

**ISLAMIC EDUCATION INSTITUTION  
IN BANGLADESH****A Study on Alia Madrasah****Abdul Momen,<sup>1\*</sup> Mohammad Khairul Islam<sup>2</sup>**<sup>1</sup>Jagannath University, Dhaka and Ph.D. UTM, Malaysia<sup>2</sup>Jagannath University, Dhaka and Ph.D. DU, Bangladesh\* Correspondence email: [abdulmomen@ihc.jnu.ac.bd](mailto:abdulmomen@ihc.jnu.ac.bd)

**Abstract:** The paper examines the Alia Madrasah education system in Bangladesh, including its historical context, pedagogical framework, and role in delivering a combination of religious and modern education. However, these institutions face various obstacles, including the need for more competent professors and the ineffective implementation of academic changes. The primary objectives of this study are to investigate the potential of this system and highlight its historical origins, establishment, and challenges. Data for this study were gathered by qualitative approaches, which entail obtaining information from documents, previous studies, and firsthand observations. These methods included text analysis, a literature review, and observation to gain insights. The study demonstrates that Alia Madrasahs have a pivotal function in delivering formal education to Muslim students. The results show that Alia Madrasahs have a rich history and uniquely integrate religious and modern education. However, they suffer from outdated curricula, managerial concerns, and inadequate resources, underscoring the need for comprehensive reforms in Bangladesh. By improving the educational standards, Alia Madrasahs can effectively equip students with the necessary skills and knowledge for pursuing higher education and entering the job market.

**Keywords:** Islamic Education, Bangladesh, Obstacles, Alia Madrasah

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**Introduction**

MADRASAHS, Islamic institutions focused on education and culture, have a long and significant history that can be traced back to the time of Hazrat Muhammad (Sm). The Prophet established the initial Madrasah, known as Darul Arqam, at the foot of Mount Safa in Makkah. Subsequently, he founded the Suffa Residential

Madrasah and Darul Qurrah Madrasah in Medina upon his journey. These institutions played a crucial role in influencing the educational environment of the Islamic world in line with the importance of education as stated in the Holy Quran and Hadith.<sup>1</sup> The inception of Madrasah education in Bengal may be traced back to the Sultani period (1210-1576), when Moulana Takiuddin Arabi established the first Madrasah at Mohisantosh. During the Mughal era, the scope of Madrasah education expanded to encompass a diverse range of subjects, including astronomy, Mathematics, Geography, Accounting, Agriculture, Public Administration, Biology, Zoology, and Fine Arts. The gradual expansion served as the foundation for the Alia Madrasah Education system in Bangladesh. The origins of the current Madrasahs in Bangladesh may be traced back to the establishment of Madrasahs in Bengal during the early thirteenth century by the Muslim king Bakhtiyar Khilji. These schools were the exclusive educational establishments that imparted instruction to the Muslim populace until the British assumed control of the Indian subcontinent during the mid-eighteenth century. In Bangladesh, there are currently two distinct forms of Madrasah education: Qawmi, which is the old variety overseen by a private organization, and Alia, which is the modern variant that has received government authorization. Ziaur Rahman, the President of Bangladesh, spearheaded the effort to reorganize Alia Madrasah education. On July 04, 1979, he formed a separate Madrasah Education Board by enacting the Madrasah Education Ordinance. The Calcutta Alia Madrasah, the first Alia Madrasah in the Indian subcontinent, holds a prominent status in the educational history of the region. Established in October 1780 with the backing of Governor-General Warren Hastings, it marked a significant milestone in the establishment of government-operated educational institutions during the British colonial period in India. Alia Madrasah, also known as the "High Madrasah," is a government-controlled educational institution in Bangladesh that

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<sup>1</sup> Abdul Momen, "Education in Islam: Comprehensive Insights into Concepts, Nature, Goals, and Principles," *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science*, 8.3s (2024): 3710-3723.

offers education up to the Kamil (Master's) level. It combines religious and modern teachings. Alia Madrasah's origins may be traced back to 1780, when Warren Hastings, the Governor-General of British Bengal, founded the inaugural Alia Madrasah in Calcutta. The purpose of this institution was to provide structured education to young Muslims, preparing them for careers in public service under the East India Company. After the British left in 1947, the Calcutta Alia Madrasah's assets were transferred to Dhaka, where they established the Government Madrasah-e-Alia Dhaka, which became the first Alia Madrasah of Bangladesh. Over the years, the curriculum has expanded to encompass additional disciplines, including Bengali, mathematics, general studies, Arabic, Quran and Hadith, Aqaid and Fiqah, and Tajweed, in addition to conventional religious teachings. Alia Madrasahs are supported by government assistance through scholarships and stipends, distinguishing them from Qawmi Madrasahs, which rely entirely on donations and charitable contributions. The instructional approach in Alia Madrasahs combines theoretical and practical methods to promote critical thinking, logical reasoning, and creativity. This is achieved through lectures, demonstrations, discussions, and laboratory sessions. The process of recruiting teachers is standardized and supervised by the Madrasah Education Board and NTRCA. It involves educators successfully passing the Teachers' Registration Examination. The Alia Madrasah system in Bangladesh integrates religious and modern education, supported by government assistance and regulated recruitment procedures. It plays a crucial role in providing formal education to Muslim students in the country. This article examines the historical roots, establishment, and educational structure and frameworks of Alia Madrasah education in Bangladesh.

This study examines Bangladesh's Alia Madrasah education system, focusing on its historical background, educational methodology, and its contribution to the delivery of formal education. It aims to clarify the evolution of Madrasah education in Bangladesh, particularly the Alia Madrasah system, which integrates traditional religious education with modern education. It also examines the obstacles faced by these institutions and their

impact on students' preparedness for further education and employment.

To inform efforts to improve and modernize this critically needed education sector, this study is important because it provides insight into the historical development and distinctive educational strategy of Bangladesh's Alia Madrasah system, which combines modern and traditional Islamic education. It also assesses the system's significant role in formal education and workforce preparation, while identifying issues that impact students' academic and professional preparedness.

The research employs a qualitative methodology to explore the complexities of the Alia Madrasah education system. This study employs a narrative inquiry method, which facilitates a comprehensive understanding of the historical origins and pedagogical structures of Alia Madrasahs.

Methods of data collection included literature review, textual analysis, and observation.

- **Literature Review:** A thorough examination of the current literature to get theoretical insights into the Alia Madrasah system. This encompasses historical literature, scholarly journals, governmental papers, and prior research on Madrasah education in Bangladesh. The literature study examines the historical evolution of Alia Madrasahs and the pedagogical methodologies utilized in these institutions.
- **Textual Analysis:** Analyzed pertinent papers from the Bangladesh Madrasa Education Board and other educational authorities to comprehend the curriculum, academic policies, and regulatory frameworks controlling Alia Madrasahs. This report identifies deficiencies in educational standards and areas requiring adjustment.
- **Observational Insights:** Conducted observations in certain Alia Madrasahs to acquire direct insights regarding classroom dynamics, pedagogical approaches, and student involvement. Field trips also enable discussions with educators and students to collect qualitative data on their experiences and perceptions of the educational system.

