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**Institutional Scope and Need of Mainstream  
Education in Madrasas**



**Tribhuvan University**

**Research Centre for Educational Innovation and Development (CERID)**

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# **Institutional Scope and Need of Mainstream Education in Madrasas**



Tribhuvan University  
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## Acknowledgment

Nepal is a multiethnic, multicultural, and multi lingual country. Although schools in Nepal do not discriminate in terms of ethnicity, culture or language, children of some ethnic groups could not take due advantage from the opportunity of education provided by the schools. Muslims of Nepal constitute one of these groups. The literacy rate of Muslims is 34.72% which is much less than national literacy rate i.e. 53.7%.

The previous FRP studies revealed that education for the Muslims would be meaningful if the educational institutions could encompass their cultural and social values into them. They, therefore, prefer Madrasas to mainstream schools for educating their children. Madrasas are the cultural education institutions of Muslims, established to fulfill their needs of education for cultural and social values. Although a large number of Muslim children are studying in the Madrasas, they are not fully satisfied with the education provided by the Madrasas because they are required to face the challenges of modern life.

The Government of Nepal has realized the importance of Madrasas in the achievement of the goal of EFA. It seeks to integrate Madrasa education into formal system of education. In this connection, some issues and challenges have come up. This study attempts to analyze them, under the heading of "Institutional Scope and Need of Mainstream Education in Madrasas"

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H. Md. Zahid Parwez  
Researcher

## Acronyms

BPEP	Basic Primary Education Project/Programme
CERID	Research Centre for Educational Innovation and Development
CDC	Curriculum Development Centre
DG	Director General
DOE	Department of Education
EFA	Education for All
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FRP	Formative Research Project
GO	Government Organization
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
MOES	Ministry of Education and Sports
NFE	Non-formal Education
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
GON	Government of Nepal
SOP	School Outreach Programme
SFG	Special Focus Group
UNICEF	United Nation Children Fund
VDC	Village Development Committee

## Executive Summary

Madrasas are the most trusted Muslim institutions providing cultural education to Muslim children. A Muslim should be able to read the Quran and Hadith and follow their instructions.

The previous FRP study (CERID, 2004) reveals that Muslim parents generally prefer Madrasa to mainstream schools. They send their wards to Madarsas for cultural education. There are large numbers of girl students in the Madrasas. Today Muslims feel that Madrasa education alone is not enough to prepare children for the world of work. The study, recommended that the Madrasas can be used as institutions of mainstream education to fulfill the goal of EFA. In line with this, MOES has launched a program for registering Madrasas free of cost.

Another FRP study (CERID, 2006) shows that the Muslims are willing to use Madrasa as mainstream schools but they oppose external influence of any form. They feel that any type of external intervention will spoil the cultural sanctity and environment of Madrasas.

Muslims are ready to use Madrasas also for mainstream education if autonomy is granted to them. This study intends to study the institutional scope and need of mainstream education in Madrasas and its autonomy. The main objectives of this study are:

- to find out what Madrasa organizers say about autonomy of Madrasas
- to analyze their views about the government provision of registering Madrasas as formal schools
- to assess the capability of Madrasas for conducting mainstream education.

This study was carried out in three highly Muslim populated districts of Nepal - Rauthat, Banke and Kapilbastu. This study included two Madrasas from each district. The respondents of this study were the Madrasa stakeholders such as head teachers, chairpersons and members of management committee of Madrasas and Maulvis. They were interviewed with the help of an interview schedule. A FGD was conducted in each Madrasa catchment area, involving Muslim scholars, intellectuals and community leaders. A seminar was conducted at the district. Data were interpreted to achieve the objectives of this study and suggestions were made on the basis of the findings of study.

It was found that the Muslim populated areas had low literacy rates. Madrasas of urban areas were teaching mainstream subjects up to the secondary level. The numbers of teachers of mainstream subjects were inadequate. There were female and non-Muslim teachers in Madrasas. It indicates change. Madrasas had good building facilities but lacked furniture and educational materials.

The views of Muslim on the government provision of registering Madrasas as mainstream schools are as follows:

- The government provision for registering Madrasas is not very clear.
- Madrasas are enthusiastic about incorporating mainstream subjects.
- Mainstream Madrasas can fulfill educational and cultural needs.

- The absence of a clear-cut policy has made Muslims hesitate to register their Madrasas.
- Since mainstream courses and Madrasa courses are fulltime courses, it is not possible to provide both courses simultaneously. There is a need of an integrated curriculum for this purpose.
- Autonomy should be guaranteed after registration. Property and management of Madrasas cannot be handed over to the government.
- Any external intervention in Madrasas affairs cannot be tolerated.
- The government should supply mainstream subject teachers and monitor and supervise the Madrasas activities. It can audit the use of all financial supports provided to the Madrasas.
- Madrasas should be accountable to the Muslim community because it runs primarily by the donation of Muslims.
- The government should formulate a Madrasa Act. A Madrasa Board must be appointed in the centre.
- Any policy governing Madrasas should be formulated in consultation with Muslim intellectuals.
- Madrasas should start secondary and higher secondary education it will be comfortable for girl students

### **Recommendations**

- Madrasas are the religious institutions of Muslims. They can not be registered as general school under the control of government. They should be registered as community schools. The provision of registration should guarantee their autonomy.
- Madrasas should run under the Muslim community. The government should develop a system for the composition of the Madrasa Management Committee. This should done in consultation with Muslim religious leaders and scholars.
- The government should provide financial support to Madrasas in the form of appointment of mainstream subject teachers, and textbooks.
- An integrated curriculum for Madrasas should be prepared. The curriculum should balance mainstream and Islamic courses.
- Government should issue a clear-cut policy for Madrasas management and curricula in consultation with Muslim religious leaders and intellectuals. It should specify the role of Madrasas and the role of the government.
- A Madrasa Board should be appointed at the central level to look after Madrasa related matters. It should include Muslim religious leaders and Muslim intellectuals.
- Government school textbooks should be translated into Urdu.

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# CHAPTER I

## Introduction

### Context

Madrasas have been traditional places of learning for Muslims all over the world since the establishment of a Madrasa type institution in 1005 in Egypt (Anjar, 2003). They are the most trusted institutions of Muslims because they provide religious as well as cultural education. As a religious group, Muslims give highest importance to religious education. According to the Islamic faith, acquiring the knowledge of the Quran and Hadith, the main sources of religious guidance, is the principle duty of every Muslim. They call it "Farze Ain" (primary duty).

According to Islamic belief, only the person having full faith in Islam can be termed as "Muslim". The Quran and Halith are the main sources of Islamic code of conduct. According to Miasahib (1991), there are three main sources of religious guidance for Muslims, which can be taken as classes of tradition because the instructions provided by these sources are the basic duties of every Muslim. A Muslim must follow all the instructions provided by these sources completely. The sources of guidance are:

- The sayings of Prophet Muhammad based on God's words
- The doings and practices of Prophet Muhammad
- What Prophet Muhammad agreed to or denounced when any thing was asked or done in his presence

Muslims send their wards to Madrasas for Islamic education based on the Quran and Hadith and also teaching other subjects of Islamic education such as *sariya*, *fiqh*, *tafseer* etc.

Madrasas have been educating Muslim children in different parts of the world. There is no fresh record of Madrasas functioning in Nepal. The present study shows that there are more than 300 Madrasas in the three sample districts. FRP study conducted in 2004 (CERID, 2004) revealed that 41.22 percent of the primary school age children (6-10 years) in the study areas were studying in Madrasas. Only 18.06 percent children of this age group were studying in the mainstream schools. However, a large portion (40.71%) of the children belonging to this age group was not in schools. This suggests that Muslims prefer Madrasas to mainstream schools for the education of their children. The interviews with Muslim parents and other persons having a good understanding of Muslim education reported that they tend to give priority to Madrasa education than to the mainstream education because Madrasas provided religious education.

Although Madrasas are socially recognized, trusted and revered, they have been isolated from the modern educational development. The FRP study of 2005 (CERID, 2005) reported that Madrasas had no prescribed curriculum. They used specific textbooks, written by Indian scholars. The books are not contextual to mainstream education in Nepal. Some Madrasas in Nepal teach mainstream subjects like Nepali, English, and Mathematics and are using books of mainstream curriculum. There was great variation in the selection of books. Each Madrasa followed a specific syllabus

based on specific books decided by scholars called Ulemas. However, education in these Madrasas has not been recognized by the state.

Recently many countries have recognized the potentialities of Madrasas and have made them free to provide ECD, basic primary education and non-formal education. Such provisions have helped the people who would have otherwise remained isolated from modern education. For example, Bihar Madrasa Board is a state recognized institution in India, which is providing formal education up to the higher level. Such a strategy has helped to avail resources, goodwill and participation of people. There is a big scope in Nepal to understand the potential of Madrasas.

Recently, MOE has decided to recognize Madrasas as institution of formal schooling. According to this decision, a Madrasa in Nepal can be registered without any fee, as a primary school if it includes mainstream subjects in their curricula and teaching them along with the religious education courses. A Madrasa can continue to run as an autonomous body and as a community institution.

### **Significance of the Study**

Madrasas in Nepal have management committees. The committees are fully responsible for personal administration, financial management, educational administration and selection and implementation of the curriculum. According to FRP study related to Madrasas (CERID, 2005), a Madrasa followed a loose curriculum designed as Dars-e-nizami, which included both religious and secular knowledge. Although the main emphasis of Madrasa education is on providing Islamic education, it includes courses such as Reading of the Quran, Islamic study, and of Urdu as the main subjects. Some Madrasas have included subjects like Nepali, Mathematics, English, General knowledge, History and Geography in their curricula. The objectives of a Madrasa primary curriculum include literacy and numeracy, religious education, moral training as per Islamic belief, and developing a base for higher Islamic education.

The Muslims were not very happy about the mainstream education. According to them, the mainstream education did not fulfill their cultural needs. It prevented them from the learning of the Quran and Hadith. It would not teach their cultural language, Urdu. The main objection to mainstream education was that it was neither capable of catering to the cultural needs of Muslims nor could it provide religious knowledge and Islamic values.

It was also found that Muslims were not fully happy with Madrasa education either. It did not prepare Muslim children for the world of work nor did it enable them to face the challenges of modern life. They demanded the inclusion of modern subjects in Madrasa education because they wanted their children get cultural education and education, which enabled them to solve day-to-day general problems. For the solution of problems, they demanded linkage of Madrasas with mainstream education. They suggested the inclusion of mainstream courses in the Madrasa course. For this purpose, Muslims have suggested three measures: curricular, administrative and financial.

The curricular measure included development of a separate national curriculum for Madrasas through the joint effort of the government and the Muslim religious leaders and intellectuals. They suggested the inclusion of mainstream subjects such as Nepali, English, Mathematics, Science, History and Geography. The role of Madrasas providing religious education and moral education should not be

disturbed. An integrated curriculum should be developed with room for Islamic education and mainstream subjects both.

On the administrative measure side, Muslims suggested government recognition of Madrasa education as formal education. They also suggested reorganization of Madrasa management committee to ensure the participation of Islamic and modern education scholars. They wanted autonomy for Madrasas with limited intervention of the government.

The financial measure included the financial support for Madrasas. Madrasas had no sustainable source of income. They relief on donations by Muslims. Therefore the Madrasa organizers demanded financial support from the government, which could meet the salaries of the mainstream subject teachers at least (CERID, 2004).

FRP study II (CERID, 2004) and III (CERID, 2005) clearly indicated that Madrasas were capable of conducting Islamic education because they had well-qualified teachers for Islamic education. However, teaching potentials and the efficiency of Madrasas concerning mainstream subjects like Nepali, English, Mathematics, and Science was rather questionable. Moreover, there was a lack of furniture for students in all these Madrasas. The students used to sit on a mat in the classroom. The sitting arrangement was not suitable for students because it was very difficult for writing exercise. Black board was the only instructional material being used. The classroom space was not sufficient for students.

