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Understanding Madrassah Education and Its Impacts

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PhD

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Understanding Madrassah Education and Its Impacts
A Case Study of Chach (Attock) region in Pakistan

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Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Bradford Centre for International Development
University of Bradford

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Declaration

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I declared that this thesis is substantially my own original work and has not been submitted in any form for an award at any other academic institution. Where material has been drawn from other sources, this has been fully acknowledged.
Abstract

**Understanding madrassah education and its impact**
A case study of the Chach (Attock) region in Pakistan

In recent years, madrassahs and their education systems in many developing countries - and specifically in Pakistan - have attracted much attention from researchers and policymakers at the local and international level. The main focus has been on the reform of madrassahs, their political activism and, more specifically, studies which attempted to investigate their alleged links with militancy. Moreover, madrassah education has been questioned for its relevance to the contemporary needs of individuals and societies. However, despite focusing on many dimensions of madrassahs, few studies have tried to understand madrassah education within the economic, socio-religious and cultural context of Pakistan. A number of publications have reached generalised conclusions about the madrassah education system in Pakistan.

Inspired by this, and by adopting qualitative research methods, this study focused on two main research questions: (a) Why do people prefer a madrassah education and what type of factors shape their preference? (b) What are the socio-economic impacts of a madrassah education on individuals and at community level? Researcher conducted a field study of more than six months in the Chach (Attock) region of Pakistan. Different students, parents, madrassah teachers and key informants were interviewed to collect required informations.

The findings of the study revealed that different economic backgrounds, parental religious interests, individuals’ personal religious interests, and social norms and cultural values shape preferences for a madrassah education. Moreover, this study also revealed that there exist various socio-economic impacts of a madrassah education on individuals and at community level. However, a madrassah education has often caused conflict in communities. The study shows that while a madrassah education creates barriers to achieving modern skills and incomes, its social benefits are valuable for those living within socio-cultural constraints in rural areas. Specifically, it enhances the social status and agency of women. The study also shows that madrassah education is an opportunity for those who otherwise would have no other option to study. This study concludes that there is a need to re-think madrassah education within the economic, social, cultural and religious context of Pakistan. This study has practical implications for practitioners, madrassahs and researchers, and it also suggests further research related to madrassah education.

**Key Words:** Madrassahs, education, Islamic education, socio-economic impact, qualitative research, community, education and development, community, Chach, Pakistan.
Dedication

To all my family
&
Atifa Khan & Amna Khan
for
your love and patience
Acknowledgements

First of all praise and thanks to Almighty Allah - the most merciful and the most beneficent; who provided me chance for doing this study and gave me strength and skills to complete this thesis.

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Acronyms

CA  Capability Approach
EFA  Education for All
FBOs  Faith-based organisations
GOP  Government of Pakistan
JI  Jamat-e-Islami
IPS  Institute of Policy Studies
MMA  Mutahida Majlas-e-Amal
NPE  Net Primary Enrolment
NGOs  Non-Government Organisations
UN  United Nation
Chapter one

Introduction

1.1 The madrassah\textsuperscript{1} debate: background of the study

This study is an empirical attempt to investigate the madrassah education in Chach region in Pakistan. Madrassah means the traditional Islamic education\textsuperscript{2}, which exists in many developing countries and elsewhere. Madrassahs are the centuries-old Islamic institutions, which are well known as providers of Islamic education (chapter four provides more detail on the history of madrassahs and their education system). The madrassah education system is also common in South Asia, and in Pakistan, specifically; it has become a part of education. Madrassah institutions are commonly understood to aim for the preservation and transmission of Islamic knowledge. They have also been seen as stereotypical and backward, because of their resistance to bring modern changes into their education system (Sikand, 2005; Farish et al., 2008; Rahman, 2009). Until ten years ago, madrassahs, like the other religious organisations, were marginalised, if not ignored, in the development discourse (Clarke, 2006; Haynes, 2007; Clarke and Jennings, 2008). However, they have became part of the contemporary debate about education in many developing countries (Sikand, 2005).

\textsuperscript{1} Madrassahs ( or Madaris) is the Plural of Madrassah ( or Madrasa).

\textsuperscript{2} Traditional Islamic education means, an Islamic education system which is based on the Islamic curriculum.
During the last few years madrassahs, and the education provided by them, have received significant attention, and - since the incident of 11 September 2001 - they have become a source of major concern at national and global levels, because of their alleged links with militancy and extremism (Hefner and Zaman, 2007; Fair, 2008; Ali, 2009). Immediately after this incident, madrassahs become the subject of intense debate in national and international media, of widespread interest to policy makers and researchers, and a common topic of discussion in the public sphere (Malik, 2008). Madrassah education in Pakistan is seen as being out dated, and the main cause of Jihad\(^3\), militancy and other religious conflict (Stern, 2000; ICG, 2002; Candland, 2005; Haqqani, 2005; Berkley, 2007; Jalal, 2008; Ali, 2009). This concern is related not only to the perceived links madrassahs have with conflict, but also to their particular system of education and its implications in the contemporary perspectives (Ali, 2009). Many questions have been raised about the character of madrassah education, for example, the relevance of its religious nature for the socio-economic conditions of society, and the future prospects of those who attain a madrassah education (ICG, 2002; Rahman, 2004; Candland, 2005). However, despite the recognition of the importance of madrassahs little empirical work has been done, other than some anecdotal accounts and general observation reports (Ali, 2008).

Madrassahs in Pakistan have a long history (see chapter four for a detailed discussion on madrassah education in Pakistan), and they are deeply embedded in the religious and local socio-cultural context. Moreover, these institutions have now become part of contemporary civil society - involved in

\(^3\) Jihad means, holy war or a war in the name of God
range of activities, including education, politics and welfare work (Riaz, 2008; Ali, 2009). However, the relationship between madrassahs and the state in Pakistan has been a controversial issue for long time. Since 1980s madrassahs have rapidly increased in number, both in rural and urban areas in Pakistan (Malik, 2008; Riaz, 2008).

Madrassahs in Pakistan have undergone a long reform process, and many efforts have been made to change the education system they operate (also see section 2.7 in chapter four). Unfortunately, many of the reforms of the madrassah education system have proved unsuccessful, for example, the failure of recent model madrassah project (Bano, 2007; Hefner and Zaman, 2007; Riaz, 2008). This mainly happened because the historical background, and local context, of the madrassahs was ignored - with reform agendas defined and imposed on them by politicians (Riaz, 2008).

During the last decade, many studies have been conducted related to madrassah education in Pakistan (ICG, 2002; Candland, 2005; Fair, 2008; Ali, 2009; Winthrop and Graff, 2010). These studies have mainly focused on investigating a link between madrassahs and militancy, although there have been some policy-oriented studies as well (Winthrop and Graff, 2010). Many assumptions would appear to have been made about the rise of madrassah education, and also about its impacts in the society (Farish et al., 2008), without theoretical basis. There seem to be many problems associated with the madrassah education system. This lack of understanding is important as an increasing number of studies indicate that the religious education provided by the madrassah is not appropriate, or less effective, than formal education (Bano, 2010a). These studies rarely consider madrassahs as social institutions,
for example, as they might other forms of educational institutions. And the local context of madrassahs has been ignored; that is, the norms, religious beliefs and culture values - as well as state, national and international political forces - which influence them (Riaz, 2008). These studies also fail to understand the historical background and the aims and objectives of madrassah education, which are different from the purpose of formal (secular) education (Sikand, 2005).

It can clearly be seen that research relating to madrassahs is underdeveloped - suggesting there is a need to go beyond the assumptions to investigate the knowledge gaps, by providing empirical evidence. However, this type of study requires a sound understanding of madrassahs, for example, their historical background, their aims and objectives, the local context where they function, their education system, and the impacts of this type of education at the individual and society level. This has been the inspiration for my interest in undertaking this study, in order to understand madrassah education and its impacts in Pakistan.

When considering madrassahs, within the broader development debate, it became clear that there were many different theoretical perspectives which could provide the foundation for empirical investigation. Theories related to the philosophy of Islamic education help to provide an understanding of the aims and objectives of madrassah education. They also help to clarify that how the madrassah education is different from formal education. A detailed theoretical discussion provides different critical views of Islamic education, as well as critiques by Islamic scholars of formal education. In addition, this study explores madrassah education in different developing countries, in order to understand
the varying characteristics and practices of madrassah education. Instead of relying on one particular theory of education and development, this study discusses alternatives conceptual frameworks. A detailed discussion of the human capital approach facilitates an explanation of how madrassah education is inadequate for the development of human capital to achieve economic goals. However, education and human development theory and the capability approach advocate a different point of view. Broadly, the human development and capability approaches are more flexible for education provision. It recognises that people have different attributes and that they live in different contexts, so, consequently, they have different needs of education. Various factors will influence their education preferences. Therefore, capability approach provided a good platform from which to investigate madrassah education, from a human development perspective.

This is a case study of madrassah education in the Chach region, in the Attock district, of the Punjab province in Pakistan. Chach is a rural area, which has inherited a long-established tradition of a madrassah education system. Male and female madrassahs are very active in Chach. Moreover, there are different sector of madrassahs, such as Dubandi, Brelivi, Ahl-e-Hadis, Jamat-e-Islami and Shia are providing Islamic education at the same geographic locations (section 4.6.1 more detail discussion on sectarian divide of madrassah education) . Commonly, these madrassahs are community initiatives, working independently of the state. They are usually not registered with the government. These rural madrassahs provide an ideal environment for this study to investigate various aspects of traditional madrassah education provided at one location.
This study used a qualitative approach to look at different aspects of madrassah education at the grassroots level. Instead of providing statistical analysis, more emphasis was placed on analysing perceptions and the views of participants in the study area. This approach provided an opportunity to gather information from people inside and outside the madrassahs, in order to answer the research questions posed by this study. In addition, it provided clear information about different religious, and socio-economic and cultural factors - an understanding of which were critical to know the realities of the madrassah education phenomenon in Chach.

Based on the study findings this thesis argues that not only the poverty, but other social, cultural, and religious factors are also important which shapes the preference for a madrassah education (see chapter five for detailed discussion). Findings also revealed that regardless of their socio-economic condition, many people in Chach, value the madrassah as a way to achieve religious goals (such as to achieve the will of God) or some other social benefit (Such as, to achieve good social status in the community which is associated with madrassah education). However, this study also revealed that a madrassah education may create barriers later in life for people from low income households who were attached to the madrassah because it could provide an inexpensive route to education - rather than because they had genuine religious interest. On the other hand, this study argues that a madrassah education is an opportunity for many who are living within socio-economic constraints and cannot attain formal education, and also for those who particularly want a religious education. Specially, it becomes more evident in the case of girls in the rural areas like Chach, that madrassah education is an opportunity for them.
Secondly, this study revealed the differing socio-economic impact of a madrassah education on individuals and at community level (see chapter six), which previous studies failed to recognise. On the basis of these findings, this thesis argues that a madrassah education have unfavourable impacts on the skills, and therefore on the economic situations of individuals. However, there are significant social advantages of a madrassah education, which makes it attractive for some parents and individuals. Similarly, this study exposed some important social advantages of madrassah education for the community. But it was also found that sometimes a madrassah education becomes the reason for sectarian conflict and violence. This study contributes to various dimensions of the existing debate about madrassah education, and identifies the capacity for future research in this area.

1.2 Aims and objectives of the study

The specific purpose of this research was to understand the madrassah education system and its impacts in the Chach region4 of Pakistan. As mentioned above, there is an ongoing debate about the madrassah education system in Pakistan; however, there is a scarcity of empirical evidence. Therefore, in order to explore the reality of madrassah education the study focused on the following objectives. Achievement of these objectives will help to answer the research questions which underpin the overall investigation. This study developed a framework to meet the following objectives:

---

4 A justification for the selection of the Chach region for this study will be discussed in detail in chapter three
(a) To identify the different factors that shape the preferences for a madrassah education in the case study area.

(b) To understand the socio-economic impacts of a madrassah education on individuals in Chach.

(c) To understand the impacts of madrassah education at the community level.

1.3 The research questions

Through the case study of madrassahs in the Chach area this research sought to address the following questions:

(a) Why do people prefer a madrassah education and what type of factors shape their preference?

This question seeks to identify the factors (like income, religious belief, social norms and cultural values) which shape a preference for a madrassah education, and to explore whether going to a madrassah school is by choice or necessity. This question will aid understanding of the views of different people in the case study area, in relation to how they value, long-term, a madrassah education.

(b) What the socio-economic impacts are of a madrassah education on individuals and at community level?

This question aims to identify different impacts of madrassah education on individuals as well as at the community level. Many aspects of a madrassah
education are considered, for example, what type of skills do students gain from a madrassah education? What are the job prospects of madrassah graduates? What are the social impacts of madrassah education? Similarly, what are the impacts at community level? In general, this question attempts to identify a clear picture of the traditional Islamic madrassah education system and its impacts - from socio-economic development point of view.

1.4 Significance of the study

In Pakistan the role of formal education, from the socio-economic development perspective, has been much discussed and analysed for many years. However, little empirical research has been conducted into madrassah education. Specifically, studies related to madrassah education in rural areas, and those which explore madrassah education from the human development perspective, have been very rare. Therefore, this study offers an important empirically-based understanding of madrassah education in Pakistan. Moreover, the case study of madrassahs in Chach aids an understanding of madrassah education at the grass-roots level. Madrassahs have, in recent years, attracted considerable attention; however, there are many misconceptions of about madrassah education. Therefore, this research makes a significant contribution to the existing work in multi-disciplinary discussions about madrassah education, and also in the field of development studies. This study explores madrassah education in different ways, in order to provide a foundation for development organisations, international donors, policy makers and government to understand the embedded nature of madrassah education in Pakistan. In addition, findings can be used to help devise meaningful policy for madrassah reform in Pakistan - where public education is inadequate and the full potential
of madrassahs, to provide education, is under-appreciated. This study will also prove useful for madrassahs eager to improve their own education systems.

Previous studies have argued that poverty is the only reason for the increase in madrassah education in Pakistan (Singer, 2001; ICG, 2002; Khalid, 2002). However, these studies often ignored the madrassahs’ socio-cultural and religious context. Therefore, this study emphasises that poverty is not the only reason but some other people are attracted to the education Madrassahs’ provide.

In addition, when analysing madrassah education, previous studies only considered the economic outcomes of it - and generally concluded that madrassah graduates do not have enough skills to deal with many challenges of the globalise world (Candland, 2005; Fair, 2008). These studies overlooked many aspects of a madrassah education, which may be valuable to individuals and communities. By contrast, this study has analysed madrassah education beyond this limited way and discovered that how it can help to achieve personal and collective goals. Thus, this study argues that local and international development institutions need to consider madrassahs as an existing educational reality, and include them in the development process. This research also makes a significant contribution to educational debates within development studies. For example, by focusing on the madrassah, this study aids an understanding of the role of non-state education providers. It is also important to mention that this is the first in-depth, empirical research that looks at madrassah education in the Chach area. Thus, it adds to the development discourse - providing empirical information about madrassah education in rural
areas of Pakistan. In this way, the study helps to develop a comprehensive understanding of madrasah education from a development perspective.

1.5 Limitations of the study

This study is not without limitations. The first limitation is that it is context specific, focusing as it does on the Chach area of Pakistan. Therefore, the study did not examine madrasah education in other parts of Pakistan. The information gathered, and the findings, therefore reflect madrasah education in a specific area - which may be difficult to generalise for madrassahs in Pakistan at large, or madrasah education elsewhere.

The second limitation is that the research focuses on a specific aspect of madrassahs – that is the impacts of madrassah education in rural areas. It is important to mention that this study does not provide comparisons between rural and urban madrassahs, nor between madrassahs and formal education systems. There are, therefore, many other dimensions of madrassahs which need to be examined – for example, the madrassah-state relationship, in order to properly evaluate the impact of the curriculum reform process in Pakistan and the madrassah-militancy link. This study, however, specifically focuses on the educational aspects of madrassahs, although other matters are discussed to clarify the findings.

The third limiting factor is that the research is methodology specific. Due to limited time and resources the information collected, and findings obtained, is based on a small sample of madrassahs. Moreover, there was no reliable

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5 As in Pakistan many urban madrassah are different from rural madrassahs, in relation to their context, resources, and curriculum.
statistical data about madrassahs available in Pakistan, and also madrassah authorities were hesitant to provide facts and figures, due to current issues related to madrassahs in Pakistan. All these factors must be recognised as the limitations of this study. However, different ethnographic methods were used to collect the information required to answer the research questions.

1.6 Structure of the thesis

This thesis comprises seven chapters.

Chapter two provides an insight into the existing literature, which helped develop a theoretical framework for this study. First, this chapter will contrast the Islamic and Western point of views regarding Islamic education, in order to provide an understanding of the context of the madrassah. Secondly, there will be a brief discussion about madrassah education in different developing countries, which will aid understanding of the varying practices of madrassah education. This chapter will also discuss madrassah education in the contemporary perspectives and explore alternative conceptual frameworks of education and socio-economic development. The literature review in this chapter identifies a research gap, and also provides a theoretical and conceptual framework for conducting an empirical investigation into a madrassah education.

Chapter three discusses the methods and journey of this research in detail. Initially, it focuses on the philosophical background of the study and also discusses the research design adopted. It gives an overview of the criteria for the selection of the research site, and the sampling methods applied. This chapter also provides information about the multiple data collection methods
used, and how the data was analysed. Detailed information is provided on the course of the field work and there is a discussion of my position as a researcher. This chapter also discusses how I dealt with different ethical issues.

Chapter four explains the context of madrassah education in Pakistan. It provides a detailed historical background of madrassah education from its origins to the present day. In addition, this chapter also provides a detailed profile of the growth of madrassahs in Pakistan, and the role of madrassah education in Pakistani society. This chapter discusses the institutional structure, funding resources, enrolment trends, curriculum, and teaching methods of madrassah education. And it illustrates how the madrassah education system is different from other types of education. It also highlights the sectarian divide of madrassah education. This chapter includes a brief discussion on the madrassah reform process in Pakistan; it also highlights the emerging trend for female madrassah education, especially in rural areas. And there is an overview examination of the link between madrassahs and militancy and terrorism. The final part of this chapter discusses madrassah outreach services and their voluntary and welfare work at the community level. This chapter argues that madrassah education is an existing reality in Pakistan, which demands the attention of researchers and policy makers.

Chapter five seeks to answer one of the research questions, that is: *Why do people prefer a madrassah education, and what type of factors shape their preference?* Through analysing interview responses carefully, this chapter reveals evidence of the different factors that impact preferences for madrassah education. This chapter examines the realities of madrassah education at the local level and argues that poverty is not the only reason for the increased
number of students in madrassahs, and also the growing number of madrassahs. It argues that the other factors which impact on choice of a madrassah education include, for example, cultural values, social norms, religious beliefs, parental preference, and personal religious goals. Through theoretical reflection, this chapter argues that people from different backgrounds have different reasons for choosing for a madrassah education. In its conclusion, this chapter argues that madrassahs enable people in constrained situations to gain an education.

Chapter six analyses the socio-economic impacts of madrassah education in the Chach region, and highlights different themes by analysing the interviews and observation data. This analysis uncovered different results, related to the impacts of madrassah education on individuals and community. This chapter also revealed that madrassah graduates have limited skills - which may create obstacles to their entry into the labour market, and to an improvement in their economic condition. But the research also reveals that the social impacts of madrassah education are significant - enhancing graduate capabilities in others ways, such as, through social benefits. The analysis explains that within a constrained environment a madrassah education can improve the lives of girls – empowering them to practice their freedom of choice and agency. At the community level, the analysis reveals broader social impacts of a madrassah education. For example, the role of Ulama\textsuperscript{6} in the community for dealing with different social issues. Findings also revealed that madrassahs can create strong socio-religious groups of people, which are active in welfare work. But, unfortunately, it should also be acknowledged that, due to sectarian differences,

\textsuperscript{6} The plural of Aalim, meaning an Islamic scholar. A person who has completed a madrassah education.
a madrassah education can become a reason for community conflict. In conclusion, this chapter argues that despite being of limited economic benefit, the social impacts of a madrassah education can be considerable, helping to enhance different capabilities of the poor and religious people.

