



## **Islamic Education in India with Especial Reference to the Women Sector of India**

**Mrs. Joynab Khatun**

*Research scholar, Department of Arabic, JJT University, Churela, Rajasthan*

### **Abstract**

*Islamic educations have played a vital role in building and shaping the fate of Muslim from the very inception of the Islam. Islamic educations not only fulfill the religious needs of Muslims, but also providing a great contribution to the field of knowledge and art and try to make them complete human beings from every side. Islamic educations are imparted through Moktabs, different types of Madrassas, Khankas, Jamias, Religious Assemblies, Tablik Jamat etc. These institutions imparted instruction not only in the field of theology but also in other disciplines such as Logic, Astronomy, Astrology and Medicines etc. These institutions are also providing relevant and appropriate form of education to Muslim girls with more culturally. Therefore, Islamic institutions fulfill both religious and secular needs and taught what is necessary for secular as well as religious life. A Muslim girl educated in girls Madrassa as religious specialists become to play an important role in social reform and in improving the conditions of her family. The present paper is attempted to highlight the Islamic education in India with especial reference to the Indian women sector.*

**Key Words:** *Education, Islamic education, Islamic institutions, India, Madrasa, Maktabs, Women.*

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**Introduction:** Education is the instrument for changing and development of the society. It trained and develops the manpower assets, transforms the society. It also changes the status of a person from one status to another in social hierarchy. Education according to Indian tradition is not merely a means of earning of living; nor is it only a nursery of thought of a school for citizenship. Growth of education is considered as a sign of human growth and development.

The prophet Muhammad (pbuh) recommended education as meritorious in the eyes of the almighty and invited all to aquarist. The word "Islam" is Arabic word which means 'peace' and "education" means 'knowledge'; and thus "Islamic education" implies 'the peaceful knowledge acquired from Islam.

Islam came to Mecca through the prophet Mohammad (pbuh), who born in Mecca in the year 570 A.D. to destroy the darkness of the World's thought as because when the sun of Islam was enlightening the world, even the Europe was passing through dark ages of history. In this period, the Artist, Scientist and the men of intellectuals were tortured and

sometimes they were compelled to go to death. The high ignorance was prevailing all over Arabia. There was neither a school nor College and Library in the whole Arabia. The entire tribes were illiterate, but some of them used to feel proud of been unlettered. According to Allama Bilazari, the Qraish, head of all tribes in Arabia, had only 17 persons who Knew writing.

The Islamic education has been commenced during the period of Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (pbuh) by establishing non-formal educational institutions called 'Darul Arkan', where the very primary knowledge of Islam was imparted. At this stage education was provided either by gathering under the shadow of trees or by gathering in the house of a leading person. Thereafter, when the Mosques were established then at the premises of the Mosques the Islamic educations were imparted. In this period Islamic education was accepted only the Muslim people, but it is mentioned that since the day of Islam many non-Muslim people were converted into Islam and learnt the knowledge of Islam. The first slogan of the Islam that Islam chanced in this horrible atmosphere was about 'Education'.

The Islamic formal education was established, developed and spread out to the whole world including India during the Abbasid period and as such this period is called as the Golden age in the Islamic History. The Arab Muslims came to India in the form of Traders, Sufi-Saints and Invaders. Besides their vocation, they rendered the best services for propagating Islamic concept among the Indians and tried their best to impart Islamic knowledge side by side with Arabic Language and Literature so that they can understand the Qur'an and Hadith. To impart the knowledge of Qur'an and Hadith, they established Islamic Institutions in different parts of India like Multan (now in Pakistan), Jaunpur, Ajmeer, Lucknow, Delhi, Gulakunda, Bidar Bisapur, Bengal, Deoband etc. and later on to the Assam. Documents reveals that some Sufi Saints like Zalal UddinTabriji (d 1244 AD), Shah Jalal Mujarrad (d. 1345 AD), Gias Uddin Awlia, Shah Milan well known as Azan Fakir (d. 1690 AD), and many other Sufis came to Assam with a view to propagate Islam and many of them stayed Assam permanently. They along with the converted ones established Maktabs, Khanqahs and Madrasahs in different districts of Assam for imparting Arabic and Islamic knowledge amongst the people of the local Muslims. The Islamic Schools (i.e. Madrasahs) in modern Assam were set up at Badarpur towards the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century by one pious Sufi scholar namely Hazrat Khwaja Sheikh Tamiz Uddin (d-1899 AD). He with the help of his wife Saghira Banu was able to establish Islamic School for ladies and female children.

