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*A Comparative Review of Higher Secondary Level Curriculum
of Madrasahs in Pakistan*

Hameedullah Bhutto* Ibrahim Narongraksakhet**

* Ph.D Candidate, College of Islamic Studies, Prince of Songkla University, Pattani Campus, Thailand.

**Associate Professor, College of Islamic Studies, Prince of Songkla University, Pattani Campus, Thailand

Abstract

This documentary study aims to review, address and comparatively study the current Higher Secondary curricula of *Madrasahs* in Pakistan which are implemented by five *wafaqs* (federations) of *Madrasahs* in Pakistan. The scope of the study is to explore and analyze the contents of Higher Secondary curricula of all *wafaqs*. The findings of the study of all *wafaqs*' curricula reveal that Higher Secondary curricula of *wafaqs* have some strengths and weaknesses. Their strengths are curriculum contents are valid, learnable and balanced that can provide wide range of objectives. On the other hand, their weakness are educational philosophy is not employed, aims, goals and objectives are not formulated, curriculum contents are consistent with students' needs and ineffective teaching methodology. In addition to the above findings suggestions and steps to improve the curriculum are proposed.

Keywords: Madrasah, Curriculum, Higher Secondary, Integrated Curriculum and Pakistan



Introduction:

Madrasahs are very well known for imparting religious knowledge and welfare services in Pakistan (Bhutto & Narongraksakhet, (2016:574). The origin of *Madrasah* curriculum can be traced backed to late seventeenth century when Mulla Nizamuddin Sehavi set up a *Madrasah* at the Firangi Mahal, Lucknow, India. Its standardized curricula were named as *Dars Nizami* after his death in 1748 (Malik, 2008). It included “revealed sciences” (*wahhi*) and “rational sciences” (*ma’qulat*). The revealed sciences included study of the Quran, Hadith, Quranic commentary, and Islamic jurisprudence. The rational sciences included Arabic language/grammar to help understand the Quran, Persian language / grammar, logic, rhetoric, and philosophy that would befit prospective bureaucrats / judges (Haqqani, 2002). Even three centuries later, *Dars Nizami* still continues to be the standard course of most of the *Madrasahs* in Pakistan (Malik, 2008). The duration of the course is generally eight years.

Madrasah, as a separate education system, came into being after 1857 in south Asia with the advent of British rule (Khalid Rahman, 2009:57, Al-Rashdi, 2007:223). In 1947, Pakistan became independent country for the Muslims by the partition of India (Usmani, 2000: 44). After creation of Pakistan, *Madrasahs* continued their mission independently with lack of curriculum development, management and other

activities (Buzdar, Rana & Saeed, 2012: 172). Some *Madrasah* authorities established boards (*wafaqs*) independently to organize the *Madrasah* education system but these *wafaqs* were not recognized by the government (Ibid). In the era of Zia-ul-Haq, these *wafaqs* were recognized and their final degree/certificate was accepted by the government as a master degree in Arabic/Islamic Studies (Ibid). Currently there are five *wafaqs* in the country who affiliate those *Madrasahs* which are linked with their school of thought, shown as bellow (Ibid):

1. *Wafaq al-Madaris al-Arabiyyah* (Deobandi’s school of thought)
2. *Wafaq al-Madaris al-Salafiyyah* (Ahl *Hadith*’s school of thought)
3. *Tanzim al-Madaris Ahl Sunnat* (Barelvi’s school of thought)
4. *Wafaq al-Madaris Al- Shiah* (Shiah’s school of thought)
5. *Rabitat al-Madaris Al- Islamiyyah* (Jamat Islami’s school of thought)

Aims and Objectives of Higher Secondary level Curricula of all *wafaqs*:

Tyler (2013:34) proposes use of educational philosophy as a screen for selecting and eliminating educational objectives. But the documents of *wafaqs*’ curriculum don’t provide clear information about any educational philosophy that illustrates the aims, goals and objectives of *Madrasah* education (Bhutto & Narongraksakhet, 2017:4). Only *Rabitat-ul-*