Chapter Seven summarises the preceding chapters and presents the conclusion of the study, including the implications of the findings about the madrassah education in Chach. By revisiting the research questions, it demonstrates how the study has addressed the issues raised. This chapter also argues that a more focused analysis of the different dimensions of the madrassah education system would help aid understanding and encourage better use of the largely untapped potential of madrassah education in Pakistan. This chapter also provides some suggestions for future research.
Chapter Two

Madrassah education: A literature review, theoretical and conceptual framework

2.1 Introduction

Chapter one gave a brief discussion of madrassah education and related issues. This chapter explores the existing literature further, to explain various concepts that underpin the madrassah education system. One of the aims of this chapter is to provide a conceptualisation of madrassah education, that is, what does madrassah education mean and how this relates to the conception of Islamic education? It also provides an overview of the philosophy of Islamic education which explains the aims and objectives of Islamic education and illustrates whether and how it is different from secular or formal education. While doing so, it brings attention to the views of the critics of both sides of scholarships for each type of education. Moreover, In order to further understand the context of the present study, an attempt has also been made to explore the diversity of madrassah education in some developing countries. Secondly, this chapter will discuss the issues and challenges of madrassah education. Thirdly, to understand the notion and insights of madrassah education from human development perspectives, this chapter will explore literature on alternative conceptual frameworks of education and development. This will help to understand the impacts of madrassah education in contemporary perspectives. Finally, this chapter will conclude the whole discussion.
2.2 Conceptualising madrassah education

2.2.1 Defining the madrassahs

The word ‘madrassah’ is originally derived from an Arabic word ‘Dars’ which means lesson or an instruction. Thus, the word madrassah has been used to refer to a ‘centre of learning’ that maybe religious as well as a formal school or a college. Historically, the word ‘madrassah’ has contained different meanings (Sikand, 2005), for example during the seventh century – when Islam was in it’s early phases, typically this term has been referred to the traditional Islamic educational institutions that provide Islamic education at different levels (Hefner and Zaman, 2007; Riaz, 2008; Ali, 2009). In this way, ‘madrassah’ is a generic term used for all type of Islamic educational institutions offering different subjects from basic Quranic learning classes to the teaching of ‘Hadith’ studies and ‘Fiqh’ (Islamic Law) (Bulliet, 1993; Ali, 2009). In the non-Arabic countries such as in South Asia, madrassahs are the exclusive institutions which provide intermediate and higher levels of Islamic education. These institutions have been differentiated from those institutions that provide basic Islamic education, for example, basic Quran learning and ‘Hifz’ classes at mosques or home-based Quran teaching centres for children in their early years. (Robinson, 2000). However, the Islamic educational institutions that provide a formal curriculum consisting different religious subjects, other than basic Islamic teaching, can be divided into different categories. For example, the institute that provides Islamic education from secondary to tenth grade is simply called madrassah, whereas the word ‘Darululoom’ is used for an institute that provides Islamic education up to twelfth year, and ‘Jamia’ is an institute that provides

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7 Sayings of Prophet Muhammad
curricula that equals college and university levels (Riaz, 2008). In short, any institution that provides Islamic education beyond basic learning of Quran can be called as madrassah. The basic aim of all types of Islamic madrassahs is to produce ‘Aalim’\(^8\) who can serve ‘Muslim Ummah’ (Islamic Nation) for their religious guidance (Bano, 2007). Madrassahs are not uniform in their types and are different in nature and functionality all over the world (Sikand, 2005; Berkley, 2007). In South Asia and specifically in Pakistan, the prefix ‘dini’ (religious) has been commonly used to symbolize an institute that is devoted specifically for the provision of traditional Islamic education (Sikand, 2005). In the recent debates of madrassah education, many studies commonly misunderstand the real context of madrassah education, and low level Islamic teaching centres have also been categorised as madrassahs. Therefore, at this point it is important to clarify that the focus of this study is only on the madrassahs which explicitly provide formal Islamic subjects and are working independently without any affiliation or control of the government.

Since the main emphasis of madrassah education is on the transmission of traditional Islamic education, therefore to understand the madrassah education and its goals, it is necessary to have an overview of Islamic education. Therefore, the following section provides a detailed discussion on the conception of Islamic education, its philosophical perspectives and its aims and objectives. It will help to understand the context of madrassah education, and how it is different from the formal education.

\(^8\) Aalim is a term in Urdu used for male Islamic scholar, plural of Aalim is Ulama
2.2.2 An Islamic concept of education

This section aims to answer basic questions related to Islamic education. For example, what is Islamic education; what is the overall goal of Islamic education; is it different from modern education; and why does it always comprise of religious subjects and carry a religious disposition?

‘Islam’ is commonly characterised as a ‘religion of book’ – the holy Quran. Therefore, the Quran is regarded as the sacred word of God and source of knowledge. Every Muslim acquires some basic knowledge of God’s words, and also considers practising this knowledge as an act of worship (Sikand, 2005; Hefner & Zaman, 2007). In the other words, ‘Islam’ is the complete submission to the will of ‘God’, and Muslim is a person who does this submission. Hence, the ‘Quran’ is central to Islam and Islamic knowledge and it plays a fundamental role in all types of Islamic education. In addition to the Quran, Hadith - the sayings of Prophet Muhammad is another important source of Islamic knowledge which contains an important value in the Islamic education system (Sikand, 2002). It means Islamic epistemology is deeply rooted in religion and spirituality (Al-Zeera, 2001).

Because such an emphasis is placed on the holy texts in seeking knowledge, the acquisition of Islamic education which is supposed to be an environment (for example, madrassah education) that fosters this pursuit is also important in Islamic life. There is also a basic link between Islamic education and its practice in daily life, and for this reason, education in the Islamic traditions is seen as being inseparable from Muslims’ life. Therefore, attainment of Islamic knowledge and learning for every believer is exalted in Islam. Hadith texts also
contain numerous exhortations and encourage believers to acquire knowledge as a religious duty\(^9\). As a result, transmission of knowledge has always been very common of Islamic history and traditions. Thus, establishment of an Islamic educational system is inherited and an essential part of Islamic society (Sikand, 2005).

Islamic education is aimed towards the development of a person as a whole. Its scope includes the spiritual as well as intellectual aspects of life (Erfan and Valie, 1995; Sahadat, 1997; Al-Attas, 1980). Contrary to western education with its emphasis on materialistic and rationalistic epistemology which focuses on intellectual development, Islamic education is geared towards the development of soul, spirit, heart and intellect (Boyle, 2004). Moreover, according to Al-Zeera (2001), the concept of Islamic education lies in its universality and comprehensiveness, that is, Islamic education provides a complete code of life which is multilevel and multidimensional and not restricted to a specific time and place. On the one hand, believers can understand it and consider it as a charter for dealing with their spiritual, personal, social, economic and political lives. Whereas, on the other hand, the wholeness of Islamic education emphasises an understanding of one’s role in the community and his/her relationship with the universe around him (ibid). This is all deemed as acts of worship, for which there is a concept of reward from God (Zia, 2003). Another aim of Islamic education...
education is to prepare human beings for the pursuit of good in the worldly life as well as for the life hereafter (Sarwar, 2001).

Muslims commonly recognise two types of knowledge; the rational or humanly constructed knowledge (ilm-ul-aqliyya) and the revealed knowledge (ilm-ul-naqliyya). In the Islamic belief, the revealed knowledge is the true knowledge that comes from Quran and Hadith, and which is different from rational knowledge. Furthermore, in Islam attainment of knowledge or education is not regarded as a means of materialistic quest, but the main objective is to understand and achieve the will of ‘God’ and to lead one’s life according to it. Muslims commonly believe that this type of knowledge is the only way for successful life here and for life after death (Wan Daud, 1989; Sarwar, 2001; Sikand, 2005). In the discussion of epistemological problems of contemporary Islamic education, Halstead (2004) has questioned the emphasis of Islamic education on revealed knowledge and ignoring the rational knowledge. However, it is striking to note that both in Quran and Hadith, knowledge is seen as one comprehensive whole and there is no rigid division mentioned between ‘religious’ and ‘worldly’ or ‘secular’ knowledge. During the medieval times there was no such difference between worldly and Islamic knowledge, still many scientific developments were made by Islamic scholars during those times (Sikand, 2005). However, at the later stage of Islamic history, a gulf between worldly and Islamic knowledge has been created (ibid). Whilst, focusing on this issue, Al-Zeera (2001) noted that, neither an idealistic epistemology which considers only a person’s soul and spirit, nor pure materialistic and rationalistic epistemology is appropriate for Muslim educational approach. Al-Zeera (2001,
p.78) further argues that ‘an Islamic epistemology is required to fulfil the needs of both the religious and material dimensions of life.

The above discussion on the conception of Islamic education explains reasons for the establishments of madrassah education. Unfortunately, the situation of present day madrassah education shows that by making a rigid distinction between ‘religious’ and ‘worldly’ education, many traditional madrassahs have forgotten the real path of Islamic education, which has been discussed above. Merry (2007) argues that, this type of educational divide creates obstacles for one to embrace socio-economic and political life; furthermore, it creates conflict with one’s civic responsibilities and the society in which one lives.

The following discussion now turns to the philosophy of Islamic education in order to provide more in-depth understanding and insight about the aims and objectives of Islamic education, and thus the madrassah education.

2.2.3 Philosophy of Islamic education: an overview

In the context of this study it is important to discuss the philosophy of Islamic education, as it is believed that the philosophical realisation is intertwined with the features of an education system (Farid, 2005). Therefore, discussion in this section seeks to present an overview of the philosophical considerations of Islamic education to provide an understanding of the aims and objectives underpinning the Islamic education system. This discussion will also specifically provide grounds to understand how these conceptions play an important part in shaping the characteristics and context of independent madrassah education system. Moreover, this discussion will explain how the philosophy of Islamic
education is different from western concepts of formal (secular or liberal) education.

During the mediveal Islamic civilisation, Islamic scholarships produced a significant amount of literature on the philosophy of education. An excellent education system of that time show reflections of the philosophical work of Islamic scholars (Kadi, 2006; Gunther, 2006). However, Halstead (2004) argued that Islamic civilisation has had rich tradition of education but little work was done on the philosophical side of education, and he further argued that mostly Islamic scholars were reluctant to develop a discrete philosophy of education. The existing literature on the philosophy of Islam education showed that, the early philosophical thoughts on education were fairly balanced\(^\text{10}\) until the time of Al-Ghazali (1058-1111), who stressed on the religion and sacred knowledge in education. Therefore, Al-Ghazali’s thoughts influenced the other Muslim scholars which can be still seen among the traditional Muslims (Halstead, 2004).

However, as discussed above, the Islamic concept of education is mainly based on the divine knowledge which comes from ‘the holy Quran’. Therefore the core of philosophy of Islamic education is based on the sacred knowledge (Merry, 2007; Hassan et al., 2010). According to Hassan et al (2010), Islamic philosophy of education encourages the human beings to know and realise their creation, their responsibility and they should also manage their act according to the will of God. Similarly, according to Sahadat (Sahadat, 1997), philosophy of

\(^{10}\)For example, Ibn Shanun (817-870) and Al-Farabi (d.950) wrote about the modern curriculum and teaching methods, Ibn Sina (980-1037) emphasised on inclusive learning (Gunther, 2006). Similarly, Al-Kindi emphasised on reasoning in Islamic education, and rational theology of the Mu'tazilites is among some popular philosophical discussions of Islamic scholars who asserted the importance of modern education with religious education (Hassan et al., 2010)
Islamic education provides a complete code for the preparation of life in this world and life hereafter. Al-Attas (1980: p.27) views education as ‘the recognition and acknowledgement progressively instilled into man, such that, it leads to the recognition and acknowledgement of the proper place of God in the order of being and existence’.

In Arabic there are three words or concepts frequently used when education in Islam is discussed. These three terms are, ‘Talim’ ‘Tarbiya’ and ‘Tadib’. According to Cook (1999), these three terms differ in connotation but embody the various dimensions of the educational processes as perceived by Islamic philosophy of education. These three terms also provide a useful starting point for analysing the Islamic education, and thus explain the aims and objectives of madrassah education system. The most commonly used word for education in a formal sense is Talim, which comes from the root ‘alima’ (which means to know, to perceive, to learn) relating to knowledge being sought or imparted through instruction, training and other forms of teaching. Ibn Shanun provided a comprehensive framework emphasising on the addition of different modern subjects to religious education, and also suggested teaching methods for Muslim teachers (Gunther, 2006).

‘Tarbiya’ comes from the word ‘raba’ (to increase, grow, to rear) and it refers to the spiritual and ethical development of individuals by guiding them to a state of maturity according to the will of God. The third word, Tadib basically comes from Arabic word ‘aduba’ (cultured, well-mannered) which suggests the development of social dimensions of an individual through learning a strong moral and social behaviour in the community and society at large.
Based on overlapping concepts of these three terms, Sahadat (1997) argued that Islamic education is concerned with the whole person and the development of well integrated personality, which comprises spiritual, physical, intellectual, social and moral dimensions of human life at individual as well as in the society at large. Whilst, Halstead (2004) viewed emphasis of these three terms to analyse Islamic education in similar way but using different terms, such as, (a) supporting individual development (b) increasing understanding of social and moral rules in the society and (c) transmitting knowledge. Of course, such an analysis is not exclusive in the Islamic thinking. However, as Halstead (2004: p.7) further added that ‘What creates a distinctively Islamic view of education is the application to these three dimensions of the principle that no aspect of a Muslim’s life can remain untouched by religion’. Such as, acquisition of knowledge from the perspectives of Islamic philosophy must be integrated with the divine knowledge. Also, in Islamic view of education, individual development is discussed in terms of a balanced development of all aspects of an individual’s personality leading to a higher level of religious understanding and commitment in all area of life. In Islamic view of education, the best society is the one that is organised according to the divine law (Al-Attas, 1980; Sahadat, 1997; Zeera, 2001; Halstead, 2004). According to Halstead (2004) this concept of Islamic philosophy of education contrasts with the liberal notion of education which emphasises the development of personal autonomy\(^{11}\). Halstead further added that, liberal educationalists emphasise on human agency and see the most justifiable form of society as an open, pluralist and democratic. In practice, the three terms discussed above may not be found in a pure form in many Muslim

\(^{11}\)However, Grimmitt (1987) has provided a detail discussion that how different types of religious education have varying concept of human development. For example, it is also important to mention that in the Western countries Christian religious education is not completely considered as liberal education.
countries, because of various changes and influences of new ideas within Islamic education (Halstead, 2004). In the present times, theoretical discussion on Islamic education become more controvercial, and the gulf between Islamic religious knowlede and secular knowledge has been increased. The following section provides an overview of how Islamic scholars have become more conscious of modern education and their criticism of the concept of modern or secular education.

### 2.2.4 Inadequacies in modern education from Islamic perspectives

In addition to the above, another aspect of Islamic education, which is also relevant to this study, is the ‘Islamisation of education’. It is the most widespread framework associated with the Islamic education that can be seen as a contemporary perspective of Islamic education. This approach articulated general and specific (Islamic) aims of education. This framework emphasises upon the type of education that reflects Islamic principles (that is, Islamic epistemology of education) and ultimately the will of God. It also claims to provide guidelines as to how Muslim children should be educated in the modern times (Farid, 2005; Merry, 2007). For example, there is a common argument from a group of Islamic scholars that, any education which does not include religion and spirituality within the modern education system will be one sided and will not fulfil the needs of Muslim students (Husain and Ashraf, 1979; Al-Attas, 1980; Mudawi, 1989; Sahadat, 1997; Al-Zeera, 2001; Halstead, 2004).

Notion of Islamisation of education is mainly based on the considerations of Muslims scholars that, there are many inadequacies in the modern education system which does not reflect the basic aims and objectives of Islamic
education. According to many Muslim scholars modern-day education and its curriculum development, policies and pedagogical tools are simply the products of the Western social and cultural setting and there is a need to re-define these according to the Islamic ways. As, Husain and Ashraf (1979) argued that, the greatest danger of liberal education is the creation of a variety of ideas and thoughts. Similarly, by criticising the western model of education Sahadat (1997) argues that education for Muslims should be fundamentally based on Islamic doctrine, rituals, ethics, manners that pertain to their history and culture. Ali (Ali, 1984) notes that since the current formal education system has been imported from the west, therefore, this type of education does not represent values implicit in Islam and is therefore inadequate to educate the person as a whole, modern education is insufficient and incompatible for Islamic societies as it has been cut off from the religious and spiritual values. Consequently, there are constant arguments from Islamic thinkers against modern education and its underlying philosophy. Therefore, by presenting Islamisation of education as a better and certain alternative to modern education, its proponents claim that the concept of education as Islamic education is more holistic and relevant to the Muslim children than its western ‘man-made’ concept of education (Sahadat, 1997; Cook, 1999). Similarly, Ahmed (1990) argues that by avoiding religion, modern education system neglected a vital part of a person’s life. By addressing the dilemmas of both Islamic and modern education, Farhan (1989) suggested a framework for the modern Islamic education. However, Halstead (2004) has criticised that Muslim thinkers were not successful to develop a meaningful framework for a balanced Islamic education.
From the above discussion, it is concluded that the present day traditional madrassahs have been inspired by the Islamic philosophy of education and they have inherited the Islamisation notions that are evident in the type of education they provide. However they have become more inflexible towards modern education. Therefore, critics have commonly argued that there may be profound consequences for what is to be taught in madrassahs. However, as mentioned above, no significant attempt has been made to provide a systematic guideline of how the aim and objectives of Islamic education should be achieved (Panjwani, 2004). Due to this reason, the present day Islamic education in practice is different than as it was hoped by early Islamic philosophers (Merry, 2007). Therefore, the madrassahs and other Islamic educational institutions have been challenged to define what is essentially ‘holistic’ about the education they provide. Similar question needs to be asked about the madrassah education system in South Asia and specifically in Pakistan, for example whether the madrassah education provides what is defined in Islam or what was proposed by many of the great Islamic philosophers – a balanced Islamic education.

So far, this section has provided an overview of Islamic philosophy of education, conceptions of Islamisation framework. It has also discussed some of the critiques of the modern education by the proponents of Islamic point of views. However, in the context of the present study, I propose that it is pertinent to look at the critiques of Islamic education from secularist point of views, which will help to understand the realities of Islamic (madrassah) education in more detail. Therefore, the following section provides a brief discussion on the secularist critiques of Islamic education.
2.2.4 Questioning the Islamic education from secularist perspectives

The conceptions of Islamic education discussed above have demonstrated that there are some fundamental differences between the approaches of Islamic and secular education. Therefore, criticisms from secular points of view raised many questions about the Islamic education. According to secularist’s arguments, the theoretical and epistemological perspectives of Islamic education are seriously flawed. Initially, the opponents of Islamic education argued that the central meaning of the terms in Arabic used for education does not correspond to the central meaning of ‘education’ as described by the liberal philosophers (Halstead, 2004). Therefore, by evaluating Islamic philosophy of education, critics concluded that Islamic concept of education promotes indoctrination. As, by focusing on the rationalist tendencies, Halstead (2004; p.524) argued “independence of thought and personal autonomy do not enter into the Muslim thinking about education, and which is more focused with the progressive initiation of people into the received truths of the faith”. On similar lines, Dwyer (1998) argued that religious education not only indoctrinates students but it violates their rights of personal, physical and political liberty as well as their freedom of thoughts and expression. However, proponents of Islamic education replied to this concern as, “rationality is involved in all elements of the Islamic education, but the Islamic view of rationality is different, such as, in the liberal tradition, intellectus is held to be reason, whereas Islam considers it to be wisdom” (Bagheri and Khosravi, 2006). Also, Barrow (1981) criticised primacy of religious belief and absolutist approach of Islamic education and called it as “unprovable propositions”, and argued that Islamic education is problematic, because it is not open to critical thinking which is contradictory to formal
education process. From a liberal perspective, indoctrination in Islamic education is objectionable, because Islamic education moulds students into a predetermined conception of how they should lead their lives and inculcates specific kinds of dispositions (White, 1982), also it does little to develop children into morally autonomous adults and to liberate them from ignorance and misconceptions (ibid). Another related criticism of Islamic educational theory is concerned about its inflexible and narrow attitude about truth, as it has been argued that such dogmatism becomes the reason for intolerance towards other religious or nonreligious ideologies (Halstead, 1995).

Moreover, theoretical justification of Islamic conception of education has been critiqued as being very narrow. It has been claimed that the education conceived by Islam is only good if it inspires virtue in the individual or strengthens the community (Halstead, 2004b). Whilst, the liberal educationists argued that education and knowledge acquisition needs no justification, however, the simplest justification for education is its intrinsic aims (Downie et al., 1974; Moore, 2004). Equally, curriculum and pedagogies of Islamic education system are also on spotlight of critics. It has been often argued, that contents of Islamic education can only provide a very limited and inflexible views of religion and its meaning in the daily life (Halstead, 2004b). The primary concern regarding the curriculum of Islamic education is that, it does not equip people with modern knowledge to prepare them for productive life and other valuable socio-economic activities, and more specifically, it deeply affects certain important skills within education, such as, criticising, questioning, evaluating and making judgments (Halstead, 2004). Therefore, it is commonly argued that pure Islamic curriculum is irrelevant to the modern needs of Muslim

So, to avoid the consequences of religious education and to reduce the gulf between Islamic and liberal education, it has been suggested that religious belief should remain in the private sphere of an individual’s life and must not determine the public issues, such as education (Hirst, 1974).

Moreover, it is interesting to note that the above critiques from secular perspectives are not alone, rather critical voices from within Muslim scholars have also questioned the fundamental assumptions and process of Islamic education; the framework of ‘Islamisation of education’; and it's practice and provision. In their views the Islamic education system has generally failed to deal with the social, economic, political and many other present days problems of diverse Muslim communities in the world (Hoodbhoy, 1991; Tibi, 1995; Sorush, 1997). Similarly, it has been observed that, the proponents of Islamisation of education have been unsuccessful in providing an alternative for operating an Islamic education system in the modern and globalised world (Panjwani, 2004). For example, (Cook, 1999), while discussing the case of Egypt, mentions that there is a significant disagreement among the Muslim scholars (mainly between Ulama) on the Islamic conception of education, and that it has been rejected by certain segments in Egypt. In my view, to some extent the above discussed critiques are equally true in the case of present situation of traditional madrassah education in many parts of the world, and specifically for the madrassahs in Pakistan.

