IN THE DEFENSE OF MADRASA EDUCATION

Abhu Bali, *

ABSTRACT

The present article is a reaction to non-indigenous understanding the role of Madrasa education. After 9/11 attack theoretically/ academically non-indigenous question the relevance of traditional Madrasa and its curricula by portraying "Madrasa as a hub of Terrorism." Therefore this present article tries to clear up the rumors against politically charged ideology by reexamining the role of Madrasa education in the Ontologically insecure world.

Keywords: Religious education, Ontological insecurity, Ontological security, pedagogy, class situation.

Introduction

The classical sociological thinkers, such as Marx, Weber, and Durkheim believed that the primacy of religion would disappear once the progressive development due to modernity triumphs over (at least in its traditional sense as the belief in supernatural beings). Beyond such predictions, religious beliefs and ideals have not only remained strong but in certain contexts have undergone a significant revival and further elaboration. It is commonsensical that the role of religion in modern societies is substantially different from its role in pre-modern times, and that is in some respect the hold of religion over people's day-to-day lives has weakened. It is an open debate as to how far religion got weakened or secularization is installed and what is their effect on social institutions (Giddens,1997:349).

The changing texture of religion is considered to be an important part of the structural transformation in the contemporary India, and it needs critical scrutiny. Associated changes due to mass media and the new form of communication technologies facilitated by globalization appeared to have transformed almost all religions (if not religion per se!). What is new is that the nature of religion itself is being changed. It is now accepted, if little late, that the ethnic and religious identities hardly disappears with modernity. Rather, modernity refashions religious identities in various ways and fact led to the resurgence of faith under particular conditions (Trivedi, 2011:159).

There has been an important revival of the study of religion in contemporary sociology, but with a different intellectual agenda. Fundamentalism and modernity, globalization and inter-religions conflict, religion and politics, religious movement and ethnic identity are the key issues for sociological analysis (cited in Turner, 295). It is astonishing that there is not a single institution of comparative religion in India. Similarly, very few studies who focus on religion and educating people about it for academic contribution especially in the case of Jammu and Kashmir.

Ever since religion and religious ethos have a strong sense of pedagogy to educate its followers. Even in the modern societies their presence and engagement with a secular form of education have been well recognized. Efforts have been made by the religious organizations to secularize its domain internally as rational order through the establishment of educational institutions without losing its core religious values.

*   Abhu Bali, Ph.D Research Scholar, Dept. of Sociology, University of Jammu, Jammu 180006

Operation of modern educational institutions under religious organization perhaps shows the latter's crisis and its transformation through the former.

The present article is an outcome of rigorous fieldwork where researcher explored the process of religious philosophy followed by Islamic schools of thought and their pedagogical practices got shaped under such doctrines give a sociological insight into how tradition reinvent itself through the introduction of modern social space like educational institutions. This study would also explore that how Islamic school (Madrasa) of thought refashion itself to survive in the modern.

In this regard, Luckmann and Fenn remind us of a situation in which the process of secularization is irreversible, a situation in which religion can exist only when it alters its modes of functioning, far from challenging the public policies prevalent in the modern industrial world (cited in Pathak, 1998:92). Therefore these alternative modes of functioning are very important to understand through which un/consciously sustain and refashion religious education in Jammu and Kashmir context, for instance Madrasa (Zia ul-Uloom of Poonch district) in Jammu and Kashmir and other part of India manifest itself in divergent philanthropic activities in good and noble schools, working for the flood-affected victims etc. Another instance of philanthropic activity of Madrasa in Jammu and Kashmir is proving food and education to poor and low-status Muslims families. Here religion seeks to fulfill the desire unfulfilled by the rational design of the bureaucratic state. It is not difficult to see many religious organization and personalities engaged in this humanistic endeavor. The goal is meaningful work, not debate with science. Instead, it uses science and technology to promote its causes.

It is crucial to point out here that modernity promises are tempting. There is also an acute anxiety that experiences of modernity are painful in which cultures are suffering because of the global ambition of modernity. There is a challenge to the uniqueness/ specificity of our cultural identity. Avijit Phatak (1998) quote on this, that which is equally important to understand is the weakest aspects of secularization (synonyms to modernity) it is almost complete failure to accomplish what is religion has been doing for the ages by providing a meaning of existence.

