

Understanding the Qawmi Madrasah System in Bangladesh and Its Educational Framework

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Abstract

This study investigates the Qawmi madrasah system in Bangladesh, a crucial component of the nation's traditional Muslim educational structure. The system functions autonomously, without government supervision, and is strongly supported by the local population. The study focuses on comprehending the historical development, educational framework, and societal function of Qawmi madrasahs, which have undergone substantial changes and challenges due to colonial and modern influences. The main goals are to investigate the origins and evolution of Qawmi madrasah education, analyze the historical background and growth of these institutions in Bangladesh, and assess the impact of government policies on them. The study utilized a qualitative methodology, which included analyzing texts, reviewing literature, and gathering observational information. This approach was used to understand the Qawmi madrasah system thoroughly. The analysis revealed that Qawmi madrasahs have successfully preserved their conventional Islamic educational emphasis while adjusting to societal shifts. These institutions play a vital role in safeguarding the Islamic identity, advancing religious education. Qawmi madrasahs persist in offering complimentary education, sustenance, and accommodation, sustained by contributions from the public and philanthropic resources. The recent acknowledgement by the government that the Dawrah degree is comparable to a master's degree has improved graduates' educational and professional opportunities. The study emphasizes the necessity for Qawmi madrasahs to include contemporary educational techniques and curricula to provide students with the skills to face current issues while maintaining their fundamental principles. In order to guarantee the long-term development and advancement of these institutions, it is imperative to engage in discussions with policymakers and educators.

Key words: Qawmi madrasah, Bangladesh, Curriculum, Educational Framework.

Introduction

The Qawmi madrasah is firmly grounded in community backing and functions under private governing bodies. This institution is integral to Bangladesh's conventional Muslim educational system, deriving from procedures established during the British colonial era when these madrasahs were known as “Khariji” or operating independently from government oversight. The term “designation” emerged because

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Qawmi madrasahs have traditionally declined financial support from the government, opting instead for funding through public donations, Zakat (charitable giving), philanthropy, and endowment funds. As a result, these institutions offer tuition-free education, along with provisions for food and lodging, to their students. Madrasahs, also known as Islamic educational institutions, have a rich and significant history that can be traced back to the revered Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W). He founded the initial madrasahs, including Darul Arqam, Suffa Residential Madrasah, and Darul Qurrah Madrasah.¹ These centres functioned as educational institutions and facilitators of disseminating Islamic culture and knowledge. Notable individuals such as Ubada ibn as-Samit (R.) played crucial roles as instructors.² In the Umayyad and Abbasid eras, expansive mosques and distinct madrasahs were constructed, which led to the establishment of mandatory primary education and played a crucial role in the notable increase in literacy rates during the Islamic Golden Age.³ The madrasahs throughout this period were not solely focused on religious education; they achieved significant advancements in philosophy, theology, fine arts, mathematics, architecture, astronomy, and medicine.

The advent of Islam on the Indian subcontinent around the eighth century resulted in significant transformations, such as establishing novel traditions and educational establishments. During the Muslim rule in India, which lasted for almost 650 years, there was substantial growth in religious education, arts, and architecture. This period witnessed the construction of magnificent masterpieces such as the Taj Mahal and Qutab Minar. Before British colonial authority, maktabas (elementary schools), mosques, khanqahs (spiritual retreats), and madrasahs served as the leading institutions for Muslim education in India. Islamic education encountered substantial obstacles due to the down fall of the Mughal rule and the ascent of the British East India Company. The policies implemented by the British administration, along with the endeavors of Christian missionaries, posed a threat to Islamic education and culture. The revolt of 1857 was a pivotal moment that resulted in eliminating Muslim institutions and establishing a Western education system. But in 1866, the first Qawmi Madrasah, Darul Uloom Deoband, was founded by influential Islamic scholars such as Maulana

¹ M. S. Anjum, "Establishment of Schools in Period of the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him)", *Pakistan Journal of Islamic Research*, 2017, Vol. 18, No. 1, pp. 73-80.

² Lamis Ahmad Esmat, "Early Islamic Educational Institutions in Islamic Educational Science", *Journal of Educational Analytics*, 2024, Vol. 3, No. 1, pp. 95-106.

³ Ahmed Renima et al., "The Islamic golden age: A story of the triumph of the Islamic civilization", *The state of social progress of Islamic societies: Social, economic, political, and ideological challenges*, 2016, pp. 25-52.

Muhammad Qasim Nanotvi (1832-1880) and Haji Muhammad Hussain Abid (1834-1912). Its main objective was to safeguard the Muslim identity, culture, and traditional education from the impact of colonial forces. The Qawmi madrasahs in Bangladesh, who are the successors of Darul Uloom Deoband, have upheld and carried forward this historical tradition. These institutions are based on the ideas of traditional Islamic education and use Arabic, Urdu, Farsi, and Bengali as the languages of instruction.

The founding of Madrasah Darul Uloom Moinul Islam Hathazari in Chittagong in 1901 was a notable advancement in this practice. After it, many more madrasahs emerged, each playing a role in safeguarding and disseminating Islamic knowledge. An independent organization supervises the administration of Qawmi madrasahs in Bangladesh, the Bangladesh Qawmi Madrasah Education Organization (Befaul Madaris of Bangladesh). Recently, the government officially acknowledged that the Dawra degree obtained from Qawmi madrasahs has the same value as a master's degree in Islamic Studies or Arabic. As a result, graduates with this degree are now eligible to apply for more advanced positions. Although there are ongoing discussions regarding Qawmi education, its influence on Bangladesh's political, social, and cultural domains remains substantial. Qawmi madrasahs fulfill the societal demand for religious instruction by cultivating scholars who defend and promote Islamic principles and customs. The present study aims to investigate the origins and development of Qawmi madrasah education, analyze the historical backdrop of Qawmi madrasahs, their proliferation in Bangladesh, and the governmental policies regarding Qawmi madrasahs and the educational framework.

As Defined by Qawmi Madrasah

A Qawmi Madrasah is an educational institution focusing on religious teachings and Islamic studies. The word "Qawmi" is derived from the Arabic words "*Qawm*" or "*Qom*," which means "public" or "community."⁴ The private management body has complete control over this madrasah's activities. Qawmi educational techniques have their roots in Bangladesh's conventional Muslim educational system. In the era of British colonialism, these academic institutions were referred to as "*Khariji*," meaning they operated independently from the government. This is because Qawmi madrasahs refuse government support and instead depend on public donations. This Madrasah is formed and financed through contributions, Zakat monies, charitable funds, and endowment funds provided by the public. The learners of this Madrasah receive complimentary education, including food and lodging provisions.⁵

⁴ Jane Dammen McAuliffe, *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān*, Vol. 6. (Leiden: Brill, 2001).

⁵ Masooda Bano, *Allowing for diversity: State- Madrasa relations in Bangladesh*, Working Paper 13, Religions & Development Research Programme, (University of Oxford, 2008), p. 11.