However, after a detailed discussion on the conception of Islamic education and its theoretical perspectives; and, after reviewing the critical accounts from both sides of scholarships, it is important to look at the practice of Islamic education.
I do so by reviewing the madrassah education in different developing countries. Such an exercise will help to understand the context, characteristics and diversity of madrassah education in different countries. It will also provide an understanding of how the practice of madrassah education in Pakistan is different from others and what are its impacts. Therefore, the following section provides a brief overview of madrassah education in few countries where the madrassah education is well-known.

2.3 Contextualising the madrassah education in developing countries

Trying to portray a clear picture of madrassah education is difficult due to historical shifts and transitions in roles, purposes and status of madrassahs as well as due to various changes in their education system (Park and Niyozov, 2008). As the above discussion showed that Islamic education in many Muslim majority countries is deeply rooted in religious beliefs and is largely based on strong traditional Islamic values. Existing literature also shows that in many Muslim majority countries madrassahs are prominent Islamic education providers. Moreover, in many developing countries madrassahs are working as non-state education providers, specially for children living in the remote areas (Bano, 2010b). However, the characteristics of madrassahs vary from country to country. Therefore the practices of madrassah education are diverse in different countries. Studies in different contexts have used different analytical approaches to look at madrassah (Islamic) education from different points of views. This section provides an overview of madrassah education in different developing countries where the madrassah education is prominent. That is, it will look at the characteristics of madrassah education, and also how their practices in provisions of madrassah education are different from each other.
and what are the implications in different contexts. In this regard, the main focus of this discussion will be on the madrassah education in India, Bangladesh and Indonesia.

In South Asia, India is well-known for the establishment of madrassah education system. It attracts more attention because the madrassah education in Pakistan and Bangladesh basically emerged from this region and inherits the same roots. Regardless of their diversity, in India many madrassahs are based on the traditional Islamic education system. Therefore, most of these institutions are carrying forward the type of education set by the Ulama of past generations without any significant changes. In several respects they follow specific sets of traditional values, from curriculum to teaching methods, and relationship between teacher and students. As elsewhere in the world, Islamic education in India is being imparted in several forms, both in formal madrassahs and in informal Islamic circles in the mosques and at homes. Different sector of madrassahs define their own levels and grades (Sikand, 2005). Although government madrassah boards work closely with them, many madrassahs work independently as private institutions run and organised by Ulama and remain outside the mainstream education. Like in Pakistan, Indian madrassahs too are represented by popular schools of thought, such as, Dubandi, Brelvi, Ahl-e-Hadith, Jamat-e-Islamic and Shia (chapter four discusses these sectarian divisions in more detail). These sectarian divisions are visible in their practice (Winkelmann, 2005). Dissimilarities and other limitations aside, madrassahs play a distinct role in the contemporary India, as without examining the importance of madrassahs, it is difficult to understand the present role of Muslim community in the Indian society. It is important to mention here that the role of
madrassah in India is different than similar institutions in Pakistan, for example, in Pakistan madrassahs are involved in the country politics while in India they have maintained a good distance from political activities (Riaz, 2008).

Without any authentic record, counting the total number of madrassahs in India is also still a mystery. With the significant growth in the recent years, presently total numbers of madrassahs in India are about 35,000, with an enrolment of 1.5 million students (Sultanat, 2003; Sikand, 2005). It is worth pointing out that, unlike Bangladesh and Pakistan, madrassahs in India are located in a society where Muslims are in minority. Therefore, the socio-economic and local socio-political conditions of Muslim community\textsuperscript{12} influence the growth of madrassah rather than other factors such as their historical roots. Furthermore, some fundamental features of Indian public education are another reason for the growth of madrassahs, for example, issue of Urdu language and lack of religious subjects in public education (Riaz, 2008). Moreover, for many reasons, female madrassah education for higher level of Islamic education is a recent development in India (Sikand, 2005).

The basic contents of madrassah education in India are similar as provided in Bangladesh, Pakistan and in some other developing countries. Although within India, the regional context and sectarian divide has always contributed in the varying practice of madrassah education. Generally madrassahs education in India can be divided as government affiliated and traditional (private)

\textsuperscript{12} Such as, social exclusion, discrimination and community violence are some of the main factors that shape the parental choices for madrassah education. Parents, also calculate the future opportunities and settle with madrassahs than public school. Other factors include, linguistic and syllabus problems in the public education system. Muslim parents send their children to madrassahs because of the Urdu language as the medium of instruction (Riaz, 2008). While, in Pakistan and Bangladesh the situation for the demand of madrassah education and growth of madrassahs is different.
madrassahs. In the recent years, many madrassahs have taken steps to revise their curriculum to include mainstream science subjects in the Islamic centric curriculum. Though this process is still in transformation, but when compared with Pakistan, new efforts for this move are relatively visible which are envisioned to bring a positive change and new possibilities in Indian madrassah education (Metcalf, 2007). Nevertheless, traditional madrassahs (and also conservative Ulama) are still a challenge for the modernisation process of madrassah education in India. Like in many other countries, Indian madrassahs too have been questioned and discussed for their alleged links to militancy (Alam, 2004; Sikand, 2005; Hefner and Zaman, 2007), but, in this regard overall situation in India is not that much worst as is in the case of Pakistan.

Within South Asia, **Bangladesh** is another interesting case for looking at madrassah education. Historically madrassah in Bangladesh share their roots with the same institutions in Pakistan and India. However, in contrast to India and Pakistan, sectarian divides in the madrassahs of Bangladesh are not strong. Generally, there are two types of madrassahs working in Bangladesh, which are called as ‘Aliya’ and ‘Qaumi’\(^\text{13}\) madrassahs. Aliya madrassahs are the production of 1980’s modernisations scheme of government of Bangladesh. During that time, mostly Aliya madrassahs accepted the changes to add science subjects in the curriculum of madrassah education. As a result, these madrassahs are now affiliated with government madrassah board and function under the government’s defined guidelines and policies. These madrassahs receive also help from government. On the other hand, those madrassahs

\(^{13}\) Although these two systems are widely followed, there are two other types of madrassahs in Bangladesh, called as Furkania and Nurani madrassahs which offer Islamic education only at primary level, for example, teaching of Quran and provision of Hifz classes (Riaz, 2008).
which are unrecognised by the government madrassah board (and work as private) belong to *Qaumi* education board. They vary in characteristics (such as curriculum), though, majority of them work with the traditional Dubandi\(^{14}\) guidelines of Islamic education and in most of the cases they do not want to change their traditional Islamic curriculum (Asadullah and Chaudhury, 2010). *Qaumi* madrassahs works in the form of large networks (Riaz, 2008). Similar to some other developing countries, madrassah growth in Bangladesh is rapid too, approximately total numbers of *Aliya* madrassahs are about 25000 and also roughly 9000 *Qaumi* madrassahs are working in Bangladesh (Raisuddin et al., 2004). Total number of enrolments in madrassahs is about four million (Asadullah and Chaudhury, 2010). There are several significant factors involved in the growth and demand trends of madrassah education in Bangladesh, which needs a detailed examination through a separate empirical study (Riaz, 2008).

In terms of changes in the madrassah education, in the recent years *Aliya* madrassahs have begun to hire female teachers, which significantly increased the enrolment of female students. Changes in female madrassahs opened new ways for female higher education in the rural and remote areas in Bangladesh, which may be helpful for the enhancements of socio-economic conditions of females (Asadullah, 2006).

It is important to mention that, Bangladeshi madrassahs are unique for their flexible attitude towards adapting changes in the traditional Islamic education (Riaz, 2008). Similarly, Ulama have shown their willingness and flexibility in the reform process in madrassahs (Sikand, 2004). Not only the *Aliya* madrassahs are increasing, but it has also been noticed that few *Qaumi* madrassahs are increasing, but it has also been noticed that few *Qaumi* madrassahs are

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\(^{14}\) See more detail on the Dubandi madrassah education in chapter Four
also, following the pattern of Aliya madrassah system (Riaz, 2008). Notwithstanding the flexible attitude of Ulama and also Bangladesh’s image as a moderate Islamic country, however, there exists a growing influence of radical factors. Some of these radical elements have been blamed for establishing close relations with Qaumi madrassahs (Park and Niyozov, 2008). Therefore, relationship between madrassah, Islamic Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) is a growing challenge in Bangladesh (Riaz, 2008). In short, it is true that Bangladesh still needs to make more efforts and invest reasonable resources to enhance the education of Aliya madrassah and also needs to address the future of Qaumi madrassah education. However, in my view Bangladesh sets a good example for other developing countries that wish to bring meaningful changes in the madrassah education system to link the gap between religious and modern education.

In contrast to the South Asian context discussed above, madrassah education in Southeast Asia has a large and well-developed structure of Islamic education (Park and Niyozov, 2008a). In the contemporary perspectives, madrassah education system in Indonesia provides another good example to discuss. Having a long historical background in Islamic education, at present two types of Islamic educational institutions are very much prominent in Indonesia – the ‘Madrassahs’ and ‘Pesantrens’\(^\text{15}\) (Hefner, 2009). Madrassahs in Indonesia means the state sponsored modern Islamic schooling system, while the pesantrens are self governed private residential Islamic schools, conservative in their nature and transmit traditional Islamic learning. There are about 10,000 pesantrens and 37,000 madrassahs working in Indonesia (Hefner and Zaman, \(^\text{15}\)Pesantren are also called as ‘Pondok’
However, it is striking to know that due to the reform process started in the early twentieth century, majority of madrassahs and pesantrenrs have been transformed from traditional Islamic education providers to more modern day Islamic schools. Both madrassahs and pesantrenrs have incorporated modern sciences subjects in their curriculum, such as mathematics, physics, computer studies and English language. They have also enhanced their pedagogical strategies (such as, teaching training and extracurricular activities) to provide quality education. There is also an increasing emphasis on female education in these institutions (Hefner and Zaman, 2007; Hefner, 2009; Pohl, 2009). Whilst today limited numbers of pesantrenrs are still rigid about the training in Islamic education, however, majority of them have expanded their vision to enhance community mobilisations and development in different ways. For example, pesantrenrs are active in providing technical trainings, and by making links with other NGOs for community development (Pohl, 2006). Despite all the advancements in the madrassah education system, emergence of a small number of Islamic groups committed to radical activates are still a challenge for Indonesian society (Azra et al., 2007).

However, it is important to mention that Indonesia is the largest Muslim majority country in the world (about 225 million); but, unlike madrassah education in other developing countries, both parents and government have recognised that changes in the traditional Islamic education can play a vital role in the socio-economic achievements of the pupils. Therefore, combined efforts have made it possible to diminish the educational dualism in Indonesia. Moreover, willingness of religious leaders and Ulama to adopt required changes in the curriculum and implement them has led to the evolution of a modern madrassah educational
system that ranks among the most progressive and pluralistic in the world (Pohl, 2009). Unfortunately, such elements are lacking in the case of Pakistan. Little attention has been paid both by the madrassahs themselves and the government to standardise the curriculum and pedagogy. Advancements in the Indonesian Islamic education helped the Indonesian Muslims to move into the modern era, by bringing significant changes in the social, political and economic spheres at the regional and national levels (Azra et al., 2007).

In short, madrassah education system in Indonesia can be viewed within the contemporary debates related to madrassah education. Despite some small weaknesses, majority of madrassah and pesantren Islamic education system demonstrates that meaningful changes in Islamic education can make it as a potential part of mainstream education system in some Muslim majority and in other developing countries where madrassah education exists. Therefore, it may be helpful to strengthen the socio-economic and political conditions in the development contexts.

In addition to Indonesia, in the Southeast Asia integrated madrassah education in Philippines and madrassah education system in Malaysia are also convergent and for last few years they are trying to improve their Islamic education at national level (Abaza, 2002; Park and Niyozov, 2008). In my view, madrassah trends in Southeast Asia and especially Indonesian Islamic education system is a live example for Pakistan to adopt and implement.
In addition to the above, within the developing contexts, in the recent years, complex nature of madrassah education in northern Nigeria\(^\text{16}\) has also been well debated. In Nigeria, where there is a high demand of madrassah education; madrassahs have traditionally resisted the reform process as well as the addition of secular curriculum in madrassah education (Umar, 2001; Bano, 2009).

The madrassah education in Egypt provides another example of Islamic education which includes some secular subjects with religious curriculum under state supervision (Zeghal, 2007). Similarly, in Morocco too, Islamic education has been transformed by including some science subjects (Eickelman, 2007). Islamic education in secular Turkey is also an example of balanced Islamic education, and provides secular subjects with Islamic curriculum (Agai, 2007). Islamic education in Mali has also undergone transformation to adopt science subjects (Brenner, 2007). All these examples provide an understanding of the variance and volatility of madrassah education in different developing countries.

To conclude, the contextualisation of madrassah education discussed above showed that in each context there are various factors that shape the local situation of madrassah education. However, this study argues that both the madrassah stakeholders and governments of the countries where madrassah education is under crises need to learn from others who have made significant improvements and changes in the madrassah education. This discussion also informs that relationship between state and madrassahs (and also Ulama) is

\(^{16}\)The madrassah education system in Nigeria can be divided in three categories; ‘Quranic’ ‘Islamiya’ and ‘Ilimi’. The Quranic and Islamiya deal with primary and secondary level of Islamic education, whereas the Ilimi madrassahs provide Islamic education at higher level. These institutions are working parallel to the secular schools (Bano, 2009)
very crucial for any reform process related to madrassahs education in many developing countries.

### 2.4 Rethinking madrassah education in contemporary perspectives

This section encapsulates various discussions related to the issues and challenges of madrassah education in contemporary perspectives. The current debates describe madrassahs as practice of ancient Islamic education, anti-modern, rigid and stereotypical in their worldviews. It has also been commonly argued that madrassah education is unable to accommodate social, economical and epistemological changes. Similarly, it has been raised that madrassah education imparts exclusivist attitudes in their students and the type of education it provides, creates obstacles for an autonomous life (Hoodbhoy, 1991; ICG, 2002; Rahman, 2008; McClure, 2009; Haider, 2011). In order to fully understand such depictions of madrassah education, this study takes a critical position to revisit some key themes which have been addressed in the existing literature.

#### 2.4.1 Traditional madrassah education and challenges to modernity

As discussed earlier, contemporary writings on the madrassah education frequently raise the issue of irrelevance of traditional madrassah education for the modern needs in the global world, and commonly stresses the modernisation of madrassah education system. Since it is globally believed that the contents and teaching methods are always central for any education setting to train the young minds (Moore, 2004), therefore, focusing on the contemporary perspectives, the most frequent criticism of madrassah education is on its religious nature of curriculum and conventional pedagogies (such as, rote...
learning and memorisation). When analysing the critical accounts of modernists on madrassah education, there is a reflection of a common argument that the present day madrassah education is in crisis and faces various challenges to equip their students with a type of knowledge that is required for rapidly emerging globalised knowledge economies (Lahmar, 2011). Consequently, the emphasis has been placed to re-examine the madrassah education and also to establish such institutions which are able to diminish the rigid educational dualism (Hoodbhoy, 1991; Khalid, 2002; Sikand, 2004). As a result, reform minded madrassahs across the countries have started to find different ways to integrate formal educational subjects into their Islamic curriculum. For example, as discussed above, the present day madrassah education in Indonesia, Mali and Egypt. Those who agree for the modernisation, argue that it is not the refusal of Islamic belief to teach modern subjects to their students, rather it is an opportunity for madrassah students (Farish et al., 2008).

On the other hand, certain madrassahs have remained unchanged and even hostile to any modernisation proposal, for example the madrassah education system in Pakistan. This type of opposition highlights that the new ways of formulating madrassah education and to open new spaces for incorporating formal education in such madrassahs seems a big challenge (Farish et al., 2008). Several reasons have been discussed for this rejection, such as, Sikand (2008, p.161) has mentioned that one rationale behind this is the misunderstanding of the reformists. He also argues, “as for many madrassahs the aim of their education system is not to provide general education for Muslims, rather the madrassah is regarded as the specialised institution providing specifically a ‘religious’ education and transmitting it in the Islamic
scholarly tradition”. Obviously, if this is the case, efforts of certain governments to push the madrassahs unwillingly to a reform process will have no results, and it will only increase the dichotomy between madrassahs and state (Bano, 2007). However, focusing on the reformists’ arguments, Qasmi (2005) further added that, today madrassah must need a change but it should be in the form of ‘modification’ of madrassah education; as he suggested that, every madrassah must modify their religious curriculum to provide some useful knowledge to become a good Islamic scholar, and the curriculum should be according to the current socio-religious conditions and needs of society. But, the change in terms of modernising madrassah education with secular subjects is out of the scope of madrassah education system (ibid). The situation becomes more noticeable when the conservative madrassahs do not want to modify even the existing religious curriculum in madrassah education.

The other reason behind the resistance for modernising the madrassah education is the continuity of ‘conservative’ and ‘orthodox’ approach of traditional Ulama. As their main argument is that, they are the guardians of the Islamic education system set by the great Islamic scholars in the past. Moreover, in their understandings, madrassah education is based on the ultimate truth of Islam, and madrassah education was initially structured by Islamic scholars in an appropriate way, so it is still largely adequate for today and there is no need for change or to adopt knowledge from others. In their views, there is no problem in the madrassah education, rather the problem lies in the influence of increasing materialism that has led to the deviation from the path set by the early Islamic scholars that has seriously affected piety, and devotion of madrassah people (Sikand, 2008).
In addition to the above, another important challenge to the modernity of madrassah education arises from the concerns of religious authority and identity of Ulama. In the perceptions of traditional Ulama, any attempt of change in the madrassah education system will diminish their position in the community. Obviously, addition of new subjects or deletions of some books from existing curriculum directly destabilizes their authority which is based on the existing madrassah education system. Similarly, they are also in a fear that inclusion of modern subjects in madrassah education might lead to the dilution of the religious aims of madrassah education, and may also trap madrassah students into the secularisation path (Zaman, 1999; Sikand, 2008). It shows that, in the understandings of traditional Ulama, madrassah education is a distinct sphere which must remain separate from the modern spheres of life, and especially from the secular education (ibid).

The madrassah authorities may be valid on emphasising the traditional madrassah education, for giving importance to and preservation of Islamic knowledge as well as the identity concerns. However, the question of modernisation is primarily based on the ‘effectiveness’ of the type of education madrassahs are providing today, which is obviously no longer relevant to the contemporary social and even religious situations. Therefore, the advocates of the reform argue that the only way to make the current madrassah education ‘useful’ is to restructure the curriculum. For this, there is a common agreement among the reformists to replace some old books with new religious subjects and to add natural and social science subjects and languages as well as change teaching methods. But, again there are some challenges to implement these changes in the madrassah education, even if madrassahs are willing for it. First
of all, the concept of ‘useful knowledge’ has been understood differently by different madrassahs, therefore they want to bring changes according to their recognitions of ‘useful knowledge’. Secondly, every madrassah works independently with self defined education system. Moreover there is no collaboration between different madrassahs, which makes the formulations of changes difficult according to one standard. Thirdly, the political nature of state policies have failed to cater changes in a meaningful way (Sikand, 2004; Jafri, 2006). In summary, despite the challenges, it is crucial that necessary changes be made in madrassah education to face the realities of contemporary world.

2.4.2 Madrassahs in education provision: possibilities and issues

The challenges to the modernity of madrassah education as discussed above are unfortunately true in many contexts, and urgently need to be addressed. However, at the same time, given the current educational crises in many developing countries, it has been argued that the role of madrassahs as education providers, at least at basic level education, has been ignored (Farish et al., 2008; Asadullah and Chaudhury, 2008). It has been accepted that in the developing countries where the governments have failed to provide public education, madrassahs are playing a vital role in the promotion of education. According to Evan (2008) and Hetland (2008) majority of madrassahs present an opportunity for many rural poor and orphans for whom it may be the only option for their literacy. Qasmi (2005) and Looney (2003) have considered the madrassahs as non-governmental organisations (NGOs) for their role in providing free education to many marginalised children. In particular, madrassahs are also effective for girls’ education in rural areas (Asadullah and Chaudhury, 2009). Similarly, Mujahid-Mukhtar (2005) has also indicated that
with some necessary changes madrassahs could become potential channel for delivering education for needy children. Similarly, by focusing on the ‘Education for All’ (EFA) challenges in the South Asian context, a recent study by Bano (2010) observed that, madrassahs are the prominent non-state education providers and they have potential to become an effective partners of state to achieve the educational goals, however, a significant attention is required from government to reform the madrassah education to create a meaningful (public-private) partnership with madrassahs.

The possibilities of madrassah education as mentioned above are right to some extent. However, still there are some limitations in the madrassah - state partnership for education provision. For instance, without strong commitment from both sides, this relationship may not be possible. By developing a trust with madrassah stakeholders, government needs to devise meaningful reform policies with some financial assistance for the madrassahs to implement the new curriculum. While the Ulama need to accept the values of secular subjects and implement the reformed curriculum in an accurate way. Moreover, education provision through madrassahs raises some more questions regarding, quality, equality, as well as the outcomes of such education for the future of its students.

2.4.3 The socio-economic dimensions of madrassah education

This section focuses on the socio-economic dimensions of madrassah education in the contemporary perspectives. As, it has been frequently accepted that formal education is fundamental for a satisfying and a rewarding life, thus it is a basic mechanism for socio-economic change for individuals as
well as for larger benefits in the society. For example at the personal level formal education provides good opportunities in the labour market, it eliminates discrimination regarding different social divides, enhances empowerment, participation and civic engagement; and it also brings tolerance, awareness about health, environmental issues and so on (Watkins, 2000; Drèze and Sen, 2002; UNESCO, 2002; Tomasevski, 2003; Szirmai, 2005). The emphasis that education can bring valuable changes provides a ground to question madrassah education for its socio-economic impacts, which is also the key focus of this study.