During the Muslim period a particular kind of education system was prevalent in all over India. Primary education was imparted in the 'Maktabs', and for secondary and higher education there were 'Madrasahs'. In Islamic history, Madrasahs have played a vital role in building and shaping the faith of Muslim Ummah from the very inception of the Islam. These Madrasahs have a great contribution to religious education which helps Muslims to know deeply about Islam. Madrasahs not only fulfill religious needs of Muslims, but also providing a great contribution to the field of knowledge and art, but also try to make them complete human beings from every angle. These institutions have also played an important

role in the survival of Islamic practices, publication and dissemination of Islamic literature, protection of Islamic faith and development of culture and civilization besides contributing to the development of the country.

### **Objectives:**

The present paper is designed to fulfill the following objectives:

- (a). To find out the educational system of Islamic Schools in India.
- (b). To find out the Arabic teaching-learning process through Islamic religious Schools in India.
- (c). To study the educational system for the women sector in India.
- (d). To identify the categories of Islamic Schools for the women sector with location and the system of management, drawback etc. in India.
- (e). To focus the system of Islamic education of Indian women to the whole world.

**Methodology:** The study is based on secondary data collected from reputed articles of research journals, books, prominent sites relating to education in women sector, magazines, etc. The study is all about to focus the Islamic educational scenario particularly for women sector in India.

**Meaning of Madrassa:** As it is discussed, the Islamic education is imparted basically through Islamic institution called Madrassa. Therefore, let us have a look on the Madrassa education in India. However, the dictionarical meaning of the word Madrassa is school. The word 'Madrassa' is Arabic term, which means any types of educational institutions, whether secular or religious. But, in the west, it usually refers to a specific type of religious school or college for the study of the Islamic religion, though this may not be the only subject studied and not all the students in Madrassa are Muslims. The students here also learn Law, Philosophy, Mathematics, Astronomy, Geography, Medicine, etc. English has also been introduced with the change in curriculum. But, in Madrassa, the teachings of the fundamentals of the Islamic faith, the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad, recitation and rote learning of the Holy Quran are the central points. In the Ottoman Empire during the early modern period Madrasas had lower schools and specialized schools where the students became known as dinasmends. However, in English, the term Madrassa usually refers to the specifically Islamic institutions. Generally Islamic school (Qoumi, Hafizia, Kharaji etc.) usually offers two courses of study: (i) Hifz course, the teaching of memorization of the Quran; and (ii) Alim course leading the candidate to become an accepted scholar in the community. A regular curriculum includes courses in Arabic, Tafsir (Qur'anic interpretation), Sharia (Islamic law), Hadiths (recorded sayings and deeds of Prophet Muhammad), Mantiq (logic), and Muslim history etc.

**Islamic education in Islam for women sector:** According to Islam, education is a birth right of every women. The Quran calls to both men and women to get knowledge. Islam puts significant emphasis to acquire knowledge to women. The famous saying, "Educate a man and you educate an individual, educate a woman and you educate a family". Islam not gives due respect to the women but it also draws great attention to their education. They

have equal educational rights with the men and women. There are some verses and Hadiths, which are utterly related to the women education, i.e. Allah says: (and remember (o you members of the prophet's family, the graces of you of your Lord), that which is recited in your Lord), that which is recited in your houses of the verses of Allah and Alhikmah (i.e. Prophet's Sunnah, legal ways) verily, Allah is ever most courteous, well acquainted with all thing. Here the Muhammad (PBUH) is instructed to learn what was recited in their houses from the noble Quran and wisdom: whatever they directly learn in the company of the prophet (PBUH) they should impart it truly to the member of the Islamic Umma.