The gathered data was examined through thematic analysis to discern recurring themes and patterns concerning the historical significance and evolution of Alia Madrasahs, pedagogical practices that amalgamate religious and contemporary subjects, and challenges, including teacher competency, societal bias, and curriculum constraints.

### **Expected Results**

It is expected that the study will highlight the crucial role Alia Madrasahs play in offering a dual education system that combines contemporary courses with Islamic teachings.

This study aims to demonstrate that, despite their longstanding existence and distinctive educational acceptance, Alia Madrasahs face significant challenges, including inaccurate curricula, poor management, and a lack of funding, highlighting the urgent need for extensive reforms in Bangladesh's madrasa educational system.

By addressing current issues and enhancing students' readiness for postsecondary education and the workforce, this study aims to provide practical solutions to improve the standard of education in Alia Madrasahs.

### **Historical Roots of Alia Madrasah in Bangladesh**

Madrasahs, institutions dedicated to Islamic education and culture, originated in the time of Hazrat Muhammad (Sm). He founded Darul Arqam at the base of Mount Safa in Makkah and later established the Suffa Residential Madrasah and Darul Qurrah Madrasah in Medina after his emigration.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, Masjid-e Nabawi and other mosques in Medina served as educational institutions. Prominent Caliphs, such as Hazrat Omar (R) and Hazrat Ali (R), founded significant Madrasahs throughout their rule. During the Umayyad and Abbasid eras, there was substantial growth in the establishment of mosques and separate Madrasahs. Children needed to receive primary education. Madrasah

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<sup>2</sup> A. S. I. Siddiqi, "Madrasah". *Banglapedia: National Encyclopedia of Bangladesh*. (2015).

<https://en.banglapedia.org/index.php/Madrasah#:~:text=Primary%20education%20at%20mosques%20for,at%20Mohisantosh%20is%20the%20oldest.>

education was first established in Bengal during the Sultani dynasty (1210-1576), and then Sufis flourished and spread widely.<sup>3</sup> This period saw the development of several Madrasahs, including the oldest one, founded by Moulana Takiuddin Arabi in Mohisantosh. Sultan Alauddin Husain Shah (1494-1519) significantly enhanced the scope of Madrasah instruction in Gaur and Maldaha. The Sultani curriculum encompassed a range of disciplines, including Arabic, Nahu, Saraf, Balagat, Manatik, Kalam, Tasauf, literature, Fiqah, and Philosophy.<sup>4</sup> During the Mughal era, Madrasah education expanded to encompass various disciplines, including Astronomy, Mathematics, Geography, Accounting, Agriculture, Public Administration, Biology, Zoology, and Fine Arts.<sup>5</sup> The Calcutta Alia Madrasah, founded in 1780, occupies a prominent position in the educational history of Bangladesh. Being the creator of the Alia Madrasah education system, this institution has had a crucial impact on shaping the academic environment of the region. The Alia Madrasah education system, derived from the Calcutta Alia Madrasah, has become a fundamental component of Bangladesh's educational framework. This system strongly emphasises the examination of Islamic sciences, which encompass the interpretation of the Quran, the study of Hadith, and the understanding of Islamic law. It also includes studying languages and literature, specifically Arabic, Persian, and Bengali. The gradual growth of this system became the basis for the Alia Madrasah Education system in Bangladesh.

### **Madrasah Education Under the British Colonial Rule**

Following the decline of Muslim control and the arrival of the British in 1757, India experienced significant changes in various

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<sup>3</sup> Saeyd Rashed Hasan Chowdury, "Unveiling Sufi Legacies in Dhaka of Bangladesh: A Chronological Discourse on Islamic Heritage." *Ullumuna* 28.2 (2024): 585-619.

<sup>4</sup> Rachel Fell McDermott, "A History of Bangladesh. By Willem van Schendel. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009. xxvi, 347 pp. 26.99." *The Journal of Asian Studies* 71.1 (2012): 294-296.

<sup>5</sup> Abdul Momen and Mobarak Hossain, "Features of Medieval Muslim Education System under the Mughals: An Analysis", *Jagannath University Journal of Arts*, Vol. 12, No. 1, (January-June 2022):241-257.

aspects, including social, economic, religious, and educational domains. The traditional Madrasah education system had a slow decline due to the influence of British rule, which introduced secular and English education.<sup>6</sup> This transition represented a notable divergence from the conventional emphasis on mental and moral development, shifting education towards worldly aspirations. The primary objective of increasing English education was to streamline the governance of the East India Company.<sup>7</sup> Madrasah-i-Alia was established in 1781 by Warren Hastings to educate academics who were skilled in the Arabic and Persian languages.<sup>8</sup> The purpose of this education was to prepare individuals for public service, aligning with the objectives of the British Government. The importance of English education for government jobs surpassed traditional opportunities for Muslims. As a result, intellectual movements arose, giving rise to institutions such as Dar-ul-Uloom in Deoband and Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College in Aligarh. However, despite the changes above, several Madrasahs, such as Calcutta Madrasah, continued to exist. The Calcutta Madrasah, in particular, implemented reforms that emphasized the enduring nature of Islamic education. The period from 1922 to 1927 saw the highest level of educational advancement, highlighting the ever-changing nature of Indian education.<sup>9</sup>

Under British colonial rule in the Indian subcontinent, Madrasahs underwent significant changes in their character, scope, and role. The evolution was significantly shaped by the educational policies implemented by the colonial administration, the endeavours of Muslims to adapt to their role in a shifting

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<sup>6</sup> Abdul Momen, Mansoureh Ebrahimi, and Ahmad Muhyuddin Hassan, "Identifying the Role of the First' Qawmi Madrasah ' Darul Uloom Deoband in the Indian Subcontinent." *Environment-Behaviour Proceedings Journal* 8.SI14 (2023): 65-71

<sup>7</sup> Abdul Momen, Mansoureh Ebrahimi, and Kamaruzaman Yusoff. "British Colonial Education in the Indian Subcontinent (1757-1858): Attitude of Muslims," *Journal of Islamic Thought and Civilization*, 14.1 (2024): 17-39.

<sup>8</sup> Momen, "Identifying the Role of the First' Qawmi Madrasah ' Darul Uloom Deoband in the Indian Subcontinent," 65-71.