As discussed earlier, the madrassah curriculum is purely religious. In the views of traditional Ulama the aim of madrassah education is not to achieve technical skills and economic gains but the moral and spiritual development to achieve the will of God. Therefore, it is evident that unfortunately, the economic impacts of madrassah education are not as those that could be achieved through the formal education. Similarly, it has been argued that madrassah education is a source of social instability, violence and conflict (Asadullah and Chaudhury, 2010). This study revealed too that sectarian divide in the madrassah education creates intolerance and conflict in the community. However, there are some social impacts which cannot be ignored in some contexts; for example, piety, social mobility, empowerment\textsuperscript{17} and contributions for community work (Al-Zeera, 2001). This study has revealed significant insights to the social-economic impacts of madrassah education (see chapter six for more detailed findings).

\textsuperscript{17}However, Fennell (2008, p.44) argued that, as religious education providers work within local community norms that may create obstacle for individual autonomy, thus it may have serious impacts on achieving the gender equity both at national and international level. Waljee (2008) also argued that religious education can be a potential way for girls’ education, but it may not empower females as it is in the western notions.
Given the disjunction of madrassah education for economic ends, Merry (2007, p.8) has argued that, it is not suggested that the madrassah education must purely convert its contents for material aims, however, one who attends madrassah education must be able to acquire some necessary knowledge and skills for an autonomous life. The present study also agrees with reformists to establish such madrassah curriculum which must respond to present day socio-economic needs of individuals as well as society. However, this study raises some questions; for example, will the socio-economic impacts of reformed madrassah education be the same as of formal education; what would be the impacts of madrassah education where the reform process has failed or in the case where madrassahs that do not want to change the existing madrassah education. It also raises significant questions, such as: what are the socio-economic impacts for those who have madrassah as the only way for education attainment, or for those who want to get the madrassah education only. The findings of this study have revealed ground realities about the socio-economic impacts of madrassah education, which has been discussed in greater detail in chapter five and six.

2.4.4 Demand for madrassah education

In this section I intend to give an overview of the demand for madrassah education in contemporary perspectives. From the above discussion it is now clear that madrassah system of Islamic education has its own underlying philosophy, aims and objectives, which do not yield to socio-economic ends that are more promising through formal education. This study thus raises a question as to why do people still prefer madrassah education over formal education. The answer to this question is not simple, as there are different points of views
in the existing literature. Moreover, it is important to mention that, in comparison to developed countries where the demand of religious (also Islamic) education is well researched, in the developing countries less attention has been paid to this topic, and specifically little empirical work has been done to understand the demand of madrassah education.

Madrassahs are a reflection of society where they exist and grow (Pohl, 2009), therefore, there is an argument that the presence of madrassahs and growth in the demand for madrassah education in the developing countries is closely related to the existing issues or shortcomings of formal education. For instance, lack of access to school for poorer and marginalised, which pushes the community to find alternative solutions for the education of their children (Stern, 2000; Singer, 2001; Smith, 2002; ICG, 2002). As opposed to this point of view, according to Cockcroft et al (2009), this is not an explicit factor to explain the demand of madrassah education. Specific to my study also, as I shall discuss in chapter five, poverty or the access to school is not the only reason for madrassah enrolment, but there are many other factors that shape the preferences for madrassah education (see chapter five for detail discussion).

It has also been argued that secularization\(^{18}\) itself is a main reason for the increased demand of madrassah education (Pohl, 2009). Such as, a significant and perhaps controversial aspect of secularization is to place religion in the private sphere, which also affects the realm of education. Thus, the public education in many developing countries has been transformed into more secular (scientific and rational) form, as a result of which religion has been

\(^{18}\)By secularization I mean the secularization of society in general and specifically the secularization of education in the Muslims societies.
largely neglected in the education spheres. This is understood to be in opposition to the basic concept of Islamic education. As a consequence, many parents see it as a danger to the moral and religious development of their children; therefore, they prefer madrassah education (Riaz 2008; Pohl, 2009; Sakurai and Adelkhah, 2011).

In addition, Bano (2012) has explained the demand of madrassah education in terms of non-material benefits, such as the religious rewards, that are significant for believers. Therefore, it is concluded that emergence of demand for madrassah education in some contexts is connected with rational choice and self interest. Similarly, Evan (2008) has also argued that the demand of madrassah education is based on the rational choice. Given the convergent trends in the demand of madrassah education, Nelson (2006) has argued that, within the global and national educational marketplace, both donors and policy makers need to reconsider the local demands. As I shall demonstrate in chapter five, there are far greater in-depth realities regarding the perceptions of people about madrassah education.

2.5 Alternative conceptual frameworks of education and development

This section aims to provide discussion on alternative perspectives of education and development. It will also help to understand the empirical realities of madrassah education. Whilst varying in focus and examined from different perspectives the study of education and development is central to social sciences (Moor, 2004). The focus of this study is to understand the socio-economic impacts of madrassah education, therefore, ‘human capital approach’ and ‘capability approach’ provide a suitable conceptual understanding.
2.5.1 Education and human capital approach

The concept of education as an investment in economic growth arose in late 1950s with the belief that investment in physical resources only could not adequately respond to the new demands of market. Therefore, the notion of economic growth with the growth in quality of labour force resulted into more investment in education (Szirmai, 2005). In 1960s, theory of ‘human capital’ further developed this idea. The basic concept of the theory of ‘human capital’ is that, through the investment in education people can achieve certain skills; and become more productive by taking part in technological activities which have been regarded as a vital economic product factor. It means skill development of human being through education is a key to micro and macro level economic growth. (Schultz, 1961; Becker, 1975). The idea of human capital elaborates that investment in education for human being could be viewed as similar to the investment in other form of physical infrastructures that would give returns which can be calculated (Schultz, 1961). At the same time, concept of the human capital approach largely convinced the national and international policies for more investments in education. It also provided a logical justification to expand provision of public education both in developed and developing countries, to achieve the economic growth at micro and macro levels (Szirmai, 2005; Fennell, 2008; Unterhalter, 2009).

Schultz (1993) provided a framework for systematic evaluation of the cost and benefit analysis of education in different countries. It argued that education has an important economic value. Later, an empirical study confirmed the economic impacts of investment in education (Psacharopoulos, 1994). This study also showed that returns to education in the developing countries were higher than
in developed countries, also the rate of returns were higher in the primary education than tertiary and higher education (ibid). The results of this study were an indication for developing countries to pay significant attention to investment in the education to achieve economic goals (Fennell, 2008).

Education and human capital approach certainly makes an important point that skills and knowledge acquired through formal education relates to a person’s income abilities, especially it is vital for those who are living in extreme poverty. For example, good quality education can make a difference in the life of poor people in developing countries, and also more focused attention to quality education for human capital accumulation includes people to economic growth (Robeyns, 2006).

Despite these empirical facts, human capital approach has been questioned for number of reasons. Such as, work within human capital approach assumes that labour markets work in a straightforward way, that is, once people have developed certain skills through education, they will easily get employment in the labour market. It has been argued that, this approach does not take account of the complexities associated with gender, race, class and different education system, which have significant implications in the labour market and so for the rate of return to education (Fennell, 2008; Unterhalter, 2009). For example many educated women may not participate in the labour force. This does not mean that such women are less productive (Mincer, 1974 ; Fennell, 2008).

This framework also tends to view schooling as a mechanical process, where children enter the school as an input and exit with appropriate skills as human capital output. The learning environment in different schools for different
children, with varied outcomes has not been considered (Unterhalter, 2009). It also ignores the impacts of religion, social class, gender and race on the investement in education, and smiliarly the involment of parental choices for the education of their children (Fennell, 2008).

Human capital approach looks at one side of educational benefits, that is it only considers the economic benefits in terms of increase in income, and ignores the social benefits or non-economic returns of education (Robeyns, 2006a). Whilst the social returns to education are important for individuals and societies, such as, according to Kambhampati (2004), education increase awareness about health issues, it decreases corruption and crimes. It creates more modern attitude to life and increases the abilities of individuals to participate in social, cultural and political activities.

Another critique of human capital theory to consider investment in education for economic returns is that, some people may want to invest in other physical assets than education which will give them more returns than education (Gillie et al, 1992). In addition to this, the present study also raises the question that, how can human capital approach deal with different types of education? Such as, the madrassah education, which mainly aims to achieve the religious and social aims, when some people are more interested for social benefits of education and not the economic returns.

However, considering the human development perspectives, Sen (1997) has argued that we must go beyond the notion of human capital. That is, ‘value of an economy does not lie in the economic growth but in its capacity to provide different opportunities for humans to flourish and to enhance human
development’. The following section provides discussion on the perspective of education and human capability approach.

2.5.1 Education and capability approach

Capability approach (CA) was first introduced by Amartya Sen in 1980s. The core concept of capability approach is that it focuses on what people effectively ‘to do’ and ‘to be’. CA approach also views human development as an expansion of freedom to make choices for their ‘doing’ and ‘beings’ to live a good life (Sen, 1999). Sen defines CA as,

“A person’s capabilities refer to the alternative combinations of functionings that are feasible for her to achieve. Capability is thus kind of freedom: the substantive freedom to achieve alternative functioning” (Sen, 1999, p.75)

It means, this approach focuses on individual’s freedom and their choices which they can make to flourish their life, rather than what type of resources and access to resources they have (Clark, 2005; Walker, 2005; Alkire, 2005; Gasper, 2007). It means in contrasts to the human capital approach discussed above, it places more focus on the quality of human life and not the economic growth (Unterhalter, 2009). However, it is important to note that CA in some ways is connected with human capital approach and does not totally reject the notion of human capital approach¹⁹ (Sen, 1997).

Before discussing the CA to education in more detail, it is important to briefly mention that CA involves three core concepts; ‘functionings’, ‘capabilities’ and

¹⁹Unterhalter (2009, p.214) further explain it as; “concern for human capital should not be neglected as it is alert to the ways in which people develop skills and enhance their income. But earning power and economic values are ultimately not the only dimensions of human flourishing that are important. Education has wider values for individuals beyond enabling them to contribute to economic growth or enhance their own or their families’ earning power”.

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‘agency’. According to Sen (1999, p.75) functions are the various things or achievements a person values within given resources to live a good life. These functions include, for example, being healthy, and being educated, being happy, being respectful and participating in different activities in community, however, there is no limitations or a defined list of functions (ibid). Capabilities are a real freedom of a person to achieve different functions and it can be defined as combinations or vector of different functions to achieve. It also reflects the freedom of choices from different options to choose a type of life one wants to live (Drèze and Sen, 1995; Sen, 1999). According to Sen (1999, p.19), agency is ‘someone who acts and brings about change’. Idea of agency is important and lies at boundaries of functions and capabilities, that is, how a person is free to make choices for doing and being what he/she values for a good life (ibid).

Sen (1999) and Nussbaum (2000) have identified a list\(^\text{20}\) of some basic capabilities which are critical for achieving other capabilities. Sen (1993) has also argued that it is not possible to define a possible list of all capabilities; therefore, basic capabilities are a sub-set of all other capabilities, or a freedom to live a good life and to fight against poverty. Thus basic capabilities are very important for analysing poverty, well-being and other issues in the development process in many developing countries (Robeyns, 2003). In the development of the concept of capabilities, Sen has given a great importance to education in the freedom of individuals and development of society, also education is among the basic capability list (Sen, 1999). The following section provides detail discussion on education as a basic capability.

\(^{20}\) For example, this list includes; life, bodily healthy, senses, emotions, bodily integrity, practical reasoning, affiliations, play, control over one’s environment, other species. (Nussbaum, 2000)
(i) Education as a basic capability

Considerations of CA about the importance of education are much deeper than the human capital approach. Sen (1992) mentions that, education is a set of some small number of doings and beings which are crucial for human development. Therefore, the conceptualisation of education as a basic capability is in two ways. First, lack or absence of education would essentially harm and disadvantage the individuals in different ways. Second, as education plays important role in the expansion of other capabilities, consequently it is basic to further capabilities (Walker and Unterhalter, 2007).

Sen (1992) has recognised the importance of education in three different ways. First of all, the ‘instrumental social role’ of education fosters public debate and dialogue about social and political issues. Secondly, ‘instrumental process role’ of education improves enhanced participation in the decision making at household, community and national level. Thirdly, ‘empowering and distributive role’ of education helps deprived, marginalized and excluded people to organise politically (ibid). Moreover, education has redistributive effects between social groups, households and within families. Education also has interpersonal impacts because people use the benefits themselves and to help others (Unterhalter, 2009). Therefore, it is now commonly accepted that education plays an important role for intrinsic as well as instrumental aspects of good life and also for further capability enhancement (Brighouse, 2000; Saito, 2003; Robeyns, 2006; Flores-Crespo, 2007). Nussbaum (2006) has also agreed that education is basic to further capabilities, and has showed that it plays important role for women empowerment in India (Nussbaum, 2000). In addition, an
empirical study by Alkire (2002), also confirmed that literacy skills enhance women’s’ capabilities.

Considering the importance of education as a basic capability, however, some important questions have been raised. Such as, what about the capability enhancement of poor children where there is no access to education or they have limited access to education due to some structural factors. In the same vein how does CA consider different types of education? What types of contents are crucial for education provision? How does CA take accounts of children’s capabilities that are dependent on the parental choice for their education? (Brighouse, 2000; Saito, 2003; Robeyns, 2006; Unterhalter, 2009). This study also raises a question that, if the capability approach to education considers more than the technical outcomes of education, would the madrassah education be helpful for learners in some specific context.

As discussed earlier in this chapter that the curriculum and pedagogies of madrassah education are different than the formal education. Therefore, this study is interested to understand what type of educational contents education and capability framework considers for education provision. The following section discusses it in more detail.

(ii) Enabling condition in education

Despite the importance of education that Sen has discussed, he himself has not defined basic capabilities within education setting (Saito, 2003). However, Nussbaum (2000, p.90) has mentioned that some functionings are required to achieve in childhood for future life. Therefore, Terzi (2004) as raised a question that, if education is important and expands further capabilities, then it is
important to identify what type of enabling conditions or subset of capabilities are essential in an education process. Basic capabilities in education means that what doings and beings are fundamental to achieve different functions in education, and how do these basic capabilities can help to overcome many issues related to education, also lack of these basic capabilities can create many obstacles for individuals not only in the attainment of education process but for other capabilities as well. Hence lack of these conditions may harm the future life (ibid). Otto and Ziegler (2006) have suggested that it may not be correct to propose a general list of capabilities; rather educational capabilities may be defined in a particular context. It must focus on the general list of capabilities; such that, each person by achieving functioning in education should be able to sustain the general basic capabilities needed for flourishing good life (ibid). In addition, Anderson (1999) has argued that education should provide capabilities which are fundamental for each person to functioning as an equal citizen in a democratic society and to participate in a range of socio-economic activities. However, taking account of different theoretical and analytical considerations, Terzi (2007) proposed an ideal list of some basic capabilities (enabling conditions) which are crucial for achieving functionings in education. This list includes, literacy, numeracy, sociality and participation, learning disposition, physical activities, science and technology and practical reasoning. This list also provides us a broader concept of education as a basic capability. Table 2.1 gives detailed list of these basic capabilities in education with explanation.
Table 2.1 List of Basic Capabilities in Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic Capability</th>
<th>Achieved function in education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Literacy</td>
<td>Being able to read and write, to use language and discursive reasoning functioning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numeracy</td>
<td>Being able to count, to measure, to solve mathematical questions, and to use logical reasoning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociality and participation</td>
<td>Being able to establish positive relationship with others and to participate in social activities without shame</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning disposition</td>
<td>Being able to concentrate, to pursue interests, to accomplish tasks, to enquire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical activities</td>
<td>Being able to exercise and being able to engage in sports activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science and technology</td>
<td>Being able to understand natural phenomena, being knowledgeable to technology, and being able to use technological tools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practical reasoning</td>
<td>Being able to relate means and being able to critically reflect on one’s and others actions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adopted from Terzi (2007)

The above list includes basic elements which are important in each education system, and lack of these basic capabilities would disadvantage the people. It is a general list; however, Terzi (2007) and Alkire (2002) further explained that a more specific list can be depicted in specific contexts. It is true that, the above list of capabilities is very crucial for equality in education as well as for future freedom and well-being. However, as this list is based on the conception of formal education and basic capabilities related to it. There are different education systems and the concept of capability to be educated varies in different situations. So, it is important to note that evaluating an education system by proving resources and measuring the output by year of schooling completed is not enough, but the emphasis of capability approach is to evaluate an education system in terms of different functions a person can achieve and how these functions can help for capability enhancement for a better life.
Therefore, the list discussed above, provides a ground to question madrassah education, whether through madrassah education people can achieve some functions and also capabilities which enhance their life conditions, or does it create obstacles for them?

(iii) Equality perspectives of CA in education

CA critically views the global patterns of equality in access, quality and achievements in education (Unterhalter, 2007). It has been argued that, even the narrowly focused notions of equality discriminate people. Such as, the goals have been often set for the large benefits and it ignores the individuals’ development (Sen, 1999). CA refused the standardised provision of education and setting universal goals on the basis of a homogeneous nature of human being in all societies (Unterhalter et al., 2007; Tikly et al., 2011). Therefore, the notion of capability approach for the provision of education is more flexible, which not only considers the heterogeneity of human beings but also different socio-cultural, economic, religious and many other factors that can affect education processes (Sen, 1993). It also recommends that, there is a need to recognise the learner requirement to provide resources for education, for example, people may have different access to resources or learning needs (Sen, 2002). Such as, due to unavailability of female teachers girls may have different educational outcomes than boys.

CA also takes a different point of view for gender equality in education. Unlike the other approaches, instead of providing equal access and resources for education, the CA stresses to look at the socially embedded complexities which effect the girls education (Sen, 1992). For example, how social norms and
values can create obstacles for a girl to participate in education, or affect her inspiration or preferences for education. Moreover, some contextual factors also have impacts on the achievement of capabilities in education and also capabilities through education (Alkire, 2002; Vaughan, 2007). Therefore, CA emphasises on different dimensions of gender equality in education. Such as, equality in access, equality in the conditions (school environment and resources) of provision and equality in achieving different capabilities (Vaughan, 2007). Taking account of these dimensions for education are crucial for achieving educational outcomes for girls (as well as for boys) (Unterhalter, 2007; Vaughan, 2007). It also illustrates that a uniform education is an inadequate approach to achieve meaningful outcomes of education, rather we need to enhance people’s capabilities through the education they value for doings and being in the local context.

However, there are some issues relating to CA to education. Such as, how to know that a person has made preference due to some particular factors where he/she lives? (Walker, 2005) To what extent we should listen to children for their education? How to specify valuable functionings and capabilities in various education settings? (Saito, 2003). Similarly there are many more questions that have been raised related to education that need further exploration.

The broader notion of CA to education discussed above, provides a ground for exploring madrassah education which is different from formal education. Such that, to investigate what type of different needs or preference people have for madrassah education, also to study what are the different impacts of madrassah education.
2.6 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the core notions and concepts that underpin the discourse of madrassah education. Theoretical discussion on the conceptions of Islamic education showed that the aims and objectives of madrassah education contrast the concepts of formal education. Therefore, critiques have questioned its relevance for the development of individuals as well as for societies. The literature on madrassah education in developing countries has shown that madrassah education is common among many Muslims and also numbers of madrassahs and the students are growing with time. Therefore, the emphasis has been placed on the reform of madrassah education which has failed in many cases. However, it has been suggested that, given the crises in the provision of public education in developing countries, reformed madrassah education can play a vital role for many marginalised children or for those who want the madrassah education only. Rethinking the madrassah education in contemporary perspectives, this chapter has also raised some questions; such as, what would be the socio-economic impacts for those who have no other options than the madrassah education, and also for those who want to get madrassah education only?

This chapter has discussed two conceptual frameworks of education and development. Discussion on education and human capital approach provided an understanding of economic value of education at micro and macro level. This study argues that how human capital approach will be applicable in the case of a madrassah education which is different from the formal education. However, concept of capability approach to education identifies this gap and provides a
broader normative framework for understanding different types of education, its processes and also its outcomes in the different socio-economic, cultural religious contexts. It argues that education is not simply for the economic benefits, but it has more importance to flourish one’s life, for example, the focus of CA is on freedom of choices and agency. CA emphasises that provision of education should be different for diverse groups of people and also according to what they value for their good life. Whilst the madrassah education is different from formal education, therefore, by taking a concept of capability approach to education as a base, this study investigates that, why do people prefer madrassah education, and also what are the impacts of madrassah education?
Chapter Three

Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

Chapter Two reviewed the existing literature related to madrassahs and their education system in general. It specifically looked at the aims and objectives of madrassah education, situated madrassah education in different developing countries, and discussed the issues of and challenges to this form of education. The previous chapter also explored the research gap and paved the ground for this study. The theoretical and conceptual framework developed in Chapter Two, provides a ground and argument for adopting a suitable methodology to achieve the aims and objectives of this study.

According to Denzin and Lincoln (1994), methodology provides some general principles and step-by-step guidelines to conducting a piece of research, and also selecting suitable methods for studying a social phenomenon in a specific context. This chapter will provide details of the research methods this study employed, and the process through which the data collection and analysis process was conducted.