Madaris Al-Islamiyyah (2010:5-6) and Wafaq-ul-Madaris Al-Salafiyyah (2011:4) have mentioned some aims and objectives of their *wafaqs*. Instructions for teaching method to the higher secondary level curriculum Wafaq-ul-Madaris Al-Salafiyyah are given bellow:

1. The explanation of important words should be written on the board:

In the beginning of every lesson, the teachers should write the important words (of both subjects Holy Qur'an and *Hadith*) on the board and their meanings, singular, plural forms (if the word is noun) and the tenses forms (if the word is verb) so that students would write them in their note books. The main purpose of this practice is to educate the students how to use the basic Arabic language (various forms of verb and noun and etymology).

Sunan Nasai and Mishkat al-Masabih should be taught comprehensively but during the teaching Sunan Nasai Kitab al-Taharah, Kitab al-Salat, Kitab al-Hajj, Kitab al-Wasa'iq and Kitab al-Muzariah should be taught with distinct attention. Students should be directed for making notes. *Fiqh al-Hadith* should be paid more attention. Different opinions of *Fuqaha* should be mentioned and discussed with their justifications and the appropriate justification should be mentioned.

At the beginning of the academic year the biography of Imam Nasai, Imam Abu Muhammad Husain bin Masood and Imam

Abu Abdullah Khatib al-Tibraizi, their method, style, conditions, characteristic and the status of the book should be explained.

The teachers should explain each and every word, and should translate each verse of the Qur'an and *Hadith* (Apostolic Tradition) in the easiest way and explain them comprehensively. The teachers should be more attentive towards the *Tarkib Nahwi* (syntactic analysis) and dialectal remarks (l'rab) in the text of *Hadith*. Also, the teachers should manage one question about *Tarkib Nahwi* and dialectal remarks in a question paper during examination.

2. Exercises should be solved through oral and written practices:

The teachers should solve the exercises in *Iqra* part four, Durus al-Lughat al-Arabiah and al-Tuhfat al-Sunniah twice. First time at the end of the lesson in their supervision and second time students should write in their note books and the teacher must listen one by one and make correction according to the Arabic grammar. The easiest exercises must be solved through oral.

3. Exercises of *Sarf* should be practical:

After teaching a standard portion of the text book of *Sarf* subject teachers should make etymological exercises practically even in other subjects, like Holy Qur'an, *Hadith* and Arabic language.

1- *Tarkib Nahwi* should be practical:



During teaching the prescribed book al-Tuhfat al-Sunniah for *Nahwi* (syntactic analysis) in first and second year; teacher should practice of *Tarkib Nahwi* (syntactic analysis), at least one, after every exercise. For that purpose the exercises should be the models. *Tarkib Nahwi* practices should be carried out by teachers of other subjects too.

2- Arabic conversation should be practiced in daily routine:

The major portion of curriculum of this level contains for teaching Arabic language; its main purpose is that students must be able to use Arabic language in their daily routine. To achieve this goal, only practicing exercises of text books is not enough therefore, it needs continuous practice of Arabic conversation among teachers and students inside and outside the classrooms. In order to promote the Arabic conversation practice, the institutional management should put positive efforts, and appreciate students and teachers in this regard.

3- The biography of prominent authors should be dictated to the students:

The teachers of *Mishkat al-Masabih*, *Sunan Nasai* and *Kitab al-Tauhid* etc. should dictate authors' biography of these books in Urdu or Arabic language with their introduction, services and the characteristics. Furthermore, the difference between *al-Masabih* and *Mishkat al-Masabih* should be explained.

The teachers should not concentrate over curriculum in examinational perspective; they should maintain the complete curriculum for standard deep learning process so that students should not be weak in learning.