Background of Establishment “First Qawmi Madrasah” in the Indian Subcontinent

The British colonial authority in India had a significant and harmful effect on the Muslim minority, characterized by prejudicial legislation, religious intervention, and the deliberate demolition of Islamic institutions. After the demise of the Mughal power, the British intentionally tried to convert India to Christianity.⁶ Prominent individuals like Mangles aimed to spread Christianity as a divine mission. Christian missionaries constituted a substantial menace to Islamic traditions due to their vigorous proselytizing endeavors.⁷

Following the 1857 Revolt, there were significant retaliatory actions by the British against Muslims, which involved large-scale deaths, confiscation of property, and widespread persecution. The British perception of Muslims as the main catalysts of the uprising intensified this harsh reaction, leading to an urgent necessity for Muslims to safeguard their religious and cultural identity.⁸ The British specifically focused on and decimated Muslim educational and religious establishments, notably in prominent locations such as Delhi. This devastation further underscored the necessity for establishing novel institutions to safeguard Islamic teachings and maintain the structure of the society. The takeover of lands and resources from Muslim landowners by the British resulted in the impoverishment of numerous Muslim households and further alienated them from their customary support systems.⁹ The economic relocation weakened the long-term viability of established educational institutions that had depended on philanthropic assistance.¹⁰ The compelled conversion of orphans during famines in 1837, as observed in locations such as Sikandara, and the overall intervention in religious affairs by colonial authorities motivated Muslims to establish educational institutions where their faith could be imparted without foreign interference.¹¹ The Muslim community in India was significantly affected by the

⁶ S. R. Wasti, “British Policy towards the Indian Muslims Immediately after 1857”, *Muslim Struggle for Freedom in India*, (Delhi, Renaissance Publishing House, 1993), pp. 1-24.

⁷ M. A. Laird, *Missionaries and education in Bengal: 1793-1837*, (Clarendon Press, 1972), p. 4.

⁸ T. R. Metcalf, *Aftermath of Revolt: India 1857-1970*, (Princeton University Press, 2015), p. 291.

⁹ Mufti Muhammad Zafiruddin Miftahi, *Dar al-'Ulum Deoband: A Brief Account of its Establishment and Background*, (Johannesburg, South Africa: Imam Gangohi Academy of Research Friends of Deoband). Retrieved from: <http://www.darululoom-deoband.com/urdu/books/tmp> [accessed in Bandung, West Java, Indonesia: October 24, 2018] (2012).

¹⁰ T. R. Metcalf, *Op. cit.*

¹¹ M. A. Laird, *Op. cit.*, p. 10.

British colonial rule, which led to the need for a response to safeguard their religious and cultural identity in light of discrimination, oppression, and the dismantling of their institutions.¹²

Darul Uloom Deoband was founded on May 30, 1866, in response to the precarious state of Muslim identity in India due to British colonial domination.¹³ The objective was establishing an educational institution to safeguard Islamic knowledge and culture while opposing British attempts to culturally dominate India. This esteemed Islamic institution was established at the Chatta Mosque in Deoband, in the Saharanpur District of the United Provinces of India.¹⁴ The principal initiator of the organisation, Maulana Muhammad Qasim Nanautavi, articulated the essentiality of establishing such an organisation. He stressed that the British had oppressed Muslims since the insurrection of 1857, explicitly attacking their cultural and educational establishments. Given the closure of state-funded Muslim schools, it was imperative to identify alternate approaches to maintaining Islamic education.¹⁵ The inauguration of Darul Uloom Deoband was humble. It began beneath a pomegranate tree with the initial instruction delivered by Mulla Mahmud to the first pupil, Mahmud Hasan (1851-1920), who would subsequently emerge as a prominent figure recognised as Shaikh-ul-Hind.¹⁶

The first founders comprised notable individuals such as Haji Abid Husain, Maulana Qasim Nanautavi, and several more who established the consultative council known as the Majlis-e-Shura. Haji Abid Husain was the inaugural Vice-Chancellor.¹⁷ The madrasah rapidly garnered prominence and extended its operations, requiring relocations to more extensive premises before finally establishing its primary site. Deobandi scholars actively sought to interact with India's religious plurality by conversing with Christian and Hindu experts. They also took part in non-violent resistance actions against colonial control. Maulana Nanautavi's vision for the madrasah encompassed promoting tolerance, open-mindedness, and the repudiation of inflexible perspectives.¹⁸ Darul Uloom Deoband stood apart due to its reliance on

¹² Sayyid Mahboob Rizvi, *The History of the Dar al-Ulum Deoband*, (Idarah-i Adabiyat-i Delli, 1980).

¹³ M. Burhanuddin Qasmi, *Darul uloom Deoband: A Heroic Struggle Against the British Tyranny*, (Mumbai: Markazul Ma'arif, 2001), p. 7.

¹⁴ *Ibid*

¹⁵ Ziaulhasan Faruqi, *The Deoband school and the demand for Pakistan*, (Asia Publishing House, 1963), p. 634.

¹⁶ Sayyid Mahboob Rizvi, *Op. cit.*, p. 117.

¹⁷ *Ibid*

¹⁸ Molana Mohammad Qasmi, *Qasim Nanautvi's Contribution to Islamic Thought with Special Reference to Al-Kalam*, (Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh, India, 1988), pp.80-85.

financial contributions from regular Muslims, as opposed to affluent benefactors or government funding, thereby establishing itself as a community-backed establishment. Maulana Nanautavi formulated eight fundamental principles for the institution, emphasising autonomy, solidarity among educators, and prioritising the well-being of students.¹⁹

The madrasah's curriculum and culture were explicitly crafted to rejuvenate conventional Islamic sciences and guarantee Muslims' religious instruction.²⁰ Darul Uloom Deoband gradually became an influential example for numerous other madrasahs in the Indian subcontinent, exerting a substantial influence on the Islamic educational sphere and the Indian independence movement.²¹ The organisation aimed to impart knowledge of the Qur'an, Hadith, Islamic doctrines, and jurisprudence, as well as to foster Islamic ethics and preserve autonomy from governmental interference. The objective of Darul Uloom Deoband was to develop Arabic educational institutions throughout India and connect them with the central institution.²²

The movement's origins were rooted in spirituality and reform. Its founders drew inspiration from older scholars such as Shah Waliullah Dehlwi (1703-1762), who criticised British colonialism and advocated for justice and equality. They believed that a robust educational and spiritual groundwork was crucial for withstanding colonial subjugation and safeguarding Islamic identity.²³ Ultimately, Darul Uloom Deoband was founded in response to the oppressive actions of British colonial rule, with the primary objective of safeguarding and promoting Islamic knowledge and culture.²⁴ The community-supported methodology, emphasis on traditional Islamic sciences, and refusal to succumb to colonial influence established it as a fundamental institution for Islamic education in India and other regions.

¹⁹ Barbara D. Metcalf, *Islamic Revival in British India: Deoband, 1860-1900*, Vol. 778, (Princeton University Press, 2014), pp. 20-24.

²⁰ Shahabuddin Ansari, "Darul Uloom Deoband," *Islamic Quarterly*, Vol. 24, No. 3, 1980, p. 111.

²¹ Sajjad Hussain *et al.*, "Socio Religious Impact and Brief History of Dār ul 'Uloom Karāchī," *Al-Qamar*, 2021, pp. 91-108.

²² Shazia Ramzan, and Ainee Rabab, "Darul uloom Deoband: Its evolution in 19th century British India and impact on the system of education in Pakistan", *FWU: Journal of Social Sciences*, Vol. 7, No. 2, 2013, pp. 157-164.