First, this chapter will explore the philosophical standpoint of this research. Secondly, it will explain the research design and the multiple methods of data collection and analysis utilised. Thirdly, it will consider pertinent validity and reliability issues. Fourthly, it will provide a reflection of the field work experience, including my position as researcher during that phase. And, finally, it discusses
the ethical issues which occurred during the course of the study, and how researcher dealt with them.

3.2 Philosophical position of the research

Any social science research project starts with philosophical assumptions, which help to determine an appropriate research methodology (Creswell, 2007). Therefore, before embarking on a discussion of the methodology employed for this study, it is important to examine the philosophical stance which underpins it. There are many theories and approaches which could be used to understand social phenomenon (Burr, 2003). Philosophy of the social sciences employs different paradigms to explain social change and to answer different questions related to a social phenomenon. There is no definitive way of defining and distinguishing all philosophical paradigms - and there is some overlap between the various frameworks (Patton, 1990). However, in general, these paradigms are; Positivism, Critical Theory, Constructionism and Realism. A paradigm can be further understood by three interconnected terms: Ontology, Epistemology and Methodology. Ontology is concerned with the nature of reality or a social entity; Epistemology is regarded as the theory of knowledge, which provides a “relationship between the knower and the known”; (Bryman, 2004) and methodology provides a map to the researcher for obtaining the desired knowledge and understanding (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994; Al-Zeera, 2001; Bryman, 2004).

We live in a very complex and changing world, and social scientific studies consider aspects of our daily life - for instance, social issues, environmental challenges, social relations, and problems related to the organisation of social
relations. Researchers bring their own worldviews - and paradigms associated with a specific social sciences’ enquiry –, which influence the accomplishment of a research project (Creswell, 2007). In short, a researcher’s philosophical assumptions play an important role in determining the particular ontological, epistemological and methodological structure used for a specific research project (Somekh and Lewin, 2005; Creswell, 2007). It is not possible to investigate the meaning of any socially constructed reality through scientific methods (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994; Robson, 2002). In contrast to these rigid considerations of scientific method, I believe that the heterogeneous nature of human beings, and the different contexts in which they live, must influence the discovery of any social reality. This research, which strives to uncover a social reality (related to Madrassah education in Pakistan), adopts a subjective ontological position, underpinned by social constructionist, epistemological assumptions. Social constructionism (which is often referred to as constructivism, and combined with interpretivism) is a paradigm which insists that we take a critical position towards our understanding of the social world. Social constructionism believes that knowledge is the social construct of individuals in a particular context (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994; Robson, 2002; Burr, 2003). According to Creswell (2007) and Bryman (2004) a social phenomenon, and its meaning, is continually being accomplished by social actors. This means that a social reality not only happens through the interaction of social actors, but that it also creates its own different meanings. These meanings are constantly revised - helping the researcher to understand the complexity of different interpretations of participants’ behaviour and views (Bryman, 2004). Moore (2004) has discussed the influential role of social constructionism, with regard to the impact of an educational institution. Gergen
& Gergen (2003) also utilised social constructionism to explore the social reality of educational institutions - particularly how education can play a role in building a better society. Social constructionism has further been confirmed as a suitable epistemological setting for this study, by work carried out by Merry (2007), who also used this approach to identify the impact of Islamic education in different contexts in developed (Western) countries.

Through the field study, in Chach, Pakistan, this thesis aims to develop knowledge and understanding of madrassah education and its socio-economic impacts on individual and community. The social constructionist perspective tends to use qualitative methods for data collection and analysis. Adoption of this approach helped aid my understanding of the different themes which emerged during engagement with participants. These themes included, for example, why people prefer a madrassah education, and how different factors impact on peoples’ views of madrassah education. In addition, the madrassah education is different from the formal education system; therefore the impact of madrassah education could be different from the impact of any other type of education system. By collecting and (re)interpreting the views of different people a reality could be constructed, which enabled an understanding of the complex and multiple realities of madrassah education. The social constructionist approach relies on consideration of participants’ views and insists upon descriptive and interpretive research methods (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). Therefore, this approach will help to understand the people views and perception about the madrassah education in the case study area.
However, it is important to clarify that social constructionism is not a fixed method - rather it offers different assumptions about the aims of research and the nature and status of data collected. However, constructionism mainly emphasise on the use of qualitative methods (Burr, 2003; Gergen and Gergen, 2003). The following section provides more information on the research design and strategy adopted for this study.

3.3 Research strategy and design

The selection of method and design is always a crucial process in social science research, as it aids the turning of research question(s) into a project. As a general principle the research methods employed must be appropriate to the research question(s) the researcher wants to answer, in order to achieve the research objectives (Robson, 2002). As discussed in the previous section, this research is based on subjective ontology, and since the aim of this study is to understand the madrassah education system as a social phenomenon, and not to test one possible interpretation in order to test one particular theory, this study has adopted an inductive approach. Moreover, it utilises an explanatory and developmental research (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994; Bryman, 2004). Considering the nature of this research, researcher has adopted methodologies which have previously provided an explanation of a social process within madrassahs (Merry, 2007). Hence, qualitative rather than quantitative methods have been employed for this study. This approach seemed most likely to be able to offer a critical understanding of madrassah education and its impacts, through consideration of the views, perceptions and the actions of different participants who engage in this specific setting. As Somekh and Lewin (2005) have argued, social science research is concerned with people and their lives,
and qualitative research methods are the best tool for an analysis of human beings in different social contexts (ibid). To understand the reality and the educational role of madrassahs researcher wanted to ask many questions to different people engaged in madrassah environment. For in-depth understanding of madrassah education, therefore, it is not possible to acquire in-depth information using statistical data and analysis, using quantitative methods (Silverman, 2005; Creswell, 2007). And my review of methods used in existing research relating to madrassahs suggested that the qualitative approach was suitable for this study. For example, Merry (2007), Bano (2007), Bano (2010), and Cockcroft et al (2009) used the same approach to study various dimensions of madrassah education. Therefore, for this study I decided to use the ethnographic case-study design to closely explore madrassah education.

3.4 Madrassahs in Chach as a case study

The aim of this study is to understand the madrassah education in the Chach region of Pakistan. The case study approach is a commonly used research design, used to study a social reality by focusing on particular contextual factors (Yin, 1994; Silverman, 2005; Creswell, 2007). In the case study the emphasis is on the local setting (Bryman, 2004); in this case, where the madrassahs are in Chach this study focuses to understand madrassah education in the particular setting of Chach region. According to Yin (1994) the case study is useful for research which concerns an empirical exploration of a specific contemporary phenomenon within its real life context, and which utilises multiple sources of evidence (Creswell, 2007). A case study can be defined as the investigation of any phenomenon in a bounded context - which can include a situation, an
individual, a group, or an organisation. (Yin, 1994; Miles and Huberman, 1994; Robson, 2002; Bryman, 2004). A research project could consist of the study of a single case or multiple cases (Bryman, 2004).

Researcher has selected participants from different (which belongs to five different school of thoughts) madrassahs in Chach to examine the madrassah education phenomenon within a single case study. The focuses of the study is on why and how questions – for which the case study approach is the preferred research design (Yin, 1994). My concern is to investigate why people prefer a madrassah education, and how this kind of education impacts individuals and also communities. The case study design helped the researcher to achieve the aims and objectives of this study, which were to comprehend the phenomenon of madrassah education within the local socio-cultural, political, economical and religious context of Chach. To achieve this, the case study approach was also useful for this study because it allows the researcher to collect different informations of madrassah education system for holistic analysis (Yin, 1994).

Researcher deliberately selected the case of madrassahs in the Chach region. There are four provinces in Pakistan, and Chach is a small rural part of the Attock district in the Punjab province. There were two reasons for this selection: firstly, Chach is a rural area, where the characteristics of the madrassahs are different from those of madrassahs in urban areas. And rural madrassahs are more traditional and much more embedded within the local community. Secondly, in Chach madrassahs of different schools of thoughts (such as, Dubandi, Brelvi, Ahl-e-Hadis, Jamat-e-Islami and Shia) are working in the same area – so researcher was easily able to collect data from participants who attended all these madrassahs. This broad and varied selection of participants
was useful because it provided access to varied subjective realities and enabled critical examination of madrassah education. It also offered the chance to acquire a detailed understanding of the different socio-cultural and religious factors associated with madrassah education. However, it is important to clarify that it was not the intention of this research to compare all the madrassahs in Chach, as many had a similar structure and their education systems overlapped. Therefore, researcher considered the madrassahs to examine as a single case (see chapter four for more information on the different sectarian divides of the madrassahs in Pakistan). Figure 3.1 shows a map of Pakistan and the location of the Chach region.
3.5 Justification of the selected case location

There are different reasons for the selection of the location of this study. Firstly, the madrassahs in Chach have been long established and the region is well-known for the rich traditions of its madrassah education. The location of Chach is very important – it is located at the border of the Northern Province, where
madrassahs have been under the spotlight for the decade because of their traditional education and its implications, and madrassahs in Chach have the same madrassahs education. Secondly, a review of existing studies related to madrassahs in Pakistan demonstrates that previously more emphasis was on urban madrassahs in the major cities, and that less attention has been paid to madrassahs in rural areas. Moreover, despite the large number of madrassahs working in Chach, no research had been conducted in this region. It was a combination of these factors that made Chach an ideal place to investigate the traditional madrassah education in a rural socio-cultural and religious environment. Thirdly, and perhaps most importantly, researcher was familiar with the Chach region. Aside from being a local resident, researcher also had some experience of working as a volunteer community unit manager for a World Bank-funded development project in the area. This gave me background knowledge of Chach. In addition, researcher had a good command of the local language, which would help me interact with research participants during the field work. O’Leary (2004) argued that good research strategy and design was not enough, and that some basic knowledge of the case study area was necessary, in order to carry out research in a complex and diverse social setting.

3.6 Data collection methods and process

This section outlines the data collection process for this study. The focus of the study, the research questions, the research strategy, my skills as a researcher, and the resources available, determined the data collection methods for this research (Morse, 1994; Robson, 2002). As discussed in the previous section the qualitative case study approach was selected as being suitable for this research. This approach is premised on extensive and multiple data collection
methods, to enable a holistic analysis of the selected case study (Yin, 1994). Researcher adopted ethnographic methods for data collection that are in-depth interviews, non-participant observation, and document review. The use of these ethnographic methods enabled me to generate rich information and secure multiple evidence about my case study. This approach also helped researcher to understand and interpret the socio-cultural, values, religious beliefs, actions and reactions of different research participants in their local setting (Robson, 2002; Creswell, 2007).

Multiple data collection methods are used to ensure that if one fails to capture satisfactory information other methods may be helpful (Al-Zeera, 2001; Mason, 2002). This multiple data collection process enabled researcher to collect comprehensive data and to interpret the views and perceptions of research participants and the nature of the madrassah education system. It also helped to deal with reliability both at the stage of data generation and later for data analysis (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Moreover, using multiple methods of data collection enabled researcher to gain an understanding of views of participants from different types of madrassahs involved in this study, and to capture and different opinions, in order to address the research questions as comprehensively as possible. Adopting an ethnographic approach to data collection provided an opportunity to the researcher to live in the local community and to experience the many realities which presented themselves, through observation and one-to-one conversations. It would not otherwise have been possible to obtain such in-depth information - for example, on how different structural factors, that is the local culture, social norms, and religious values, shaped the preference for a madrassah education. This process also
helped to understand how the madrassah education system is embedded in the local community, and what are the impacts.

Creswell (2007) saw the qualitative data collection process as an interconnected series of activities, as shown in figure 3.2. Drawing on this, the process of data collection adopted for this study was planned in such a way that one step would help the next stage. The following section provides information on how researcher gained access to the madrassah education system and the individuals for interviews.

**Figure 3.2 Data collection activities**

Source: Adopted from Creswell (2007)
3.7 Access to the case study location, the madrassahs and individuals

Gaining access to the social setting (individual and madrassahs), relevant to the research focus, was a challenging step. It involved strategic planning that had to be finalised before researcher could enter the field. This process is outlined below.

Before travelling to Pakistan to begin the data collection process, researcher contacted the Institute of Policy Studies (IPS) in Islamabad. As the IPS had already conducted some research into madrassahs in Pakistan, Researcher felt their input would prove useful for this study. Their information and guidance helped to decide how researcher would plan this research. Researcher also contacted a few madrassahs in Chach, utilising personal contacts in the area. Some of them agreed to participate in this study. When researcher arrived in Pakistan, it was decided to inform the local town committee administrator and the police station about my project. Because, madrassahs are currently a controversial issue in Pakistan and researcher was keen to avoid any misconception about this research, which might affect the data collection process at any stage.

During first two weeks in Chach, researcher paid preliminary visits to some of the madrassahs in the local area, in order to meet their head teachers and to establish a working relationship, which was very important for effective data collection. The purpose of these introductory meetings with the head teachers was to discuss the aims and objectives of this research, that is, what researcher wanted to do, and to gain their consent to conduct my study in their institution. Again, my local personal contacts facilitated these meetings. This was very
helpful as otherwise the madrassahs might not have agreed to meet the researcher. At this time government agencies, trying to gain access to madrassahs, had been rebuffed. Introductory letters from supervisor and the university, confirming my role as a research student, helped to reassure the madrassahs that research had no hidden agenda.

The data collection process started during the second week of field visit in Chach, Pakistan. Researcher planned to visit the one madrassah and then move to the next. On the first day of visit to a madrassah, the head teacher introduced the researcher to other teachers and students in the morning session, and gave a chance to the researcher to speak in detail about the aims and objective of the research and also the reason for visiting their madrassah. During the initial stage, a few visits to each madrassah were planned, in order to gain the trust of the madrassah people (teachers and students). In each madrassah, the first interview was conducted with the head teacher; subsequent interviews with other teachers and students followed.

After a few visits to a madrassahs, researcher became closer to the people there and friendly relationships were established, which created the environment for my research participants to speak freely and with confidence. It also gave an opportunity to the researcher to use observation skills in a real environment, in order to collect some required information from teachers and students. Each individual was interviewed separately, so confidentiality could be maintained. As far as access to female madrassahs, and the conduct of interviews with female teachers and students, was concerned, there were a

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21 In all madrassahs, there is a tradition of a combined session in the morning for all students and teachers, when the head teacher gives a short speech - including some recitation and translation of the Holy Quran.
number of problems. Due to local social norms and cultural barriers, it was initially difficult as a male researcher - to interview women. But during the contact with the male madrassahs researcher met people who negotiated on his behalf with the head teachers of female madrassahs, and, after some discussion, researcher was given permission to conduct interviews in female madrassahs with a female research assistant. This type of cooperative environment further enhanced access to parents, through the teachers and students. Researcher also contacted interviews with a small number of informants who had some knowledge about the madrassahs and their education in their local area, and also some community members, for example, Chairman of the community and head teachers in the public schools. Researcher had contacted these informants in advance of the commencement of the field work and agreement had been obtained, as necessary. The reason to conduct interviews with key informants was to know the views and perceptions of people from outside the madrassahs, and also to validate the information collected from the people in the madrassahs.

3.8 Selection of the madrassahs and individuals for interviews

The justification for the selection of the case study location has already been discussed above. This section gives more information about the selection for interview of the madrassahs and the individuals. The nature of the sampling, and selection of research subjects, is dependent on the purpose of study and the nature of the population under investigation (Robson, 2002; Bryman, 2004). It is important that a researcher decides who, what and how many should be

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22 In order to conduct interviews with head teachers in public schools and colleges I provided an introductory letter from the district education officer.
selected for participation, and what form of sampling is suitable for the study (Creswell, 2007). Qualitative researchers typically utilise in-depth investigation, relying on relatively small samples (Patton, 1990). However, there are no *hard and fast* rules for defining a sample size in qualitative inquiry (Bryman, 2004; David and Sutton, 2004). Patton (1990, p.244) argues that sample size depends on what the researcher wants to know, the purpose of the study, what will be useful, and how much time and resources are available. Bryman (2004), however, argues that mostly decisions about sample size are affected by time and resources.

Target sample for this study includes madrassah students, teachers and parents, madrassah graduates and some key informants who are associated with or who have knowledge of madrassah education. The first step was to select the madrassahs to include in the study. As mentioned earlier, in Chach there are a large number of madrassahs, ranging from home-based Quranic teaching classes to large madrassahs which provide a full programme of madrassah education\(^23\). The madrassahs in Chach also belong to school of thoughts (as discussed above). Given this complexity and the large concentration of madrassahs in Chach - and keeping in the time limits and available resources - researcher selected one madrassah providing full Aalim course from each sect. The final selection was based on the willingness of different madrassahs to participate in this study. However, researcher was more interested in working with large madrassahs, which had been established in the area for a long time. In the end my sample included five male and two female madrassahs. Researcher chose only two female madrassahs because all the

\(^{23}\) See chapter four for more information about the curriculum and courses provided by a full madrassah education - which takes eight-ten years to complete.
madrassahs in Chach were run by only two dominate sects, the Dubandi and the Brelvi. Researcher also wanted to include a Shia madrassah, in order to understand the complexity of different madrassahs, but as there was none in Chach, therefore researcher included a Shia madrassah from the nearby rural area of Sanjwal. Sanjwal is in the same district as Chach and has similar economic, socio-cultural and religious characteristics.

Drawing on the purposive approach for sampling (Creswell, 2007), so far as the student sample was concerned, researcher decided to approach students in their final year. This was because by then the students would have spent at least eight years (five in the case of girls) in the madrassah, and, therefore, they could give richer information about their experience and what expected to do in the future, after finishing their studies. The head teachers helped to identify students from different family backgrounds, that is different economic and social backgrounds. Parents were selected for the sample if they had at least one child enrolled in any sect of madrassah. Their family backgrounds (economic, religious, and social) were also considered. Madrassah teachers were also included in this study, in order to authenticate the views of students and parents. The sample of teachers was also drawn up in a purposive way, and required they have at least two years experience of teaching in a madrassah - as more experienced teachers would likely have more information to share. However, the main purpose of the selection being to acquire the maximum amount of information, in order to answer the research questions and to achieve the aims and objectives of the study. When selecting informants the two overriding priorities were that people agreed to volunteer their time and views, and

24 All students were 16+ years old.
provide reliable information. Priority was given to those who could talk confidently and agreed to answer different questions related to this research. All interviews were carried out until the stage of saturation of data was achieved. See Table 3.1 shows an overview of the data collection process.
Table 3.1 An overview of data collection process for the study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Objectives / Type of information collected</th>
<th>Methods / Recording</th>
<th>Number of interviews</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Teachers     | To understand the dynamics of the madrassah system and the overall educational goals of each sector of madrassah  
To understand teachers’ views about changes to the madrassah curriculum, and their attitudes about other sectors of madrassahs  
To understand what teachers thought about the future prospects of madrassah students  
To understand the role of Ulama in the community  
To understand the overall impact of a madrassah education on individuals and communities | In-depth interviews  
Informal observations  
Review of curriculum and books  
General field notes | Male - 15  
Female - 8  
Total - 23 |
| Students     | To understand the family background of students and the reason why they were studying in a madrassah  
To understand what students learn in a madrassah and how they learn, and what their plans are for the future  
To understand student views about other sectors of madrassahs and other Islamic practices  
To understand the socio-economic impact of a madrassah education on individuals | In-depth interviews  
Informal observations  
General field notes | Male - 19  
Female - 11  
Total - 30 |
| Parents      | To understand the families’ socio-economic backgrounds and religious affiliations  
To understand parents’ views of their children’s madrassah education  
To understand how parents think a madrassah education will help their children’s future prospects  
To understand parents’ views of the changes to the madrassah education programme  
To understand the impact of a madrassah education | In-depth interviews  
Informal observations  
General field notes | Male - 10  
Female - 5  
Total - 15 |
| Madrassah graduates | To understand madrassah graduates’ views of a madrassah education, and the reason why they studied in a madrassah  
To understand how a madrassah education may have helped madrassah graduates to gain employment  
To understand madrassah graduates’ views on the changes needed in the madrassah education system | In-depth interviews  
Informal observation in the community | Male - 5  
Female - 3  
Total - 8 |
### Chapter Three

| Other Informants | To understand the role of madrassah graduates in the community  
| | To understand the madrassah graduates’ views on the impact of their madrassah education  
| | To understand the views of other informants of the madrassah education system  
| | To understand the advantages and disadvantages of a madrassah education, as seen by people outside the madrassahs  
| | To understand the role of Ulama and the impact of a madrassah education  
| | To understand the changes people outside the madrassahs have proposed for the madrassah education system  
| General field notes | In-depth interviews  
| Male - 6  
| Female - 3  
| Total - 9 |
As discussed above, this study utilised ethnographic methods for data collection, the main method being in-depths interviews. In addition non-participant observation was used to validate the data and information gathered through the interviews. A documents’ review was also conducted, to acquire other information for this study. It was considered employing a focus-group, but after initial discussion with the madrassahs researcher decided against this because most participants were reluctant to speak openly on a number of issues relating to the madrassahs. The following section outlines my data collection process, conducted through in-depth interviews and observation.

