muslim community was facing threats from the colonial power as much as from within the community. The modernist efforts of the Anglo-Mohammedan College at Aligarh, founded by Sayyed Ahmad Khan, and the growing influence of reformist liberal Muslim leaders who favored English education and closer cooperation with the British colonial administration was viewed as one of these challenges. Additionally, Deobandis were opposed to folk Islam, including Sufi tradition, and the Shi'as. The founders of Deoband, Nanautwi and Gangohi, challenged the veracity of the Shi'a faith on many occasions and wrote extensively against it. The ulama of Deoband not only adhered to the Hanafi school, but also insisted that any deviation from *taqlid* was a serious matter of concern and must be confronted because it was no less than *bida't* (innovation). To the Deobandis, the gates of *ijtihad* were firmly closed. One important issue that made the Deobandi ulama distinctly different was their position in regard to local practices:

the Deobandis opposed folk Islam in which intercession by saints occupied a major place, seeking initiation in a mystic order was considered the path to salvation, and miracles and other such phenomena were seen as the crucial and defining attributes of saints and prophets. They did not oppose mysticism altogether but did argue that adherence to the Islamic law (*sharia*) was the path to mystical exaltation. (Rahman, 2004)

Whereas earlier madrassahs were loosely organized, Deoband had an elaborate administrative setup: a rector (*sarparast*), a chancellor (*muhtamim*), and a chief instructor (*sadr mudarris*) (Rahman, 2004). The adoption of a hierarchical structure within the madrassah demonstrates the triumph of Western ideas of education. The presence of a planned curriculum, set requirements for admission and graduation, organized examinations, a building of its own (as opposed to being part of a mosque), and a well-structured bureaucracy to serve the managerial needs were inconsistent with the spirit of the archetypical medieval madrassahs that Deoband aspired to emulate. One can point fingers at Dars-i-Nizami for the structural dimensions, but it is well to bear in mind that the ulama of Farangi Mahall never organized their activities as an institution, and that the Deoband Madrassah was founded in opposition to the colonial educational system, not to replicate it. But these characteristics can also be interpreted as the capacity of the ulama to adapt to changed circumstances. Indeed, they helped the Deoband to emerge as the leading Islamic educational institution, serving a wide audience.

In the early days of its existence, the Deoband Madrassah did not generate much activism, but with Maulana Mahmud ul-Hasan (1851–1920) at its helm, the institution placed itself at the forefront of sociopolitical movements. Maulana Hasan, the first student of the madrassah, often called the Shaikhul Hind (the Leader of India), established an organization called Samaratur Tarbiyat (Results of Training), organized the Jamiat ul-Ansar for armed uprising against the British, and was deeply involved with an abortive attempt to internationalize the independence movement. In 1919 the Deoband Madrassah was also instrumental in founding the Jamiat-i-Khilafat-i-Hind (All-India

Khilafat Conference) and Jamiat-i-Ulama-i-Hind (Association of Religious Scholars of India), two very active political organizations (Qasmi, 2001).

Activism aside, the reputation of the Deoband Madrassah spread over time, attracting students from far and wide, and the madrassah was replicated in many places. Metcalf noted that the Deoband Madrassah and its close replication in Shahranpur, 20 miles from Deoband, drew students in great numbers from as far as Bengal (Metcalf, 1982: 135). But the madrassah also drew criticism from various quarters of the Sunni Muslim community because of its austere measures, the Deobandi ulama's strict stance on taqlid, their puritanism, and their insistence on the correctness of their interpretation of religious texts. Differences on the immediate sources of the 'threat to Islam', a matter of serious concern to the Muslim community at large, was one of the factors that led to the emergence of various others schools of thought and subsequently new madrassahs.

The emergence of the Ahl-e-Sunnat wa Jama'at (People of Sunnah and the Community), commonly referred to as Barelvis, under the leadership of Maulana Ahmed Riza Khan (1855–1921) in the late 19th century, is a case in point. Maulana Ahmed Riza Khan was born in Bareilly in northern central India (currently in Uttar Pradesh), undertook the traditional Dars-i-Nizami courses under the supervision of his father Maulana Naqi Ali, a scholar of hadith, and never attended any structured madrassah. At the age of 14 he assumed the responsibility from his father for writing fatwas, and continued to do so for the rest of his life. He performed the hajj twice. Since his childhood, Riza Khan had demonstrated unique qualities, including an outstanding capacity for memorization and scholarship. In 1900, Maulana Ahmed Riza was proclaimed a *mujaddid* (renewer) of the 14th century Hijri by like-minded ulama meeting in Patna. After several failed attempts to establish a madrassah, he succeeded in founding the Madrassah Manzar al-Islam in Bareilly in 1904. Another school, Darul Uloom Numaniyyah of Lahore, established in 1887, shared his thought and identified itself as Barelvi.