The aim of contemporary education is not only the mental, physical and social development of the individual but also his religious and moral development. That is why modern educationists stressed the importance of moral education. Religious faith in education helps the individual to face all kind of adverse conditions. Religion is the foundation of all moral character because without religion man cannot have faith in truth, beauty, and goodness. The freedom that we want to grant child through education is not possible without religion (Sharma, 2010:231).

Another, one of the vital criticism that madrasas developed against the modern/English schools are that they focus solely on transmitting knowledge as a result of which student doesn't learn "proper' ways of behavior. However, civility is not always formally taught in the madrasa; it is also transmitted through the serious of pedagogical actions which leave an indelible imprint on the minds as well as bodies of the students (Alam,2011:158).

This pattern of recruitment suggests that fundamentalism is not a traditional protests against modernity, but instead, these social movements are characterized by their selective approach of acculturation (Antoun, 2001 cited in Turner:297). Selective modernization refers to the process whereby on individual accepts a practice or belief from another culture (the secular world) and integrates it into their value system (The religious world). One illustration of the process of selective modernization is the use of

television and radio by fundamentalist Christian groups in the United States. For study researcher prime foci is Question of Ontological Security and religion in the context of Education.

Ontological security

Beck (1992) and Giddens (1990) shared a similar concern to describe the most conspicuous features of contemporary society where every institution is associated with risks like health and environmental scares of the past few years: brain tumors caused by cellular phones, cancer caused by high-tension electrical wires and let us not forget the risks from our homes, our water, and the very air we breathe (Indesedy: 27-28). As Anthony Giddens (1991) states:

"The threats of death, insanity and - somehow even more fearsome - cancer lurk in all we eat or touch."

Although their observation was limited to western society only the matter of fact is, these threats, argues Beck (1995), cannot be delimited spatially, temporally or socially. The magnitude and global nature of risks are such that risks are becoming more and more difficult to quantify, prevent, and avoid. Contemporary events are often open-ended, rather than events that have a foreseeable end. Accordingly, the risks of late modem society are not readily calculable. Which together contributed to the development of strikingly new forms of social life, the consequent origin of trust and security is changed (Cited in Indesedy:27-29).

In this society, nobody is sure what is going to happen, and so neither knows how to behave nor can predict what the outcome of their actions will be. Instinctively or by learned habit, people dislike and fear ambivalence, that enemy of security and self-assurance. As result peoples are inclined to believe that they would feel much safer and more comfortable if situations were unambiguous where it is clear what to do and sure what would happen if they did it. Living in a world of contingency can lead to what Giddens (1991) terms 'ontological insecurity.' The ontologically insecure individual has little if any sense of continuous narrative or biography. Obsessive exaggeration of risks to personal existence, extreme introspection, and moral vacuity are characteristics of this individual. Giddens is arguing that the ontological insecure individual may fail to achieve an enduring conception of his or her aliveness (ibid).

 For this study researcher compared ontological insecurities with the failure of the modern education system and how Madrasa (religious education center) gives them ontological security by putting forward the case of Zia ul-Uloom Madrasa of district Poonch and (J&K). From ancient society to modern society we have several different perceptive to understand the meaning of education, but still, we are insufficient to understand the lacuna the simple reason is, our policies leave the agency (students, actor) and the meaning they attached to education. Therefore present study tries to refill the meaning of education via actor foci! To understand the subjectivity researcher interacts with Madrasa children and asked some fundamental questions, its difficult to unfold the overall gain of fieldwork, therefore, researcher stick one question which researcher would like to discuss in length.

Question: To understand the rationale behind there in/securities why you (the subject of observation children) enrolled in Madrasa but not in government or public schools.

Response: They respond, their "Class Situation" (availability of assets) is the main cause of their admission because they do not have enough money to support their basic needs (food, shelter, cloths) and you (researcher) are talking about distance dream (education in private schools or public schools).

Researcher: ok! But what is wrong with government school, the government has the facility of free education and higher level at very low cost which any one can afford.

Response: They said in our Madrasa around more than 90 percent children are government school dropout because they don't understand what teachers teach to them especially the modern subjects (math, science, English). Therefore they failed many times in same class. Therefore, they lacked interest and decided to leave the school.