<sup>9</sup> Fritz Blackwell, "The British Impact on India, 1700–1900." *Education About Asia* 13.2 (2008): 34-37.

political environment after the demise of the Mughal Empire, and the rise of identity politics within the Muslim community.<sup>10</sup> Thus, comprehending the historical background of Madrasah education in colonial India requires a thorough analysis considering these three interconnected aspects. The initiation of British colonial rule in India can be attributed to the foundation of the British East India Company's political dominance in Bengal in 1765, following the Battle of Plassey in 1757. This signaled the beginning of British supremacy, which progressively expanded its control throughout the Indian subcontinent. The Mughal Empire experienced a decline, particularly following the death of Aurangzeb in 1707. This loss created an opportunity for British expansion, with their policies initially targeting provinces such as Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa. These policies laid the foundation for a more extensive colonial administration. Although formal British engagement in education began with the Charter Act of 1813, there are earlier indications of educational efforts, albeit through various means. During the Mughal period, traditional academic institutions, including pathshalas, mastabas, and Madrasahs, continued to exist alongside emerging initiatives such as missionary schools. Although missionaries influenced the East India Company in shaping its educational practices, it adopted a position of religious neutrality to avoid inciting religious passions among its Indian people. The founding of the Calcutta Madrasah in 1780 by Warren Hastings was a notable event, chiefly motivated by political factors.<sup>11</sup> This initiative aimed to actively engage the Muslim population, train individuals for managerial positions, and meet the community's legal requirements. The implementation of the Dars-i-Nizami curriculum exemplified the practical approach to education prevalent during this era.

Nevertheless, the direction of educational programs experienced substantial changes over time, particularly with the introduction of Thomas Macaulay's Education Minute in 1835.

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<sup>10</sup> Saiful Islam, *Prosohongo: Shiksha* (Issue: Education, in Bengali), (Dhaka: Shikshabarta Prokashona, 2002), 27

<sup>11</sup> J.P. Naik and S. Nurullah, *A Students' History of Education in India: 1800–1973* (Bombay: Macmillan, India, 2000), 30



This proclamation represented a significant shift, prioritizing Western education and English as the primary teaching language while marginalizing traditional educational institutions, such as Madrasahs.<sup>12</sup> The ensuing marginalization of the Persian language and the increased focus on English language education further reduced the importance of Madrasah education for securing government jobs. In the mid-19th century, a comprehensive reassessment of educational approaches reached its peak with the publication of Wood's Despatch in 1854. This comprehensive framework proposes a systematic and complete transformation, shifting from the filtering policy to government-funded education at every level. The subsequent process of Westernization in education sidelined traditional institutions, such as Madrasahs, forcing them to adapt or become obsolete.<sup>13</sup> Despite these difficulties, Madrasahs continued to hold importance within the Muslim community, especially as hubs of identity politics and religious action. Inspired by individuals such as Shah Waliullah, reform groups arose to tackle identity issues and restore the cultural legacy lost due to colonial disruption. Madrasahs have evolved into more than just sites of Islamic instruction in the evolving educational landscape. They now represent resistance, empowerment, and community togetherness. Although institutions such as the Calcutta Madrasah had a foundational role in developing contemporary Madrasah education, initiatives like the Deoband Madrasah led the way in establishing a unique heritage of Muslim awareness and activity.<sup>14</sup> The narrative of Madrasahs in colonial India illustrates the complex interplay between colonial ambitions, community aspirations, and evolving identities as educational programs were introduced. Amidst the transformative colonial forces of British rule, Madrasahs arose as

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<sup>12</sup> *Macaulay's Minute on Education (1835)*, Report of the Saddler's Commission, Appendix 2, Vol. 6, (Calcutta: Calcutta University), 12-16

<sup>13</sup> V. Langohr, "Colonial education systems and the spread of local religious movements: The case of British Egypt and Punjab," *Contemporary Studies in Society and History*, 47(1) (January 2005): 161-189.

<sup>14</sup> Abdul Momen, "The 'Firangi Mahal': Family of the Learned and their Contribution to the Development of Islamic Educational Curriculum," *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, Humanities*. 68.- (2023): 219-240.

strongholds of resilience, safeguarding cultural legacy and influencing the formation of Muslim identity.<sup>15</sup>

### **Calcutta Alia Madrasah: The First Alia Madrasah in the Indian Subcontinent**

The Calcutta Madrasah, later renamed the Calcutta Alia Madrasah, has a prominent position in the educational chronicles of the Indian subcontinent. Founded in October 1780 with the support of Governor-General Warren Hastings, it marked a significant milestone in the establishment of government-run educational institutions during the British colonial era in India. The Madrasah was initially situated in Baithakkhana near Sealdah in Calcutta, but it was subsequently moved to Wellesley Square in 1827.<sup>16</sup> The primary purpose of its formation was to cultivate individuals with extensive knowledge in Persian, Arabic, and Muslim Law to meet the educational requirements of the Muslim population in Bengal. Guided by Mulla Majduddin and then Muhammad Ismail, the Madrasah persevered in its mission despite facing numerous difficulties and reform initiatives.<sup>17</sup> Despite encountering bureaucratic intrusions and opposition to modernization, it has consistently served as a prominent centre for Islamic education, attracting Muslim students for over a century. Although the Madrasah initially followed a traditional Islamic curriculum, efforts to bring change incorporated English and modern topics, although with limited effectiveness. Although there were suggestions to merge with Calcutta University, the Madrasah maintained its independence, establishing a distinct educational trajectory in the subcontinent.<sup>18</sup> The Calcutta Madrasah has made a significant contribution to the development

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<sup>15</sup> Ali Riaz, "Madrassah education in pre-colonial and colonial South Asia," *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 46.1 (2011): 69-86.

<sup>16</sup> Md. Safiqul Islam, *A Brief History of Govt. Madrasah-E-Alia, Dhaka. (1780-2024)*, (Dhaka University, Head of the Department of English, Govt. Madrasah-E-Alia, Dhaka. Access date: January 01, 2024).

<https://www.dhkgovmalia.edu.bd/index.php?request=about-us-eng>

<sup>17</sup> Islam, *A Brief History of Govt. Madrasah-E-Alia, Dhaka. (1780-2024)*.