Comparative study of the curriculum contents of all *wafaqs*:

Curriculum content is the raw material for the students by which they are expected to meet the purpose of the education established for the curriculum (Sowel1996:154) According to Taba (1962:267-285) curriculum contents should be valid and significant, learnable and adaptable to students' experiences, consistent with social and cultural realities, balance of breadth and depth, provide for a wide range of objectives and appropriate to the needs and interests of the students. To select the curriculum contents and text books all *wafaqs* have special committees comprises on subject specialists and well experienced and learned scholars (Bhutto & Narongraksakhet, 2017:5). The curriculum contents of higher secondary of all *wafaqs* are shown in tables (Table 1 to Table 5) in the Appendix.

The researchers studied the contents of higher secondary curriculum of all *wafaqs* comparatively to find out the similarities and resemblances among their curricula and uniformity with each other. For that purpose, researchers deeply studied the

curricula of all *wafaqs*. The results of that comparative study are discussed one by one under the description of the subjects. After discussion of each and every subject the researchers highlighted the strengths and weaknesses of higher secondary curriculum of all *wafaqs*. The highest number of subjects 16 and the lowest number 9 are recorded in all five *wafaqs* (see Table 6) in Appendix.

1. The Holy Qur'an:

The translation of the Holy Qur'an is the major subject of all *wafaqs* in both years of higher secondary level; in this level students not only complete the translation of the Holy Qur'an but they start to read exegesis in Urdu and Arabic languages. Wafaq al-Madaris al-Arabiyyah and Rabitat al-Madaris al-Islamiyyah are common in the selection of chapters (from chapter ten to chapter seventy seven) for the translation of the Holy Qur'an Tanzim al-Madaris Ahl Sunnat selected from chapter eight to chapter forty one and Wafaq al-Madaris al-Salafiyyah selected chapters from nineteen to one hundred and fourteen chapters. On the other hand the selection of chapters is not mentioned in the curriculum of Wafaq al-Madaris al-Shiah.

2. Hadith:

Hadith subject is included in curriculum of all *wafaqs* in higher secondary level in both years. Text books of *Hadith* are

different; only one book Riad al-Salihin is common in three *wafaqs*: Tanzim al-Madaris Ahl Sunnat, Wafaq al-Madaris al-Arabiyyah and Rabitat al-Madaris al-Islamiyyah.

3. Usul Hadith:

Only Wafaq al-Madaris al-Salafiyyah has included *Usul Hadith* subject in its curriculum. This subject is implemented in the year of higher secondary level.

4. Fiqh:

Fiqh subject is the part of all *wafaqs* and included in both years of higher secondary level. Texts books of *Fiqh* are different in each *wafaq*; only Wafaq al-Madaris al-Arabiyyah and Rabitat al-Madaris al-Islamiyyah have same books "Kanz al-Daqaiq" in first year and "Sharh Wiqayah Akhirain" in second year.

5. Usul Fiqh:

Usul Fiqh subject is included in curriculum of all *wafaqs* in higher secondary level in both years. Text books of *Usul Fiqh* are different in *wafaqs*. Wafaq-ul-Madaris Al-Arabiah, Tanzim al-Madaris Ahl Sunnat and Rabitat al-Madaris al-Islamiyyah have same books "Usul al-Shashi" in first year and "Nur al-Anwar" in second year.

6. Aqaid:

Aqaid subject is part of only two *wafaqs* in higher secondary level, namely Wafaq al-Madaris al-Salafiyyah and Wafaq al-

Madaris al- Shiah with different text books. Wafaq al-Madaris al-Salafiyyah implemented this subject in both years while Wafaq al-Madaris al- Shiah implemented it in only first year.

7. *Sirat*:

Sirat subject is incorporated in only curriculum of Tanzim al-Madaris Ahl Sunnat for both years of higher secondary level.

8. Ethics:

Ethics subject is the part of curriculum in Wafaq al-Madaris al-Arabiyyah and Wafaq al-Madaris al- Shiah with different text books with different in text books. This subject is implemented in Wafaq al-Madaris al-Arabiyyah for first year, while in Wafaq al-Madaris al- Shiah for both years of higher secondary level.