Although Muslims were looking for full support of the government in matters of curriculum, administration and finance they were not in favor of any type of intervention from the government side in these Madrasas. They felt that any external intervention would hamper the nature of Madrasas.

These conditions raise many issues regarding Madrasa education. FRP III study (CERID, 2005) reported that the Madrasa curriculum was loaded with the subjects of Islamic values. The students in Madrasas had to learn five languages, (Urdu, Arabic, Persian, English and Nepali) at the same time. Madrasas did not have as many teachers as were required for teaching mainstream subjects. They did not have good sources of income. The physical facilities in the Madrasas were not very satisfactory. There was a question regarding the quality of education. On other hand, Madrasa organizers were looking for autonomy along with the government help. It raises the question about their notion of autonomy.

Although the Muslims are today willing to incorporate mainstream subjects in the Madrasas, there is a hesitation, if not a mistrust. There are conceptual and systematic differences between the state provisions of the government schools and the traditional systems. They have caused a dilemma as well.

This study is intended to find out the ways to bridge the gap between the feelings of Madrasa organizers and the present effort of the government to recognize Madrasas as schools in the mainstream education. This study intends to find out the views of Madrasa organizer about its autonomy and the ways to guarantee the autonomy of Madrasa while registering them as formal schools. It also intends to find out the ways to ensuring quality education in Madrasas.

## **Research Questions**

The step of the government to use Madrasas as the institutes of formal education to meet the goal of EFA by recognizing them has raised many issues regarding their

future roles to educate Muslim children. The Madrasa organizers and even a large segment of the Muslim community were not in favor of any type of external intervention. They felt that such interventions will spoil the religious and cultural sanctity of Madrasas. They were in favor of full autonomy. In Madrasas maintenance of quality of education is difficult because they do not have mainstream subject teachers, furniture, instructional materials and sustainable source of income. This study intends to find out answers to the following research questions:

1. What do Madrasa organizers mean by autonomy of Madrasas?
2. How do they think the autonomy of Madrasa should be guaranteed?
3. How do they perceive the government provision to register Madrasas as an agency of mainstream education after the inclusion of mainstream subject?
4. What it takes to ensure quality education in Madrasa schools?

### **Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of this study are as follows:

1. Find out the notion of Madrasa organizers about the autonomy of Madrasas.
2. Assess their views about the government provision to register Madrasas as formal schools.
3. Assess the capability of Madrasas to the run mainstream subjects on the quality track.

## CHAPTER II

### Literature Review

Policy related to the inclusion of Madrasa as institutions of formal education and any study related to this subject should be based on clear understanding of the nature of Madrasa education and its importance to the followers of Islam. Hence, this chapter tries to present the review of the literature related to Madrasa Education under three headings: an analysis of the Islamic education system, efforts made for educating Muslims of Nepal and a brief account of previous FRP studies in this direction.

#### **Islamic System of Education**

The tradition of Islam begins with teaching and learning. The word Qur'an, which is the name of the main religious text of Muslims, literally means reading or recitation (Muhammad, 1970). The tradition of Islamic education began with the reading and recitation of the Qur'an. In the early days of Islam, Prophet Muhammad himself used to teach his followers about divine revelations and their interpretations. After the compilation of the divine verses in the form of a book the Qur'an, became a central part of Islamic education. It became the duty of every follower of Islam to memorize the Qur'an from the beginning to the end because they believed that it was the perfect word of God, sacred and therefore eternal. It is the religious duty of every Muslim to follow all the instructions of it whole-heartily.

Islamic education is not only limited to the dissemination of religious knowledge, it also insists on the acquisition of worldly knowledge, which is necessary for the welfare of human beings. The Qur'an instructions played a vital role in the development of a distinct education system, which is known as Islamic education. The Islamic education system includes a definite objective, curricular structure and a chain of educational intuitions for dissemination of Islamic knowledge. The aim of Islamic education, curricula and educational institutions are discussed below.

#### *Aims of Islamic Education*

The aims of education are derived from the aim of life determined by the philosophical sources which influence the life of people of a particular group or ethnicity. Education is the only vehicle for the attainment of the aims of life. Since Muslims are a religious-value-predominant society, their aim of life is mainly built on a religious foundation. According to Islamic belief, the aim of life is to get paradise in the next world or in the world of philosophy, self-realization or self-perfection. Muslims believe that on the Day of Judgment, God will award people with paradise or punish them with hell, according to their deeds.

Islam has clearly instructed its followers to acquire education to achieve these great aims of life. The first aim of the followers of Islam is to follow the will of God which was sent to them through Prophet Muhammad and compiled in the form of the Holy Qur'an. The Qur'an has instructed Muslims to acquire all the knowledge, which is necessary for the welfare of community. Miasahib (1991) has reported two broad aims of education for Muslims which are as follows:

- Farze Ain (compulsory duty) and
- Farje Kafayah (social duty)

Farze Ain is related to learning which is compulsory for every Muslim. It is a compulsory duty of a Muslim to acquire the knowledge included in "Farje Ain". According to Islamic belief, only a person having full faith in Islam only can be termed Muslim. This fairly is related with the believes of oneness of God. His angels, His messengers (Hazarat Muhammad being the last of them all), His wills compiled in the form of the Qur'an and, the Day of resurrection (Abdalati, 1995). Muslims should study the Qur'an (the verses of God) and Hadith (the saying and doing of Prophet Muhammad) to have a clear understanding of all these matters.

According to the religious guidance, if a person accepts Islam, it becomes his/her compulsory duty (Farze Ain) to learn the elementary rules of rituals, prayers, religious and social duties, which are expected to be performed by him/her as a complete and faithful believer of Islam. Since the Qur'an and Hadith are the prime source of providing such type of knowledge; therefore, it is the compulsory for every Muslim to acquire knowledge about these two sources of religious guidance. The areas of knowledge, which fall under the category of compulsory duty are also known as "Manqulat" or revealed knowledge which had come straight from God, and which is permanent and unchangeable.

Muslim theologians differ regarding the sort of education which is compulsory. Some say that it is the learning of two primary sources of religious guidance, i.e. the Qur'an and Hadith; some regard it as the knowledge of jurisprudence (Fiqh) and some hold it as the fundamental articles of Islam. In summary, it can be said that it is the "Farze Ain" of Muslims to have the knowledge of Qur'an, Hadith and Islamic theology.

The second aim of Islamic education is known as Farze Kafayah. It is related with that learning which should be acquired from some member of the Muslim community for the sake of the welfare of other members of community. Only after completing Farze Kafayah a Muslim gets absolution from sin. According to this aim, if the community needs some expertise for its welfare, it becomes the basic aim of Muslim to acquire the expertise. For example, if a community needs a doctor, it becomes the aim of Muslims of that community to become doctors. However, if the community already has a doctor, the other members of community will be absolved from the sin of not being a doctor. Farze Kafayah deals with different areas of learning which together are termed Maqulat or rational knowledge. Islam relates this learning with their religious duty. It admits that not acquiring this knowledge is a sinful act.

According to Miasahib (1991), there are three categories of duties under "Farze Kafayah": commendable, non-commendable and lawful. Commendable includes such areas of learning with which a Muslim must be conversant for the welfare of community. This category contains essential areas of learning such as knowledge of medicine, arithmetic etc. Muslim must have basic information of these areas according to the need of the community. However, it is optional to have expert knowledge. Non-commendable' includes those areas of learning which are forbidden for the Muslims such as talisman, sorcery, magic, reading of novels that go against Islamic tradition, belief etc. The lawful area contains learning of poetry, history, geography, science etc. In this way, Farze Kafayah contains the areas which must learn for the welfare of the society which they are required to learn according to their wish and which they must not learn.



## *Curriculum and Institutions of Islamic Education*

Islamic education is as old as Islam. Islamic education began with the dissemination of divine revelation by Prophet Muhammad to his followers. That education was solely based on oral tradition in which the followers of Muhammad learnt all revelations by heart and recalled them when necessary. They did not only learn it but also spread it among other people. Finally, all these verses were compiled in the form the Qur'an which is till now the main text of Islamic education.

The first school of Islamic education was the mosque. It was the mosque where Hazarat Muhammad conveyed to his followers the divine revelations and their interpretations. It was in a mosque that the Qur'an was compiled. It remained as the main institution of Islamic education for many years. Still it is propagating Quranic education through Maqtabas attached with it (Anzar, 2003).

In the beginning Islamic education was limited to Quranic schools, where the teachers taught about the Qur'an and the students learned by rote. The students were supposed to read the Arabic text with correct pronunciation. After the death of Prophet Muhammad, Muslim scholars sought answers in the sayings and practical life of Hazarat Muhammad. This developed the tradition of Sunnah and Hadith and they were also included as a text of Islamic education. Mosques remained the main institutions of Islamic learning even after the death of Hazarat Muhammad (Anzar, 2003).

The inclusion of the Hadith as a text of Islamic education opened the way for the inclusion of other texts, related to the interpretation of the Quran and Hadith. The other texts, which were added as texts of Islamic education, were Shariyah (Islamic law), Fiqh, (system of jurisprudence) and Tafseer (explanations of the Qur'an verses made by scholars). In this way, the first content of Islamic education was mainly a religious (Anzar, 2003).

Islam emphasizes learning of two types under the heading Farze Ain or compulsory duty and "Farze Kafayah" or social duty. The first heading is related with the acquisition of revealed knowledge or knowledge of religious texts and the second heading is related with the acquisition of knowledge beneficial to the community. Although mosques provided the knowledge related to the first heading, there was still the need of an educational institution, which could provide knowledge related to both heading. This need assisted in the establishment of Madrasas as institutions of Islamic education.

The Arabic word "Madrassa" means center of learning (<http://www.uvm.edu>). At present, Madrasas have become main center of Islamic education. They provide free education and accommodation and boarding and facilities to its students. Maktab is another educational institution. However, there is a difference between these two institutions. Madrasas are established to provide both type of knowledge, i.e. revealed as well as rational. These are autonomous and independent institutions, which operate under their own management. Maktabas, on the other hand, are generally related to a particular mosque and they provide only the knowledge of the Qur'an. In this way, Madrassa is the fundamental institution of Islamic education providing knowledge of religious as well as secular learning.

According to Anzar (2003), the first Madrasa was established by Fatimid caliphs in Egypt in 1005. That Madrasa was established to teach minority Shiites the fundamental verses of Islam. It had all the basic necessities of an educational institution e.g. library, teachers teaching in different subjects etc. The curriculum of

that Madrasa included astronomy, architecture and philosophy besides the religious components. When Sunni Muslims conquered Egypt, they revamped the Shiite version of Islam and prescribed the books related to earthly knowledge. A large number of books were taken to Baghdad, where Nizam-ul-Mulk Hasan Bin-al Tusi established the first organized Madrasa named Nizamiah in 1067 (Anzar, 2003) and (Sikand, 2001).

Sikand (2001) has further reported that the Nizamia Madrasa established in Baghdad was intended to train bureaucrats, administrators and judges for the royal court and the qualities religious scholars (Muftis) for legal opinions (Fatwa). The teacher and students for these Madrasas would come from elite groups.

Since one of the principal aims of the Nizamia Madrasa was to produce a class of bureaucrats, the teaching of Fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence) came to occupy an important place in the Madrasa curriculum. All the major Sunni sects. (Hanafi, Hambali, Maliki and Safaiee) had their own curricula for their Madrasas. However, the main aim of these Madrasas was to promote the understanding of the rules of the Islamic law. Therefore, Quran, Hadith, Qiyas (analogical reasoning), Ijma (consensus in the Muslim community) were included as the main subjects. Other subjects included in the curriculum of these Madrasas were Arabic grammar, logic, philosophy etc. Theology and mysticism were given less emphasis (Sikand, 2001).