<sup>18</sup> Mani P. Kamerkar, "Impact of British Colonial Policy on Society Relating to Education in Western India During the 19th Century," *Bulletin of the Deccan College Research Institute*, 60 (2000): 373-382.

of Muslim scholars and the preservation of Islamic knowledge, leaving a lasting impact on the educational system of colonial India. The foundation of this school was a significant milestone in the history of state-managed educational institutions, as it paved the way for the development of Islamic education in the region. The Calcutta Madrasah, hereafter referred to as the Calcutta Alia Madrasah, holds significant importance as an institution in the educational chronicles of the Indian subcontinent. The establishment of the Calcutta Madrasah was a direct response to the requests made by Muslims in Calcutta for a school specifically designed to educate young Muslims.<sup>19</sup> This initiative aimed to highlight the significance of education in the British endeavours to strengthen their control in India.<sup>20</sup> This institution played a pivotal role in assimilating various components of Indian society and advancing the modern education sought by the indigenous elite. The Calcutta Madrasah and the Benares Sanskrit College embodied the Orientalist education strategy introduced by Hastings to establish a privileged group that would assist in preserving British dominance in India.<sup>21</sup> The establishment of the Calcutta Madrasah marked a significant shift in the educational landscape of colonial India, reflecting the various strategies employed by the British to consolidate their presence and control in the region. In response to this urgent requirement, a group from Calcutta formally requested Lord Warren Hastings, the Governor-General of India, which led to the establishment of Madrasah-E-Alia in October 1780. Initially, the college was established with the capacity to accommodate 40 students in a rented facility in Sealdah. Its primary objective was to offer Islamic education to the Muslim population of Bengal.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Mahmut İzgi, "A cultural project of control: The foundation of calcutta madrasa and the benares sanskrit college in India," *Sosyal ve Kültürel Araştırmalar Dergisi (SKAD)*, 1.2 (2016): 91-102.

<sup>20</sup> J.P. Naik and Syed Nurullah, *History of education in India during the British period*, (Macmillan & Co., 1943, Retrieved April 10, 2020), 1-20.

<sup>21</sup> Amit Kumar Suman, "The Quest for Education: An Insight into the Educational Theories and Practices of the Colonial Government in Bengal Presidency," *Indian Historical Review*, 45.2 (2018): 173-188.

<sup>22</sup> Islam, *A Brief History of Govt. Madrasah-E-Alia, Dhaka. (1780-2024)*.

The Madrasah's funding was secured by allocating revenues from specific villages, ensuring its long-term financial stability. With the support of Hastings, the Madrasah thrived, benefiting from an annual subsidy from the royal treasury that enabled its expansion and progress. Over time, the Madrasah underwent substantial changes, including the implementation of an examination system in 1821 and the integration of English into its educational program in 1826.<sup>23</sup> Despite the difficulties faced, such as the division of India and the subsequent move to Dhaka, the Madrasah continued to exist, enhancing its facilities and academic programmes. Presently, Government Madrasah-E-Alia serves as a tangible representation of the long-lasting impact of Islamic education. It boasts a valuable collection of books in its library and remains dedicated to fostering the development of scholarly individuals in Bangladesh for generations to come. The foundation of Calcutta Alia Madrasah was a significant milestone in the educational history of the Indian subcontinent. It played a crucial role in developing government-run educational institutions and safeguarding Islamic knowledge in the region.

The Kolkata Alia Madrasah, founded during British colonial rule, is where Bangladesh's Alia Madrasah system originated.<sup>24</sup> Through various committees, this system has undergone substantial structural and curricular changes over time, aiming to modernize instruction and integrate it within the national academic framework.

One of the first and most significant attempts to improve madrasah education in the area was the Hunter Committee of 1882, which placed a strong emphasis on a well-rounded curriculum that integrated Islamic instruction with non-religious disciplines to provide a more comprehensive education. By suggesting that elementary education be extended and taught in local languages, as well as that administrative authority be delegated to local entities, it aimed to enhance governance and

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<sup>23</sup> Islam, *A Brief History of Govt. Madrasah-E-Alia, Dhaka. (1780-2024)*.

<sup>24</sup> Shahabuddin, Charza. "Future of madrasa education in Bangladesh: Between competition, integration and modernisation." *Language Education, Politics and Technology in South Asia*. Routledge, 2025. 136–157.

educational standards while also improving access to and quality of education. The Committee also aimed to incorporate practical courses, such as physics and agriculture, alongside conventional studies, and emphasized the value of female education. These reforms were later furthered in 1927 by the Shamsul Huda Committee, which suggested reorganizing the madrasah education system to incorporate contemporary disciplines alongside Islamic studies. This would improve administrative oversight and update the curriculum. These committees collaborated to lay the groundwork for later changes that gradually integrated madrasah education into the broader national educational system, enabling students to pursue postsecondary education and a range of employment options beyond traditional religious responsibilities.

By suggesting standardized tests and the creation of teacher training programs to improve the caliber and uniformity of instruction throughout these establishments, the Momen Committee of 1931 significantly advanced the integration of general education within the Alia Madrasah system. Following Bangladesh's independence, the Mustafa Bin Quasem Committee introduced historic reforms in 1978 that further modernized the Alia Madrasah curriculum by recommending the adoption of a national curriculum alongside traditional religious studies. The Committee's recommendations aimed to enhance the academic standards of Alia Madrasahs by professionalizing teaching and establishing a more uniform educational framework that integrated religious and secular studies. To facilitate better equivalence and compatibility between madrasah qualifications and general education certificates, this Committee placed a strong emphasis on creating comprehensive curricula intended to bring madrasah education closer to mainstream schools. By allowing students to pursue further education and a variety of employment options outside of the traditional religious sector, these reforms aimed to expand their academic horizons and by encouraging curriculum modernization, standardization, and integration with the national education system, the Momen and Mustafa Bin

Quasem Committees jointly made a substantial contribution to the development of Alia Madrasah education in Bangladesh.<sup>25</sup>

By incorporating subjects such as science, mathematics, and the humanities into traditional Islamic studies, the reforms in Bangladesh's Alia Madrasah education system have significantly modernized the curriculum, enabling students to pursue higher education opportunities beyond traditional religious fields. By providing graduates with access to a broader range of career pathways, including higher education, public services, and other professional sectors, this curriculum modernization has expanded their employment opportunities and enhanced their socioeconomic mobility. By bridging the divide between madrasah and mainstream education systems, these reforms have also contributed to national cohesion and fostered a more cohesive and inclusive educational framework in Bangladesh. Notwithstanding obstacles such as inadequate funding and poor execution, these modifications demonstrate how Alia Madrasahs are adapting to meet the demands of modern academia and religious instruction while preserving traditional and spiritual values. This dual emphasis fosters the growth of well-rounded individuals who possess the contemporary skills required for engagement in broader social and economic contexts, in addition to their understanding of Islamic teachings.<sup>26</sup> Consequently, there has been a consistent growth in the number of Alia Madrasahs, which has led to improved availability of religious instruction in addition to mainstream education.<sup>27</sup>

### **Alia Madrasah Education in Bangladesh**

The Islamic education system in Bangladesh has a long and significant history that dates back to the thirteenth century. Bakhtiyar Khilji's establishment of Madrasahs shaped this

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<sup>25</sup> Siddiqi, Madrasah. *Banglapedia: National Encyclopedia of Bangladesh*."

<sup>26</sup> Bano, Masooda. "Madrasa reforms and Islamic modernism in Bangladesh." *Modern Asian Studies*, 48 (4) (2014): 911–939.