This is the one part of the story and very common understanding why children opt madrasa education not public or private, the usual answer is poverty. This answer can give us by local auto-driver so what is the fun to spend money and months/years to understand the simple query. In introductory page of "Ethnographies revisited: constructing theory in the field" raised a very important question; why we rely on ethnographers if a journalist covers the story in very less time and tells a story better than ethnographer. Saul Alinsky's (cited in Anthany, at el: 2009:1-2) musing that a sociology department is a kind of institution that spends $100,000 on research projects to find the location of the houses of prostitution which a taxi driver could tell you for nothing. However, some critics still quip that ethnographers are often simply "poor journalists; who spend years working on a project that is conceptually bereft and no better than a weekly news documentary. As Gary Alan Fine (ibid:1-2) put it in keynote address at the recent 25th annual qualitative analysis conference in New Brunswick, Canada, ethnographer differ from journalists mostly because of a six-letter word: Theory

To understand the real picture researcher tried to go beyond the ready-made answer. For years the most prominent and controversial theory of culture of poverty was Lewis Oscar (1969) "Culture of Poverty." Lewis argued that this culture emerged when the population is socially and economically marginalized from capitalist society developed patterns of behavior to deal with their low status. This behavior was characterized by low aspiration, political apathy, helplessness, disorganization, provincialism and the disparagement of so-called middle-class values. Once this culture was in place, Lewis argued, it developed mechanisms that tended to perpetuate it, even if structural conditions changed (cited in Lamont and Small, 2017:6).

 More specifically, the culture of poverty perspective argued that the poor remained in poverty not merely as a result of their economic conditions but also because of cultural values and practices they had developed from poverty. This perspective, as exemplified by Lewis (1969) and Banfield (1974) argued that culture constituted a set of norms and values that guided the behavior of individuals. They also, however, conceived of culture as a "lifestyle," at times called a "worldview," which made the escape from poverty difficult or impossible. Therefore, it is not wrong to conclude that Madrasa children are a victim of the "poverty of culture." The researcher is not denying the objective conditions which put the strain on their actions, outcome and their class situations but how after changing the objective condition their subjective condition is same.

These examples reflect the internal damage done by the modern education system to children who instead of improving their conditions, suppressing them into unprivileged position, as a result they are facing triple deprivation that is social, economic and political, hence multiplication of ontological

insecurities. This inability of modern education fails to offer psychological and emotional comfort that explains the presence and influence of non-scientific (religious education) knowledge in human lives, even in a rational world. From this point of view, the important thing about beliefs is not what they are but the fact that they are there for people to believe in them: it is the reassurance their existence provides that matters. Associated with symbolic anthropology and some versions of phenomenology, this is a perspective which argues that since all humans require reassurance that the world is a safe and ordered place – that they have what Giddens calls a desire for 'ontological security' – all societies will have forms of knowledge which perform this hermeneutic/ psychological task. This task of ontological security is well performed by the Madrasa and HGS in opposite to modern education which leads to reducing the climate of uncertainty which an individual finds disturbing no matter how far he or she seeks to put it to the back of their mind; and it inevitably exposes everyone to a diversity of crisis situations of greater or lesser importance, crisis situations which may sometimes threaten the very core of self-identity, a characteristic of the ontologically insecure individual.

CONCLUSION

Despite the central importance that madrasas play in the lives of Muslim communities around the world, relatively little academic attention has been paid to them. Advocate Madrasa education against modernization thesis false claims to give equal educational opportunity, quality education to every section of society still a distance dreams for poor which led to ontologically insecurities.

In the process, the valuable function (ontological security) that many madrasas play in providing free or highly subsidised education, along with boarding and lodging for vast numbers of Muslim children from improverished families, is readily forgotten. The expansion of the madrasa network must be appreciated in the context of abysmal levels of poverty in many Muslim of communities, with governments, often under pressure from International, western dominated organizations such as the World Bank and the International Monetary fund, being forced to cut back on welfare spending and 'opening up' their economics, and egged on by dominant. Western powers to enter into a fierce arms race 50 as to oil the machines of the international weapons industry, thereby reducing resources for public education – obviously, if governments were encouraged and enabled to spread with more on quality education for the Muslim poor than they are presently doing, many Muslims families would prefer to send their children to general schools rather them to madrasas. By situating the madrasas debate securely within a security driven paradigm, without appreciating the crucial socio-economic roles that madrasas play in the lives of poor Muslims, this obvious point is obscured (Noor, etal, 2008:13)

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