According to Rahman (2004) , a Muslim scholar named Shah Abdul Rahim had made an attempt to design a curriculum for Madrasa Rahmania of Baghdad in 1718 but the first standardized curriculum for Madrasa education was developed by a Muslim scholar named as Mulla Nizamuddin Siharvi in 1748 at Farangi Mahal, Lucknow, which was a seminary of Islamic scholars (Ulemas). This curriculum is known as Dars-i-Nizami. The curriculum developed by Shah Abdul Rahim emphasized Manqulat (revealed knowledge) while the Dars-i-Nizami curriculum emphasized Maqulat (rational knowledge). The latter had more books on grammar, logic and philosophy than before (Rahman, 2004) and (Sikand, 2001).

Ahmad (<http://www.apess.org>) has reported that the curriculum of “Dars-i-Nizami” had about twenty subjects broadly divided in two categories:

1. al-ulum-an-naqalia (the transmitted or revealed knowledge)
2. al-ulum-al-aqalia (the rational knowledge)

The first contains an area of knowledge related with that body of knowledge by God directly. This curriculum includes texts like Qur’an, Hadith, Tafseer, Fiqh etc. Other subjects included in this area are dialectic theology, life of Prophet Muhammad and religious themes.

Second area of this curriculum contains purely rational knowledge or secular subjects: grammar, rhetoric, prosody, logic, philosophy, Arabic literature, medicine, mathematics, polemics etc.

Ahmad (<http://www.apess.org>), has pointed out that the curriculum of Dars-i-Nizami was based on books which are very old; for example, the books on logic and philosophy written in the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries. Medicine is based on some 11<sup>th</sup> century books. The books of astronomy, mathematics and grammar are more than five to seven hundred years old. Rahman (2004) has commented on the obsolete nature of this curriculum in the following words:

**“The curriculum of Dars-i-Nizami can be taken as a symbol of stagnation and ossification of knowledge.”  
(Rahman, 2004)**

The Dars-i-Nizami curriculum, which was developed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, is still in use in all types of Islamic Madrasas. Muslims are divided into different sects. The Madrasas of these sects reflect their belief systems. The emphasis on Dars-i-Nizami in Madrasa run by different Muslim sects varies beliefwise. For example, the Sunni sects such as Deobandi, Barelvi, Ahl-i-Hadith, Jamat-i-Islam and Shia sects run their own Madrasa with their own specific curricula. The curricula of these Madrasas are described as follows:

- **Deobandi Madrasa:** Deobandi is in fact a chain of Madrasas in South Asian countries including Nepal. The first Deobandi Madrasa was established in 1867 in a small town of Saharanpur District of U.P., India. The Madrasa was named Darul Ulum. Maulana Muhammad Qasim Nanautaw and Maulana Rashid Ahmed Gangohi established this Madrasa. While the early seminaries were loosely organized, the Madrasa at Deoband had an organized management. It had an academic chief (Sarparast), administrative chief (Mohtamim), and a chief instructor (Sadr Mudarish). The educational structure of that Madrasa was good. Education was graded and was given over a period of 7 to 12 years. It had a fixed curriculum, regular classes and a definite examination system. It provided certificate in Islamic education up to Alim (Higher secondary level) and Fazil (Bachelor level) (Sikand, 2001).
- According to Sikand (2001), the Madrasa at Deoband was established for the purpose of developing religious consciousness in the Muslim community, which was in threat because of the increasing influences of the British and of the missionary schools established by them.
- Since Deobandis oppose Sufism and folk Islam, worship of local deities, and respect for soothsayers and astrologers because they follow the fundamental beliefs of Islam and reject the influences, practices and beliefs that have no sanction in Sunna, the Prophetic way of life. Therefore, the Deobandi Madarsa places more emphasis on revealed knowledge (Manqulat). This emphasis is quite different from the emphasis in the standardized curriculum Dars-i-Nizami Madrasa which is on rational science (Maqulat). In this way, the curriculum of Deobandi Madrasas gives more emphasis to the reading of the Hadith than Dars-i-Nizami has originally prescribed. Subjects such as Greek philosophy, which speak against Islamic belief, were excluded and more books on Hadith and Fiqh were added in the curriculum (Rahman, 2004).
- Another distinct change in the nature of Deobandi Madrasa was the shift of emphasis from the elites to the poor Muslim community. The Madrasa in Deoband was established to defend Islam from the influences of alien cultures - e.g. British culture or Hindu culture. They looked at the Madrasas as institutions for the preservation of Islamic culture and religion and therefore, they gave more emphasis to these Madrasas.
- **Barelvi Madrasa:** This Madrasa belongs to the Barelvi sect. Ahmed Raja Khan (1856-1921) of Bareilly established the first Madrasa of this sect. Since Barelvis believe in traditional Sufism and in Muhammad's superhuman nature as "present and hearing" (hazir-o-nazir) even after his departure from the world, Khan set up the Madrasa Manzar al Islam in Bareilly in order to defend the tradition of popular Sufism Islam from both Deobandis and Muslim modernists. Like the Dar-ul Ulum at Deoband, against which it

sought to define itself, the Manzar al-Islam madrasa taught the Dars-i-Nizami, to which were added numerous Sufi texts penned by Khan himself as well as polemical treatises seeking to prove all other Muslim groups as deviant. It also has a chain of Madrasas all over South Asia including Nepal (Rahman, 2004) and (Sikand, 2001).

- **Wahhabi Madrasa:** The Ahl-i-Hadith, also known as Wahhabi (a major Sunni group in South Asia) has a Madrasa network of its own. The Ahl-i-Hadith Madrasas also teach the Dars-i-Nazami but they emphasise the teaching of the Quran and Hadith and oppose folk Islam and common practices such as anniversaries of saints, distribution of food on religious occasions, and popular mysticism (Rahman, 2004) and (Sikand, 2001).
- **Jamat-i-Islami Madrasa:** The Jamat-i-Islami is a revivalist political party created by Abul ala Maudoodi (1903-1979). Maudoodi believed in borrowing technology and other concepts from the West in order to empower the Islamic community. As such he favoured a more modernist education than the orthodox traditional Madrasas education. He also laid emphasis on refuting Western culture and intellectual domination. Maudoodi's anti-Western critique tends to be more thorough, trenchant and appealing than that of the traditionalist seminarians. Jamat Madrasas teach besides traditional texts, politics, economics and history with a view to preparing the young Ulemas for confronting the ideas of the West. Unlike other Sunni groups, the Jamat in India does not have any official Madrasa of its own. Instead, it is loosely affiliated with several Madrasas, the most prominent being the Jami'at-ul Falah at Baleriaganj (Azamgarh, Uttar Pradesh), the Markazi Darshgah (The Central School) in Rampur (Uttar Pradesh), and the Idara-e-Tahqeeq-o-Tasneef-e-Islami at Aligarh. Common to all these Madrasas is the understanding that Islam is not simply a bundle of rituals or of prescriptive and proscriptive rules, or simply a private relationship between the individual believer and God, complete worldview and an all-embracing ideology, covering all aspects of personal as well as collective life. In line with this understanding, and in contrast to what the traditional Sunni Madrasas do) the religious schools associated with the Jamat teach disciplines such as jurisprudence and Arabic grammar along with modern subjects such as English, history and science. Voluminous works of the founder of the Jamaat, Maulana Sayyed Abul Ala Maududi, are a compulsory reading. Unlike the Deobandi and Barelwi Madrasas, Jamaat-related Madrasas stress the need for Muslim scholars to exercise Jihad or the application of reason in matters of Islamic law within the broad framework of the Shariah and do not turn their back on the challenges thrown up by the onward march of modernity. Rather, they critically accept modernity and seek to Islamize it. Thus, Jamaat scholars have been in the forefront of what is known as the "illumination of knowledge" project, seeking to ground not just the social sciences, but even linguistics and the physical sciences in a normative framework based on the Quran and the traditions of the Prophet Muhammad. The Jamaat has published scores of tracts and books on Islamic perspectives on issues of contemporary concern as diverse as family planning and women's rights, on the one hand, and international relations and bio-technology, on the other (Rahman, 2004) and (Sikand, 2001).

- **Shiites Madrasas:** Besides the Sunni Madrasas, there are Shia Madrasas as we have seen. Shias believe that the successor of the Prophet was Ali Ibn-e-Abi Talib and not the first three caliphs whom Sunnis take to be his successors. They mourn the battle of Karbala, fought between the Prophet's grandson Hussain and the Omayyad Caliph Yazid bin Muawiya in 680 A.D. This led to the birth of the supporters of Ali and the rise of Shia Islam. They also use the standardized "Dars -i-Nizami" curriculum in their Madrasas, but teach their own religious curriculum. The Hadith taught in Shiites Madrasa is different from that which is taught in Sunni Madrasa. They have their own version of the Hadith agreeing with their religious belief.

Most Madrasas share a common system of administration. At the apex is the Sadar Mudarris (the head teacher), who is assisted by a team of fellow Ulema (religious scholars). The teachers are themselves products of Madrasas, a few having had some access to modern education. Funds for the running of Madrasas generally accrue from public donations, from earnings from properties controlled by the Madrasas, from Awqaf (endowments), from sale of skins of animals sacrificed on the day of Eduzzoha, and, in some cases, from organizations based in Arab countries. In Pakistan and Bangladesh, several Madrasas get funds from the government. The students who come from poor families are provided free education, food and accommodation - all free. Some come for a year or two, to memorize the Quran. Others stay on for up to twelve years for training for the "Maulvi Fazil" or "Maulvi Alim" degree, after which they are recognized as accomplished Ulamas.

Madrasas in India and Pakistan have the following levels of education:

- Ibtidai (elementary), where only the Quran is memorized and taught
- Wustania (middle), where selected books from Dars-i-Nizami are taught and
- Fauquani (higher), where the whole Dars-i-Nizami is taught.

In some Madrasas where competent Ulemas are available, students, after their graduation do postgraduate courses in Tafsir, Hadith, or Fiqh. In Bangladesh the government controlled or Alia Madrasa system is a unique system of Islamic education with few parallels in the Muslim world. Having five distinct academic Ibtidai (elementary), Dakhil (secondary), Alim (higher secondary), Fazil (B.A.), and Kamil (M.A.), these Madrasas teach modern subjects such as English, Bangla, science, social studies, math, geography, and history along with a revised version of Dars-i-Nizami (<http://www.apess.org>)

People of all ages attend Madrasas and many move on to becoming Imams. The Alim certificate approximately requires twelve years of study. A good number of the 'huffaz' (plural of 'hafiz') are products of Madrasas. Madrasas also resemble colleges, where students take evening classes and reside in dormitories. An important function of Madrasas is to admit orphans and poor children in order to provide them education and training. Madrasas may enroll female students; however, they generally study separately from male students. There are examples of all-female Madrasas. The use of Urdu is less common today ([en.wikipedia.org](http://en.wikipedia.org)).

Qasmi (2005) admits that Madrasas play an important role in the spread of education as well as Islamic teachings. But he insists that in this twenty-first century they need to be able to cope with new issues which are unfold rapidly. There are deficiencies in the Madrasa system and the sooner these are they looked into and adapted to the

changed situation, the better it would be for the community. To name a few of them, for instance:

- a. *Absence of a state level centralized agency to control Madrasas at state level. Some Madrasas follow their self-designated syllabus, which is a hindrance to quality education. All small Madrasas should be affiliated to one Jamia or at least a major Madrasa of the state and should adopt its syllabus.*
- b. *No modern teaching methodology even in big Madrasas. Trying new teaching techniques of teachings is a crying need.*
- c. *Lack of ability the Madrasa alumni to cope with the challenges of modern world. Present Ullamas must do to meet the challenges of time before it is too late.*

According to Farooq, (www.angelfire.com), Madrasas need to recognize that the world has undergone a transformation. Employers have specialized needs, which the current education is unable to meet. Global and private competition, not to mention financial constraints, is not likely to disappear in the near future. Madrasas are currently doing is not the solution to these problems. To survive present and future challenges, Madrasas must find new ways to extend contemporary education to their students.