²³ Shafique Ali Khan, "Nationalist 'Ulama's Interpretation of Shah Wali Allah's Thought and Movement. (Some Ideological and Intellectual Deviations of the Scholars of Deoband Darul Uloom from the Fundamentals of Wali Allahi Philosophy)", *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society*, Vol. 38, No. 3, 1990, pp. 192-219.

²⁴ Ali Ahmad, "The Dar al-ulum of Deoband: A religio-political movement for the Indian Muslims", *Islamic Quarterly*, Vol. 40, No. 1, 1996, p. 23.

During the period of British colonial rule, the entire Muslim culture and heritage were on the brink of extinction. During this challenging period, it became necessary to establish an autonomous educational institution specifically dedicated to preserving and protecting the religious beliefs, customs, and education of Muslims.²⁵ A group of Ulama's wants to develop a groundbreaking institution to disseminate knowledge and inspire students to resist tyrannical rulers and the British intention to exert intellectual control over India. Darul Uloom Deoband, established on May 30, 1866, is the inaugural Qawmi Madrasah, pivotal in shaping India's Muslim community's history. As Deoband's reputation increased, many students from local and distant countries arrived.²⁶ The Muslims were swiftly enlightened by the radiant beams of knowledge and wisdom, illuminating their minds and hearts with the brilliance of Islam and its rituals. They acquired their religious education from Darul Uloom Deoband.

The institution's objective was to mitigate the perceived deterioration in moral and intellectual standards among India's Muslims by offering them traditional Islamic education.²⁷ The establishment of this organisation was a direct reaction to the British colonial regime's oppression of Muslims after 1857, resulting in the killing of many Muslims and scholars.²⁸ The madrasah rapidly acquired renown and became a paradigm for other Islamic educational institutions. Deoband graduates established institutions throughout India and other regions, forming an extensive network of madrasahs with a standardised curriculum. Some early prominent institutions were Madrasah Mazahir Uloom in Saharanpur and Jamia Qasmia Shahi in Muradabad. The network extends over numerous madrasahs worldwide, encompassing Pakistan, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, South Africa, the United Kingdom, and even Arab nations like Saudi Arabia.²⁹ Darul Uloom Deoband's influence stretches beyond its original location.³⁰ Islamic education globally has been dramatically influenced by it, leading to current Islamic discussions on standard piety and permissible religious customs. Esteemed intellectuals like Maulana Rahmatullah Kairanwi (1818-1891) and Maulana

²⁵ Abdul Momen *et al.*, "Identifying the Role of the First 'Qawmi Madrasah' Darul Uloom Deoband in the Indian Subcontinent", *Environment-Behaviour Proceedings Journal*, Vol. 8, No. S114, 2023, pp. 65-71.

²⁶ *Ibid*

²⁷ Nathan Spannaus, "Darul Uloom Deoband and South Asian Islam", *Modern Islamic Authority and Social Change*, Vol. 1, 2018, pp. 217-43.

²⁸ Aizan HJ Ali and Mat Zin, "Islamic Institution of Education in British India: A Study on Deoband Madrasah", *Jurnal Usuluddin*, Vol. 9, 1999, pp. 113-132.

²⁹ Abdul Momen, *Op. cit.*

³⁰ A. N. Khan, "Mawlana Mahmud Al-Hasan (1851-to 1920): His Contribution to Dar-Ul-Uloom Deoband", *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society*, Vol. 33, No. 2, 1985, p. 123.

Sayyid Ahmad founded significant madrasahs in Makkah and Medina, expanding the Deobandi movement's influence.³¹

The educational philosophy and curriculum at Deoband focus on the learning of Quranic interpretation, Hadith, and Islamic jurisprudence (Fiqh). This educational model prioritises preserving traditional Islamic knowledge while cultivating a strong sense of religious and moral purity. This strategy has garnered students' attention from Afghanistan, Central Asia, and several African countries.³² These students then return to their native countries to create educational institutions that follow a similar model. The founders of Darul Uloom Deoband traced their intellectual and spiritual heritage back to Shah Wali Allah Dehlavi, a renowned Islamic scholar who emphasised the significance of traditional Islamic education. The academics of Deoband were affiliated with many Sufi groups, including Chishtiya and Naqshbandiya, advocating for both spiritual purity and intellectual education.³³ The graduates of this institution played an important role in opposing British colonial rule and promoting the political liberation of the Indian subcontinent.³⁴ The institution's leaders were vital in bringing Muslims and other communities together to pursue independence, contributing to the giant fight for India's freedom.³⁵ Deoband is regarded as one of the foremost Islamic educational establishments, ranking second to Al-Azhar University in Cairo regarding significance and recognition.³⁶ This institution's stringent academic standards and influential network have played a vital role in maintaining the Islamic identity of Muslims in the subcontinent and other regions.³⁷ The institution's alumni are renowned for their academic prowess, ethical behaviour, and dedication to Islamic values. To summarise, Darul Uloom Deoband has had a significant and enduring influence on

³¹ Abdul Momen, *Op. cit.*

³² Mohammad Asjad Ansari, "Modern education in madrasahs: A perspective study of Dar al-Uloom Deoband", *Asia Pacific Journal of Research*, ISSN (Print) 2320, 2016, p. 504.

³³ Abdul Momen, *Op. cit.*

³⁴ Syafiq A. Mughni *et al.*, "Dar al-Uloom of Deoband: An education, propagation, and Islamic political movement in India", *Tawarikh*, Vol. 10, No. 2, 2019, pp. 87-102.

³⁵ Khalil Ahmed and Shahid Hassan Rizvi, "The Role of Deobandi Ulema in Strengthening the Foundations of Indian Freedom Movement (1857-1924)", *Pakistan Journal of Islamic Research*, Vol. 15, No. 1, 2015.

³⁶ Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *Modern Islam in India*, (Harvard University, Read Books, 2006), pp. 10-15.

³⁷ Myra Hamid, *The political struggles of the ulama of Dar-ul-Uloom Deoband: Identifying and operationalizing the traditionalist approach to politics*, (University of Maryland, College Park, 2005), pp. 21-25.

Islamic education and intellectual discourse. The network of madrasahs remains essential in influencing Muslim communities' religious and social fabric globally.³⁸

The Qawmi Madrasah in Bangladesh

In Bangladesh, there are primarily two categories of Madrasahs: government-established and funded madrasahs and non-government-aided and privately managed madrasahs.³⁹ One is the Alia madrasahs, which operate alongside the secular, modern-style mainstream education system and offer subjects with an Islamic focus. The second category of madrasahs is referred to as Qawmi madrasahs. The Islamic seminaries in Bangladesh have a historical connection to the broader Islamic revivalist-reformist movement in South Asia due to the specialised religious education they provide. Qawmi madrasahs operate autonomously from the state's education system, and their caretakers are ulema who have received training in either local Qawmi madrasahs or the Darul Uloom Deoband.⁴⁰ Deoband Madrasah is the primary institution that follows and carries on the traditions of all Qawmi madrasahs in Bangladesh. Numerous Qawmi madrasahs in Bangladesh are purportedly operated under the Deobandi ideology. Most madrasahs in Bangladesh share the same intellectual lineage. These madrasahs have long run on the generosity of their patrons and the resources they possess. This is because financial autonomy is included in five of the eight guiding principles laid out by Maulana Muhammad Qasim in 1866 when the Deoband madrasah was founded.⁴¹

The Qawmi madrasah of Bangladesh is a direct descendant of the Madrasah Darul Uloom Deoband in India.⁴² Qawmi, one of Bangladesh's essential branches of the Madrasah system, emphasises traditional Islamic education. The primary languages used for education are Arabic, Urdu, Farsi, and, to a lesser extent, Bengali.⁴³ During

³⁸ Brannon D. Ingram, *Revival from below: The Deoband movement and global Islam*, (University of California Press, 2018), pp. 30-35.