<sup>27</sup> Syed Mahbubul Alam Al Hasani, "Aliyah madrasa education in Bangladesh: Problems and prospects," *Journal of Islamic Studies and Humanities*, 8.1 (2023): 77-98.

system.<sup>28</sup> Until the mid-eighteenth century, these institutions, including mosques and khanqahs, were vital in teaching the Muslim populace; however, the British colonial administration altered the situation thereafter. Under the British administration, there was a shift in concentration towards producing persons who would serve the colonial state. This led to the foundation of the 'Calcutta' Alia Madrasah in 1780.<sup>29</sup> This signified a transition towards a curriculum rooted in the Dars-i-Nizami system, prioritizing Persian language, grammar, logic, philosophy, mathematics, and astronomy while diminishing the focus on Quranic studies.<sup>30</sup>

The adoption of English as the official language in the 1830s decreased the need for 'Alia Madrasah graduates to fill government positions. A new type of Madrasahs evolved, combining religious and secular studies to adapt to the changing educational and labour market requirements. By the time Pakistan was established in 1947, these institutions had transformed into 'Alia Madrasahs, which had a notable presence in East Pakistan (now Bangladesh).<sup>31</sup> The integration of contemporary secular education and traditional Islamic teachings characterizes the Alia Madrasah system in Bangladesh. Spanning 16 years and five tiers, this curriculum encompasses a range of disciplines, including English, Bengali, science, mathematics, history, and Islamic studies. The Government provides financial support to these colleges, and their degrees hold the same importance as those from conventional educational institutions.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Muhammad Mohar Ali, *History of the Muslims of Bengal* (vol. IB, Riyadh: Imam Muhammad Ibn Saud Islamic University, 1985), 828.

<sup>29</sup> Dr A.K.M. Ayub Ali, *History of Traditional Islamic Education in Bangladesh* (Dhaka: Islamic Foundation, 1983), 214.

<sup>30</sup> Mumtaz Ahmad, "Islamic education in Bangladesh: Tradition, trends, and trajectories," *Islamic Education in South & Southeast Asia Survey Project of the National Bureau of Asian Research*, (2006): 5-6.

<sup>31</sup> Umme Salema Begum, "Swadhinata uttar Bangladeshe Madrassa Shikkhar Gatidhara," (Trends of Madrassa Education in post-Independent Bangladesh), *Bangladesh Asiatic Society Patrika*, vol.23, no. 1 and 2, (June, December 2005): 80-82.

<sup>32</sup> Amr Abdalla, A. N. M. Raisuddin, and Suleiman Hussein, "Bangladesh educational assessment: Pre-primary and primary madrasah education in Bangladesh," Basic education and policy support (BEPS), (2004), 21.

Upon Pakistan's establishment as an autonomous and self-governing nation, it was determined that the Arabic Department of the Madrasah would be relocated to Dhaka, the newly designated capital of East Pakistan (now known as Bangladesh). Guided by the then-principal, Khan Bahadur M. Ziaul Huq, and with the assistance of his staff, the Madrasah, including its extensive library, furniture, and office records, was effectively relocated to Dhaka and stored at the Islamic Intermediate College.

The Madrasah and its dormitories were relocated to a more prominent location in Bakshi Bazar, Dhaka. The Government of East Pakistan approved the necessary funds to construct suitable buildings, estimated to cost Rs. 3,300,000. In 1958, the then-Chief Minister of East Pakistan, Mr. Ataur Rahman Khan, laid the foundation stone for the new Madrasah buildings and its hostel. Construction was finished in 1960, and the Madrasah moved to its current premises in 1961.<sup>33</sup> Alia Madrasahs represent a diverse range of religious perspectives, reflecting various schools of thought. Although there have been critiques about the extent of religious and secular education, the fact that they are expanding and being incorporated into higher education suggests a certain level of acceptance and desire for them. Significantly, a considerable proportion of university instructors in Bangladesh are graduates of Alia Madrasahs.

Alia Madrasahs, under the jurisdiction of the Bangladesh Madrasah Education Board, are subject to government supervision and initiatives for improvement. Although students demonstrate exceptional abilities in the humanities and social sciences, they encounter difficulties in math and scientific education compared to students in mainstream institutions.<sup>34</sup>

To meet the diverse needs of students and make a substantial contribution to the nation's educational landscape, Bangladesh's Alia Madrasah educational system effectively blends traditional Islamic instruction with contemporary academic disciplines. This system combines modern disciplines such as physics,

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<sup>33</sup> Islam, *A Brief History of Govt. Madrasah-E-Alia, Dhaka. (1780-2024)*.

<sup>34</sup> Ahmad, "Islamic education in Bangladesh: Tradition, trends, and trajectories." 5-6.



mathematics, social sciences, English, and information and communication technology (ICT) with fundamental religious studies, including the Quran, Hadith, Islamic law, and Arabic. To build both religious knowledge and contemporary scientific understanding, students in the science stream, for instance, study physics, chemistry, biology, and mathematics, in addition to Quranic studies and Islamic jurisprudence. The educational levels of this madrasah align with the general education system, enabling students to pursue higher education in public or private universities across a range of fields, including technical disciplines, engineering, medicine, and agriculture.<sup>35</sup> In addition to preserving Islamic heritage and beliefs, this dual approach fosters intellectual development and societal responsibility by equipping students with the credentials and skills necessary for a range of employment options, including positions in both the public and private sectors. Standardized education and recognition are ensured by the system's formal regulations and curriculum development, which is overseen by the Islamic Arabic University and the Bangladesh Madrasa Education Board, thereby integrating madrasah graduates into the country's educational and employment structure. By striking a balance between spiritual development and modern academic needs, the Alia Madrasah system remains a vital pillar in Bangladesh's education sector despite obstacles such as outdated curricula and resource constraints. This promotes social cohesion and national progress. Students are better prepared, as both religious academics and competent professionals, to make significant contributions to a changing society due to this dual focus.<sup>36</sup> Therefore, the Alia Madrasah system is crucial in striking a balance between religious instruction and contemporary educational requirements, resulting in well-rounded individuals who can preserve their religious

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<sup>35</sup> Mahmudul Hassan, M., and Muhammad Abuzar. "Developing religious identity: Assessing the effects of Aliya Madrasahs on Muslim students in Bangladesh." *Solo Universal Journal of Islamic Education and Multiculturalism* 2.01 (2024): 49–60.

<sup>36</sup> Al Hasani, "Aliyah madrasa education in Bangladesh: Problems and prospects," 77-98.

identity while making contributions to Bangladesh's socioeconomic development.