9. *Mantiq*:

All *wafaqs* employed *Mantiq* subject in their curricula of higher secondary level for both years, except Wafaq al-Madaris al-Shiah. Text book “Sharh Tahzib” is most common in the curriculum of Wafaq-ul-Madaris Al-Arabiah, Tanzim al-Madaris Ahl Sunnat and Rabitat al-Madaris al-Islamiyyah. Wafaq al-Madaris al-Arabiyyah and Rabitat al-Madaris al-Islamiyyah are common to this subject in their curriculum. *Mantiq* is included in curriculum but not included in examination in Wafaq al-Madaris al-Salafiyyah.

10. Philosophy:

Philosophy subject is encompassed in only curriculum of Wafaq al-Madaris al-Shiah for second year of higher secondary level.

11. History:

History subject is part of three *wafaqs* in higher secondary level, namely Wafaq al-Madaris al-Salafiyyah, Tanzim al-Madaris Ahl Sunnat and Wafaq al-Madaris al-Shiah with different text books. Wafaq al-Madaris al- Shiah implemented this subject in both years, Wafaq al-Madaris al-Salafiyyah and Tanzim al-Madaris Ahl Sunnat implemented it in first year only.

12. Arabic:

Arabic subject is a central part of curricula of all *wafaqs* for both years of higher secondary level. Different text books are suggested by each *wafaq*, although Wafaq al-Madaris al-Arabiyyah and Rabitat al-Madaris al-Islamiyyah are common are common in text book “Nafhat al-Arab” for first year; while “Muqamat Hariri” for second year. “Muqamat Hariri” is also included in curriculum of Wafaq al-Madaris al-Salafiyyah for second year. The curriculum Wafaq al-Madaris al- Shiah for Arabic is the same text books of Hadith subject in higher secondary level.

13. Sarf:

Sarf subject is incorporated in only curriculum of Wafaq al-Madaris al-Salafiyyah for both years of higher secondary level. There is difference of text books in curriculum and examination in Wafaq al-Madaris al-Salafiyyah.

14. Nahw:

Nahw subject is the part of all *wafaqs*' curricula for both years of higher secondary level. Three *wafaqs* are common in text books for both years namely, Wafaq-ul-Madaris Al-Arabiah, Tanzim al-Madaris Ahl Sunnat and Rabitat al-Madaris al-Islamiyyah.

15. Ma'ani wa Bayan:

Ma'ani wa Bayan subject is part of curricula of all *wafaqs* except Wafaq al-Madaris al-Salafiyyah. This subject is included in curriculum for both years of higher secondary level. The text books are different; only Wafaq al-Madaris al-Arabiyyah and Rabitat al-Madaris al-Islamiyyah are common in text book "Mualim Al-Insha" part II for first year and part III for second year.

16. English:

English subject is incorporated in only curriculum of Wafaq al-Madaris al-Salafiyyah and Rabitat al-Madaris al-Islamiyyah for both years of higher secondary level. Wafaq al-Madaris al-Salafiyyah included text book of English

suggested by Punjab Text Book Board for higher secondary level. But there is no description and details are available for text book in the curriculum of Rabitat al-Madaris al-Islamiyyah.

17. Economics:

Economics subject is employed by Wafaq al-Madaris al-Salafiyyah and Rabitat al-Madaris al-Islamiyyah in their curriculum of for both years of higher secondary level. Wafaq al-Madaris al-Salafiyyah included text book for Economics suggested by Punjab Text Book Board for higher secondary level. But there is no description and details are available for text book in the curriculum of Rabitat al-Madaris al-Islamiyyah.

18. Civics:

Civics subject is incorporated in only curriculum of Wafaq al-Madaris al-Salafiyyah for both years of higher secondary level. Wafaq al-Madaris al-Salafiyyah included text book for Civics suggested by Punjab Text Book Board for higher secondary level.

19. Political Science:

Political Science subject is incorporated in only curriculum of Rabitat al-Madaris al-Islamiyyah for both years of higher secondary level, but there is no description and details are available for text book in the curriculum.