³⁹ Humayun Kabir, "Diversity and Homogeneity of Islamic Education: Colonial Legacy and State Policy towards Madrasahs in Bangladesh", *The Journal of Social Studies*, No. 120, (October-December) 2008, Centre for Social Studies, Dhaka, pp. 1-24.

⁴⁰ Humayun Kabir, "Replicating the Deobandi model of Islamic schooling: the case of a Quomi madrasa in a district town of Bangladesh", *Journal Contemporary South Asia*, Vol. 17, Issue 4, 2009, pp. 415-28.

⁴¹ Maulana Nadeem-ul-Wajidi, *Sir Syed and Maulana Qasim Nanotvi*, 18 February 2012, Retrieved: 16 August 2018. https://twocircles.net/2012feb18/sir_syed_and_maulana-qasim_nanotvi.html

⁴² Abdul Momen, *Op. cit.*

⁴³ Tiffany Ellis, *Madrasahs in Bangladesh*, IPCS Special Report, No. 47, August 2007, Intern, *Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies*, (New Delhi, India), p. 3.

the British period, most Muslim intellectuals in the East Bengal region (now Bangladesh) observed similar challenges in education, culture, philosophy, and Muslim social customs as their counterparts in India around the mid-18th century.⁴⁴ After carefully considering these issues, Sheikhul Islam Maulana Habibullah and Bengali academics and Ulama from Deoband founded Madrasah Darul Uloom Moinul Islam Hathazari in Chittagong, Bangladesh in 1901. The principles of Darul Uloom Deoband inspired the establishment of the madrasah.⁴⁵ Subsequently, diverse Muslim academics founded other renowned madrasahs in Bangladesh. Some of the most renowned madrasahs in Bangladesh are the Madrasah of Potia, Mekhol in Chittagong, Lalbagh and Malibagh Madrasah in Dhaka, Darul Uloom Datta Para (Datta Para Madrasah) in Narsingdi District, Balia Madrasah in Mymensingh, and Jmiah Emdadiah in Kishorgong.⁴⁶ All of them are private institutions affiliated with the Deobandi movement, which implement the traditional Dars-i-Nizami curriculum in their instruction.⁴⁷

A privately autonomous organisation upholds the rules and regulations of the Qawmi Madrasah called the 'Bangladesh Qawmi Madrasah Education Organisation' (Befaul Madaris of Bangladesh). Nevertheless, in 2006, the Bangladesh government acknowledged this Madrasah but stipulated that the education system be reformed. Qawmi madrasahs are not only unacknowledged, but they and their pupils are also absent from official government paperwork and other records.⁴⁸ Accurate data regarding the quantity of Qawmi madrasahs and the number of students enrolled is currently unavailable. Traditionally, Qawmi madrasahs have refrained from engaging with the government.⁴⁹ Consequently, the precise quantity of them remains undisclosed. There are multiple estimations regarding the amount of Qawmi madrasah and their number of pupils. Research indicates that 19 distinct private autonomous boards oversee Qawmi madrasah, with Befaul Madarisil Arabia Bangladesh (Befaul)

⁴⁴ Ghazanfar Ali Khan, *History of Islamic education in India and Nadvatul-Ulama*, (Kitab Bhavan, 1784, Kalan Mahal, Darya Ganj, New Delhi, 110002, 2004), p. 112.

⁴⁵ Masooda Bano, *Op. cit.*

⁴⁶ M. A. Rahman, 'Alia Madrasah: Etihash O Oitijjo', *Mashik Shikha Dorshon*, 1st year, 2nd series, publication Nakib Al Mahbub Memorial Trust, 2011, (Bengali)p. 133.

⁴⁷ Mujib Mehdi, *Madrasa Education: An Observation*, Editor: Rokeya Kabir, (Bangladesh Nari Progati Sangha, Dhaka, 2003), pp. 34-75.

⁴⁸ M. Niaz Asadullah and Nazmul Chaudhury, "To madrasahs or not to madrasahs: The question and correlates of enrolment in Islamic schools in Bangladesh", *International Journal of Educational Development*, 49, 2016, pp. 55-69.

⁴⁹ *Ibid*

being the largest among them.⁵⁰ In 2006, Befaq presented a report to the Prime Minister, stating that approximately 1.9 million pupils were enrolled in around 15,000 Qawmi madrasahs.⁵¹ However, the integrity of this number was doubted due to the presence of other similar madrasah boards in Bangladesh. The study by Barkat et al. (2011) estimates 5.2 million pupils enrolled in Qawmi madrasah.⁵² Alternative calculations indicate that there are between 4000 and around 60,000 Qawmi madrasahs in the country, with an estimated student population of around 1.4 million.⁵³ Despite the most cautious calculations indicating that the student population exceeds one million, the government documentation hardly acknowledges the existence of the Qawmi madrasah. However, despite the low economic benefits and lack of official recognition, surveys indicate that the enrolment rate in these madrasahs is rising, especially for girls.⁵⁴ Following 1971, certain Qawmi madrasahs initiated the process of modernising their educational approach. This involved transitioning from Urdu to Bengali as the language of instruction and incorporating English language and mathematics lessons into their curriculum.⁵⁵ The "Non-government Education Board" was formed in 1978 to facilitate the coordination of madrasahs. By 1998, a total of 2,043 madrasahs had registered with this board.⁵⁶ During the latter half of the 20th century, there was a significant and primarily uncontrolled expansion in the madrasah sector. The numbers increased from approximately 4,100 in 1986 to as many as 64,000 by 2005.⁵⁷

⁵⁰ *Ibid*

⁵¹ A. Barkar et al., *Political Economy of Madrassa Education in Bangladesh: Genesis, Growth and Impact*, (Ramon Publishers, Dhaka, 2011), p. 36.

⁵² *Ibid*

⁵³ M. Niaz Asadullah et al., *Op. cit.*

⁵⁴ UNICEF Bangladesh, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), *Situation assessment and analysis of children and women in Bangladesh*, (UNICEF, 2009), pp. 45-52. Retrieved from: <https://www.childrenontheedge.org/uploads/8/2/9/7/8297605/womenandchildrenbangladesh.pdf>

⁵⁵ Zeeshan Hasan, "Market solutions for Qawmi madrasahs", *Daily Star*, September, 16, 2020. Retrieved from: <https://www.thedailystar.net/news-detail-72723>

⁵⁶ A. B. M. Saiful Islam Siddiqi, "Madrasah", *Banglapedia- The National Encyclopedia of Bangladesh*, Retrieved from: <http://en.banglapedia.org/index.php?title=Madrasah>. In: Sirajul Islam and Ahmed A. Jamal (eds.), *Banglapedia: National Encyclopedia of Bangladesh*, Second edition, 2012, Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, Dhaka.