3.9 The Interviews process

This section provides information about the process of in-depth interviewing with selected informants. In-depth interviews were used to acquire the best data to answer the research questions. After the initial visits, which secured the agreement of the madrassahs to participate in this research, the interview process started at the end of March 2009, and run to the end of September 2009. Researcher conducted all interviews in one madrassah before moving on to the next. An interview schedule was prepared for each madrassah, and timings and venues were arranged in advance – to minimise disturbance to the madrassah’s teaching programme. As mentioned earlier, the initial interview was with the head teacher, serving as a kind of pilot for other interviews at the same institution, as advocated by Robson (2002). During the initial interview researcher secured baseline information about the madrassah, for example, its curriculum and practice, and also information about the particular sector the madrassah was affiliated to. This interview also provided the parameters which would be set for further interviews in that madrassah, for example, how
questions could be shaped, in order to obtain consistent information from teachers and students.

In each madrassah the second round of interviews was with the teachers; in the third stage interviews were arranged with the students. In all the madrassahs, the head teacher was the main contact person for all interviews arrangements. Whilst the interview process was continuing with the teachers and students, parents were approached for their voluntary participation and interview appointments were made with them. The interviews with parents were mostly conducted during afternoons and evenings - depending on their availability.

As Bailey (2007) said, the quality of an interview depends on the environment in which it is conducted. Researcher took this into account and arranged interviews in locations which were convenient for participants, and also for researcher. Interviews with madrassah teachers and students were usually conducted at the madrassah sites in private rooms. However, in some madrassahs permission was only given to sit in the main madrassah office. Even so, the room was usually quiet and both interviewer and interviewee could talk freely, without disturbance and interference. One potential advantage of conducting interviews at the madrassahs was that researcher could closely observe the madrassah environment and daily activities. Most parents agreed to be interviewed in their homes or in the *Hujra*\(^{25}\). Interviews with other participants were conducted at a mutually agreed place. This arrangement provided the environment for individuals to speak openly and confidently, when answering my questions. In addition, interviews were conducted in Urdu or in

\(^{25}\) The Hujra is a traditional sitting area for guests attached to a house or near to a house. It is very common in the Chach region.
the local Chachi language, which encouraged participants to express their views and talk about their experience in their own words, in a friendly and relaxed way. However, throughout, researcher maintained neutral position as a researcher.

Interviews typically started with general conversation about the madrassahs, before focusing on the issues under investigation in this study. However, the direction of each interview emerged differently and questions were asked according to specific responses from the informants. As Mason (2002) points, it is the interviewer’s responsibility to manage the interview conversation in a consistent way, and with specific focus, so at the end the data are meaningful and able to provide knowledge. With this in mind, researcher constantly probed and guided the interview process, and helped keep the conversation on track – in order to explore the people’s accounts of their madrassah experience. The interviews focused on the key issues of the research, that is, what factors shape preference for a madrassah education, and what are the impact of such an education on individuals and community. Using in-depth interviews to collect data, enabled researcher to understand the social norms, cultural issues, and religious values and practice of the madrassah, and how these factors influenced the construction of the institution as a social phenomenon. Apart from collecting information from verbal responses, face-to-face interaction provided an opportunity to observe emotions, facial expressions and how responses were delivered - important markers which offer additional understanding and which could not have been acquired by any other data collection method (Bryman, 2004).
Average time of each interview was more than two hours. Although, the stage of saturation reached at some point, the researcher has to adopt a strategy to conducting interviews in a way to provide enough time to participants, so that they would receive an adequate attention to provide more and more information required for this study.

Informants in the madrassahs did not agree that interviews could be recorded. Some other participants were also hesitant, and some individuals were not comfortable with even notes being taken during the interviews. In the end, researcher took a note only of important points made during the interviews and then, after finishing each one, researcher immediately wrote out in detail what was said. In addition, researcher conducted observations throughout the field work period and took notes. This is discussed in more detail in the following section.

3.10 Observations

Observation is another key data collection technique, central to qualitative research – in order to achieve holistic analysis of a social setting (Robson, 2002) Patton (1990, p.262) describes three advantages of observation. Firstly, direct personal contact with participants provides the opportunity to capture information from real settings, in order to achieve better understanding. Secondly, observation enables the researcher to discover much situational information. And, thirdly, observation enables the researcher to see things which may have been previously overlooked by the interviewer and informant. With this in mind, I conducted non-participant (informal) observation, in addition to in-depth interviews, to gather data. This approach provided researcher a
firsthand experience, which helped me understand the multidimensional aspects of madrassah education.

This observation method enabled researcher to collect relevant information from diverse participants, inside the madrassahs and in the local community. During interview visits researcher was able to observe, and gain useful insight into, the madrassah’s environment - including the daily life of students and teachers, the educational process within the madrassah, and views about madrassah education. Observing different madrassah settings provided the opportunity for researcher to understand how madrassahs associated with different sectors differed from each other. However, researcher was only able to use the observation method in the male madrassahs, as the female madrassahs only permitted to conduct interviews.

Whilst interviewing the parents, researcher’s observations focused on family background, the socio-economic status of the family, religious interests and religious practice, and parental attitude towards a child’s education. Researcher was especially interested in parental views about education for girls, in particular madrassah education. During stay in Chach, researcher was able to observe local socio-cultural norms, religious values and practices, and socio-cultural factors that were embedded in people's lives and which shaped their decisions and actions. researcher also observed the impact of madrassahs, for example, how they participated in the socio-economic activities of the community, and with each other and other institutions.

Field notes and data gathered through observation provided additional information and deeper insight into the local setting of the madrassahs and their
education system, which enabled researcher to interpret participants’ attitudes to madrassah education, and any trends in the work of these institutions. This type of data enhanced the quality and validity of information provided by the interviews.

3.11 Secondary source of data

In addition to data collection through interviews and observation, secondary information was also collected – including published literature on the historical background of madrassahs in Pakistan, in general, and madrassahs in Chach, in particular. A review of the madrassah educational process, and syllabus, helped me understand how it differed from formal education in Pakistan, and how the madrassah education experience is different for male and female students. Published work has also been consulted to understand the madrassahs related subjects in Pakistan, such as books published (in Urdu) by IPS related to madrassah education. However, one difficulty I encountered was that in Pakistan there is no current consistent and reliable data available about madrassah education. Therefore, this study relies mainly on the information gathered through the interviews and observations I conducted.

3.12 Data analysis process

This section discus the data analysis process researcher undertook for this study. In fixed design research (quantitative research), traditionally analysis starts at the end of the data collection stage (Robson, 2002). However, when conducting flexible research (qualitative research) it is suggested that data analysis should take place parallel with the data collection process, and that it should continue throughout the field work (Robson, 2002; Silverman, 2005;
Corbin and Strauss, 2008). This approach of simultaneous analysis often helps the researcher to learn by doing, in an inductive way (Creswell, 2007) - so themes and ideas emerge whilst the data gathering process continues, providing directions for further data collection and helping to make sense of data at an early stage (Patton, 1990; Miles and Huberman, 1994). In qualitative research analysing human conversation and actions is a challenging and time-consuming task. And there are no absolute processes or formula for analysis of this type of data. Rather this process depends on the nature of the inquiry and the different analytical methods used to transform thick descriptive data into findings (Patton, 1990).

An interpretivist approach was employed in this study for data analysis - commonly used in ethnographic case study analysis, and in accordance with a social constructionist stance Miles and Huberman, 1994 (1994) described three main concurrent stages for qualitative data analysis - data reduction, data display and the drawing of conclusions. To satisfy the requirements of the first stage, daily, at the end of data collection, researcher wrote up interview notes and prior the analysis, transcribed and translated them into English (see Appendix). Data reduction process involved the intensive reading of lengthy, in-depth interview data, and the condensing of it into different emergent and relevant meaningful themes. In order to analyse the data, this reading exercise was continuous to narrow down the data into sub-themes - which helped the researcher to examine the data, its scope and meanings to answer the research questions (Silverman, 2005). Data gathered through observations was also integrated into this process - which helped build thematic categorisations. Researcher incorporated data analysis within the data collection process –
which enabled to redefine some interview questions as researcher went along, in order to obtain more specific information (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Creswell, 2007). Throughout the data analysis process, an open and manual coding strategy has been used, rather than a computer programmes. Of course, themes and sub-themes and related data, which emerged from the interviews of diverse participants (for example, students, teachers, parents) was arranged in a way to interpret in a coherent way.

After finishing the analysis, the data was combined and displayed in chapters five and six. My priority was to answer the research questions. Data from the interviews was presented in a way which would enable a conclusion to be reached (unclear). At the same time, researcher considered the impact of any ethical issues which had arisen and decided to keep confidential the identities of participant madrassahs and individuals – so they would not be affected in any way (what ways do you mean?). Finally, researcher drew conclusions from the analysis and findings.

3.13 Data validity and reliability

The trustworthiness of qualitative research has been criticised, due to its flexible, subjective nature, and loose research methods (Guba and Lincoln, 1981). Therefore, the issues of validity, reliability and generalisation have been widely discussed by qualitative methodologists (Patton, 1990; Creswell and Miller, 2000; Al-Zeera, 2001; Creswell, 2007). The main challenge for qualitative researchers is to convince the audience that research is accurate, and that conclusions drawn are true (Robson, 2002). This study was planned in a way that would enable it to address validity and reliability issues. A careful strategy
was adopted, in order to effectively collect specific and authentic data, as advocated by Neuman (2007). Data validation was established by using the triangulation approach (Robson, 2002) – which utilises multiple methods of data collection to confirm findings and eliminate researcher and informant bias and fill gaps in information provided by interviewees. In addition, the triangulation of informants (students, teachers, parents and other key participants) also helped to obtain consistent and quality information, related to particular aspects of the madrassahs under investigation in this study. Additionally, during sample selection researcher took care to ensure a variety of madrassahs, from different sectors, and informants from diverse (socio-economic and religious backgrounds, and male and female) were included in the research. This provided a source of information, which could be validated and corroborated, or contrasted – in order to best address the research questions. This approach ensured the external validity of data gathered within the case study area.

In addition to triangulation, interview participants were asked to specifically address the subjects posed by the research questions, which confirms the quality of data gathered for this research (Gray, 2004). All the conversations with participants were simple and conducted in their local language, in comfortable and confidential settings – enabling them to talk freely about matters related to this study. This enhanced the credibility and quality of data, and assisted my understanding of the madrassah phenomenon - enabling me to draw accurate conclusions. Another validation strategy which researcher utilised, suggested by Robson (2002) and Creswell (2007) , was that of prolonged engagement in the field – which enabled researcher to work closely with participants, in order to secure accurate information. Field work for this
study lasted more than six months, and researcher personally conducted interviews with participants.

But validity is not only about the methods used and information collected, it is also applicable throughout the research process (Kvale, 1996). Therefore, to further satisfy the validity requirements for analysis and the provision of accurate and valid data, researcher made a significant effort to check links between existing literature, research questions and the data collected. Robson (2002) identified the value of peer debriefing, in order to explore the validity of analysis and conclusions. Researcher’s peer debriefing was established in various ways. For example, at regular intervals findings were informally discussed with colleagues, and formally discussed with research supervisor. These peer debriefers kept researcher on track, by asking many questions about data collection, analysis and interpretation. This practice provided external checks for the research process (Guba and Lincoln, 1981). Tentative findings of this study have also been presented in conferences and in departmental research seminars, where discussion added to the internal validity of this research.

One question this research faced, with regard to external validity or generalisability, was whether findings from my sample could be considered as being representative in a broader sense. This research is comprised of a qualitative case study – guided by a social constructivist approach – which aimed to explore and understand the reality of madrassahs in a particular context. As such the situation in other places, under different circumstances, may be different (Crotty, 1998; Denzin and Lincoln, 1998; Robson, 2002). Therefore, it is important to note that the aim of this study was to provide an
analytical and in-depth understanding of madrassah education in a particular area of Pakistan, rather than to be able to generalise these findings. However, it may be possible to utilise the findings of my case study to underpin a theoretical foundation for an understanding of madrassahs elsewhere in Pakistan.

Apart from internal and external validity issues, the other significant factor which measures the quality of qualitative research is the reliability of the methods used (Robson, 2002). In social research, reliability can be addressed in several ways (Silverman, 2005). With regards to this study, reliability is satisfied by employing research design and data collection methods which generate consistent data. Reliability is also reflected in interviews process, where questions focused on the main subjects under investigation and the data collection process was continuous and reliable. Two additional approaches to data generation also contributed to reliability. Firstly, researcher carefully transcribed each interview rather than contracting out this work. Secondly, the coding and analysis of the interview data was done only after researcher had read the material several times. Additionally, researcher carefully organised and presented the data.

3.14 Methodological limitations

There were some limitations on the methodology adopted for this study. My particular interests, as the researcher, and researcher’s pre-existing skills and knowledge, influenced the chosen methodology. The qualitative approach adopted for this research has been criticised for its subjective nature, which contrasts with the quantitative (objective) approach, often seen as being more reliable (Patton, 1990). However, the aim of this study was to understand
education provided by madrassahs at the grassroots level, and not to provide statistical information about these institutions. There were also some limitations in terms of the case study selected and the individuals targeted for this study. The aim was to provide holistic analysis, which required a prolonged time in the field collecting context-specific and rich data. Due to resource constraints researcher selected a single location case study with a small number of participants, in an area researcher was familiar with. As a result, the thick and deep data collected is difficult to generalise.

The other methodological limitations of this study are related to data collection methods for this study. Despite the effectiveness of interviewing to secure the required data, and the attention I paid to the process - in order to satisfy validity and reliability requirements - there remains the possibility of some biased, distorted or poor responses, which may affect the quality of data. Furthermore there were limitations to observation. Researcher may have misunderstood a situation observed, or participants could act have differently when they were not being observed. It was difficult to analyse and interpret the large amounts of data which came out of the interviews. The data analysis process, and interpretation of findings, is skills. Researcher took care to ensure that any natural bias did not influence the findings and to remain focused and critical throughout.

3. 15 My fieldwork experience as a researcher

This section offers some reflections on my engagement as a researcher during this study. Studying any aspect of madrassahs in Pakistan, post 11 September 2001, is a hazardous business. Madrassah authorities view people trying to
research their institutions as an agent of government or another organisation. They are also concerned that many studies depict madrassahs in a negative way. To avoid this confusion, I had to prove the exact nature of my research, and that I had no other hidden agenda for conducting it.

When I first contacted the madrassahs they were very inquisitive about my research. They asked many questions, for example, where did you get your funding? Why did you choose this topic? Was this topic assigned by your university or does it reflect your personal interest? However, as was mentioned earlier in this chapter, personal contacts helped me access the madrassah sites and gain the trust of staff, students and parents. Once the aims and objectives had been discussed and they were assured that there would be no personal or institutional harm arising from participation in this study, they agreed to cooperate.

Prior to this study, as a resident of Chach, I was aware of local cultural, social, and religious values and practices, and I maintained good social relations within the local community. It was thought that, as a local resident, I would have some advantage as a field researcher. But I was considered to be an outsider by the madrassah community – because I was studying with a foreign university. While I was in the field, the Pakistani government launched a major operation against militants in the Swat valley and tribal areas. It was believed that the militants were connected with madrassahs and that they wanted to apply Islamic Law to the country. This operation had a profound effect on madrassahs all over Pakistan, as they became more wary about external interest in their work. This meant that, during the initial stages of my research, I was nervous about the Ulama’s response and reaction to this study. At first I thought that my outsider
status would be a barrier to my research, and that students and parents would be reluctant to meet with me and to respond to various questions about the madrassah education.

But many of these worries dissipated when key people in the madrassahs welcomed me as a guest. I then realised that my perceptions about the madrassah people were wrong. In all the madrassahs, everyone answered my questions politely, and I was able to freely interact with teachers and students and observe the madrassah inhabitants and their activities. Some teachers, parents and students, who I met in the course of interviewing, told me they appreciated my academic interest in madrassah education. However, despite their cooperation during interviews I remained aware of my position and the limits I should not to cross to become biased. At the same time some non-participant madrassahs were suspicious about my presence and perceived my research as a project by western university to investigate the work of madrassahs. They also spread rumours that I was being paid to conduct this research. However, in the end I won the trust of some madrassahs by proving enough information to prove this was a piece of academic research. Then I was able to collect my data from the madrassahs and other participants.

One of the main challenges I faced during the field work was getting access to the female madrassahs, and conducting interviews with female teachers and students. This was due to conservative social values, and cultural limits in the Chach region. For example, conversations between women and men, other than family members, are frowned upon. Moreover, female madrassahs also have a very strict rule preventing men from entering the boundary of the institution. Although, consideration had been given to these kind of sensitive
issues, associated with female madrassahs, I had not fully appreciated how concerned their head teachers would be about how misunderstanding of my research could cause them difficulties. After several discussions, it was decided that the parental permission of female students would be sought in advance of interviewing, to avoid any misconceptions. This proved very helpful. However, permission was given only for interviews to be conducted in the presence of teacher - which was an obvious limitation. Also during initial contact, I realised that female students felt too shy to speak to a male researcher. Therefore, I arranged for a female research assistant to sit with me during the interviews. This approach enabled me to address many questions to female madrassah students, and they were able to answer with confidence - which enhanced the quality of data I gathered.

Another important issue that I had to deal with was the defensive (or prejudiced) attitude of the Ulama in the madrassahs. In this situation, I maintained a neutral position. Their expectations of me (as a Muslim) were very high. For example, in some madrassahs they openly requested that I portray them in a good light and that if I uncovered anything unsavoury I should ignore it. However, I was aware that I had to be unbiased at all costs. Arranging interviews with parents and other informants was also a challenging job. But despite these issues I was able to conduct the necessary interviews and collect the required data. However, data analysis and presenting the findings was also a time consuming process.
3. 16 Ethical Issues and considerations

As mentioned earlier this study used qualitative data collection methods, namely interviews, formal conversations and non-participant observation. Researcher asked questions, for example, about religious beliefs, cultural and social situations, and family background. All potential ethical issues were discussed separately, but, in general, they were related to the research questions researcher was asking. Before moving on to discuss particular ethical issues, related to this research, it is important to explain the situation in Pakistan, with regard to madrassahs. After 11 September 2001, Islamic organisations, and especially madrassahs, become very sensitive about interest in their work. It was thought some of them were linked with militant operations. So, there were many barriers to research in madrassahs, although this did not necessarily mean it was impossible.

There were many ethical issues to consider before embarking on this research, including voluntary participation, informed consent, avoiding (potential reputational) harm, protecting the dignity of participants, anonymity and confidentiality, and to protect information.

**Voluntary participation** is a basic of good social research (Robinson, 2002). During the initial stage of this study, researcher found it difficult to approach people for their voluntary participation. There were many reasons for this difficulty, such as people being afraid because of the prevailing situation in Pakistan. Researcher also realised that it was not only individuals but organisations who were reluctant to participate in this type of research. At this

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26 For example see ICG (2002) Pakistan : madrassahs, extremism and the military
time the government of Pakistan (GoP) was trying to register madrassahs, and there were some disagreement between madrassahs and GoP about this process. Also many intelligence forces, and other national and international agencies, were trying to approach madrassahs to uncover their alleged militant links. This was the main reason why people were reluctant, during the initial stage of my research, to speak openly about madrassahs. However, after researcher explained the purpose of this study, and its importance as an academic project, they agreed to cooperate and showed a genuine interest in research. But participation was voluntary and they could withdraw from the research at any stage.

**Informed consent** means that my participants had the right to know that they were part of a research project. Researcher was also obliged to tell them about the nature of study and its aims and objectives (Robson, 2002), inform them that it was a scholarly pursuit only, and that they would not benefit directly from their participation. Therefore, during the research process, it was considered unethical to collect any information without the permission and willingness of any madrassah or individual. So, from the start, informed consent was ensured in that all the participants (individuals and organisations) were made aware of their role as a participant and that they were free to withdraw from the research at any stage without discrimination. Furthermore, sufficient time was given to all participants to decide whether or not they wanted to participate in the research. In the case of interviews with madrassah students, advance permission was sought from the head of the madrassah as well as from the students. For interviews, consent was always required from participants before any recording and taking of notes. In most cases, participants were not happy and had
reservations concerning voice recordings. Therefore, no conversation would be recorded so as to provide them space to speak freely.

**Avoiding harm to and protecting the dignity** of participants was achieved by considering the religious, political and educational nature of the research during the entire process. During the interviews there was always a chance of asking a question which may affect the personal feelings, beliefs and socio-cultural values of the respondent. Therefore, researcher was very careful not to ask any question which could disturb the participant’s personal life. As mentioned before, any research related to religion and madrassahs is very sensitive in Pakistan, and participants may feel harmed, including mental and psychological harm. At the same time, in the context of Pakistan, there is a fear of social criticism and marginalisation, not only of the participants but for the researcher as well. To deal with this type of ethical dilemma, all interviews were conducted at suitable and safe places that did not compromise the security of the participants and researcher. In addition, researcher ensured that the participants, especially the younger ones, were not harassed in any way.

**Anonymity and confidentiality** are important issues for a social sciences researcher (Kumar, 1996). Any misuse of non-documentary information can create misunderstandings between researcher and participants and can be harmful to a particular person or organisation. Therefore, one more ethical issue for this research project was to ensure the protection of information gathered from all sources. The names of participants and their madrassahs were not mentioned in any text, and different codes were given to interview responses. However, researcher have kept the original data, with names, safely until the research is completed. Another consideration is that the successful completion
of any research project depends on the security of the researcher both during and after field work (Robson, 2002).