20. Computer:

Computer subject is incorporated in only curriculum of Wafaq al-Madaris al-Salafiyyah for both years of higher secondary level. Wafaq al-Madaris al-Salafiyyah included text book for Computer suggested by Punjab Text Book Board for higher secondary level.

-Students become able to recite the Holy Qur'an with proper accent and beautiful voice.

-Students' memory becomes stronger by memorizing some chapters from the Holy Qur'an and *Hadith*.

-Students become able to translate *Hadith* in their mother tongue and explain in own words.

21. Pakistan Study:

Pakistan Study subject is incorporated in only curriculum of Wafaq al-Madaris al-Salafiyyah for both years of higher secondary level. Wafaq al-Madaris al-Salafiyyah included text book for Pakistan Study suggested by Punjab Text Book Board for higher secondary level.

-Students get good knowledge of *Fiqh* subject.

-Students get their education free of cost.

-Students get sound knowledge about religion and faith.

-The evaluation of students' behavior is assessed through paper and pencil devices, observations, and interviews (oral examination).

Strengths of the Curriculum of higher Secondary level:

-Curriculum contents are valid and significant.

-Curriculum contents are learnable and adaptable to students' experiences.

-Curriculum contents are balance of breadth and depth.

-Curriculum contents can provide for a wide range of objectives.

-Curriculum contents and text books selected through committees comprises on subject specialists and well experienced scholars.

-Students become able to translate the verses of Holy Qur'an in their mother tongue and explain in own words.

Weaknesses of the Curriculum of higher Secondary level:

-There is no clear educational philosophy for *Madrasah* education.

-Aims, goals and objectives of higher secondary level *Madrasah* education are not formulated and set.

-Curriculum contents are not consistent with social and cultural realities.

-Curriculum contents are not appropriate to the needs and interests of the students.

-Curriculum contents are not integrated with some modern subjects to

modernize and integrate the *Madrasah* education system with mainstream.

-Students learn only one foreign language, i.e. Arabic.

-Some curriculum contents of *Fiqh* subjects are not valid and outdated.

-Lack of curriculum contents of modern *Fiqh* in *Fiqh* subject.

-Curriculum contents of *Mantiq* subject are not learnable and adaptable to students' experiences at higher secondary level.

-Curriculum contents of *Ma'ani wa Bayan* subject are not learnable and adaptable to students' experiences at higher secondary level.

-Curriculum contents of *Usul Fiqh* subject are not learnable and adaptable to students' experiences at higher secondary level.

-Unnecessary consideration towards *Sarf* and *Nahw* subject is paid at large scale.

-The teaching methodology is old and traditional.

-Ineffective teaching and passive method of imparting knowledge.

- Students cannot participate in active learning process due to poor teaching methodology.

-Traditional teaching methodology affects students' abilities and their critical and creative thinking.

Conclusion:

After the analysis of higher secondary level curricula of all *wafaqs* it shows that they are not common in selecting subjects and text books. The structure of the curriculum is also different from each other. It is also observed that all *wafaqs* did not follow the basic principles of the curriculum in terms of Instructions, selecting goals, text books, scheme of study and time management which are highly neglected during the development of the curriculum; there is only *Wafaq al-Madaris al-Salafiyyah* who has described some instructions for the teachers in its curriculum.

There is no integration of modern subjects from main stream into their curricula except *Wafaq al-Madaris al-Salafiyyah* and *Rabitat al-Madaris al-Islamiyyah*. They both included some modern subjects but they are not clear for implementation of these subjects. *Rabitat al-Madaris al-Islamiyyah* suggests some extra books to the students out of the curriculum to develop the habit of self-study.

Finally, Study suggests that all *wafas* should prepare a detailed educational program with a well-structured curriculum that defines the clear educational philosophy, goals, objectives, learning experiences and evaluation for each level of their educational program. The educational program of all *wafaqs* should be valid educationally and accepted by teachers, students, parents and the society.

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