The Madrasah-E-Alia is an exceptional educational institution in the subcontinent, renowned for nurturing several Islamic scholars and intellectuals of national and worldwide acclaim. The Madrasah has been instrumental in disseminating conservative, systematic, modern, and progressive Islamic education and ideology since its establishment. It aims to challenge misconceptions held by the West and some uninformed individuals about Madrasahs and their educational practices. They combine science-based modern education and religious subjects, making it a favoured option for students seeking a comprehensive educational experience. Alia Madrasahs, accredited by the Bangladesh Madrasah Education Board, follow a defined curriculum that encompasses a wide range of disciplines, including science, mathematics, English, and Bengali. These Madrasahs offer a comprehensive education up to the MA level. The Alia Madrasah system in Bangladesh comprises approximately 10,450 institutions, with a student enrollment of over two million spanning primary to postgraduate levels.<sup>37</sup> This educational system has a substantial impact on the development of competent graduates. It provides five levels of education: Ibtidai (Primary), Dhakhil (Secondary), Alim (Higher Secondary), Fazil (B.A. Degree/Honors), and Kamil (Master's). Each level offers specific study tracks in areas such as Arts, Muzabbid, Science, and Business Studies. Fazil offers two degree program options: a three-year program and a four-year Fazil-Honours program. On the other hand, Kamil (Masters) offers specializations in Tafasir, Hadith, Arabic, and Fiqh, providing students with a comprehensive educational path.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup>Abdalla et. Al., "Bangladesh educational assessment: Pre-primary and primary madrasah education in Bangladesh." 21.

<sup>38</sup>Al Hasani, "Aliyah madrasa education in Bangladesh: Problems and prospects," 77-98.

## The Structure of Alia Madrasah Education

Calcutta Alia Madrasah, a pioneering institute dedicated to Islamic theology, Persian and Arabic languages, Islamic law, and jurisprudence, was established in India in 1780 by the British. At the request of well-informed Indian Muslims, Warren Hastings, the first Governor General of British India, established the Madrasah. However, its early success exceeded expectations, leading Hastings to secure financing from Raja Naba Krishna Dev.<sup>39</sup> This action aimed to guarantee the Madrasah's viability before moving costs into open accounts. Until 1947, Calcutta Alia Madrasah was a well-known hub for Madrasah education on the Indian subcontinent. After Pakistan and India gained independence, the school relocated to Dhaka and is now known as the Government School. Madrasah-E-Alia Dhaka. With the help of the Mohsin Wakf Fund, the Madrasah system grew over time, and organizations such as Hugli Madrasah began using the syllabus of Kolkata Alia Madrasah. Significant changes occurred in the growth of Madrasah education, most notably in 1907–08 with the reform suggestions of the Earl Committee. As a result, an 11-year curriculum was created, which included a 3-year Title course that concentrated on the Kolkata Alia Madrasah's Hadith and Tafsir Department.<sup>40</sup> This change was intended to raise the bar on education so that institutions of higher learning like Deoband or Lucknow would no longer be necessary. The Madrasah Educational Structure comprises three main tiers, which make up the government-approved Alia Madrasah system. The first tier is the First Grade (Ibtidaiyyah), a fundamental level that spans five years, from Class 1 to Class 5. Higher Secondary (Dakhil & Alim): This phase spans seven years, encompassing classes six through twelve. Dakhil (classes six through ten) and Alim (classes eleven and twelve) are regarded as secondary and higher secondary levels, respectively. Class Above (Fazil & Kamil): This advanced

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<sup>39</sup> Assignment Point, "Historical Study of Madrasah Education in Bangladesh" (Term Paper, accessed March 2024).

[https://assignmentpoint.com/historical-study-of-madrasah-education-in-bangladesh/#google\\_vignette](https://assignmentpoint.com/historical-study-of-madrasah-education-in-bangladesh/#google_vignette)

<sup>40</sup> Ahmad, "Islamic education in Bangladesh: Tradition, trends, and trajectories." 5-6.

stage, which offers Honours and Master's degrees, takes two years for each course, for four years. The Government has recognized Madrasah education in Bangladesh's academic landscape by granting Dakhil the status of SSC, Alim the level of HSC, Fazil the status of a Degree, and Kamil the status of a Master's.<sup>41</sup>

**The Structure of the Stages and Duration of the Alia Madrasah System<sup>42</sup>**

No.	Name of stage	Standard	Period of study
1	Dakhil (General, Science, and Mujawwida)	Middle/Secondary	5 years
2	Alim (General, Science, and Mujawwida)	Higher Secondary	2 years
3	Fazil BA (Pass)	B.A. Degree/Graduation	3 years
4	Fazil BA (Hons) ➤ Al-Quran & Islamic Studies Dept. ➤ Al-Hadith & Islamic Studies Dept. ➤ Islamic History & Culture ➤ Da'wah & Islamic Studies ➤ Arabic Language & Literature	B.A. Degree/Graduation	4 years
5	Kamil M.A ➤ Kamil (Hadith Group) ➤ Kamil (Tafsir Group) ➤ Kamil (Fiqh Group) ➤ Kamil (Adab Group)	Master's Degree or equivalent to a Post Graduate Degree	2 years
6	Kamil M.A ➤ Al-Quran & Islamic Studies Dept. ➤ Al-Hadith & Islamic Studies Dept. ➤ Islamic History & Culture ➤ Da'wah & Islamic Studies ➤ Arabic Language & Literature	Master's Degree or equivalent to a Post Graduate Degree	1 years

<sup>41</sup> Abdalla et. Al., "Bangladesh educational assessment: Pre-primary and primary madrasah education in Bangladesh." 21.

<sup>42</sup> Islam, *A Brief History of Govt. Madrasah-E-Alia, Dhaka*. (1780-2024).

Madrasah education is a prominent element of Bangladesh's educational system, alongside general and vocational education. The system consists of two main categories: Alia Madrasah, which is under government administration, and Qawmi Madrasah, which non-governmental private organizations operate.<sup>43</sup> The origins of these Madrasahs may be traced back to ancient institutions that first emerged in Bengal and later developed into a codified system in Bangladesh. Ayub (1983) argues that the absence of these institutions would have deprived ancient Bengal Muslims of the opportunity to get a formal education. Alia Madrasah, also known as the "High Madrasah," is a government-regulated mainstream educational institution in Bangladesh. The institution offers education up to the Kamil (Master's) level, combining both religious and contemporary studies. Warren Hastings, the Governor-General of British Bengal, created the first organized Alia Madrasah in Calcutta in 1780.<sup>44</sup> This institution aimed to train young Muslims for public service in the East India Company. After the British left the Indian subcontinent in 1947, the assets of the Calcutta Alia Madrasah were relocated to Dacca (now Dhaka), where they formed the Government. Madrasah-E-Alia Dhaka. This became the first Alia Madrasah in Bangladesh.<sup>45</sup> The curriculum of Bangladesh Alia Madrasah has changed, incorporating contemporary disciplines alongside traditional religious education. The curriculum comprises a range of courses, including Bengali, mathematics, general studies, and spiritual subjects such as Arabic, Quran, Hadith, Aqaid, Fiqah (Islamic jurisprudence), and Tajweed. At the Alim level, students can select from various subject groups, including general, science, business studies, and Mujabbid. The curriculum emphasizes Islamic literature and offers other elective topics (Bangladesh Madrasah Education Board (BMEB). Madrasah and Qawmi Madrasah have

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<sup>43</sup> S.M.A. Al-Hasani, "Development of Bangladesh Aliyah Madrasah education and curriculum," *Research Journal of Social Science & Management RJSSM*, 6(09, 2017):14-19.