## **Efforts for Educating Muslims**

### *Policies and Programs*

Government of Nepal (GON) is making various efforts to educate the Muslim children. MOES has included Muslims as a special focus group and has developed special policies and programs to increase the access of this group to mainstream education. All policies and programs have been developed line in with EFA. Accordingly, Nepal is to ensure that by 2015 all children will have quality basic and primary education. They will not be discriminated by culture, ethnicity or caste.

The “National Foundation for Development of Indigenous Nationalities Act 2058 (2002)” has recognized need for educating children in their mother tongues. The provision made in the Education Act (7th Amendment) for the use of the mother tongue in primary classes has been a positive step towards addressing the instructional needs of indigenous and linguistic minority children across the country.

In order to empower the indigenous people and linguistic minorities, MOES has emphasized the need for making primary schooling relevant to minority children. To make the school curriculum relevant to children's everyday life, the government has introduced a policy of designing 20 percent of the curricular contents in consonance with the local contexts.

MOES, in line with the Dakar Framework of Action, has developed an action plan and sets of thematic strategies. This plan focuses on the EFA goals and targets. There are altogether seven thematic goals, of which three are related to the education of cultural minorities. These thematic goals are:

- Free and Compulsory Primary Education
- Appropriate Learning for Life Skills

- Ensuring Social Equity and Gender Parity

Free and Compulsory Education includes a task objective to improve the relevancy of mainstream curriculum to the ethnic groups by a thorough revision of the curriculum. The main program activities for the accomplishment of this goal are:

- Implement a three language policy (local, national and English)
- Incorporate the cultural values of minority and other groups in the text materials
- Allow flexibility in curriculum and make it contextual
- Rewrite Social Studies focusing on the inspiring contributions made by different ethnic and cultural groups in the process of nation building

Similarly, “Appropriate Learning for Life Skill” includes a task objective to empower special focus group people of disadvantaged communities such as ethnic and linguistic minorities, Dalits etc. to get access to appropriate learning and life skill. Some important program activities for the accomplishment of this goal are:

- Identify the status and difficulties of special focus group people
- Develop a provision of special support/motivation for facilitating the groups benefit from mainstream education

Ensuring Social Equity and Gender Parity” includes strategies such as:

- Advocate measures to sensitize the stakeholders of education in matters of ethnicity, culture, etc.
- Introduce meritocracy measures to cater for the meritorious students comprising girls, Dalits, children of the ethnic groups, and disabled children
- Introduce pedagogical measures to cater for the children of special needs
- Enhance the cultural identities, particularly those of the ethnic minorities and Dalits

This goal includes task objectives of new policies for the inclusion of ethnic minorities, Dalits and females, in the development and use of local languages and in cultural flexibility. Some important program activities for the accomplishment of this goal are:

- Include of gender, caste, ethnicity, religion and disability mainstreaming
- Announce a three language policy at the political level and language transfer policy at the classroom level
- Adapt a core and local curricular approach in curriculum development

### *Efforts*

GON and several development agencies have made efforts to increase the access of Muslims children to mainstream education. These efforts can be summarized below.

#### **a. Efforts Made by the Government**

The government of Nepal has included Muslims in the list of disadvantaged group and made various efforts to increase the access of Muslim children to education. It had earlier implemented special incentive schemes for educating Muslim children on

trail basis in three VDCs of Rupendehi district. According to DOE, a seven-member committee has been constituted under the chairmanship of Director General of DEO. The committee has members from Madrasas, Gombas and Pathshalas. It is expected to suggest ways for linking Madrasas, Gombas and Pathshalas with mainstream education.

DOE had organized a two-day seminar (18-19 Paush 2062) at Bhairahawa. The participants of this seminar were Madrasa teachers, organizers, and officials of MOES and DOE. This seminar had made the following suggestions:

- All the Madrasas of the country should be recognized as educational institutions.
- Madrasa system of education should be recognized as equivalent to the public school system.
- The Madrasa management committee and Madrasa PTA should be reorganized. They should include people who can contribute effectively.
- A separate Madrasa Board to look after the Madrasa education should be established.
- All the Madrasa teachers should be provided teaching licences.
- The physical facilities of Madrasas such as building, furniture, toilet, drinking water facilities should be upgraded.
- Financial support for textbooks, scholarship, stationery, educational materials and administrative expenses should be given to Madrasas.
- Madrasa curricula should be reorganized and updated.

Recently, MOE has launched a special program for registering Madrasas as a mainstream school. In this program, a Madrasa having the prerequisites can apply for registration and they will be registered, free of cost. Many Madrasas, over the country, have used this opportunity and have been registered as mainstream schools. The government is providing a fixed amount as financial assistance to these Madrasas and also providing teachers under the Rahat quota.

#### **b. Efforts of other Agencies**

UNICEF has launched a pilot project for mainstreaming Madrasas. This project has provided mainstream subject teachers to the sample Madrasas of Kapilbastu district and books and stationery for the students who were in Grade I last year and are in Grade 2 this year. This program is running in 17 Madrasas Kapilbasu. Twenty-four teachers had been appointed by UNICEF.

Save The Children/US has organized a motivational program for the Muslims of Nepalgunj. The purpose of this program was to motivate the Muslim children towards mainstream education. It has provided incentives to 300 Muslim children and enrolled them in mainstream schools.

#### **c. An analysis of Previous FRP Studies**

Education of Muslims have got a great importance place in FRP studies. Four studies already been conducted prior to this study.

The first study was conducted by CERID in 2002 under the title of "Access to Education for Disadvantaged Groups". In this study Muslims were included as a Special Focus Group along with other groups such as Mushar, Tamang, Chepang,



Chamar and Tharus (Kamaiya). This study was conducted in Rupandehi. The objectives of this study were:

- To identify the factors that affect the education of special focus group children.
- To identify the gaps between different methods of implementation and the procedure adopted by BPEP II in improving the education of the special focus groups.
- To provide feedback to the program and suggest measures for promoting the educational participation of the special focus groups.

The findings of this study showed that Muslim children preferred going to Madrasas. In the mainstream schools children would have a language problem in the classroom because Nepali, the medium of instruction, was different from their mother tongue. Muslim children were better in studies than children of other ethnic groups but their enrollment was discouraging. The main recommendations of this study were: educational incentive scheme, mobilization of local NGOs, pocket level orientation program etc. (Access to Education for Disadvantaged Group, 2002).

The second study conducted in 2003 entitled "Access of Muslim children to Education" was concerned mainly with the identification of causes of low participation of Muslim children in mainstream education and to suggest appropriate measures to increase their participation.

Major findings of this study: The economic status of Muslim was very low. A majority of Muslim population (67%) were engaged in manual jobs and 52% were dependents. The main reason for the low participation in mainstream schools were (lack of religious education absence of culture-friendly environment, language difficulty, lack of skill education and mismatch of school environment and social culture. It also reported an incentive program which was launched in the study area but could not reach the targeted group. That incentive program had therefore no effect on enrollment of Muslim children in the mainstream schools.

The major recommendations of this study were recognition of Madrasas, management of the teacher-Maulvi ratio in schools and Madrasas, incentive scheme for Muslim children, need of policy decision for mainstreaming the Madrasas (Access of Muslim children to Education, 2003).

The third study entitled "Access of Muslim Children to Education: Phase II" was conducted in 2004 by CERID. It intended to find out the extent of Muslim children's participation in school education vis-à-vis their socio-cultural practices and to analyze the contribution of Madrasas to the education of Muslim children.

The main objectives of this study were:

- To trace out the flow of Muslim children into different schooling systems.
- To analyze the enrolment, promotion, repetition and dropout rates of Muslim children in schools.
- To find out the major socio-cultural aspects that determine Muslim children's participation in different schooling systems.
- To analyze the curricular structure of Madrasa education.
- To analyze the role of Madrasa for the participation of Muslim children in the mainstream schools.
- To find out the ways of bridging the gap between Madrasa and the mainstream school.

- To suggest strategies to increase Muslim children's participation in the mainstream schools.

This study was carried out in three highly Muslim populated districts: Banke in Bheri zone, Mahottari in Janakpur zone and Rauthat in Narayani zone. This study placed the literacy rate of the Muslims (6 years and above) in the study area at 43.76% (literacy rates males 49.93%, females: 37.66%). There was a great contribution of Madrasas in fostering Urdu literacy among Muslims. 28.11% of Muslims (28.83% male and 27.40% female) Madrasa-literate.

According to this study, 41.22% of the primary school age children (6-10 years) in the study area were studying in Madrasa. Of them, 39.84% were boys and 42.60% were girls. Only 18.06% children (23.60% boys and 12.49% girls) of this age group were studying in the mainstream schools, i.e. government and private schools. 40.71% of the children belonging to this age group were out of school.

The repetition and dropout rates of Muslim girls were higher than those of Muslim boys, but girls' promotion rate was lower. Madrasas were fostering literacy in the Muslim community. 28.11% of the total population (28.83% of male and 27.40% of females) was Madrasa-literate. They were spreading knowledge of Islamic education. They were also providing Nepali literacy and arithmetic. The number of Muslim girls in Madrasas was higher than that of the mainstream schools.

According to this study, the socio-cultural factors affecting participation of Muslim children in mainstream education were lack of religious education, poor economic background, absence of Islamic environment, less familiar language of instruction, and lack of awareness. Other reasons for Muslim low participation comprise co-education; absence of female teachers, parda system, conservative thinking of parents etc.

This study suggested the inclusion of school courses in Madrasa or *vice versa* for bridging the gap. It also recommended for OSP Muslim children with the inclusion of Islamic education. Madrasas and GON can bridge the gap between the mainstream school and Madrasa. It recommended that Madrasas must be recognized as institutions of primary education and the mainstream subjects should be integrated into the Madrasa curriculum (CERID, 2004).

The fourth study entitled "Linking the Madrasas with Mainstream Education in Nepal" was conducted in 2006 by CERID. It intended to find out curricular, administrative and financial measures for linking of Madrasas and mainstream schools.

The main objectives of this study were:

- To analyse the structure of public school primary curricula and Madrasa primary curricula.
- To solicit the ideas of the Madrasa stakeholders, public school stakeholders and community leaders to explore the possibilities of integrating mainstream and Madrasa subjects.
- To suggest a curricular framework that focuses on the integration of major subjects of primary level into Madrasa education and *vice versa*.

The major findings of this study: Madrasas have adequate numbers of teachers for teaching Islamic courses. But, there was a shortage of teachers teaching mainstream subjects like Nepali, English, Mathematics and Science. Physical facilities in Madrasas were not adequate. Many Madrasas didn't have adequate classroom space.

There was a management committee in each Madrasa. Local Muslims complained that these committees were not able to incorporate all sectors of the local Muslim community.

The study reported that Madrasas had no written curriculum. Madrasa education was based on textbooks, written in Urdu language. Many of these books were published in India. The Madrasa curriculum included mainly subjects related to Islamic values. 50% Madrasas were teaching mainstream subjects such as Nepali, Mathematics and English. However, they were not teaching subjects like science, social studies, health and physical education etc. They had recruited mainstream educated teachers for this purpose. But the teachings of these subjects were given less emphasis. The medium of instruction in Madrasas was Urdu, which was different from the mother tongue and local dialect of Muslims of the study area. The Madrasa students had to study five languages.

This study further reported that Muslims could not find Madrasa education fully relevant to their needs. They admitted that Madrasas were fulfilling the religious and cultural needs but were unable to link the Muslims and the demand of the day. Therefore, they were enthusiastic about linking Madrasas with mainstream education. Muslims were also suspicious about the linkage. They were afraid that the inclusion could hamper the identity of Madrasas. Muslims suggested reorganization of Madrasa management committee after Madrasa-linking. The committee should have a representation of all sectors of the local Muslim community. There should be a guarantee of autonomy.

This study suggested redesigning of Madrasa curriculum. The new curricula should incorporate subjects like Nepali, Mathematics, English and Science. A separate curriculum for Social studies, Moral education, Health and Environmental education should be prepared the curriculum should teach Islamic values.