3. 17 Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to describe the methodological foundations of the study. In this explanatory study, which aims to look at madrassah education as a social phenomenon, a social constructionist approach for investigating the issues raised in the research questions was adopted. The chapter then provided an overview of the social constructionist stance – how a social reality is constructed in a specific context. This research is centred on why? and how? types of questions. It also understands the madrassah education as context-specific and embedded in the local culture, social norms, cultural values and religious beliefs and practices. Therefore, given these conditions, a qualitative case study was chosen as the most appropriate strategy for in-depth understanding and analysis of madrassahs in Chach. In addition, justification for the selection of case location has been discussed in detail. This chapter has also discussed the multiple qualitative data collection methods and data collection process used in the field in order to gather rich data related to the complex nature of the madrassah education system. Multiple data collection methods provided a form of triangulation to collect reliable and valid information from diverse participants.

This chapter has also explained in detail how the data was analysed by manual coding. Throughout the research process, significant attention has been paid to meeting the quality criteria and to dealing with validity and reliability issues. In this way, it was ensured that the information collected is valid and that any
distortion has been removed. Researcher have carefully interpreted the participants’ views and put arguments with appropriate supporting evidence without any bias. Despite the efforts at consistency in this study, there were some methodological limitations, obstacles in the field, and ethical concerns related to the research.

Before moving to present the findings, the next chapter will discuss madrassahs in general and explicitly the context of madrassah education in Pakistan, including their historical background, structure, sectarian division of madrassah education and type of education they provide. It will provide a broader understanding of madrassahs and their education system in Pakistan.
Chapter Four

The Context - Understanding madrassah education in Pakistan

4.1 Introduction

Chapter one gave a brief introduction to madrassahs in Pakistan, and their educational system was discussed, and in chapter two, theoretical concepts of Islamic education have been reviewed. This chapter provides a more in-depth discussion of the madrassah educational system. In order to explain the context of this study; it is necessary to understand the early historical background of madrassahs in Pakistan. To that end this chapter will, first, provide an overview of how they evolved and developed their educational system.

Then this chapter will explore the different aspects of madrassah education in Pakistan, in order to discover, for example, the structure of madrassah education; how madrassahs differ from other schools; what type of curriculum madrassahs provide; how madrassah schools are funded; how many madrassahs and madrassah students there are in Pakistan; the nature of the relationship between the state and madrassahs; and how the madrassahs are responding to proposed reforms. In addition, this chapter will also overview madrassah-militancy links and outreach of madrassahs in the community.

4.2 Origin, history and development of early madrassahs

An educational system is not developed overnight. It involves, rather, a time-consuming process of initiation, growth and organisation. This was also true for the madrassah education system. The history of madrassahs can be traced
back to the origins of Islam. Over the years different sectors of madrassah have been inspired by different schools of thought within Islamic theology, and influenced by different political and socio-cultural factors – the impact of which can still be seen today (Riaz, 2008). This section looks briefly at the origins, history and development of madrassahs.

Madrassahs are rooted in the seventh century, when the Prophet Muhammad started teaching Islam in the Arab region. During that time there were no organised educational institutions and the Prophet and his companions were teaching from home to Muslims and new converts and also in the mosques. These types of informal study circles were called halqa (Hefner and Zaman, 2007). During the initial time of Islam (7th century), mosques were the only convenience place as an educational institute. The first madrassah was established in the house of Zaid Bin Arqam (a companion of the Prophet Muhammad), in the Safa valley. Later, after the migration of the Prophet to Madina, a madrassah called Ahl-e-Suffa was established in the city of Medina (Ali, 2009). However, as Islam begin to expand outside the Arabian region it was felt education should be more organised, and eventually this gave birth to the idea of the madrassah being separate from the mosque and home study circle. Then slowly madrassahs began to spread to Muslim communities across the world (Sikand, 2005). Although, the basics of Islamic education (for example, study of the Qur’an, Hadith, and Fiqh) have been the same since the Prophet’s time, institutions providing these programmes have changed dynamically (Halstead, 2004; Alam, 2004; Sikand, 2005). During the eighth and ninth centuries knowledge of Islam grew, and this led to more organised and

27 It was the time (610CE) when Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) started his Prophet-hood with the revelation of the holy Quran. This was the beginning of Islamic education (Sikand, 2005)
advanced learning of religious principles. Madrassahs began operating as separate educational institutes, providing classrooms and other related facilities, such as, library. They also offered accommodation for students and teachers. Eventually, they transformed into the kind of institutions which can be seen across the Muslim world today (Berkley, 2007). The distribution of madrassahs, and changes in the education system they provided, has been influenced by socio-political and economic factors (Hefner and Zaman, 2007).

It is difficult to determine the date of the establishment of the first madrassah as a separate education provider. The widespread belief is that organised madrassahs were started by Nizamul Mulk Tusi in 1067 in Baghdad. This early madrassah was called Madrassah Nizamiya. However, there are other accounts from history that claim that the first madrassah was founded well before Madrassah Nizamiya, in the 11th century in the Iranian town of Nishapur. Whatever the truth is, Madrassah Nizamiya appears to be the first state-sponsored madrassah – becoming the model for other madrassahs across the Muslim world. Nizamul Mulk later started other madrassahs in different regions under his regime. Following his lead other Muslim rulers and wealthy people in the Muslim communities organised madrassahs elsewhere, providing them with land and other facilities needed for an educational setting (Sikand, 2005; Riaz, 2008). During the Middle Islamic Period, from 1000 to 1500, madrassahs became popular Islamic educational institutions (Berkley, 2007).

Although, the new madrassahs were more organised than the earlier study circles they remained largely informal and flexible. Such as, medieval madrassahs had no well-defined institutional structure, admission process, specific curriculum, examinations’ system, or specific study period. Students
were paired with individual teachers; and the teacher (now known as the *Ulama*) was the main authority of the madrassah educational system. Students often travelled a long way to study with a well-known teacher. Certificates of qualification were associated with teachers, and their personal *ijaza* (authorisation), and the ability of students was recognised by association with their teacher’s name, rather than any institute (Berkey, 1992). The teacher determined what was taught, influenced by the local socio-cultural and religious context (Sikand, 2005). Therefore, the madrassah institutions had little or no input into the character or process of the education system they were responsible for (Berkey, 1992).

Since the start, madrassah education has been (mostly) free to students. Funding for programmes had to be secured elsewhere, from different sources. Most funds came from the local Muslim community and civil society - in the form of religious donations, for example, *Zakat*\(^{28}\) and *Awqaf*\(^{29}\). It is interesting to consider that even in the Middle Ages madrassahs were largely working independently of government. However, a few madrassahs did receive government support - for example, during the Seljuk Empire in Iraq (1040) (the empire should have a start and end date), and those run by the Mamluks in Egypt and Syria (Berkey, 1992; Hefner and Zaman, 2007). Arjomand (1999) says that in 13\(^{\text{th}}\) century Iran madrassahs became more organised, providing large libraries, accommodation and medical facilities. Also these charitable institutions were engaged in providing welfare services for the local community (ibid).

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\(^{28}\) *Zakat* is the one type of Islamic tax, an eligible Muslim give every year for charity

\(^{29}\) *Awqaf* is a type of private funds set for some welfare work and services; more specifically it can be called religious funds for religious activities.
It is clear, from historical accounts that state interest in madrassahs extended beyond that of education. Some governments had other political agendas, and state meddling in madrassahs was common in many Arab regions. For example, Turkish leaders in Arabia established madrassahs to strengthen their authority in the eyes of the local population (Berkey, 1992). Moreover, state interest in the madrassahs was not only limited to political agendas. Different sector madrassah networks were used against each other, for example, during the eleventh century Madrassah Nizamiya helped to foster Sunni orthodoxy - in order to counter the rise of Shi'ism. This practice of madrassah manipulation was common in Arab regions, where religious Ulama were very influential in the local community. This demonstrates that madrassahs have always had some relationship with the state (Sikand, 2005). However, more recently, the nature of this relationship has changed dynamically (Brenner, 2001). In many regions, the elites and rulers who established these institutions left them largely in the hands of the Ulama, to be operated to improve Islamic knowledge. The informal and flexible medieval Islamic education system (as discussed above) provided the opportunity for many people, who would otherwise have been unable to obtain an education. And a competition emerged between different Ulama, keen to secure a position in a good madrassah. But no attention was paid to changing or improving the education system according to the contemporary needs (Berkey, 1992; Hefner and Zaman, 2007).

In the 19th and 20th centuries rulers in Iran, and the Ottoman Empire, realised the importance of education and they put their effort into modernising Islamic education. These changes brought more regulations, new subjects, and a more systematic way of learning. There was the opportunity to think beyond political dimensions of religious education and focus, rather, on how Muslims could live
in the new era (Menashri, 1992; Ringer, 2001). It is important to say that this reform largely took place without the cooperation of the existing madrassah community, and the relationship between the new school system and the established religious education stalwarts was not easy. This led non-state actors, who opposed reform, to develop their own curriculum for Islamic education. And since that time there has been an ongoing debate between reformist and Ulama\textsuperscript{30} about changes in the traditional madrassah education (Hefner and Zaman, 2007).

The idea that educational institutions could help bring about change, especially socio-economic and political, prompted a new focus for Islamic education. This development appears to create a disjunction between the educational role of madrassahs in the pre-modern age, and those of today (ibid). However, for hundreds of years madrassahs and Islamic education institutions were highly successful – and there was, what is now considered to be, a Golden Age (7th to 17th centuries). Madrassahs started to decline as European countries began their colonisation of the world. This decline continued during the 18\textsuperscript{th} century, when Europeans introduced secular education systems in lots of countries - including the Indian Sub-Continent (Berkey, 1992; Talbani, 1996).

This section has provided a detail account of the development of madrassahs, informing us that changes in the provision of Islamic education are not new. Clearly the rise of madrassah education during the Middle Ages initiated a reorientation of Islamic knowledge and authority. Changes at that time were influenced by the institutional founders, Ulama, and others involved in the provision of madrassah education. This historical discussion aids an

\textsuperscript{30} Islamic scholars – plural of an Aalim
understanding of the foundations of madrassah education, which underpin the developments taking place in Islamic schools today. We have also considered how the socio-economic context impacts on madrassah educational programmes. The pressing question is, if teaching in madrassahs today adheres to traditional values, what place can a madrassah education have in the modern Muslim’s life and the globalised world?

4.3 A brief account of madrassahs in South Asia

This section provides a brief history of madrassah education in South Asia. It will also help aid an understanding of the madrassah environment in Pakistan. The roots of madrassahs in South Asia can be traced back to the 13th century (Bano, 2007). However, rise of the Mughal Empire, and the spread of Islam towards the East, led to the establishment of madrassah education in the Indian sub-continent in more organised form. In these early days subjects such as poetry, logic and Falsafa (philosophy), were taught - mainly in Arabic and Persian. The first madrassah in South Asia is said to have been the Madrassah Firoz, in a rural area in Multan31 (Ali, 2009 ; Alam, 2011). During the Mughal era, an informal education system had been established in South Asia; and from there the madrassah tradition evolved into its present form. At first the madrassah was considered to be a prestigious institution for the learning of Islamic studies and other subjects (Metcalf, 1978; Robinson, 2000).

After the fall of the Mughal Empire, and the start of British rule (in 1858), there was a new development in the madrassah educational system. There was a backlash to the nature of the western educational system, as many Ulama on

31 Multan is a large agriculture region in the centre of Punjab Province of Pakistan.
the Asian sub-continent opposed worldly knowledge and emphasised, instead, the value of religious and spiritual knowledge (Farish et al., 2008). This led to a division in the Muslim community in British India, with some people having a bigger interest in a modern education and others in a religious education. But slowly the madrassahs, and their religious traditions, spread across Indian society. These new madrassahs provided a model for the present day form of madrassah educational system (Bano, 2007). Rapidly changing educational policies by British government prompted the Muslim community to consider changing its education system (Metcalf, 1978), and a new curriculum was designed by Mullah Nizamuddin, called Dars-e-Nizami. This is the curriculum taught today, with some modifications, in many traditional madrassahs in India, Bangladesh and Pakistan (Sikand, 2005). However, there was some disagreement between Muslim modernists and the Ulama about this new curriculum. The Muslim modernists, like Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, felt it was time for a change, while the Ulama saw the British education system (secular education) as a threat to Muslim identity and culture (Metcalf, 1978; Ali, 2009).

After the changes in the curriculum, madrassahs needed to be persuaded to adopt the new system. In 1867 the Darul Duband, or Duband madrassahs, were conceived, and the foundations were laid for a new tradition of Islamic education which persists until today in many countries, including in most madrassah in Pakistan (Malik, 1996; Bano, 2007). This new madrassah system also encouraged other changes in Indian society, for example, political activism

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32 Dars-e-Nizami is the curriculum which was developed in the early nineteenth century by the leading Indian Islamic scholar, Nizam-ud-Din Muhammad. This curriculum was developed in response to Western education systems, and offered a mixture of classical and modern subjects. However, now this curriculum has changed, to focus only on religious subjects (Sikand, 2005).

33 This madrassah system was named after the city of Duband, in present day India (Sikand, 2005).
against the British government and the growth of India’s freedom movement (Robinson, 2000; Hefner and Zaman, 2007). The main aim of the Duband madrassah tradition was the preservation of Muslim life and Islamic values in British India. Also the Duband madrassah trained Islamic scholars and Ulama, who had to be dedicated to serving Islam and helping people practise their Islamic belief in daily life (Riaz, 2008). Dependant on charity funding, the Duband madrassahs became very popular, especially for students from poor and low income families (Robinson, 2000). At the same time other schools of thought - such as Brelvi, Ahl-e-Hadith, and Shia (section 4.6.1 provides more detail on these sectors) - also began to organise their own madrassah systems. The Brelvi madrassah operated on similar lines, except their inclination was towards Sufism. They also started to establish branches in different areas in sub-continent (Robinson, 2000; Riaz, 2008; Metcalf, 2009).

However, all these different approaches made madrassah education a more complex field, and during the late 19th century reform of the madrassah system brought the different sects together under one umbrella. In 1893 a new organisation, called Nadwatul-Ulama, was set up in India – it’s main objectives being to reform the madrassah curriculum and teaching methods, and to encourage the different Ulama (including the Shia) to work together to further religious education within the Muslim community. This organisation carried out many improvements to the madrassah educational system, for example, promoting curriculum changes and establishing libraries. However, the overall concept of the madrassahs remained unchanged, and the opposition to secular

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**34** This madrassah system was named after the city of Breli, which is in India.
education continued (Robinson, 2000). The following section provides a profile of Pakistan, and an exploration of its madrassah educational system.

4.4 Pakistan: The context

The idea of separate a state for Muslims was conceived by Dr. Muhammad Iqbal, and the theory of *two-nations* (conceived by Muhammad Ali Jinnah) encouraged Indian Muslims to start a freedom movement - which lobbied for a separate country. After a long struggle, on August 14, 1947 - after division of the Indian sub-continent -, the Muslim-majority country of Pakistan came into existence. Pakistan was created on the basis of an Islamic ideology; and it was this ideology – and the geographical location of the newly formed country - which established its importance in the region (Mujahid, 2001). Pakistan has borders with India, Afghanistan, Iran, and China. It is divided into four provinces and has a population of more than 170 million people. Pakistan has the second largest Muslim (97%) population in the world, after Indonesia. Approximately 67% of people live in rural areas, where agriculture is the main livelihood. Much of the population lives below the poverty line, the literacy rate is very low (less than 50%), and the country faces many development challenges, from economic instability to various social issues (Talbot, 2009).

Since its formation, Pakistan has struggled to achieve democracy and a stable state. Due to various internal factors - such as weak political agendas and corrupt government policies - and external factors – such as conflict, terrorism militancy - there has been persistent political instability. Most of the time the state apparatus has been run by military administrations (for example, the Zia

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35 Dr Muhammad Iqbal (1877 –1938) was a philosopher and national poet of Pakistan

36 Muhammad Ali Jinnah (1876 – 1948) was a founding father of Pakistan.
regime between 1978 -1988 and the Musharaf regime between 1999-2007), which has created obstacles to the formation of a well-defined constitution, a democratic government structure, and stable institutions (Haqqani, 2004; Haqqani, 2005; Hussain, 2007; Talbot, 2009). Pakistan’s political institutions are dominated by the military, landlords, and the bureaucrats. As a result, the country’s power structure is unbalance and there is a general absence of governance. Like elsewhere, democracy, security and development are interlinked in Pakistan. However, unfortunately, democracy has never really been practiced in Pakistan, leaving the country underdeveloped. Furthermore, regional ethno-conflicts have complicated an already complex situation (Kukreja and Singh, 2005). And there is a wide socio-economic gap between rich and poor households, even today the power over Pakistani politics resides in the hands of a few landlords, who, understandably, are resistant to democracy. This environment helps foster the interests of corrupt elites and assists those who are in power - who tend to have close relationships with each other and who are unwilling to introduce reforms that would loosen their grip, even though they might also help the poor and lead to the socio-economic development of the county (Talbot, 2009).

Despite, the high population growth rate Pakistan has achieved some economic success. During 1980s and early 1990s GDP rose by 6.2% - giving Pakistan the status of a middle income country and by 1993-4 Pakistan had a GDP of 52 billion dollars (Talbot, 2009). Pakistan also introduced new regulations to encourage open trade (Zaidi 1999). However, the structural institutional corruption, and the misuse of resources and power, has retarded development in Pakistan. Changing government structures and conflict between different social groups have halted the making of important decisions about the country’s
socio-economic development (Zaidi, 1999; Kukreja and Singh, 2005). This poor economic development has adversely affected Pakistan’s civic services – such as health, education, employment, infrastructure, and water and sanitation - and there has been an increase in incidents of radicalisation (Zaidi, 1999). In recent years the challenges of terrorism, and increased corruption, have further damaged the socio-economic progress of the country. These multiple problems have nearly reduced the country to a *failed state* (Kukreja and Singh, 2005; Rashid, 2008). Furthermore, current insecurity have made the situation much worst (Talbot, 2009).

Religion has always had an important role in Pakistani society. Religious values and beliefs influence interaction, attitude of individuals, and socio-economic trends in Pakistan (Mohiuddin, 2007). Some commentators believe that religion has become the main reason for the failure of Pakistan to modernise (Pal, 1999; Qureshi, 2005). The underlying cause of this failure is seen as the persistent conflict between the Ulama and the state. The main for this conflict is the issue of an Islamic constitution – which remains unresolved (Qureshi, 2005). However, the Ulama have participated in the country’s politics, and during 1980s, General Zia-ul-Haq’s Islamisation policies resulted in an increase in the size of the religious community in Pakistan. It is clear, from this brief review, that - after experimenting with different political, economic and development models - Pakistan remains an unstable country, which needs a long-term strategy to tackle its major underdevelopment issues (Zaidi, 1999).

**4.5 Growth of madrassahs in Pakistan**
This section provides information about the development of madrassahs in Pakistan since 1947. As mentioned earlier, madrassahs in Pakistan follow the South Asian tradition of Islamic education. After Partition many Ulama migrated to Pakistan and established their own madrassahs (Bano, 2006). But the newly established state was initially not receptive to the idea of madrassahs, and most education in Pakistan at that time was modelled on the British system. The Ulama disapproved of this modernisation – but the madrassah education in general, were not recognised by the government. Madrassah qualification certificates were useless and there were no job opportunities for madrassah graduates in the public sector (Bano, 2007; Ali, 2009; Rahman, 2009). However, over time the number of madrassahs has greatly increased, with most, as was mentioned above, belonging to the Dubandi sector (Bano, 2007).

Table 4.1 gives an overview of the growth of madrassahs in Pakistan. To enable better understanding of madrassah development the following part of this section will discuss the madrassah phenomenon at different times and during different regimes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Madrassahs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1947</td>
<td>245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>472</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>908</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>2056</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>2861</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>3906</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Over the year various rulers have had different attitudes towards madrassahs and the Islamic educational system. The first period of madrassah development took place between 1947-71. As discussed above, during these early years madrassahs struggled to find their place in Pakistan, as the Establishment was influenced by the British educational model. In 1958 Ayub Khan came to power, but his approach towards madrassahs was unclear. However, in 1962 he transformed the country’s identity; Pakistan became the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, and the government assumed control of the madrassahs. Many changes followed and new policies were introduced by the government, including proposals to change the madrassah curriculum (Ali, 2009). However, this reform was strongly resisted by the Ulama – which established different Wifaq\(^{37}\) (see section 4.6.1 for more detail) for the various sects who ran madrassah education programmes in the country (Riaz, 2005; Ali, 2009).

Between 1971-1977 President Bhutto made some progress towards madrassahs, and madrassahs received considerable attention for their development from government - but they still worked independently. Madrassah graduates were now given job opportunities in the public sector, and the madrassah institutions enhanced their capacity in different directions, such as political activities (Ali, 2009).