The defining characteristic of the Ahl-e-Sunnat wa Jama'at, as the name suggests, is the claim that it alone truly represents the *sunnah* (the Prophetic tradition and conduct), and thereby the true Sunni Muslim tradition. Despite the fact that Barelvis are adherents of the Hanafi madhhab, like the Deobandis, they differ on issues such as the acceptance of Sufi tradition, respect for the saints, and traditional practices. While Deobandis are opposed to these, Barelvis encourage these practices: 'A major part of the theological literature of Ahmad [Riza] Khan was directed at proving that the mystical practices of the Barelvis as spiritual mentors and guides (*pir*) were in consonance with Islamic law or prophetic tradition' (Reetz, 2006: 91).

The differences of opinion turned into a bitter fight in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, when Deobandis and Barelvis engaged in a fatwa war. Insofar as national politics are concerned, the Barelvis acted quite conservatively. While they opposed British colonial rule, they distanced themselves from mass movements such as the non-cooperation movement of the 1920s supported by the Deobandis. The positions of Barelvis and Deobandis remained divergent and oppositional to each other in later years as well. Deobandis opposed the Pakistan movement, while Barelvis extended their support to the Muslim League.

The acrimonious relationship and high-profile debates, at times not so civil in nature, between the Deobandis and the Barelvis demonstrate that in the late 19th century a schism had become obvious within the Muslim community. Educational institutions became vehicles of incessant quarrel as much as they were places of intellectual endeavor toward a 'true path'. The primary objective of these madrassahs, therefore, was to define the true Muslimness and the role of the Muslim community at a critical juncture of history. Definitely the madrassahs were contributing to this redefinition and denominational differences, but that was not the only role played by the madrassahs. Instead, efforts were made to reconcile the differences and adopt a centrist path.

The most significant example of an effort to reconcile differences, to bring together various strands of intellectual accomplishments, and to transcend the denominational differences was the

establishment of an association of scholars – Nadwatul Ulama (the Council of the Ulama) – in 1893 under the leadership of Maulana Muhammad Ali Mungari (1846–1927). Among the primary objectives of the council were reforming the curriculum and pedagogy of madrassahs, uniting the Muslim community on the basis of common concerns, and raising awareness of Muslim identity. The beginning was truly auspicious and unifying, as the council brought together representatives of almost all shades of opinion including the Shi'as, who otherwise were left out of Sunni initiatives of any kind. The organizers expected the council to be the bridge between the old ideas and the new realities, and thus create a common ground of activism for the entire community. But the hope of unity faded soon, as many groups parted, and Bareilvis began a scathing attack on the council and its ideas. Undeterred by these criticisms, the leading members of the council decided to establish a madrassah in 1896, thus the Darul Uloom Nadwatul Ulama (in short Nadwa) came into existence. Later Shibli Numani, an eminent scholar who taught at the Muhammedan Anglo-Oriental College (commonly known as Aligarh College) for more than a decade, joined the Nadwa in 1905. Shibli Numani joined the madrassah almost 10 years after its founding, but is considered the inspiration behind the council and the madrassah.

Although the Nadwa maintained a close relationship with the Deobandi ulama and expected to have active support from the Western-educated elites, the institution did not succeed in becoming the all-inclusive institution the founders wanted it to be. The Nadwa was successful in rekindling interest in Arabic as a medium of instruction, as opposed to Urdu – a language popularized by the Deoband Madrassah. The Nadwa's efforts to underscore the importance of Arabic were due to its connections with the Arabic-speaking ulama, particularly the Egyptian reformists. Numani, during his trip to the Middle East and North Africa in 1892, met these reformists. It is often argued that his idea of educational reform was influenced by Muhammad Abduh (1849–1905), a prominent Salafist (Hartung, 2006: 141). Nadwa's connection with Salafists continued even after Numani left the school. In the mid 20th century, the Nadwa collaborated with the Egyptian Salafists in bringing out an Arabic journal to record their contribution to the ideals of Salafiyya.

The library built for the Nadwa, and its rich collection, were testimony to an emphasis on the intellectual tradition of Islamic knowledge more than on activism. Despite, or perhaps because of, the ambitious nature of the project it did not succeed as well as was expected.