⁵⁷ *Testimony of Dr. Samina Ahmed*, South Asia Project Director, International Crisis Group, to the House of Representatives Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform Hearing on "U.S. Archived 3 March 2011, Wayback Machine, 19 April 2005.

In 2004, the Befaql Madaris of Bangladesh was established. Shortly after, starting in August 2006, the Bangladesh government officially acknowledged and endorsed the Qawmi system. They did this by recognising the 'Dawra degree' offered by the Qawmi madrasah as equivalent to a master's degree in Islamic Studies or Arabic literature.⁵⁸ By this time, approximately 15,000 madrasahs had officially enrolled with the Befaql Mudarressin.⁵⁹ In April 2017, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina reaffirmed her dedication to the previous acknowledgement of the diplomas of Dawrae Hadith under Qawmi madrasah Education Boards as equal to a master's degree in Islamic Studies and Arabic.⁶⁰ In 2006, around 15,000 Qawmi madrasahs were registered in Bangladesh, and 200,000 teachers instructed 4 million pupils.⁶¹ The exact figures are uncertain because Qawmi Madrasah does not maintain student enrolment records.⁶² Furthermore, there has been a contention that including unregistered Qawmi madrasahs might increase the overall figure of Bangladeshi madrasahs to as many as 64,000.⁶³

The Structure of Qawmi Madrasah Education

The Qawmi madrasah system in Bangladesh is a prominent and essential part of the country's educational framework, with a primary emphasis on Islamic education. This traditional system has strong cultural and religious foundations and is an alternative to the government-regulated Alia Madrasah system.⁶⁴

<https://web.archive.org/web/20110303083724/http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/publication-type/speeches/2005/testimony-of-samina-ahmed-to-us-senate-foreign-relations-committee.aspx>

⁵⁸ Supriya Singh, "Recognizing Qawmi Madrasahs in Bangladesh: Boon or a Bane?" *The Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies (IPCS)*, 17 April 2017. Retrieved from: https://www.ipcs.org/comm_select.php?articleNo=2114#

⁵⁹ Wasi Ahmed, "Integrating madrasah education system", *The Financial Express*, Jul 14, 2021. Retrieved from: <https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/views/columns/integrating-madrasha-education-system-1626191723>

⁶⁰ By this time, approximately 15,000 madrasahs had registered with the Befaql Mudarressin.

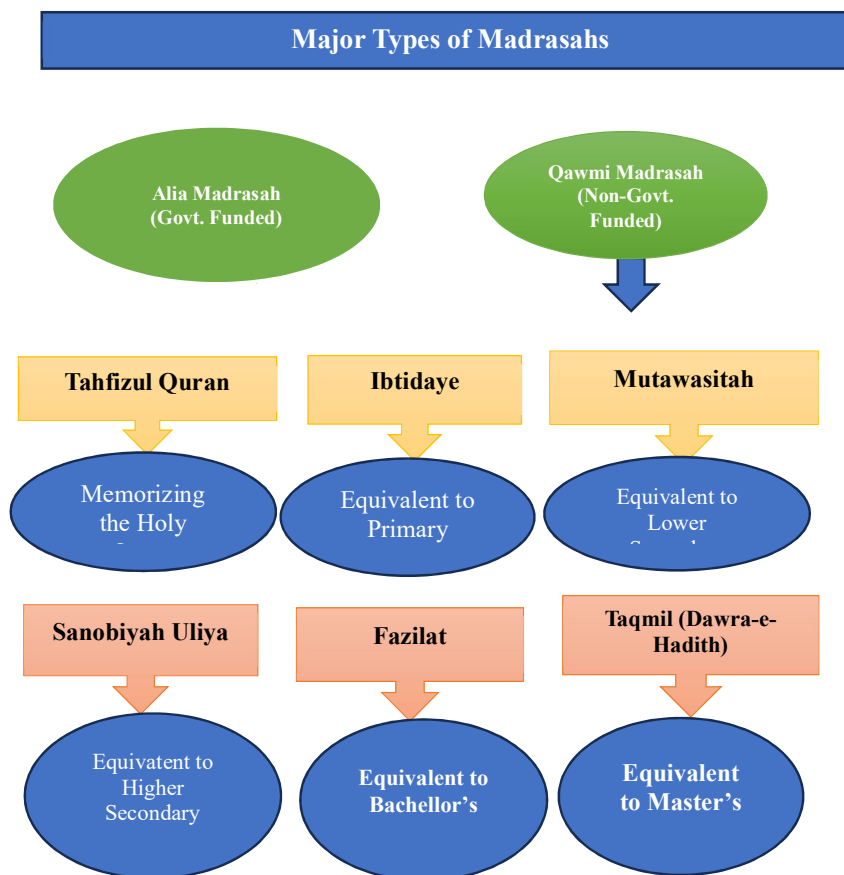
⁶¹ Masooda Bano, *Op. cit.*

⁶² Mohammad Niaz Asadullah *et al.*, *Secondary School Madrasahs in Bangladesh*, (The World Bank, Draft: 15 March 2009), p. 21.

⁶³ Testimony of Samina Ahmed, *Op. cit.*

⁶⁴ *Modernization of Madrassa Education in Bangladesh: A Strategy Paper*, Bangladesh Enterprise Institute (BEI), (Dhaka, 2011). Retrieved from: <https://bei-bd.org/grid/publications/?page=5>

Qawmi Madrasah Educational Structure



The Qawmi madrasahs have a well-defined educational progression consisting of five primary levels of study: Ibtidaye (Primary Level), Mutawasitah (Secondary Level), Sanobiyah Uliya (Higher Secondary Level), Fazilat (Graduate Level), and Taqmil or Daurah (Postgraduate Level).⁶⁵ At the elementary Ibtidaye level, children are introduced to fundamental education, which integrates fundamental religious teachings with general knowledge. This stage establishes the foundation for later stages, where

⁶⁵ Syed Al-Hasani *et al.*, "Creating a practicing Muslim: A study of Qawmi Madrasah in Bangladesh", *British Journal of Education, Society & Behavioural Science*, Vol. 20, No. 3, 2017, pp. 1-9.

the curriculum progressively becomes more sophisticated and specialised. As students advance to the Mutawasitah and Sanobiyah Uliya levels, they engage in increasingly extensive Islamic studies alongside their ongoing general topics, equipping them for the more demanding Fazilat level. The Fazilat level corresponds to a college education involving in-depth study of Islamic theology, jurisprudence, and other advanced religious disciplines.⁶⁶

The pinnacle of Qawmi madrasah education is the Taqmil or Dawrah level, which emphasises comprehensive studies and specialisation comparable to postgraduate education.⁶⁷ This level focuses on rigorous academic research and an in-depth understanding of Islamic concepts. Aside from the fundamental levels, the Qawmi madrasah system has specialised elements such as the Qur'an and Tazwid, which emphasises Qur'anic grammar and recitation, and the Hifzul Quran, which is dedicated to memorising the Quran.⁶⁸ These components are crucial to the conventional Islamic educational structure, guaranteeing that students master fundamental religious practices. After successfully finishing the Dawrah level, students are awarded certification, which allows them to pursue advanced academic and professional prospects.