<sup>44</sup> Ali, "History of Traditional Islamic Education in Bangladesh," 214.

<sup>45</sup> M. Bano, "Allowing for Diversity: State-Madrasa Relations in Bangladesh," Working Paper 13, Religions and Development Research Programme, University of Oxford, 2008.

different sources of support. Alia Madrasah receives government support through scholarships and student stipends, but Qawmi Madrasah relies exclusively on charitable contributions and donations. Alia Madrasah relies heavily on government financing, which is used to pay the wages of professors and administrators.<sup>46</sup> Pedagogy Alia Madrasah employs a pedagogical approach that integrates theoretical and practical methodologies, encompassing religious and contemporary disciplines. Teachers employ a lecture-based instructional approach, supplemented by practical demonstrations, debates, and laboratory sessions. This strategy aims to cultivate critical thinking, logical reasoning, and creativity in pupils.<sup>47</sup> Recruitment of teachers. Teachers in Alia Madrasah are selected following a standardized procedure supervised by the Madrasah Education Board and the Non-government Teachers' Registration and Certification Authority (NTRCA).<sup>48</sup> Prospective educators must complete the Teachers' Registration Examination to be eligible for teaching posts.<sup>49</sup> To summarize, the structure of the Alia Madrasah education in Bangladesh combines religious and modern education with financial support from the Government and adherence to established recruitment procedures. This system is crucial in delivering formal education to Muslim pupils in Bangladesh.

### Reformation Initiatives in Alia Madrasah Education

The Madrasah education system has had multiple reform initiatives, beginning during the British era. In 1915, the 'New Scheme Madrasahs' introduced the first significant reform. This

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<sup>46</sup> T. Ellis, "MADRASAS IN BANGLADESH", IPCS SPECIAL REPORT No 47, (August 2007 Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies, B 7/3 Safdarjung Enclave, New Delhi 110029, INDIA.

<sup>47</sup> BEI, "MODERNIZATION OF MADRASSA EDUCATION IN BANGLADESH: A STRATEGY PAPER," Bangladesh Enterprise Institute (BEI), (Dhaka, 20011). <https://bei-bd.org/grid/publications/?page=5>

<sup>48</sup> Syed Mahbulul Alam Al-Hasani, "Madrasah Education In Bangladesh: A Comparative Study Between Aliya and Qawmi," *Journal of Creative Writing* (ISSN-2410-6259) 4.2 (2020).

<sup>49</sup> A.M. Karim, "Some Notes on Madrasah Education in Bangladesh: A Historical Description," *International Journal of Islamic Studies and Humanities*, Vol. 1, (Yogyakarta, 2018), 130.

occurred following a decrease in the need for Madrasah graduates in government institutions after English superseded Persian as the official language of India in 1837.<sup>50</sup> The New Scheme involved revising the Madrasah curriculum to include English and a limited number of other contemporary disciplines. During the period of Pakistan, the New Scheme Madrasahs transformed into high schools that focused more on general education and had minimal religious content. The Madrasahs that did not participate in the New Scheme eventually became known as 'Alia Madrasahs', with further reforms expected in the future. In 1938, a Madrasah Education (Moula Baksh) Committee was established under A K Fazlul Huq, a prominent Muslim figure in undivided Bengal. The Committee proposed several recommendations, including the establishment of a University of Islamic Learning in Calcutta (now Kolkata). This university would have authority over both the New Scheme and the Old Scheme Madrasahs. Additionally, the Committee suggested the creation of a teacher training institution. Lastly, the Committee proposed aligning the traditional maktab/Ebtedaee level education in the Madrasahs with the primary schools established under the Primary Education Act.<sup>51</sup>

During the postcolonial era, organizations such as the Madrasah Education Committee, established in 1938, and the Maulana Akram Khan Committee, which operated from 1949 to 1951, focused on curricular improvements and the integration of different languages.<sup>52</sup> Modernization efforts were made by committees led by Ataur Rahman Khan (1957), Air Marshall M. Nur Khan (1969), and Shamsul Huq (1970). They aimed to combine Islamic and general education by introducing courses such as Islamic Studies, English, math, and science into Madrasah curricula.<sup>53</sup> The Qudrat-i-Khuda Commission's attempts in 1974 to

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<sup>50</sup> Md Shahnawaz Khan Chandan, "Alia Madrasa: an education system on its death bed, special feature," *The Daily Star*, (Fri, October 27, 2017, Last update on: Mon, October 30, 2017). <https://www.thedailystar.net/star-weekend/aliamadrasa-1482232>

<sup>51</sup> Ali, *History of Traditional Islamic Education in Bangladesh*, 214.

<sup>52</sup> Chandan, "Alia Madrasa: an education system on its deathbed, special feature."

<sup>53</sup> Ahmad, "Islamic education in Bangladesh: Tradition, trends, and trajectories." 5-6.

modernize Madrasah education in Bangladesh were resisted, resulting in minimal alterations. Modifications included suggestions for vocational courses, recognition of Madrasah degrees, and integration into the national education system.<sup>54</sup> The contemporary reform initiatives include the creation of a National Education Commission in 2003. The primary objectives of this commission are to synchronize general and Islamic education, prioritize teacher training, and recognize higher Madrasah degrees. Future Prospects: Recognizing Fazil and Kamil degrees as comparable to B.A. and MA will make it easier for Madrasah graduates to pursue employment opportunities and enhance the quality of teaching staff.<sup>55</sup>

Revitalizing Madrasah education, specifically at Alia Madrasahs, has been a top priority for consecutive Bangladeshi administrations. Notwithstanding the keen attention and numerous suggestions, the implementation of significant reforms has been sluggish. Implementing administrative reforms was a less challenging task compared to revamping the curriculum. Nevertheless, certain Alia Madrasahs took the initiative to incorporate secular topics and hire more highly qualified instructors, enhancing their educational standards. Gender equality campaigns have led to a rise in female students attending co-educational institutions.<sup>56</sup> However, these initiatives have not been implemented in women's Madrasahs. The Asian Development Bank has recently provided financing for implementing arithmetic, English, and computer instruction at Madrasahs to tackle educational disparities. Civic education programs aim to instill in individuals a deep understanding of democratic principles. Alia Madrasahs also contribute to achieving national development objectives by actively participating in specialized educational programs and scholarship efforts, including training in English language proficiency and computer

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<sup>54</sup> Abul Kashem Muhammad Sifatullah, *Quadrat-I-Khuda Shikkha Commision o Amader Jatiya Shikkah Niti* [Quadrat-I-Khuda Education Commission and other Education Policy], (Dhaka: IRS Publications, 2001), 11.