It is seen that when the first Madrasas were established around the tenth century, there was no place for women in them. Gradually some few women started to acquire education at home, and thus women of upper classes gained some education. It is only in the medieval period, we find traces of some rulers having taken interest in the education of girls on Islamic lines. For example, sultan Jalaluddin of Hinawr (1433-1456) had founded twenty three Madrasas absolutely for girls in his capital. Similarly, Shahjahan had also founded a big Madrasas for girls in Fatehpur Sikri called Madrasas Banat. Thereafter many other Madrasas were established for the women sector to impart the most necessary knowledge of the Holy Quran and Hadith. Here we describe some of the medieval women who excelled in the field of education and arts. Razia, the daughter of sultan Iltutmish, after coming in power harmonized the affairs of the state in general and education flourished in her reign. Mahim Begum, a wet nurse of Jalal Uddin Akbar, a learned and qualified lady established a big school in Delhi to propagate education known as "khair-al-manazil". Salma Sultana, the daughter of Gul Rukhbegum (daughter of Zahiruddin Muhammad Babur) as a distinguished and eminent poetess. Nawab Zaibunnisa Begum, the daughter of sultan Aurangzeb memorized the Holy Quran by heart and learned also calligraphy and creative writing and studies text book under the guidance of Sheikh Ahmad Bin Abi Saeed Hanafi Amithawi. Nawab Zeenatun Nisa Begum, the daughter of Sultan Muhiyuddin Aurangzeb was a renowned literary woman and excelled in piousness and nobility. Arjumand Bano, better known as Mumtaz Mahal, wife of the king Shahjahan was a highly educated lady with a specialization in Persian language and literature. Gulbadan begum, the daughter of Zahiruddin Muhammad Babur was a good poet and intellectual. She wrote "Humayun Nama" a book on the life and times of her father. These are the prominent features among women in the history of Arabic and Islamic education and also gain behavior in medieval period. But this was not continued after the disintegration of the Muslim rule. After the British establishment, the education of Muslim boys was confined to the mosque only. However, the education of boys increased within the confinement after the revolt of 1857, but women education remained un-noticed completely. In this age, a new trend emerged that while the boys got English education become drifted away from their religion and culture; and other hand, the poor could not get education. Ordinary and business classes completely neglected the education of their daughters. They were unaware of not only worldly messages but also of religion. As a result, these classes of Muslims went downward and moreover, the education of women was considered to be the breeding factor for their misleading. On the other hand, high class Muslims paid attention towards their daughters'

education but their members were less. Due to the influence of European culture, they adopted it and discarded Islamic values. As a result, they suffered a lot. In the late nineteenth century, as we have seen earlier, there were two highly significant movements in the field of Muslim education; the first was that of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan and the second of the Muslim clerics. Two biggest Madrasas of India those at Deoband and Nadwa were established, followed immediately by the establishing of several other large Madrasas. But nothing was done for the education of women at first.

**Establishment of Madrasas for women sector:** After independence many women's Madrasas have been opened and bold steps have been taken to make the Muslim women educated. Some of the prominent women Madrasas are Jamiat-us- Salihat, Malegaon, kulliya Aisha, Malegaon, Jamiat-us-Salihat, Rampur, Jamiat-ul-Banat, Jaunpur (Azamgarh), Jamiat-ul-Banat, Hidrabad, Jamiat-ul-Falah, Billariyagunj (Azamgarh), Jamiat-ul- Banat-Shamsul-Uloom Niswan, Ghosi (UP) etc. Dini Talimi Council was established in Uttar Pradesh, with the aim of establishing Maktabas and Dini Madrasas throughout the State. It has been active ever since. Though it lays great emphasis on religious education, but its syllabus includes modern subjects as the primary stages. As the Maktabas established by the Council are better organized, and both boys and girls attend them, girls have benefited for the first time in getting some modicum of education, other than mechanically reading the Arabic Quran. Since girls could not study in boys Madrasas with convenient, the need was left for separate girls Madrasas, which were gradually came into being. Some educated Muslim women started women's magazines and organized Muslim women's conferences, such as the Anjuman-i-Khavatin-i- Islam. The latter, of course, were attended only by the higher class women of English educated families. They are fighting against the Purdah system, polygamy and certain kinds of unilateral divorces. Some organizations and individuals in different areas also established girl's school, though all these changes took place very gradually. Now a days, Madrassas are available in almost everywhere in India for the women sectors.