Further years of study can be pursued to specialise in specific disciplines such as Ifta, which focuses on Islamic law and jurisprudence. Upon graduation, individuals can acquire prestigious intellectual designations such as Muhaddith, Mufti, and Maulana.⁶⁹ These titles signify their advanced knowledge and preparedness to contribute to religious, educational, and judicial roles in Bangladesh and internationally. This project aims to investigate the academic framework of Qawmi madrasahs in Bangladesh, analysing the functioning of this system, its syllabus, and its influence on the broader educational and socioeconomic environments. This study aims to provide insight into the Qawmi Madrasah system by examining its intricacies. It strives to explore how this system has shaped Islamic scholarship and influenced Bangladesh's cultural and intellectual environment.

⁶⁶ Salma Akter, "Teaching Learning Process and Management System of Primary Grade in Qawmi Madrasa in Bangladesh", *International Journal of Advance Research and Innovative Ideas in Education*, Vol. 6, Issue 6, 2020, pp. 91-95.

⁶⁷ Syed Mahbubul Alam Al-Hasani, "Madrasah Education in Bangladesh: A Comparative Study Between Aliya and Qawmi", *Journal Of Creative Writing*, (ISSN-2410-6259) 4.2, 2020, pp. 111-132.

⁶⁸ "Education systems of Qawmi Madrasah: An investigation", BANBEIS, Ministry of Education, Dhaka, 2008.

⁶⁹ "Education System of Bangladesh: Certificates, diplomas and degrees awarded at all levels, types and disciplines", BANBEIS, Ministry of Education, Dhaka, 1987.

The Curriculum of the Qawmi Madrasah

The Qawmi Madrasah system in Bangladesh is a prominent and long-lasting aspect of Islamic education in South Asia. The educational system, Dars-i-Nizami, was established by Mullah Nizamuddin Siharvi in the early 18th century.⁷⁰ Its purpose was to cultivate academics with extensive rational and transmitted scientific knowledge.⁷¹ The Dars-i-Nizami curriculum initially prioritised '*ma'qulat*' (rational sciences) above '*manqulat*' (transmitted sciences), reflecting the intellectual environment of Mughal India, where it originated.⁷² The selection of Urdu and Farsi as teaching languages was based on their alignment with the administrative requirements of the Mughal Empire.⁷³ This ensured that graduates could smoothly assimilate into the socio-political structure of their era. Since its founding in 1866, Darul Uloom Deoband has relied on the Dars-i-Nizami curriculum as a fundamental component of Qawmi madrasah education.⁷⁴ These institutions strive to nurture faithful Muslim scholars with Islamic jurisprudence and theology expertise and the ability to fulfil their roles as community leaders, imams, and educators.⁷⁵ The curriculum covers a wide range of disciplines, such as Tafsir (interpretation of the Qur'an), Hadith (sayings and actions of the Prophet), Shari'ah (Islamic law), and many branches of Arabic and Farsi language studies.⁷⁶ Qawmi madrasahs in Bangladesh have been under attention in recent years due to their orthodox approach, which places greater emphasis on religious studies than modern disciplines. Although English and Mathematics have been introduced at the primary level, their integration into the curriculum is still limited. As a result, there have been

⁷⁰ 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)*, Vol. 68, No. 2, December 2023, pp. 219-240

⁷¹ M. M. Ali, "An overview on Madarsa education in India", *International Journal of Development Research*, Vol. 5, No. 3, 2015, pp. 3714-3716.

⁷² Muhammad Anwar Farooq and Mazher Hussain, "A brief survey of Muslim education in pre-colonial India (1206-1857)", *Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities Research*, Vol. 5, No. 2, 2017, pp. 12-15.

⁷³ 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, pp. 241-257. Retrieved from: <https://jnu.ac.bd/journal/portal/archives/arts/12/1.jsp>

⁷⁴ Abdul Momen, *Op. cit.*

⁷⁵ Md Nurul Momen Bhuiyan, *Creating 'Good Muslims': Qawmi Madrasa schooling in a rural town of Bangladesh*, (Diss. School of Social Sciences Theses, 2010).

⁷⁶ Mohammed Raihanul Hoque *et al.*, "Curriculum Development in Madrasah Education: A Comparative Study with Mainstream Education in Bangladesh", *Journal of Socio-Educational Dynamics – JSED*, 2023, pp. 1-13. Retrieved from: https://jsedresearch.com/papers/volume_1/vol_1_paper_4.pdf

concerns that those who graduate from Qawmi institutions lack the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively engage in the contemporary labour market, whether in the private or public sectors.⁷⁷ As a result, there have been demands for educational reforms to better align the Qawmi curriculum with international educational norms. Although facing difficulties, Qawmi Madrasahs continue to be an essential component of the educational system in Bangladesh. They maintain their autonomy from government oversight and continue to benefit from the extensive intellectual legacy of the Dars-i-Nizami curriculum.⁷⁸ This dissertation examines the historical evolution, present methodologies, and possible future trajectories of the Qawmi madrasah curriculum in Bangladesh. It thoroughly studies its advantages and areas that could be enhanced.

Incorporating teaching and learning into regular ritual activities is the primary factor contributing to the profound esteem and deep relationship between teachers and pupils. This strategy is exclusive and exceptional for acquiring knowledge from teachers.⁷⁹ The primary objective of the Nizami Curriculum of Qawmi madrasah was to cultivate a devout Muslim who possesses a deep understanding of Islamic teachings and engages in religious practices with that knowledge. They will have the capability to safeguard Islam, shield Islam from Western threats, and actively participate in spreading the teachings of Islam to others. Teachers prioritise pupils' moral, spiritual, and character development while teaching knowledge from the Qur'an and Sunnah.

Mumtaz Ahmad has highlighted the significant modifications implemented in Qawmi madrasahs during the past thirty years.⁸⁰ Such as:

- Bangla has replaced Urdu as the language used for teaching. This stage is crucial for the process of "indigenisation" of Islam and Islamic scholarship, as well as for separating them from their origins in North Indian Islamic traditions.
- Bangla has been mandated as a required topic up to the secondary level (Marhala-i-Sanvia). Qawmi madrasahs did not include Bangla in their curriculum before 1972.

⁷⁷ Tiffany Ellis, *Op. cit.*

⁷⁸ Md. Abdul Karim Ruman and Md Abdullah Bhuiyan, "Ebtedayee English syllabus under BEFAQ: An evaluation", *Bangladesh Research Foundation Journal*, Vol. 4, No. 1, 2015, pp. 14-30.

⁷⁹ Keith Trigwell *et al.*, "Relations between teachers' approaches to teaching and students' approaches to learning", *Higher education*, Vol. 37, No. 1, 1999, pp. 57-70.