The curriculum and pedagogy of the Darul Uloom Nadwatul Ulama incorporated many of the changes the reformist ulama were arguing for. Inclusion of modern history, spoken Arabic in the curriculum, and encouragement of intellectual debate instead of memorization and blind adherence to the teachers' views were among these changes. However, 'the outlook remained largely conservative and modestly open' (Reetz, 2006: 275). The reform measures faltered and finally came to a halt after the departure of Shibli Numani in 1913, although the madrassah continued to exist and enjoy a certain degree of respect and influence in India.

## Conclusion

The preceding historical narrative demonstrates that madrassah as a concept and as an institution has travelled a long way, that its contents and contours have undergone changes, and that as an institution it largely remained embedded within the society. The demands of the Muslim community, depending on time and location, have played a significant role in the making of the madrassahs. The history of South Asian madrassahs reminds us that there is no single pattern of interaction between the madrassah and the state and/or society; for example, madrassahs have been the subject of state patronage at one point and the wrath of state power at another.

Since their inception as distinct institutions, madrassahs have been sites of contestation, primarily between denominational differences within Islamic thought – whether between Shi'a and Sunni,

or between various *madhabs* of Sunnis. In late 19th century India, the debate further narrowed to various subgroups (or *mashlaks*, paths) within the same madhab (for example, the debate between Deobandis and Barelvīs, who belonged to the same Hanafi school of thought). The acrimony notwithstanding, some kind of dynamism, that is, continuous efforts to keep the institution relevant to the contemporaneous intellectual debates and offer interpretation of the classical texts in light of the new situation, was evident.

The lessons from the history of madrassah in South Asia during the colonial era are instructive in many ways. Their nature and scope was shaped not only by the internal dynamics of the Muslim community, but also by the policies of the colonial administration, the challenges from other communities – such as Christian missionaries and the Arya Samaj – and the desire of the Muslim community to be part of the emerging political system, to name but a few.

The political activism of the madrassahs and the ulama, the products of the madrassahs, was driven by the urge to define and redefine the identity of the community, especially under adverse circumstances. Aside from their success or failure, these developments created the background against which came the independence of India in 1947. The change also partitioned the subcontinent, and a new country – Pakistan – emerged.

## Notes

1. Richard Eaton, however, suggests that the earliest contact was in the 11th century with the arrival of Sufis of Turkish-speaking origin (Eaton, 1993).
2. According to some accounts, the city was built by Amr, the son of bin Qasim. The city became one of the flourishing cities in Sind within a short time. By 957 it occupied a prominent position.
3. Some scholars insist that the trend of emphasizing the rational sciences, such as rhetoric, logic and theology, in the curriculum began during Sikandar Lodi's reign (1489–1518) (Sufi, 1941, 33).
4. Jan Jahan Khan, *Tarikhī-Jan-Jahan*, manuscript available at the Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta.
5. Some scholars, however, disagree with the claim that education was patronized by the royal courts. Saiyid Naqi Husain Jafri (2006: 49), for example, opines that 'there were only sporadic efforts at establishing institutions of learning by the rulers, perhaps this was not the priority of the nobility unlike their counterparts in Europe'.
6. The most authoritative study of Farangi Mahall to date is authored by Robinson (2001).
7. Metcalf also noted, 'preparing quazis and muftis, the legal officials required by Muslim courts, was the specialty of Farangi Mahall' (Metcalf, 1982: 30).
8. The madrassah in question bore no name until its closure in 1890. During its existence the madrassah was known by the name of its head (*sadr muddarris*); for example, during the days when Shah Waliullah headed the madrassah, it was known as *madrassah-i-Shah Waliullah* and when it was headed by his son Shah Abd al-Aziz, it was known as *madrassah-i-Shah Abd al-Aziz* (Ashraf, 2005: 63–64).
9. It is important to note that Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab (1703–1787), the 18th century Islamic scholar commonly known as the founder of Wahhabism, was also a student of Haya al-Sindi. Some researchers have insisted that this demonstrates the intellectual connection between Shah Waliullah and Abd al-Wahhab (Voll, 1975: 32–39).
10. Although the East India Company emerged as the ruling power after the Battle of Plassey in 1757, it was not officially recognized by the empire centered in Delhi. In 1765, the Company was awarded the Diwani, the right to collect revenues on behalf of the Mughal emperor, in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. This provided both the official power and the recognition to the Company as the political authority of the region.
11. Resolution of the Governor-General of India in Council in the General Department, no. 19 of March 7, 1835, India General Consultations P/186/88 (2).



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