It recommended two types of curriculum. For the mainstream school, curriculum should give 20% times and weightage to religious and Islamic subject (optional) and Urdu. The Madrasa, curriculum should incorporate special courses in social studies, environmental education, moral education and health. These should be based on Islamic values.

It recommended that social studies books should be rewritten to make it friendly to Islamic culture and cultures of other ethnic groups. The curriculum of Madrasas should incorporate mainstream subjects like Nepali, Mathematics, English, science etc. to go side by side with Islamic courses. Special textbooks for Madrasas should be developed in Urdu. Textbooks of mainstream subjects should be translated into Urdu. Capable Madrasas should be selected for the implementation of mainstream course. Madrasas should be recognized as primary schools. The government should appoint at least two mainstream subject teachers for Madrasas. A Madrasa Board should be constituted at central level to look after the policy and management of Madrasa education. This committee should be composed of leading Muslim intellectuals and religious and social leaders. An elective course should be developed (at the central level) for primary schools in the Muslim area, which can provide religious education in the mainstream schools. An Islamic teacher of a nearby Madrasa can be used to teach this elective subject. The curriculum for Madrasas should be prepared by a central level seminar of Muslim intellectuals, religious and social leaders, and educationists (CERID, 2006).

## CHAPTER III

### Study Design

#### Study Framework

It is a field-based study intended to suggest the strategies for bridging the gap between government's effort to use Madrasas as the institutions of formal or mainstream education and the views of Madrasa organizers in this regard. Moreover it views of Madrasa organizers are analyzed to suggest a policy framework for increasing the access of Muslim children to education.

#### Sampling

Muslim community live in almost all districts of Nepal. According to Census 2001, their major concentration is in the Terai belt of the country. Therefore, this study selected the Muslims of those Terai districts of Nepal. There are altogether seven districts, which have Muslim population of over 10% of total population in the district (Census 2001). These districts are Rauthat, Banke, Kapilbastu, Parsa, Bara, Mahottari and Sunsari. Three of these seven districts, i.e. Rauthat (from Narayani zone), Banke from (Bheri zone) and Kapilbastu from (Lumbini zone) were selected because these three districts hold leading positions in Muslim population: 19.46%, 18.99% and 18.16% Muslim respectively.

Two Madrasas from each district were selected for the purpose of this study. Madrasa head teachers, chairpersons, secretaries and members of management committees and at least three Madrasa teachers were included in this study.

The intended size of sample of this study was as follows:

District	No. of sample Madrasas	No. of respondents for in-depth interview	No. of FGD with community people	No. of participants in seminar
Rauthat	2	2x8 = 16 person*	2x10 = 20 person	20
Banke	2	2x8 = 16 person	2x10 = 20 person	20
Kapilbastu	2	2x8 = 16 person	2x10 = 20 person	20
Total	6	48	60	60

Note. \*2 chairpersons of MCs, 2 secretaries of MCs, 2 teachers, 2 members of MC.

The size of the sample was increased for getting the information related to different types of Madrasas. However, the information on three types of Madrasa was collected:

- Registered and already conducting mainstream courses
- Unregistered but conducting mainstream courses
- Madrasas not conducting mainstream courses in organized manner

The final size of sample of this study was as follows:

District	No. of sample Madrasas	No. of respondents for in-depth interview	No. of FGD with community people	No. of participant in seminar
Banke	4	4x8 = 32 person	4x10 = 40 person	42
Kapilbastu	4	4x8 = 32 person	4x10 = 40 person	22
Rauthat	3	3x8 = 24 person	3x10 = 30 person	22
Total	11	88	110	84

### Study Tools and Techniques

The following tools and techniques were employed to collect information for the study:

- *In-depth interview:* An in-depth interview was carried out with the help of an interview guideline to explore the opinion of Madrasa organizers and teachers about the autonomy of Madrasas and to assess their views on the government provision to register Madrasas as formal schools. The ideas of head teachers, teachers, chairpersons and secretaries and members of Madrasa management committees and Madrasa teachers were collected. The problem of quality in education was discussed.
- *Focus Group Discussion:* A Focus Group Discussion was organized in each Madrasa area. The purpose of government provision of registering Madrasas as institutions of formal education and their opinion about the autonomy of Madrasas. The FGD was partially used to cross-check the views of Madrasa organizers and teachers in this direction and to triangulate the findings of the in-depth interview. It was based on a guideline prepared for this purpose. The participants of this focus group discussion were religious/social leaders of Muslim community, Madrasa stakeholders, the Muslim intellectuals, parents etc. of study area.
- *Seminar:* A seminar was conducted to find out the ways of maintaining quality education in Madrasas, which are going to be registered as formal schools. The ways of guaranteeing the autonomy of Madrasa along with qualitative education was also explored through this seminar. The participants of this seminar were policy level person (district), Muslim intellectuals, Maulvis and other persons having a deeper understanding of Muslim education of the district.

### Data Generation, Analysis and Interpretation

The data collected were analyzed thematically. Thematic analysis is considered an effective technique in the ethnographic studies (Patton, 1987). For this analysis all the bits of information related to the already classified pattern were combined to build a valid argument for generating meaningful themes. The themes were used to interpret the findings.

All the findings were verified by triangulating the information for precision. The findings were interpreted logically to get answer to the objectives of this study and to make suggestions on the basis of findings.

For the purpose of data analysis and interpretation the following matrix was used.

Technique	Source of data	Technique of data collection	Data analysis and interpretation
In-depth interview	Chairpersons, secretaries and members of Madrasa management committees, and head teachers and teachers of sample Madrasas	Note taking	Thematic analysis
Focus Group Discussion	Religious/social leaders of Muslim community, Madrasa stakeholders, and Muslim intellectuals of study area	Note taking	Thematic analysis
Seminar	Policy level persons (district), Muslim intellectuals, Maulvis and persons having a deeper understanding of Muslim education of the district	Note taking	Thematic analysis

## CHAPTER IV

### Data Analysis and Interpretation

#### Introduction to Study Site

The main objective of this study was to explore the possibility of turning Madrasas into places of mainstream education for the Muslims. The study therefore intends to explore the scope and need of introducing mainstream education into Madrasas and identify the issues related to autonomy for Madrasas. The sample of this study included three highest Muslim populated districts of Nepal. The field study was planned to be completed in three phases, i.e. one district in each phase. The first and second phases were carried out in Banke and Kapilbastu respectively and in the third phase the field study was completely in Rauthat. The Muslim populations are more concentrated in the southern belt and in the municipalities of these districts.

An analysis of the literacy rates of 10 highly Muslim-populated VDCs of these districts show that the VDCs were far below the district literacy rate. For example, Laxmanpur VDC of Banke, which has a Muslim population of 74.22%, had a literacy rate of 17.45 which was 40.76% below the literacy rate of Banke district (58.2%). Similarly, the Gauri VDC of Kapilbastu district, where 45.30% of the population are Muslims, has a literacy rate of 29.34%, which is 12.16% below the district literacy rate. Similarly, Akolwa VDC of Rauthat with a 65.65% Muslims has a literacy rate of only 12.75%, which is 11.82% below the district literacy rate. (See Appendix 6)

The above analysis clearly indicates that the highly Muslim-populated areas of these districts are lagging behind in literacy. The literacy rates of all VDCs of Banke are far below the literacy rate. Similar was the case with the VDCs of Kapilbastu district except Krishna Nagar and Pipri VDCs, both are located near the highway and are developing as suburbs. In Rauthat district, seven out of ten highly Muslim populated VDCs have literacy rates lower than the district literacy rate. However, the literacy rate of Nepalgunj Municipality of Banke (69.59%) and Kapilbastu Municipality of Kapilbastu (49.17%), and Bariya VDC (63.435) and Rajpur Tulse VDC (34.67%) of Rauthat were fairly higher than those of respective districts.

The literacy rates of Municipalities are generally higher than the district literacy rate because they have relatively advanced educational facilities and Nepalgunj Municipality and Kapilbastu Municipality are not exceptional. However, the high literacy rate of two VDCs of Rauthat can be ascribed to the well-established Madrasas there. The literacy trend presented in Appendix 6 shows relationship between the high Muslim population and the low literacy rate, especially in VDCs. It suggests that the literacy rates of Muslims of rural areas are far below the district literacy rate and national literacy rate.

#### Classification of Madrasas Education

Although this study intended to study at least two Madrasas from each sample district, it was found that the Madrasas in the study area were of three categories:

- Conducting mainstream education with government recognition
- Conducting mainstream education without government recognition

- Conducting Islamic courses in general

Altogether, four Madrasas of Banke district and four Madrasas of Kapilbastu district were studied. Of these Madrasas, two belonged to urban areas and six to rural areas. All the Madrasas of Kapilbastu belonged to rural areas. The list of Madrasas selected for this study is presented in Appendix 2.

### *Number of Students in Madrasas*

Madrasas of the selected districts had a large numbers of students. According to the records of UNESCO club, and a Banke NGO, there were altogether 64 Madrasas in Banke district in 2062 B.S. in which 6,846 children were studying. Similarly, according to Siddharth Development Committee, a local NGO of Kapilbastu, there were about 200 Madrasas in the district, with about 20,000 students studying in them. There was no record of the number of Madrasas functioning in Rauthat. However, according to Muslim intellectuals and local informants, there is at least one Madrasa in each VDC of the district; Rautahat has 96 VDCs and one Municipality.

Forty Madrasas in Rauthat district were in the process of registering a joint forum in the name of "Madrasa Committee". The forum people claimed that the Madrasas are highly developed and also Indian students came there to study. They provide education up to a higher level of Islamic studies. According to a source, a total of 2828 students are studying in these Madrasas of Rautahat.

Among the eleven Madrasas studied in sample areas, there were altogether 2885 students with the average of 253.1 students per Madrasa. Among them 50.71% were boys and 49.28% girls. (See Appendix: 3)

There were also a significant number of students in Madrasas which were teaching mainstream subjects along with Islamic subjects. Madrasa Barkatiya and Madrasa Gausiya of Banke district and Madrasa Darul Oloom Siddaqeeya, Madrasa Anwarul Oloom and Jameya Matlul Oloom Salfiya were teaching mainstream courses as well as Islamic subjects. Three Madrasas of Rauthat districts were teaching mainstream subjects, using mainstream school books and books of Bihar Madrasa Board.

The above findings suggest that large numbers of Muslim children were studying in Madrasas, and the numbers of girl students were higher than those of boys.

### *Status of Madrasas*

As mentioned above there were threes types of Madrasas, as stated above:

- (A) Conducting mainstream education with government recognition
- (B) Conducting mainstream education without government recognition
- (C) Conducting Islamic courses in general.

Only one Madrasa of Banke and four of Kapilbastu were of type "A" and the other Madrasas were of types "B" and "C". An analysis of the status of these Madrasas is presented below:

- (A) **Madrasas conducting mainstream education with government recognition:** Madrasa Gausiya of Banke and Madrasa Siddiqeeya Madinatul Oloom of Kapilbastu were government registered Madrasas. Madrasa Gausiya is teaching mainstream courses (upto secondary school) along with Islamic courses. This is a unique Madrasa because it is the only government recognized



Madrasa teaching upto S.L.C. Students of this Madrasa have been participating in the S.L.C. examination since 2058 B.S. Although this Madrasa is recognized as a school, it is not getting any financial support from the government. It collects a fee of Rs. 25 to 75 from each student. Every year it provides freship to 80 students belonging to low-income groups. The income from fees is not enough. Money is obtained by collection of donations and alms from the Muslim community. In this Madrasa the number of girl students is significant. The percentages of girl and boy students in this Madrasa are 54.34% and 45.65% respectively. It is remarkable that 30.53% students were Hindus (See Appendix: 4). The school administration reported that some Hindu students were studying Urdu and even Islamic courses in this Madrasa. All the students in other Madrasas were Muslims. This finding indicates that Madrasas can serve as institutions of mainstream education for all, not only for Muslims if the government recognizes them. On the other hand, Madrasas do not hesitate to take in non-Muslim children, which will promote cultural harmony between Muslims and non-Muslims. Madrasa organizers said that their institution was facing serious financial problems. The teachers were under-paid. It was also difficult to get quality teachers. This Madrasa was expecting continued assistance from the government in terms of books and teachers required for a registered school. A notable fact was that this Madrasa was conducting a separate section for Islamic education.