⁸⁰ Mumtaz Ahmad, *Madrasa Education in Pakistan and Bangladesh*, (Religious Radicalism Security in South Asia, 2004), p. 103. Retrieved: January 20, 2007. <https://dkiapcss.edu/Publications/Edited%20Volumes/ReligiousRadicalism/ReligiousRadicalismAndSecurityInSouthAsia.pdf>

- Topics like politics, economy, and the historical development of Islam in the Indian subcontinent until the formation of Bangladesh have been included.
- English has been mandated as a required subject in the primary portion, and numerous madrasahs now offer resources for English education at advanced levels.
- Elementary school instruction has been incorporated into Qawmi madrasahs, encompassing general courses and Islamic education.
- The curriculum now includes the study of comparative religion.
- Implementing bureaucratic systems for admission and administrative procedures and adopting professional management techniques are currently being carried out, particularly in larger madrasahs. Personal computers will significantly impact this process; shortly, multiple large madrasahs will establish their websites.
- The user's text is a bullet point. A significant advancement has been the implementation of a centralised system for evaluating academic performance in Qawmi madrasahs. This system includes the standardisation of curriculum, syllabi, and examinations, which are overseen by two major federations: Wafaqul Madaaris, with 1,500 affiliated madrasahs, and Anjumun Ittehadul Madaaris, with over 500 affiliated madrasahs.
- The sources of funding have been expanded and varied. While zakat and sadakas collected from local communities and donations from local and Pakistani business communities remain significant, the expatriate Bangladeshi workers in the Gulf States, Western Europe, and North America have emerged as a substantial funding source for Qawmi madrasahs. In addition, Muslim non-governmental organisations (NGOs) located in Europe and North America and specific individual Muslim donors in the Gulf and South Africa contribute financial resources for primary religious education. The Saudi-based World Muslim League (Rabita Alim Al Islami) has substantially donated to a few Ahl-I-Hadith madrasahs, with the largest in Rajshahi.

One of the hundred crucial functions of these madrasahs is to offer fatwas (explanations of religious literature about contemporary concerns) to Muslims free of charge, based on the Quran, Sunnah, Ijma, and Qias. To carry out this task, it keeps a roster of knowledgeable muftis (ulema qualified to issue fatwas). The institution instructs and motivates students to engage in Tableeg (the dissemination of Islamic teachings) within the Muslim community, emphasises the importance of leading a frugal lifestyle by Islamic principles, and enhances their proficiency in composing

kutabs (sermons delivered during Friday prayers).⁸¹ A particular focus is given to instructing pupils in debate and discussion, enabling them to engage in cross-religious debates. The library possesses an extensive assortment. Upon finishing their education, the students of these madrasahs are expected to instruct in religious establishments domestically and pursue employment opportunities in the Middle East.

The level of instruction provided is contingent upon the teaching competence of the Qawmi madrasah. Additionally, the bulk of them provide shelter and education to orphaned individuals. Alia madrasah is influenced by the Calcutta Alia madrasah founded by Warren Hastings in 1780, whereas Qawmi madrasah derives its inspiration from the Darul Uloom Deoband.⁸² They are dispersed around the entire nation and collaborate with assistance from community donations. Chittagong is the primary centre for Qawmi madrasah, home to the most esteemed Deobandi madrasah. An elucidation of prominent Qawmi madrasahs shows their inception and functioning. Darul Uloom Moniul Islam Hathazari, the preeminent Jamia among the Qawmi madrasah in Bangladesh, was founded in 1901 via the collaborative endeavours of prominent academics such as Muhammad Habubullah, Maulana Abdul Waheed, Maulana Azizur Rehman, and Maulana Jamiruddin.⁸³ The students originate from various regions of the country and are exempt from any charges.⁸⁴ Chittagong became the centre of Islamic education in Bangladesh, and the bastion of Qawmi madrasah can be attributed to its status as a port city, as stated by the ulema and supported by historical texts. Arab traders frequently made a halt on the Bengal coast along the eastern trade routes.⁸⁵ It has been suggested that these traders formed a small Muslim community in the Chittagong area. There is evidence that Arabs had contact with this region as early as the eighth century, as documented by Arab geographers who mentioned the names of ports and cities.⁸⁶ Several Sufi saints and academics are thought to have existed before the Muslim invasion, such as Baba Adam Shahid of

⁸¹ Syed Al-Hasani *et al.*, *Op. cit.*

⁸² Abdul Momen, *Op. cit.*

⁸³ Humayun Kabir, "Replicating the Deobandi model of Islamic schooling: the case of a Quomi madrasa in a district town of Bangladesh", *Contemporary South Asia*, Vol. 17, No. 4, 2009, pp. 415-428.

⁸⁴ Masooda Bano, *Op. cit.*

⁸⁵ Richard M. Eaton, *The rise of Islam and the Bengal frontier, 1204-1760*, (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1994).

⁸⁶ Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia, "Chittagong", *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 9 March 2024, Accessed 16 May 2024. Retrieved from: <https://www.britannica.com/place/Chittagong>.

Rampal, Shah Sultan Rumi, and others. Saint veneration, often known as prism, is prominent in famous Islam in Bengal.⁸⁷

Government Policy and Qawmi Madrasah

The educational environment in Bangladesh has been historically influenced by a wide range of academic institutions, such as the Qawmi Madrasahs, which have been traditionally run by private management groups and funded by community donations. In recent decades, Madrasahs have become a prominent topic of discussion in society due to their substantial presence, with millions of students enrolled and a widespread growth of Qawmi Madrasahs throughout the country. The socio-cultural and political impacts exerted by these institutions have emphasised the necessity of a thorough analysis of their function in the educational environment of Bangladesh. Under the rule of the BNP-Jamaat regime, acknowledging Qawmi Madrasah education became prominent.⁸⁸ The government's first actions in acknowledging Dawra's credentials, as declared by the former prime minister in August 2006, were a crucial turning point in the discussion on Qawmi Madrasahs. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina reiterated the acceptance of Dawra-e-Hadith from Qawmi Madrasahs as a post-graduate degree in April 2017, notwithstanding the difficulties in implementing it.⁸⁹ The passage of a measure recognising the Dawrae Hadith (Takmil) Certificate as a post-graduate degree in Islamic Studies and Arabic, along with other following developments, indicates a notable change in government policy aimed at incorporating Qawmi Madrasah students into the wider society.⁹⁰ Creating a consolidated governing body to supervise Qawmi Madrasah education and harmonising Qawmi educational benchmarks with mainstream academic standards are essential to closing the divide between traditional religious instruction and official academic acknowledgement.⁹¹ The evolving

⁸⁷ Masooda Bano, *Op. cit.*

⁸⁸ Staff Correspondent, "Master's Status for Top Qawmi Degree: Towards legal recognition", *The Daily Star*, August 14, 2018. Retrieved from: <https://www.thedailystar.net/news/country/bangladesh-cabinet-approves-bill-recognising-qawmi-madrasahs-dawrae-hadith-1620178>

⁸⁹ *Asian Bangla*, "Master's Status for Top Qawmi Degree: Towards legal recognition," August 14, 2018, Dhaka, Retrieved from: <https://asianbangla.com/2018/08/14/masters-status-for-top-qawmi-degree-towards-legal-recognition/>

⁹⁰ *The Daily Observer*, "Qawmi Madrasa's Dawrae Hadith gets recognition, Cabinet approves draft bill", Published: Tuesday, 14 August, 2018. Retrieved from: <https://www.observerbd.com/news.php?id=153457>

⁹¹ "Draft for law related to 'Dawra-e-Hadith' finalized", *Dhaka Tribune*, June 30, 2018. Retrieved from: <https://archive.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/education/2018/06/30/draft-for-law-related-to-dawra-e-hadith-finalized>.

educational landscape in Bangladesh highlights the significance of inclusivity and diversity in establishing a comprehensive academic framework. This is seen in the acceptance of Qawmi Madrasahs and their students as vital components of the national education system.