<sup>55</sup> Chandan, "Alia Madrasa: an education system on its deathbed, special feature."

<sup>56</sup> Ahmad, "Islamic education in Bangladesh: Tradition, trends, and trajectories." 5-6.



skills.<sup>57</sup> Despite the obstacles, continuing endeavours are being made to modernize and enhance Madrasah education in Bangladesh.

### **Obstacles for Alia Madrasahs in Bangladesh**

Alia madrasahs are uniquely positioned within Bangladesh's educational framework, striving to integrate religious instruction with secular disciplines. They serve a substantial demographic, especially in rural regions, providing an economical avenue for education. Nonetheless, these institutions contend with systemic obstacles that impede their complete potential.<sup>58</sup> Resolving these difficulties is essential for the more efficient integration of Alia madrasahs into the national education system.

#### *Educational Curriculum and Quality*

A primary difficulty is the absence of a consistent curriculum among all Alia madrasahs. The Bangladesh Madrasah Education Board supervises curriculum creation, yet discrepancies remain in its implementation. Moreover, incorporating secular disciplines frequently lacks profundity, rendering students less competitive in higher education and employment markets.

#### *Infrastructure and Resources*

Numerous Alia madrasahs have inadequate infrastructure, including insufficient classrooms, libraries, and laboratories. The absence of contemporary educational tools and technology intensifies the issue. Financial limitations frequently hinder these institutions from enhancing their amenities.

#### *Teacher Training and Professional Development*

Educators in Alia madrasahs sometimes lack access to professional development options. Insufficient training in

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<sup>57</sup>Ahmad, "Islamic education in Bangladesh: Tradition, trends, and trajectories." 5-6.

<sup>58</sup> Idris Ali, Mashrekha Anwar, and Tamanna Shammin, "Job Opportunities and Obstacles of Madrasah Graduates in Bangladesh," *International Fellowship Journal of Interdisciplinary Research*, 1, no. 1 (2021): 36-47.

contemporary pedagogical techniques leads to a dependence on rote memorization, which impairs pupils' intellectual and critical thinking abilities.

#### *Social Perception and Stigmatization*

Alia madrasahs frequently encounter societal stigma, regarded as subordinate to conventional educational institutions. This impression diminishes the morale of students and teachers and restricts the attractiveness of madrasah education to broader segments of society.

#### *Financial Resources and Management*

A considerable proportion of Alia madrasahs rely on donations and government funds, which are frequently inadequate and inconsistent. The absence of a sustainable financing model hinders the operational efficiency and advancement of these institutions.

#### *Policy and Governance Concerns*

Ambiguities in the policies regulating Alia madrasahs result in administrative inconsistencies. The intersection of responsibilities across different government entities poses difficulties in policy execution and oversight.

### **Conclusion**

Ultimately, the origins of Islamic education in Bangladesh can be traced back to the time of Hazrat Muhammad (S.A.W) and the establishment of institutions such as Darul Arqam in Makkah and Suffa Residential Madrasah in Medina. Over time, with the leadership of influential individuals such as Hazrat Omar (R) and Hazrat Ali (R), Madrasahs expanded rapidly, offering education in diverse fields of study. During the Sultani reign in Bengal, Madrasah education thrived, providing a wide-ranging curriculum encompassing subjects such as Arabic and Philosophy. During the Mughal era, a significant expansion included advanced courses such as Astronomy and Mathematics. The establishment of Madrasahs in Bengal by Bakhtiyar Khilji during the thirteenth century laid the groundwork for the contemporary educational

system. Until British domination, these institutions were the leading providers of education for Muslims. The inception of the Calcutta Alia Madrasah in 1780 marked a shift towards a curriculum that combined traditional Islamic studies with modern subjects. The Alia Madrasah system in Bangladesh emerged as a development of this paradigm, integrating both religious and contemporary education. Currently, Alia Madrasahs have a significant impact on the education system in Bangladesh, providing education up to the postgraduate level. These institutions, governed by the Madrasah Education Board, receive financial assistance from the Government and adhere to defined processes for recruiting personnel. Despite criticism from secular thinkers, Madrasahs continue to play a crucial role by offering a dual education system in conjunction with secular schools. Attempts to modernize Madrasah education have been persistent, dating back to British rule and continuing into the period of independent Bangladesh. The proposals put forth by the Madrasah Education (Moula Baksh) Committee in 1938 aimed to modernize and integrate Madrasah education into the national system, in line with the ongoing development of these institutions.

The subsequent recommendations aim to address the challenges and enhance the overall quality and integration of Alia madrasahs within the national education system.

Firstly, to develop a consistent curriculum that integrates religious and secular education, ensuring students gain a thorough understanding across multiple disciplines.

Secondly, conducting systematic evaluations and revisions of the curriculum to ensure conformity with international educational standards, integrating modern disciplines such as science and technology, which are presently deficient in numerous madrasahs.

Thirdly, to promote augmented financial support from governmental and commercial entities to upgrade madrasah infrastructure. This encompasses the construction of contemporary classrooms and Infrastructure. To provide madrasahs with contemporary educational resources, such as computers and internet connectivity, and to enhance the learning experience, thereby preparing students for a digital future.

Fourthly, implementing specialized training programs for educators that emphasize contemporary pedagogical methods and discipline-specific expertise, particularly in the fields of science and mathematics, and fostering collaborations with general education institutions to enhance information exchange and professional growth among educators.

Fifthly, initiating efforts to highlight the societal benefits of Alia madrasahs, underscoring their role in cultivating well-rounded persons and involving the accomplishments of prominent graduates as exemplars to motivate current students and alter social opinions regarding madrasa education.

Sixthly, to refine administrative processes inside madrasahs to improve efficiency and elucidate the functions of regulating entities, and to develop methods for monitoring performance and adherence to educational standards, ensuring that madrasahs achieve their academic goals.

Alia madrasahs in Bangladesh play a crucial role in advancing education and preserving Islamic traditions. Addressing their issues is vital for their continued growth and relevance in a swiftly changing educational environment. A collaborative initiative involving politicians, educators, and the community can elevate these institutions to centers of excellence, cultivating a generation of well-rounded individuals who are prepared to make significant contributions to society. By adopting the above recommendations, Alia madrasahs can overcome current hurdles, improve educational outcomes, and achieve greater integration within Bangladesh's broader educational structure. This will benefit both students and society by providing skilled graduates who are prepared for various fields.

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