Madrasa Siddiqeeya Madinatul Oloom was registered as a primary school. It was supported by UNICEF under the SOP program with textbooks (free) and service of a female teacher for teaching mainstream subjects. DEO has decided to provide one female teacher under the Rahat quota. Although this Madrasa had been registered as a mainstream school, the organizers were not satisfied with its present condition. They wanted to start a separate school, without hampering the Madrasas education and autonomy.

- (B) Madrasas conducting mainstream education without government recognition:** One Madrasa of this category was studied in each district. It included Madrasa Barkatia from Banke and Jameya Matalaul Oloom Salfiya from Kapilbastu. Madrasa Barkatia was teaching mainstream subjects up to Grade 8. Although it was not recognized by the government, it conducting mainstream courses along with Islamic courses. The Madrasa administrators say that they tend to send their students to another government-recognized school to participate in the district level examination. They do for the purpose of recognition of the education of the students. This Madrasas has a separate section for Islamic education. Students who wanted to get higher education in Islamic studies were studying in this section.

Madrasa Jameya Matalaul Oloom Salfiya is an exemplary of Madrasa. It was conducting English medium mainstream education. It has three wings:

- General Madrasa education with a few mainstream subjects
- English medium school combining Islamic courses
- Madrasa section of girls

The English medium wing ran up to Grade 7 and the Madrasa for girls to Grade 4. The students of English medium Madrasa had to pay only tuition fees.

- (C) Madrasas conducting Islamic courses:** Three Madrasas conducting Islamic courses were studied. Two were of Banke and one of Kapilbastu. Education in

these Madrasas was graded. Islamic education was a must for the primary level. Madrasa Mustakul Ulum (Banke) was providing education up to Grade 4 and Madrasa Madinatul Ulum (Banke) and Madrasa Jameya Ahle Sunnat Miskiniya, Kapilbastu were providing education up to Grade 5. Madrasa Jameya Ahle Sunnat was conducting a separate Madrasa for girls.

These Madrasas had not received government recognition even though they were also teaching Nepali, English, Math, Mero Serphero, using government textbooks. They had good number of students and remarkable number of girl students. According to the teachers, the students go to mainstream schools after competing the courses in Madrasa and vice-versa. It indicates that the students have to spend a long time (of upto ten years) in primary level education, which hinders their participation in higher education. This type of education is only a situation of coercion because the Muslim children have to study Islamic subjects as their religious duty and the mainstream courses for modern education.

All the Madrasas of Rauthat district were teaching Islamic courses. Although they taught Nepali, English, Math, teaching was not well organized. In Rauthat district, Madrasa Mahmudiya was a well organized seminary which provided Islamic education up to a higher level. It prepared Maulvies for teaching in Madrasas. This is a 127 years old Madrasa, which has been teaching mainstream courses since 1960. It uses Nepali books only up to Grade 2. For upper grades it uses the books of Bihar Madrasa Board.

- (D) **The case of Madrasa Anwarul Oloom, Kapilastu:** This Madrasa is a special one in terms of registration. In an effort to get government registration, this Madrasa was merged into a local public primary school and which taught Islamic courses along with mainstream courses. A teacher of Islamic education was also sent to this school to teach Islamic courses. However, after some time, all the parents withdrew their children from this school and started a separate Madrasa for teaching Islamic courses for them. The parents argued that although they had sent an Islamic teacher to the mainstream school, the students were unable to get proper Islamic education because of the heavy mainstream routine.

This case presents an issue related to the government policy of registration. The Muslims want that their children should do mainstream courses but they cannot disregard for the study of their religious courses. Teaching the courses of these two streams is a big overdose for the students. Muslims are not willing to get less emphasis to their religious courses. They demand for an integrated course of a manageable proportion.

In summary, a majority of Madrasas give more emphasis to Islamic education rather than to the mainstream course.

## Capability of Madrasas

### *Teacher*

The capability of Madrasa in terms of teachers, physical facilities and financial support were studied. The numbers of teachers in each Madrasa studied were given in Table 3.

**Table 3: Number of Teachers in Sample Madrasas**

Number of teachers								
Muslim			Hindu			Total		
Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
99	7	106	3	6	9	102	13	115
(86.08%)	(6.08%)	(92.17%)	(2.60%)	(5.21%)	(7.82%)	(88.69%)	(11.30%)	(100%)

In the Madrasas the numbers of teachers for teaching Islamic courses were good. However, there was a shortage of teachers for the mainstream courses. The Madrasas which are running mainstream course have managed to get mainstream teachers. The teachers were mainly Muslim males with high degrees in Islamic education. The highest percentage of Muslim male teachers in these Madrasas was 86.08%.

There were only 2.60% non-Muslim male teachers in these Madrasas. Madrasa Gausiya which was teaching mainstream subjects had appointed two non-Muslim male teachers. It is a very rare instance of a Madrasas having recruited non-Muslim. There was also a male non-Muslim male teacher in Madrasa Barkatiya. According to Madrasa sources, teachers were appointed for teaching mainstream courses.

The total percentage of female teachers in these Madrasas was 11.30% (6.08% Muslims and 5.21% Hindus). This cannot be considered a satisfactory figure; however it indicates change in the concept of Muslims. In the past, female teachers were very rare in the Madrasas of Nepal. In the sample Madrasas of this study, only 50% of Madrasas of Banke and Kapilabastu districts had female teachers and only two of them had Muslim female teachers. However, there were no female teachers in the Madrasas of Rauthat (See Appendix 5).

Although Madrasas are places of religious education, Muslims do not hesitate to appoint non-Muslim teachers as required. There were 7.82% Hindu teachers in these Madrasas [ 3 (2.60%) male and 4 (5.21%) female]. It shows that Muslims are ready to appoint non-Muslim teachers in the Madrasa to meet the demand for quality education.

In summary, Madrasas had a good number of male teachers highly educated in Islamic studies. However, there was a lack of mainstream subject teachers in these Madrasa. It poses a question to the policy of free registration. Madrasas want change in their tradition. They are allowing the recruitment of non-Muslim teachers and female teachers.

### ***Physical Facilities***

All the Madrasas ran in permanent building. But they had limited classrooms space. Many Madrasas conducted classes in verandas. There was no furniture for students except in Madrasa Gausiya and the English medium section of Madrasa Jameya Matalaul Oloom Salfiya. In other Madrasas, the students sat on mats spread the floor. The chalkboard was the only instructional material used.

### ***Financial condition***

The Madrasas were running on limited financial support. They had to rely on donations and alms given by the community. According to Madrasa organizers, the

source of income was irregular. The organizers had to work hard for collecting donations. As a result, the teachers were lowpaid (Rs 1300.00 to 3500.00 per month) A great majority of teachers were getting Rs. 2000 to 2500 per month. According to Madrasa teachers, teaching in Madrasas is service to God. Therefore, they take teaching as a religious duty. The other source of income for the teacher was the alms given by the community on cultural, religious and family occasions e.g. marriage.

### **Reaction of Muslim Community to Provision of Registering Madrasas**

MOE has implemented various programs to increase the access of Muslim children to mainstream education, to meet the goal of EFA by 2015. An important step taken by MOE is registering Madrasa as institutions of mainstream education. According to a MOE circular, the government is ready to register Madrasas, without any registration fee on the following grounds:

1. MOE can register a Madrasa as a Community Primary School without any fee and in consideration of the classwise students number and the extent of physical facilities that are available (according to Clause 77 of Education Regulations 2059). However, a deposit will be collected for lower secondary and secondary levels.
2. If the number of students is not encouraging, then the Madrasa will be allowed to conduct Alternative Schooling according to Clause 52 of the Education Regulations, 59.
3. As a registered school can take the gradewise examination itself, arrangement should be made for the district level examination for Grade 5 through the District Education Office or Resource Center. For Alternative Schooling the District Education Office will arrange for gradewise examinations through a school and the examination will be based on the learning achievements of each grade.
4. The school taking the examination according to the instructions of the District Education Office, or the District Education Office itself, should provide the certificate.

(Source: Circular of DOE dated 30 Kartik 2063)

### **Reaction of Muslim Community**

Muslims were very happy with the government provision of registering Madrasas without any deposit. According to the records available at DEO of Banke, 58 out of 64 Madrasas in the district have submitted applications for registration. Similarly, 40 Madrasas of Rauthat have applied. However, in Kapilbastu district only 3 Madrasas have applied because the Madrasa people were not clear about the provision of registering. They wanted a clear-cut policy about the terms and conditions of the registration and the status of Madrasas after the registration. They were not ready to give up their rights of autonomy for the management of Madrasas.

Although the Madrasa organizers of Banke district reacted positively, they hesitated because there was no clear-cut policy. They, however, applied for registration with the hope of a future policy and financial support for the Madrasas.

The views of Madrasa organizers and teachers, Muslim community members, Muslim scholars and leaders and people at policy level were collected to be clear

about the local notion of autonomy for Madrasas. The findings are summarized in the following paragraphs.

- **Strong point:** Muslims generally welcomed the government provision of registration. They consider it as something with multifunctional approach which fulfill their cultural and religious needs and as a process of inclusion of the Muslim community in the mainstream of nation building.
- **Weak point:** The main concern of Muslim community was the present status of autonomy of Madrasas. They felt that the government provision was not clear about the status of Madrasas after their registration. They stressed that the autonomy of Madrasas should be guaranteed. Some respondents said that the provision of registration did not speak clearly about the property of Madrasas. All these matters should be clarified and the Madrasas should be registered under a specific act guaranteeing its autonomy. They stressed that Madrasas were religious assets of Muslims.
- **Opportunities:** Muslims consider this provision as a key to the inclusion of Muslims in the mainstream and the development of the disadvantaged Muslim community. It will open the door of higher education to Muslims.
- **Threats:** They were very anxious about the change in the nature of Madrasas after their registration. If the government treats the Madrasas as general community schools, their identity could be endangered and the sanctity of Islamic culture could be threatened.

Muslims are anxious about the legal status of Madrasas after their registration. Although they are ready to use their Madrasa as institutions of mainstream education, they were against any type of intervention in the functioning of Madrasas from any quarter. So they demanded full autonomy for Madrasas after registration.

## **Perception of Muslims Regarding Autonomy**

### *Situational Analysis*

Muslims are very much eager for mainstream education. This is clearly indicated by their act of introducing mainstream courses in the Madrasas. All the Madrasas studied were teaching mainstream subjects. Madrasa Gausiya, Madrasa Barkatia Madrasa and Siddiqeeya Madiantool Oloom had transformed themselves into institutes of mainstream education embracing Islamic education. Madrasa Jameya Matlaul Oloom was conducting mainstream courses in English medium. Other Madrasas were also teaching mainstream subjects.

The teaching of mainstream courses in Madrasas was not organized. The Madrasas of Banke and Kapilbastu were using textbooks of mainstream schools but the Madrasas of Rauthat were using them up to only Grade 2. They were using the books published by Bihar Madrasa Board for the upper grades.

According to Madrasa organizers, Muslim children must study Islamic courses for religious and spiritual purposes and they should study mainstream courses to be responsible members of the society.

Muslims of Banke district are ready to use Madrasas as institutes of mainstream education. About 90% Madrasas of Banke had applied for registration. However, it was reverse in Kapilbastu, where only three Madrasas out of about two hundred had

applied. Madrasa organizers and Muslim community members want to explain the importance of mainstream education to the Muslim children, but some of them are suspicious about the government effort. They look upon this step as a conspiracy to finish Islamic culture.

There was no complete record of the Madrasas in Rauthat district. Muslim intellectuals and local person claimed that there was at least one Madrasa in each VDC of that district. This suggests that there are more than one hundred Madrasa there. According to record in the DEO office forty Madrasas have applied for registration. The process of registration is going on.