Al-Haiatul Ulya Lil-Jamiatil Qawmia Bangladesh is the governing body overseeing the government-recognized unified Qawmi Madrasah Education Board of Bangladesh and the Qawmi Institutions inside the country.⁹² This institution possesses the jurisdiction to administer nationwide examinations and grant degrees, serving as a crucial entity in the educational framework of Bangladesh. The unified system, consisting of six Qawmi Madrasah Education Boards - Tanjeemul Madarisid Diniya Bangladesh, Azad Deeni Edaraye Talim Bangladesh, Anjumane Ittehadul Madaris Bangladesh, Befaul Madarisil Arabia Bangladesh, Jatiya Deeni Madrasa Shikkha Board Bangladesh, and Befaul Madarisil Qawmia Gauhordanga Bangladesh, was officially acknowledged by the government on April 11, 2017.⁹³ The government's decision to consider a Dawra-e-Hadith certificate from a Qawmi Madrasah equivalent to a master's degree in Islamic studies and Arabic, based on the ideas of Darul Uloom Deoband, has generated discussions among education experts. Although this action aimed to simplify and establish a uniform Qawmi education system, concerns were voiced about the differences between Qawmi education and the education followed by the majority. Prominent scholars stressed the importance of revising the curricula of Qawmi Madrasahs to conform to contemporary educational trends before considering their certificates equivalent to advanced academic degrees.⁹⁴

Critics contended that the unique characteristics of Qawmi education, which places significant emphasis on religious studies, presented difficulties in aligning their credentials with conventional academic degrees. The discussion on acknowledging Qawmi certificates as equal to traditional degrees has emphasised the necessity for educational restructuring and amalgamation between the Qawmi and general education

⁹² "First Dawra-e-Hadith exams May 15", *The Independent*, Dhaka. 17 April 2017. Access: 27 February 2020. Retrieved from: <https://www.theindependentbd.com/post/90454>.

⁹³ "Qawmi Madrasa Dawrae Hadith gets recognition", *The Daily Star*, BSS. 11 April 2017. Retrieved from: <https://www.thedailystar.net/country/qawmi-madrasa-dawrae-hadith-gets-recognition-1389823>.

⁹⁴ *Dhaka Tribune*, "Experts: Modernizing Qawmi education more important than upgrading certificates," published on October 7, 2018. Retrieved from: <https://archive.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/education/2018/10/07/experts-modernizing-qawmi-education-more-important-than-upgrading-certificates>.

systems.⁹⁵ Proposals were put forward to form an education committee of Islamic scholars and researchers to modernise the Qawmi education system by integrating science, English, and Arabic disciplines.⁹⁶ As the discussion continues over recognising and incorporating Qawmi education into Bangladesh's more comprehensive educational system, pursuing high-quality education and inclusiveness remains a key focus. Ensuring a harmonious blend of traditional values and technological advancements, bridging gaps in the curriculum, and expanding opportunities for students in Qawmi Madrasahs are crucial factors to consider when determining the trajectory of education in the nation.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The Qawmi madrasah system in Bangladesh embodies a diverse and intricate blend of historical, traditional, and community-oriented education. These institutions, which have a strong foundation in the Islamic academic tradition, have undergone adaptation and evolution over centuries to address the evolving demands of Bangladeshi society. As we wrap up this dissertation, Qawmi madrasahs will undoubtedly persist in playing a crucial role in creating the educational and cultural scenery of the country. Qawmi madrasahs function as strongholds of Islamic identity, safeguarding and spreading the teachings of the Quran, Hadith, and Islamic jurisprudence. These institutions offer a dedicated environment for exploring and examining traditional Islamic disciplines, aiming to preserve and transmit the extensive intellectual legacy of the Muslim world to succeeding cohorts. These institutions play a role in the spiritual and moral growth of Bangladeshi Muslims by creating scholars and religious leaders. With the growing globalization and interconnection of the globe, Qawmi madrasahs are confronted with the task of modifying their curricula and teaching methods to equip students for the requirements of the 21st century adequately. While upholding their primary emphasis on Islamic education, these institutions must devise strategies to integrate contemporary courses and competencies without compromising their fundamental values and beliefs. Continuing changes and discussions over the future of Qawmi education will be essential in achieving this delicate equilibrium.

A notable characteristic of Qawmi madrasahs is their profound affiliation with nearby communities. These organizations generally fund their operations through public

⁹⁵ *Asian bangla*, Dhaka, "Master's Status for Top Qawmi Degree: Towards legal recognition," August 14, 2018. Retrieved from: <https://asianbangla.com/2018/08/14/masters-status-for-top-qawmi-degree-towards-legal-recognition/>

⁹⁶ *Dhaka Tribune*, *Op. cit.*

donations, Zakat, and endowments. They function as central locations for social and religious activities. They offer students complimentary instruction, sustenance, and accommodation, guaranteeing universal access to information. Qawmi madrasahs enhance social cohesiveness and well-being in Bangladeshi society by promoting community and shared purposes. As Bangladesh progresses, the significance of Qawmi madrasahs in influencing the trajectory of Islamic education will grow in importance. These institutions must devise strategies to adjust to emerging problems while upholding their fundamental beliefs and principles. Qawmi madrasahs can strive for a future in which Islamic education is smoothly incorporated into Bangladeshi society by actively participating in productive discussions with policymakers, educators, and the general public. Despite the existence of problems and controversies, it is evident that these institutions will persist in safeguarding Islamic identity, promoting community involvement, and influencing the trajectory of Islamic education in the nation. The contributions of Qawmi madrasahs will play a crucial role in securing a future for Bangladesh that upholds and celebrates Islamic values and beliefs.

Although there are significant differences in many elements of contemporary living, the globe is undergoing rapid transformation due to scientific and technological progress. It is imperative to enhance the curriculum of the Qawmi madrasahs to guarantee their pertinence and efficacy. The subsequent suggestions are formulated based on the discoveries, deliberation, and deductions:

- The curriculum of Qawmi madrasahs should be updated to include contemporary disciplines such as science, mathematics, and technology in addition to traditional religious instruction. This will empower students to make meaningful contributions to religious and economic progress by the demands of contemporary society.
- During the curriculum reform process, it is essential to maintain the integrity of the key subjects of Dars-e-Nizami without making any alterations. Introducing vocational subjects and current skills can improve the chances of finding employment, particularly in Arabic-speaking countries where students are highly skilled in Arabic.
- Qawmi madrasahs, at a more advanced level, should strive to achieve a harmonious blend of religious topics and technological and vocational education. Subjects like Tafsir, Hadith, Adab (Arabic Literature), and Fiqh can be enhanced by using current technological instruction.

- A career-oriented curriculum can be established by incorporating disciplines that align with general education. This would enable Qawmi madrasah students to compete with mainstream students in diverse professional domains effectively.
- Teacher training and curriculum development should be prioritized. Use the current commercial and public sector infrastructure to deliver thorough training for madrasah instructors, ensuring they possess the necessary skills to teach religious and modern subjects properly.

By implementing these recommendations, Qawmi madrasahs can ensure that their graduates possess a deep understanding of religious studies and modern skills, enabling them to be more competitive and proficient in different professional fields.