**Influence of Madrassa education in the upliftment of women:** A Muslim girl educated in girls' Madrasa as religious specialists can able to play an important role in social reform and in improving the conditions of her family. The Madrassa offered the education that it imparts as helping to train a class of Muslim girls to its understanding of Islam, and who can later go on to play a key role in the reform of Muslim society on 'Islamic' lines and combat what are seen as 'un-Islamic' ways of life. It is claimed that if girls are taught in Islamic Madrassas according to the rights Islam, they will no longer be exploited by Muslim males in any aspects. An educated Muslim woman who knows the various rights that has been provided to them by Islam, such as in the matters of inheritance and divorce. They would able to argue and would be able to challenge her husband if he acts in violation of the shariah in these matters. As educated mothers and wives, Muslim women might be able to play new roles and earn added respect within the household.

**Causes for educational backwardness of Muslim women:** The reason for illiteracy and backwardness among Muslim women is the restrictions that they face in the Society.

Muslim families bow to traditions which have been prevailing in the society and restrict girls from educating themselves in the name of social and religious pressure. A lot of people have a view that education is not permitted for the Muslim women. But, Islam emphasizes and encourages the seekers of knowledge and does not discriminate in between men and women. The Prophet stated that "whosoever follows a path to seek knowledge shall walk the path of paradise". The process of early marriage is also another factor that limits the education of Muslim girls. Many families marry off their daughters at an early age and consequently the girls discontinue their education soon after. The wives of the prophet learnt the holy Quran and Traditions in the company of Muhammad (PBUH) and they played a great role in disseminating the teachings of the teachings of the holy Quran and Hadiths. This injunction of the holy Quran is also applicable to the general women in India. The role of the mothers in educating the children cannot be denied. Education exhorts them to adorn themselves with education and try their best to prepare on educated and well cultured generation.

**Conclusion:** In a nutshell, it can see that the Madrasahs fulfilled both religious and secular needs of human beings and taught what was necessary for secular as well as religious life. Main stress is given on exegesis and Hadith in the women Madrasahs. Syllabi of Madrasahs have been made shorter keeping in view the needs of women students. Since the girls in Indian society become attached with domestic responsibilities from very early stage of their lives, and they cannot spend much time for education, the text have been prepared in accordance with their social problems having necessary ingredients, which can be finished within five years. After that a woman can start a matured practical life. Books have been compiled in accordance with the women's individual and social requirements. As the women usually involve in marital lives and as they cannot spend much time, the women's Madrasahs have prepared a short course for Arabic and Islamic studies. On the basis of the knowledge attained by the curriculum of Madrasahs, a women can do further study. They learn the principles of exegesis, Quran and Fiqh and selected tradition of the prophet Muhammad (PBUH) which helps them grasp the principles of Islamic Shariah. In the curriculum of women's Madrasahs, now a days, modern learning are also included. There is also inclusion of cooking, and food, sewing and embroidery. Some Madrasahs have maintained to given training and knowledge of nursing, general medicine and maternity to the female. Much care has been taken while preparing the text books so that the unnecessary lessons or books should not be included. The books which can guide the women in their specific problems should be taught. They should have the understanding of the Quran, which helps them overcome their problems. In the modern age, women sector cannot be treated as much backward to the male sector in case of latency.

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