There was a mixed type of reaction to the government step. The large numbers applications for registration show that Muslims communities are not unwilling to use Madrasas for mainstream courses. They are only asking for a clear-cut policy for registration and an assurance of the autonomy from the government side.

### *Autonomy*

A majority of respondents said the autonomy of Madrasas should not be affected (after registration). Some said since Madrasas are the religious institutions of Muslims, they should run under control of Muslim community, not under the control of the government. Government can monitor the functioning of Madrasas, but the management of these Madrasas should be in the hands of Muslims.

The perceptions regarding autonomy of Madrasas are as follows:

The Madrasa teachers clearly stated that Madrasas were the property of the Muslim community. They were established to educate Muslim children on the Islamic line. The government can utilize these Madrasas as institutions of mainstream education. Madrasas are ready for this purpose. However, they stressed that the control of Madrasas should remain with the Muslim community.

Muslim intellectuals and religious and social leaders of the study areas were consulted in a FGD and the views of policy persons, Maulvis and the persons having a deeper understanding of Muslim education of the district were collected in a seminar. They expressed their opinion that the government provision was not clear about autonomy. It seemed to be silent about the status of Madrasas and their property after their registration. The summary of their perceptions about the autonomy are as follows:

- **Statutory autonomy:** Madrasa stakeholders emphasised the need of statutory autonomy for the Madrasas (after registration). According to them, Madrasas are cultural institutes established to provide cultural education. They feel that the registration of Madrasas can be a threat to their cultural identity. Many Madrasas of Banke and Rauthat have applied for registration but their organizers are demanding a clear-cut policy and legal provision that guarantee their autonomy. A majority of Madrasas of Kapilbastu did not apply for registration in the absence of a clear-cut policy. According to them, the present provision of government has only waived the registration fees. According to the Education Act 2028 Seventh amendment, the property of a registered school is handed over to the community. The property of a Madrasa should belong to the Muslim community and so it cannot be handed over to the government or any other body. The Education Act provides for the control of school operation of fund, curriculum and textbooks and change of name and the place of the

school. Muslims look at all these provisions as a threat to the cultural identity of Madrasas. They demanded for a special act ensuring the cultural identity.

- **Autonomy in Management:** According to Madrasa teachers and members of management committee, Madrasas should be allowed to run as full autonomous institutes after their registration. Donations given by Muslim communities can only be expended for Islamic education. It is the duty of the management committee to collect donations. The government can monitor the education in Madrasas and can audit the financial accounts. Madrasa organizers were against government intervention in internal matters of Madrasas such as appointment and transfer of Maulvis and formation of the management committees.
- **Autonomy in curriculum planning:** Madrasa stakeholders and Muslim intellectuals, are ready to implement the government curriculum. They are ready to include mainstream subjects and Islamic courses together in their Madrasas. However, they strongly say that the nature of Islamic courses to be taught in the Madrasas (after registration) should be decided by the Muslim community. Government agencies should not intervene in any way in this matter. Since it is very difficult to study the courses for the students of both Islamic and mainstream curricula at the same time, they demanded an integrated course. In the process of integration the Islamic courses should include courses on value education which could be incorporated in school studies. Madrasa stakeholders are in favour of an Islamic curriculum to go along with mainstream subjects. According to them, such a curriculum should be prepared by the joint effort of MOE and Muslim intellectuals. The participants of the FGD and the seminar also supported this view. They stressed the publication of mainstream books in the Urdu language.
- **Financial autonomy:** According to Madrasas stakeholders, Madrasas run solely on donations given by the Muslims and the Madrasas organizers should work hard for the collection of the donations. The donations can only be expended for Islamic education. Government control on this matter can antagonize the spirit of Madrasas. Madrasa should enjoy financial autonomy. The teaching of mainstream courses needs additional expenses. Madrasas are not strong to raise funds for these additional expenses. So they are paying humble salaries to the Madrasa teachers. Therefore, the government should provide financial support in terms of teachers, free books, stationery etc. They admitted that the government can audit the expenses.
- **Role of government:** Muslims demanded a clear-cut government policy for registration of Madrasas. This policy should clarify the status of Madrasas that of their property (after registration). The properties of Madrasa are the properties of the Muslim community. It cannot be handed over to community schools. Government should clarify the role of the government and the role of Madrasas. The seminar participants stressed that such policy should be prepared in consultation with Muslim intellectuals. Government should form a "Madrasa Board" at central level to look after the policy related to Madrasas.
- **Role of stakeholders:** The respondents observed that there is a great variation in the management of Madrasas. In some places, Madrasa teachers are dominant and in other places the management committee are dominant. Madrasas should be accountable to the community. They should run as community institutions. The Management committees of Madrasas should

include the local Muslim intellectuals and leaders. This management committee should be fully responsible for the management of Madrasa. The government can play the role of a mediator in the formation of this committee. The role of stakeholders should be specified in the policy document.

In summary, Madrasa organizers are willing to use their institutions as places for education in mainstream subjects for the advancement of their community. However, they insist on autonomy to be guaranteed by government policy and legal provision because they feel that the registration of Madrasas done in the absence of policy and legal provision may affect the cultural identity of the Madrasas. They demanded the formation of a Madrasa board.

### **Steps to be Taken for Autonomy:**

The respondents suggested specific measures for the autonomy of Madrasas. Since the Madrasa is the property of a Muslim community, it can not be handed over to the government. The government only can use it as an institution of mainstream education. Specific provisions should be made for guaranteeing the autonomy of the Madrasas. The stance for autonomy and financial support from the government can be summarized below:

- **Possibility of autonomy with financial support:** According to the respondents, Madrasas are running on limited funds raised from Muslim community. These funds are neither substantial nor regular. The teachers in Madrasas have to work for a very limited salary. It is their devotion to religion and the community that encourages them to work on a return. The financial condition of Madrasas is not so sound as to help recruit mainstream subject teachers on government. The government should provide financial supports for the salary of mainstream teachers. The government should not interfere in the internal matters of Madrasas. It can audit the accounts.
- **Legal provisions for autonomy of Madrasas:** According to the respondents, there should be a distinct difference in the legal provision for Madrasa and the community school. Madrasas have been established by Muslims to fulfil their cultural needs. Therefore, they feel that any unwanted intervention can harm the sanctity of Madrasas. They are ready to transform the Madrasas to fulfil their educational needs but not at the cost of their religious. The seminar participants demanded a Madrasa Act with ensuring the autonomy of Madrasas in the Muslim community. It can be possible only through the establishment of a Madrasa Board at the central level.
- **Role of government:** They expect a leading role of the government in promoting the overall quality of Madrasas. The government should prepare a clear-cut policy in consultation with Muslim intellectuals. The government should not only concentrate on utilization of Madrasas to meet the EFA goal but should play an important role in strengthening the Madrasas for the welfare of Muslim society. Capable Madrasas should be registered as secondary and even higher secondary schools. The Islamic education provided by the Madrasas should also be recognized.
- **Role of stakeholders:** According to the respondents, it is the duty of Muslim community to help the government in the transformation of Madrasas. They stressed that they were ready to help the government in this matter.



## Endeavours for Quality Education

The respondents were asked about the endeavours to be made to ensure quality education in Madrasas. The Madrasa organizers claimed that they were capable enough to provide quality education. It was found that Madrasas had developed their own timetables to provide mainstream education and Islamic education. The organizers of Madrasa Baraktiya said that they were dedicated to quality education. However, the Muslim parents were not fully satisfied with the quality of mainstream education provided in Madrasas. The responses of the respondents can be summarized below:

- Regular monitoring and supervision of education in Madrasas after their registration. DEO should bear this responsibility. The Madrasa management committee should be made more responsible in this direction.
- An integrated curriculum should be prepared for the registered Madrasas. It should incorporate mainstream subjects and Islamic subject in balanced way. Otherwise, education in Madrasas will be an overload (for the students).
- The government should appoint mainstream teachers for Madrasas.
- Regular government support for Madrasas in terms of textbooks, instructional materials and stationery.

## Challenges and Issues

This study revealed many challenges and issues regarding the registration of Madrasas. The major issues are presented below:

- **Issue of autonomy:** Madrasa are institutions established to provide cultural education to Muslim children. They are the properties of the Muslim communities. The government has the responsibility of monitoring all such institutions for national interest. There is a need of check and balance for the effective running of the Madrasas.
- **Issue of quality:** Government responsibility is not limited to registering alone. The government should do accountable to bring in quality and standard in the education of these Madrasas. Since the Madrasas are generally suffering from lack of teachers for the mainstream subjects. It will be difficult for them to provide quality education. They have also been suffering from lack of furniture and instructional materials. It is a great challenge to the government to ensure quality education.
- **Issue of curriculum:** The Madrasa courses are a fulltime course. On the other hand, the mainstream courses are a fulltime. The Muslims will not be willing to give them of religious course for mainstream courses. There is a need of an integrated course to fulfil the educational and cultural needs of Muslims. There is a great challenge.
- **Issue of policy making:** Muslims have insisted on participation in the policy making process regarding Madrasa education. They will never accept a policy framework developed without consulting their community. Forming a policy making body with Muslim representation can be a challenges too.

- **Monitoring:** Effective monitoring of Madrasas is also a great challenge. It is very difficult to monitor Madrasas for an external agency because Muslims may take it as an intervention in their religious matters.

## CHAPTER V

### Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations

#### Findings and Conclusions

Given below are the Findings and Conclusions of this Study.

- The literacy rate of Muslims of rural areas was much lower than that of the Muslims of urban areas.
- Madrasas are also teaching mainstream subjects, some with government support and other without it.
- The inclusion of mainstream subjects in the Madrasas of urban areas was more organized. These Madrasas are teaching mainstream subjects up to the secondary level.
- Student populations in Madrasas of the study area was large. The proportion of girl students was encouraging. There were 247.5 students per Madrasa (48.53% boys and 51.46% girls).
- Madrasa had good number of teachers for teaching Islamic courses. However, the number of mainstream subject teachers were discouraging. Some Madrasas were ready to appoint non-Muslim teachers for quality education.
- Madrasas have good building facilities but they lacked of furniture and instructional materials.
- Muslims have welcomed the government provision of registering Madrasas as institution of mainstream education. However, they were not very clear about this provision.
- They were ready to use Madrasas as multifunctional agent to fulfil their educational and cultural needs without hampering their religious spiritual identity.
- Madrasas were enthusiastic about introducing mainstream subjects. 58 out of 64 Madrasas of Banke district had applied for registration.
- Absence of clarity of policy had made Muslims hesitant. The Muslims of Kapilbastu took the government provision positively, but only three Madrasas of this district had applied for registration.
- The case study of Madrasa Anwarul Oloom suggested that the registration of Madrasa should be done under a perfect policy framework. It is not possible to teach the courses of mainstream and Islamic education simultaneously. There is, therefore a need of an integrated curriculum.
- Muslims suggested for balancing of the mainstream and Islamic subjects.
- Muslims demanded guarantee of autonomy for Madrasa (after registration). They said that the property and management of Madrasas could not be handed over to the government.
- Muslims expected government support in the appointment of mainstream subject teachers. They stated that the government could monitor and supervise

the Madrasas (after registration). The government could audit the financing support accounts.

- Muslims said that Madrasas were accountable to Muslim communities because they ran on community donations. Madrasa management should be in the hands of the Muslim community.
- They demanded that Madrasas should also provide secondary and higher secondary education. According to them, it would be comfortable, particularly for girl students.
- A Madrasa Act should be promulgated and a Madrasa Board should be formed at the central level.
- Any policy on Madrasas should be framed in consultation with Muslim intellectuals.

## **Conclusions**

The following conclusions have been drawn from findings.

- Madrasas are the most trusted educational institution of Muslims. They have helped to spread girls' education too. They have satisfactory boy-girl student ratios.
- The Madrasa organizers are in favour of the inclusion of mainstream courses in the Madrasas. Many of them are conducting mainstream courses along with Islamic courses.
- Madrasas are cultural institutions of Muslims. Muslims are in favour of autonomy for Madrasas and opposed to any external intervention in their activities. Muslims seek governmental support for smooth operation of Madrasas after their registration.
- Muslims are positive about the registration of Madrasas but they demand a clear-cut policy framework for ensuring autonomy.
- Madrasas have good buildings but they lack proper furniture, instructional materials and teachers to teach mainstream subjects.
- Only registering Madrasas is not enough to increase the access of Muslim children to education. An integrated curriculum of the mainstream and Islamic components should be developed for quality education.

## **Recommendations**

- Madrasas are religious institutions of Muslims. They cannot be registered as general schools under the control of government. They should be registered as community schools. The provision of registration should guarantee their autonomy. However, they should be operated as required by the Education Act and Regulations of the government.
- The government should develop a system for the appointment of Madrasa management committees of these Madrasa. Thus it should do in consultation with Muslim religious leaders and scholars.
- The government should provide financial support to Madrasas in terms of appointment of mainstream subject teachers, textbooks etc.

- An integrated curriculum for Madrasas should be prepared. The curriculum should reasonably balance mainstream courses and Islamic subject through efforts of educationists and Muslim religious leaders.
- The government should issue a clear-cut policy for Madrasas management and curricula. It should specify the role of Madrasas and the role of the government.
- A Madrasa Board should be appointed at the central level to look after the matters related to Madrasas. It should include Muslim religious leaders and Muslim intellectuals.
- Textbooks prescribed by CDC for different courses should be translated into Urdu.
- The levels and standard of the students from Madrasas should be categorized to enable them to join regular classes according to their capability.
- A policy framework should be developed for the access of the graduates of the mainstream Madrasas to higher education.
- The internal efficiency of Madrasas should be analyzed to maintain quality education.
- A database for information regarding the Madrasas (in each district) and their internal efficiency should be prepared.

Appendix  
**Appendix 1**

**Guidelines for In-depth Interview/FGD**

Research questions	Triggers for in-depth interview/FGD
What do Madrasa organizers mean by autonomy of Madrasas?	Autonomy in management Autonomy in curriculum planning Financial autonomy Role of government Role of stakeholders
How do they think the autonomy of Madrasa should be guaranteed?	Possibility of autonomy along with financial support of government Legal provisions Role of government Role of stakeholders
How do they perceive the government provision to register Madrasas as formal schools after the inclusion of mainstream subjects?	Strong points Weak points Opportunities Threats Their expectations and adequacy/limitations of the provision
What does it need to ensure quality education in Madrasa schools?	Administrative measures Curricular measures Pedagogical measures Financial measures Role of government Role of stakeholders

(Triggers for FGD were finalized after analyzing the findings of the in-depth interview with Madrasa stakeholders. Issues for seminar will be drawn on the basis of findings of in-depth interview and FGD)

## Appendix 2

### Sample Madrasas

S.N.	Name of Madrasa	Type	Geographical setting
	Madrasa Barkatiya, Gurudwara Road, Nepalgunj, Banke	Conducting mainstream education without government recognition	Urban
	Madrasa Gausiya, Ghositol, Nepalgunj, Banke	Conducting mainstream education with government recognition	Urban
	Madrasa Madinatul Ulum Raniyapur-8, Banke	Conducting Islamic courses in general	Rural
	Madrasa Mustakul Ulum, Raniyapur-4, Banke	Conducting Islamic courses in general	Rural
	Darul Oloom Siddaqueeya, Materia, Kapilbastu	Conducting mainstream education with government recognition	Rural
	Madrasa Anwarul Oloom, Jahadi, Kapilbastu	Registered but again begun as a separate Madrasa	Rural
	Jameya Matloul Oloom Salfiya , Dumra, Kapilbastu	Conducting mainstream education without government recognition	Rural
	Jameya Ahle Sunnat, Miskiniya, Chandrauta, Kapilbastu	Conducting Islamic courses in general	Rural
	Madrasa Mahamudiya, Rajpur Farhadwa, Rauthat	Conducting mainstream education without government recognition	Rural
	Darul Ilam Masab-bin- Omair Islamiya, Bairiya, Rauthat	Conducting mainstream education without government recognition	Rural
	Darul Ilam Abdullah bin-Masud Islamiya, Rajpur Farhadwa, Damar Rauthat	Conducting mainstream education without government recognition	Rural

### Appendix 3

#### Numbers of Students in Sample Madrasas

##### Banke District

Grade	Madrasa Barkatiya, Gurudwara Road, Nepalgunj			Madrasa Gausiya, Ghositol, Nepalgunj			Madrasa Matinutun Ulum Raniyapur-8			Madrasa Mustakul Ulum, Raniyapur-4			Total		
	B	G	T	B	G	T	B	G	T	B	G	T	B	G	T
Nursery	29	23	52	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	29	23	52
KG	27	20	47	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	27	20	47
I	32	27	59	33	25	58	25	35	60	15	30	45	105	117	222
II	17	28	45	11	17	28	26	37	63	22	28	50	76	110	186
III	23	25	48	19	25	44	12	21	33	30	20	50	84	91	175
IV	18	21	39	16	9	25	21	31	52	23	25	48	78	86	164
V	12	12	24	13	13	26	0	0	0	26	33	59	51	58	109
VI	10	8	18	20	12	32	0	0	0	0	0	0	30	20	50
VII	4	5	9	27	17	44	0	0	0	0	0	0	31	22	53
VIII	3	7	10	18	18	36	0	0	0	0	0	0	21	25	46
IX	0	0	0	16	17	33	0	0	0	0	0	0	16	17	33
X	0	0	0	21	10	31	0	0	0	0	0	0	21	10	31
Total	175	176	351	194	163	357	84	124	208	116	136	251	569	599	1168



### Kapilbastu District

Grade	Madrasa Anwarul Oloom Jahadi			Jameya-Ahle Sunnat Miskiniya Chandrauta						Darul Oloom Siddiqeeya Materia			Jameya Matla Ul Oloom Salfiya Dumra			Total		
				General Madrasa			Girls' Madrasa											
	B	G	T	B	G	T	B	G	T	B	G	T	B	G	T	B	G	T
Pre-primary	20	20	40	65	45	110	0	0	0	0	0	0	50	25	75	135	90	225
I	10	10	20	35	30	65	0	15	15	16	13	29	30	15	45	91	83	174
II	8	6	14	15	10	25	0	18	18	16	21	37	15	12	27	54	67	121
III	5	3	8	12	8	20	0	20	20	13	20	33	20	8	28	50	59	109
IV	0	0	0	8	9	17	0	9	9	4	2	6	8	40	48	20	60	80
V	0	0	0	7	5	12	0	25	25	12	3	15	5	20	25	24	53	77
VI	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	5	15	10	5	15
VII	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	3	11	8	3	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>249</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>274</b>	<b>392</b>	<b>420</b>	<b>812</b>

### Rauthat District

Grade	Madrasa Mahamudiya, Rajpur Farhadwa, Rauthat			Darul Itlam Masab-bin- Omair Islamiya, Bairiya, Rauthat			Darul Iilam Abdullah bin- Masud Islamiya, Rajpur Farhadwa, Damar Rauthat			Total		
	B	G	T	B	G	T	B	G	T	B	G	T
Pre-primary	143	107	250	0	0	0	25	30	55	168	137	305
I	27	32	59	39	27	66	49	12	61	115	71	186
II	30	33	63	36	28	64	24	6	30	90	67	157
III	15	7	22	21	25	46	18	15	33	54	47	101
IV	13	4	17	19	24	43	20	13	33	52	41	93
V	10	0	10	22	21	43	17	8	25	49	39	88
VI	7	0	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	0	0
VII	8	0	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	0	0
VIII	6	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	6
IX	6	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	6
X	7	1	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	1	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>272</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>456</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>262</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>237</b>	<b>562</b>	<b>403</b>	<b>950</b>

## Appendix: 4

### Religion wise students (Madrasa Gausiya, Banke)

Grade	Boys			Girls			Total		
	Muslim	Hindu	Total	Muslim	Hindu	Total	Muslim	Hindu	Total
I	27	6	33	20	5	25	47	11	58
II	8	3	11	10	7	17	18	10	28
III	14	5	19	19	6	25	33	11	44
IV	10	6	16	6	3	9	16	9	25
V	11	2	13	10	3	13	14	12	26
VI	15	5	20	8	4	12	23	9	32
VII	21	6	27	10	7	17	31	13	44
VIII	12	6	18	10	8	18	22	14	36
IX	10	6	16	10	7	17	20	13	33
X	17	4	21	7	3	10	24	7	31
Total	145	49	194	110	53	163	248	109	357

## Appendix 5

### Number of Teachers in Madrasas

S.N	Name of Madrasa	Number of teachers								
		Muslims			Hindus			Total		
		M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
	Madrasa Barkatiya, Banke	9	0	9	1	2	3	10	2	12
	Madrasa Gausiya, Banke	11	2	13	2	2	4	13	4	17
	Madrasa Matinutuddin Ulum, Banke	3	0	3	0	0	0	3	0	3
	Madrasa Mustakul Ulum, Banke	6	0	6	0	0	0	6	0	6
	Jamayate Ahle Sunnat Miskiniya, Kapilbastu	5	0	5	0	0	0	5	0	5
	Darool Oloom Siddiqeeya, Kapilbastu	3	0	3	0	1	1	3	1	4
	Jamayate Matla Ul Oloom Salfiya, Kapilbastu	26	5	31	0	0	0	26	5	31
	Anwarul Oloom, Kapilbastu	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	2
	Madrasa Mahamudiya, Rajpur Farhadwa, Rauthat	15	0	15	0	0	0	15	0	15
	Darul Ilam Masab-bin- Omair Islamiya, Bairiya, Rauthat	10	0	10	0	0	0	10	0	10
	Darul Ilam Abdullah bin-Masud Islamiya, Rajpur Farhadwa, Damar Rauthat	10	0	10	0	0	0	10	0	10
	<b>Total</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>115</b>

## Appendix 6

### Highest Muslim populated VDCs and their literacy situation

District	S.N.	VDC/Municipality	Muslim Population (%)	Literacy of VDC (%)	Difference with district literacy rate
Banke (Literacy rate 58.2%)		Jayapur	81.67	29.98	-28.22
		Laxmanpur	74.22	17.45	-40.76
		Raniyapur	71.18	32.44	-25.76
		Katkuiyan	55.16	15.62	-42.58
		Kalaphanta	52.93	26.87	-31.33
		Piprahawa	48.80	29.84	-28.36
		Bankatti	45.68	19.51	-38.69
		Sonpur	45.61	31.86	-26.34
		Puraina	40.88	30.85	-27.35
		Puraini	40.85	39.46	-19.74
Kapilbastu (Literacy rate 41.50%)		Pipari	58.99	44.16	+2.66
		Abhirawa	49.60	37.81	-3.69
		Gauri	45.30	29.34	-12.16
		Vidhya Nagar	42.52	33.41	-8.09
		Jahadi	40.56	39.89	-1.61
		Sivapur Palta	40.50	41.56	+0.06
		Pakadi	37.30	28.42	-13.08
		Krishna Nagar	36.32	57.06	+15.16
		Bedauli	34.43	31.18	-10.32
		Patariya	33.37	27.28	-14.22
Rauthat (Literacy rate 24.57%)		Gamariya Parsa	67.12	19.40	-5.17
		Akolwa	65.65	12.75	-11.82
		Karuniya	63.34	12.67	-11.90
		Jatahara	63.04	23.38	-1.19
		Bairiya	61.38	63.43	+ 38.76
		Pipra Bhagwanpur	60.22	21.36	-3.21
		Jowaha	58.10	13.83	-10.74
		Rajpur Tulsi	55.02	34.67	+10.10
		Jingadiya	47.82	10.98	-13.59
		Lokaha	47.69	30.69	+6.12

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