\(^{37}\) Wafaq means the federations or boards of madrassahs in Pakistan
Between 1977-78, the Islamic ideological approach and Islamisation policy of General Zia significantly increased the number of madrassahs in Pakistan. Zia wanted to secure the support of the Ulama and the madrassahs, so he encouraged their development. The increase was also influenced by the political situation in the region, such as the Afghan-Soviet war (Riaz, 2008). The Ulama were represented in various public sectors for jobs, and the government provided help for the development of madrassahs and other religious organisations. Moreover, the madrassah higher degree was also recognised as being equivalent to a masters level university qualification. Also, a national survey was conducted - which recommended the reform of madrassahs by improving their financial conditions and changing their curriculum, in order to integrate them into the public education system (Malik, 1996; Ali, 2009). As the madrassahs grew in number, supported by the government and the influence of the Ulama in the public sector, this led, eventually, to the organisation of religious-political parties. This put the madrassahs in a more prominent position in the public sphere. However, there has been much debate about this increase in the number of madrassahs and the government support of them, and claims that this development played a role in support of Zia regime (Singer, 2001; Ahmed, 2003; Abbas, 2005). After the cold war, and the end of Zia’s administration, a civilian government came back into power, between 1989 - 1999. The number of madrassahs continued to increase, by thousands, and they also established strong networks of madrassahs along sectarian divide. Their representatives began appearing in the political arena and the madrassah became part of civil society. All governments, post 1999, have proposed reform of the madrassahs to change their curriculum, but none have been successful.
Since 2001 Pakistan’s madrassahs have become a major global issue. President Musharraf proposed a new reform to the madrassah education system (when?), but again it failed (Bano, 2007; Park and Niyozov, 2008). However, the number of madrassahs and student enrolment continues to grow in Pakistan. See section 4.7 for detailed discussion about madrassah reform.

4.6 The madrassah education system in Pakistan

This study focuses on madrassah education in Pakistan. Education in Pakistan is complex; there are three systems working alongside and separate from each other – the public, the private and madrassahs. Firstly, the government, or public education system, is the dominate one, providing primary to higher level education. Secondly, private schools are situated in both rural and urban areas, targeting children from middle income families and upper class families. A recent development in the private sector has been the founding, by Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), of new school project. Finally, madrassahs provide education, both in rural and urban areas. These institutions, some small, some large, provide Islamic education - including Quran classes, *Islamic studies* degrees and specialised programmes. In the next part of this section I will explain the madrassah education system in Pakistan in more detail.

Madrassahs in Pakistan are usually independent community initiatives - run and organised by the Ulama and the local community. However, there are a small number of madrassahs which are managed by the government, under *Awqaf* system (Riaz, 2008). Madrassahs in Pakistan also vary in terms of their location (urban or rural), their size, their available resources, the education level they
provide, and the ideological sect they belong to (Borchgrevink, 2011). In general, Islamic education in Pakistan can be divided into informal and formal. The informal, or lowest level of Islamic education, starts the mosque, maktab\footnote{A small educational setting for Islamic teaching, same as at mosque but works outside the mosque.} or home\footnote{In Pakistan, there are many home-based Islamic schools; they commonly teach basic Quranic reading to girls in rural areas.} - where children learn to read the holy Quran and some other basic Islamic teachings. Madrassahs provide a full-time formal Islamic education, from secondary level to post-graduate level. Madrassahs mostly educate a large number of students, and often one main madrassah will have several branches in different areas. There is no fee for a madrassah education and many also provide free board and lodging and free books. However, some madrassahs only provide day time classes. The formal madrassahs can be categorised by the education level they provide, such as the Jamia and Darul-ulum\footnote{‘Jamia’ is equivalent to college and ‘Darul-ulum’ is equivalent to university} (Fair, 2008). All madrassahs, which offer full time courses, must be affiliated with one of the madrassah boards (known as Wifaq), in order for qualifications to be recognised. There are a total of five madrassah boards in Pakistan – whose work is explored in more detail in the following section.

4.6.1 Madrassah boards and sectarian dimensions

Of the five madrassah boards in Pakistan, three are Sunni, one is Shia, and the other is linked with the well-known religious-political party, Jamaat-e-Islami. The three Sunni boards are Wafaq-ul-Madaris-al-Arabia, Tanzeem-ul-Madaris, and Wafaq-ul-Madaris-al-Salafia. The Shia madrassah board is called Wafaq-ul-Madaris-Shia, and Rabitatul Madaris-al-Islamiya is the one associated with
Jamaat-e-Islami. Table 4.2, below, gives more information about these madrasah boards, including their affiliations with specific schools of thought, the dates they were established, and their locations.

**Table 4.2 The different madrasah boards in Pakistan**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Wafaq</th>
<th>Sector/Sub-Sector</th>
<th>Date Established</th>
<th>Location of Markaz</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wafaq-ul-Madaris-al Arabia Pakistan (Dubandi)</td>
<td>Sunni-Hanafi-Dubandi</td>
<td>1959</td>
<td>Multan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanzeem-ul-Madaris (Brelvi)</td>
<td>Sunni-Hanafi-Brelvi</td>
<td>1960</td>
<td>Lahore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rabitatul Madaris-al Islamiya (Jamaat-i-Islami)</td>
<td>Jamaat-e-Islami</td>
<td>1983</td>
<td>Mansoora-Lahore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wafaq-ul-Madaris-Shia (Shia)</td>
<td>Shia</td>
<td>1959</td>
<td>Lahore</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Khalid (2002)

These boards each provide a working *hub* for madrassahs belonging to specific religious sects. Accordingly, they are organised along sectarian lines and work for one particular sect of madrassahs. For example, all the Duband madrassahs are affiliated with the Wafaq-ul-Madaris-al-Arabia board. The boards are private enterprises, are self-funded, and work independently. Although, there is limited interaction between the boards they do have some links with government. Table 4.3 shows the number of madrassahs in each sect.
Table 4.3 Number of madrassahs in each sect in Pakistan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wifaq/ Madrassah sector</th>
<th>Number of Madrassahs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Duband</td>
<td>9,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brelvi</td>
<td>4,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahl-e-Hadith</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shia</td>
<td>1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamat-e-Islami</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>16,000</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Bano (2007)

A madrassah board is responsible for designing curriculum, defining policy, conducting exams, and awarding certificates to successful students. Each board represents the interests of all madrassahs in a specific sect; communicating with government regarding madrassah’s education policy and other related matters (Riaz, 2008). Since the madrassah boards are associated with the different schools of thought, they reflect their particular viewpoints. The following section provides an overview of each sect, to enable a clear understanding of the sectarian divide within the madrassah educational system. In general, there are two main types of madrassah, Sunni and Shia. Sunni can be further divided into four different (sub) sectors. Fig 4.1 provides an overview of this sectarian divide.
Dubandi

Today, the Dubandi sect is a very prominent and influential Islamic movement in Pakistan, and India too. It was first started by Molana Muhammad Qasim Natautavi (1833-1877) and Molana Rashid Ahmed Gangohi (1829-1905) in India in 1865 (Shaikh, 2008, Ali, 2008). The first madrassah was, as mentioned earlier, named after the town of Duband in India. At present, the Dubandi is one of the leading sects in many countries which have a strong network of madrassahs. The original Duband madrassah represented a turning point in the history of Islamic education – marking the transformation from the informal madrassah into a more structured and organised education system. Specially, the Duband madrassah introduced the Sarparast (rektor), the Muhtamim (Chancellor) and the Sadder Madaris (chief instructor) (Rahman, 2004; Fair, 2008; Ali, 2009). They also introduced a more organised and well-defined curriculum – the Dars-e-Nizami. However, the main emphasis remained a religious education, and efforts to include modern subjects into the curriculum were not successful. The other main objective of the Duband madrassah was to resist the introduction of a secular
education. In addition, the Duband was also against the mystical approach, with its focus on remembrance and celebration of anniversaries (U’rs) of saints. This opposition has been steadily increasing since 1947 (Ali, 2009).

The Dubandi sect came to Pakistan with the Ulama, who arrived after Partition. They started new madrassahs in towns and villages, gradually extending their network across all Pakistan. They targeted the ordinary Muslim and carried their teaching into rural areas (Shaikh, 2008). Today, about 70% of madrassahs in Pakistan belong to the Dubandi sect. They not only provide madrassah education, but they are also engaged in community welfare work, also in political activities. Their representatives are engaged in national politics, for example, one of the most famous religious-political parties, the Jamaat Ulama e Islam, is Dubandi. And the leading coalition of religious parties, called Mutahida Majlas-e-Amal (MMA) (Fair, 2008), is also Dubandi. According to Giustozzi (2007), the overall nature of the Dubandi sect is conservative, and they have the same approach in education of Dubandi madrassahs in Pakistan. There are few Dubandi madrassahs, and their affiliated organisations have been categorised as Jihadi movements, which support the Taliban and other militant activities (Fair, 2008).

**Brelvi**

Brelvi madrassahs also belong to the Sunni sect. They were established by Ahmed Raza Khan (1856-1921) in 1906 in the Indian town of Breilley (Shaikh, 2008; Ali, 2009; Metcalf, 2009). This sect, and its affiliated Ulama, also moved to Pakistan in 1947. the Brelvi school of thought is based on the concept of *sufi*

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41 Fair (2008, P. 57) have mentioned few names of these organisations, which include Harkat ul Jihad, Jaish-e-Mohammad, Harkat ul Ansar, Lashkar-e-Jhangvi and Sipah-e-Shaba.
Islam (Fair, 2008). This sect, and its followers, is devoted to heterodox belief, the practice of the celebration of U’rs (the annual celebration of Sufi saints), and worshiping the graves of Muslim Saints (Rana, 2003). As mentioned earlier, both Ahl-e-Hadis and the Dubandi Ulama rejected the sufi approach of the Brelvi. The Brelvi is also at odds with other Sunni Ulama, as the sect believes that the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was made of ‘Noor’42, and that he had knowledge of the unknown (Ali, 2009). These controversies have generated debate between the Brelvi and the other Sunni Ulama in Pakistan.

The Brelvi sect is the second largest madrassah education network in Pakistan – in both the urban and rural areas. Some Brelvi madrassahs are large, others small; and many are supported by rural people. This sect also follows a modified version of the Dars-e-Nizami curriculum, and they manage shrines (Mizar) which produce funds - which are used to run the madrassahs. During my field visit I found that, in terms of curriculum reform and adding new subjects to the programme, the Brelvi were less conservative than the Dubandi. In the cities the Brelvi madrassahs have a modern approach, for example, Minha-ul-Quran, a leading Brelvi organisation in Pakistan, runs a large network of schools all over Pakistan, providing tuition in religious as well as secular subjects. However, in rural areas the approach of many Brelvi madrassahs is traditional and conservative, such as they still provide traditional curriculum of Islamic education without adding any modern subjects. Jamiaat-e-Ulama-Pakistan (JUP) is the political party linked with the Brelvi sect, and Minha-ul-Quran is also active in political activities in Pakistan (Rana, 2003).

42 Brelvi define Noor as the ‘Devine Radiance’ in term of creation it is different concept as the common belief of Muslims that all human being are made by soil. This type of belief challenged by Dubandi and Ahl-e-Hadis Scholars (Ali, 2009. P.37)
Ahl-e-Hadith

*Ahl-e-Hadith* (Salafi) is another Sunni sect. It was established by Molana Syed Ahmed in Bhopal (now part of India). This sect emerged as an Islamic reformist movement, which challenged Islamic practices and innovations, for example, the *Fatwa*\(^\text{43}\). They argued that innovation was unlawful, as it produced practices where were *additional* to the teachings of the Quran and the Hadith (Rana, 2003). The Ahl-e-Hadith sect is similar to the *Wahabi* movement in Arabia (Ali, 2009). Unlike other Islamic sects, the Ahl-e-Hadith does not follow a specific school of jurisprudence\(^\text{44}\), and they are recognised as being *Ghair Muqalad*\(^\text{45}\) (nonconformists). Compared to the Dubandi and the Brelvi, this sect runs a small number of madrassahs in Pakistan. Their madrassahs also follow the Dars-e-Nizami curriculum, but there is more emphasis is on subjects related to the Holy Quran and the Hadith. Like the Dubandi, they are against Sufi practice and worshiping shrines. (Shaikh, 2008). The *Harmain Islamic Foundation* in Saudi Arabia supports the Ahl-e-Hadith madrassahs in Pakistan, providing most of their funding. Over recent years, there has been significant growth in the number of Ahl-e-Hadith madrassahs in Pakistan, However, it has been reported that, the *Lashkar-e-Tyyaba* - which is affiliated to the Ahl-e-Hadith – was involved in the militant activities (Ali, 2009). Because of these alleged militant links the Pakistani government banned the Lashkar-e-Tyyaba in 2002. This sect is also connected to a political party, the *Markazi Jamiat Al-Hadith* (ibid).

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\(^\text{44}\) There are four school of jurisprudence – Hanafi, Shafi, Hambli, and Maliki. Dubandi and Brelvi, for example, follow the Hanafi school.

\(^\text{45}\) One who does not follow a particular path of Islamic practice.
Jamat-e-Islami

Within the Sunni sect is the Jamat-e-Islami (JI), another sect, which was started in response to the call for modernisation of the madrassahs. JI was found by Syed Abu Al Mawdudi (1903-1979) in 1941 in India. Today it is known as a religious/political party. However, originally, JI was nationalist, with a modern approach to religious education (Rahman and Bukhari, 2006; Ali, 2009; Fair, 2008). However, due to the revitalisation of Islamic fundamentalism JI has faced opposition from other sects, for their modern approach in Islam, specifically the Brelvi and the Shia (Nasr, 1994; Abdul Rauf, 1995; Shaikh, 2008). The JI run madrassahs in Pakistan and teaches the Dars-e-Nizami curriculum, including some secular subjects. Unlike the other Sunni sects, their aim is to produce a religious scholar who can face the challenges of the globalised world and western ideology (Fair, 2008). The JI have branches across Pakistan, with a main hub in Mansoora, Lahore, in Punjab province. However, the JI madrassahs are still working on the traditional lines in rural Pakistan, and they attract the educated middle class in the urban areas. The JI also have a popular student federation called Islami Jamiat Talba (IJT), which produces a enormous amount of literature (in Urdu) — covering, for example, political issues, health, and education (Rahman and Mikan, 2009). The JI has worked as an opposition political party for many years, however it has also been reported for its links to Jihadi groups (Hussain, 2007).

46 However, during the field study, I found that JI madrassahs in Chach are traditional, and do not offer science subjects.
Shia

The present Shia school of thought was first developed during the tenth and eleventh centuries. Shia believe in twelve Imams and trace their line back to the family of Prophet Muhammad. The majority of Shia believers are based in Iran, Iraq and the Lebanon. They are divided into sub-sects and follow the particular Imam of a specific sect. For example, the Ismaili follow the Agha Khan, and the Daudi Bhoras follow Burhanuddin ((Rahman and Bukhari, 2006). However, the Shia sectarian divide is not as visible as between the Sunni sects.

In addition to the four Sunni sects in Pakistan, the Shia also practice their own particular religious beliefs and have separate madrassah boards. In Pakistan between 15-20% of Muslims are Shia. They are especially numerous in the central Punjab, in Northern parts of Pakistan, and also in some areas of the Sindh province. Shia madrassahs and Imam Bargahs\(^{47}\) are operated all over the country. In addition to local charitable funds, Shia madrassahs in Pakistan receive some amounts of money from benefactors in Iran (Ali, 2009). Shia madrassahs are very well organised, and they also follow the Dars-e-Nizami curriculum, with their own modifications. However, they send their students to Iran\(^{48}\) for higher degrees, where they can learn additional science subjects alongside religious education. In Pakistan, there is always tension between Sunni and Shia groups which exacerbates Sunni-Shia violence. The Shia in Pakistan are also active in politics; their political party being *Tahreek-e Ja’Fariya, Pakistan* (TJP) - a part of MMA as mentioned above (ibid).

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\(^{47}\) A place of worship which is similar to a mosque.

\(^{48}\) During the interview a Shia Aalim said that almost all students went to Iran to study for higher degrees.
For this study, I decided to include participants from one madrassah from each of the five major religious sects. Therefore, the information above is important because it provides an overview of the different religious practices of the madrassahs I studied in Pakistan. This overview also shows the sectarian divide which exists between these sects. The intention is to aid an understanding of madrassah education systems in Pakistan. Table 4.3 provides a summary of the characteristics of the different sects which run the madrassahs in Pakistan.
Table 4.4 A brief overview and comparison of the characteristics of different sects' madrassahs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Madrassah's Sector</th>
<th>Maslak/School of thought</th>
<th>Educational approach/curriculum</th>
<th>Funding sources</th>
<th>Approach towards reform and relation with state</th>
<th>Links with militancy and conflicts</th>
<th>Political and other activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dubandi</td>
<td>Dubandi are Sunni practice the teachings of the Hanafi school</td>
<td>The Dubandi is commonly known as being rigid in their views about modern education. The majority of their madrassahs teach the traditional Islamic curriculum of Dars-e-Nizami</td>
<td>Their main funding source is donations from the local community, local businesses and other types of Islamic donations. A few large madrassahs receive individual donations from abroad</td>
<td>Due to their rigid attitude Dubandi madrassahs have are in conflict with the government on various issues. Especially, Dubandi madrassahs usually reject the government's madrassah reform proposals</td>
<td>Dubandi madrassahs have been linked with terrorism and other militant activities. Reports show that they are most madrassah likely to be involved in these kind of activities</td>
<td>Dubandi madrassahs are very active in politics. They participate in general elections and have elected members in the national assembly. They run many large and small welfare organisations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brelvi</td>
<td>Brelvi are Sunni-Hanafi schools. They are distinguished from the Dubandi by their inclination towards Sufi Islamic practice</td>
<td>Compared to the Dubandi the Brelvi are less rigid in their views about education. They teach the Dars-e-Nizami curriculum, with some tailored subjects</td>
<td>Brelvi madrassahs have similar resources as those of the Dubandi madrassahs. A small number of madrassahs receive a small amount of funding from government</td>
<td>Despite having problems with some government reforms, they are responsive to new ideas. However, there is likely to be more resistance in rural areas, where their madrassahs are more traditional</td>
<td>In comparison to the Dubandi and Ahl-e-Hadith, the Brelvi have been less exposed to militancy. But they do have one militant group, and they have been involved in sectarian violence</td>
<td>They have some political interests, and have one political party. They carry out various community works</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahl-e-Hadith</td>
<td>Ahl-e-Hadith are also Sunni, but they follow the Salafi school - which seeks guidance from the Hadith and the Quran. Unlike the Dubandi and the Brelvi they do not follow any particular Imam</td>
<td>Ahl-e-Hadith are very rigid in their views. Their curriculum is Dars-e-Nizami, but with more emphasis on the subjects related to the Hadith</td>
<td>Ahl-e-Hadith madrassahs receive funds from the local community. However, they also receive substantial amounts of money from abroad</td>
<td>The majority of the Ahl-e-Hadith madrassahs have rejected the reform process. Their madrassahs are at odds with the government on many matters</td>
<td>As with the Dubandi they are known for their strong ties with militant groups</td>
<td>They have one political party, but their political activities are very limited. Their work for the community is mostly carried out at village or town level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Jamaat-i-Islami (JI)</strong></td>
<td>Jamaat-e-Islami is a Sunni sect, but they do not follow any specific school. However the majority follow the Hanafi teachings. The JI approach is modern, with regards towards education. They teach the Dars-e-Nizami curriculum, with additional science subjects. However, there is no uniformity between madrassahs and many continue to operate as more traditional institutions. Mostly JI madrassahs run on local donations. For some of their projects they receive partial funding from government. In addition they receive individual donations from abroad. As JI is basically a modernist Islamic party, it always plays the role of opposition for political and other Islamic matters. However, they supported the madrassah reform process. Previously the JI was involved in Jihadi activities, but there have been no major allegations against JI, with regard to terrorism or militancy. JI is basically a religious political party, so this sect is more prominent in politics. They also have many umbrella organisations that are very active in welfare works.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shia</strong></td>
<td>Shia is a sect which follows the teaching of the Prophet and his successors – which distinguishes it from Sunni beliefs and practice. Shia are less rigid in their views with regard to education. They follow the Dars-e-Nizami curriculum, with many sect-specific changes. Also their course duration is different from that of Sunni madrassahs. Shia madrassahs receive local donations, and some international funding. Compared with the Dubandi, the Brelvi and the Ahl-e-Hadith, Shia madrassahs have a reasonable relationship with government. Shia are not often involved in Jihad and related activities. However they are known for their involvement in sectarian conflict and violence. Shia presentation in politics is small, but they also involved in community work.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.6.2 Madrassah organisational structure

There is no information in Pakistan on the organisational structure of madrassahs. However, Fair (2008) has provided some data - based on her field work in Pakistan - which I will utilise. In this section, I will also explore my own field work data. Madrassahs affiliated with different religious sects also vary; some are large, others small. Therefore, there is no standard madrassah organisational structure. In most of the large madrassahs, there is a madrassah committee - which includes a religious scholar and some local community members, who do voluntarily work for the madrassah. There is always a leader of the madrassah, called a Muhtamim, who is like a head teacher. In large madrassahs, the Muhtamim is called a Mufti or Shaikh-ul-Hadith. Sometimes an Aalim (Islamic scholar), with good teaching experience, can be head of the madrassah. In madrassahs, which provide the Dars-e-Nizami course, teachers must have at least an Aalim certificate from a related madrassah board - however, preference is given to an Aalim certificate with Hizf (memorisation of Quran). This means that madrassah graduates can only teach within the madrassahs of the same sect which ran their course of study. There is no requirement for madrassah teachers to have a formal education, but a good knowledge of Arabic and Persian is essential. However, when recruiting teachers, madrassahs give preference to their former students. In some madrassahs one teacher is responsible for more than one subject, or may have to teach one subject and attend administrative duties. During my field trip, I observed that madrassah teachers normally spent about eight-ten hours daily in

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49 *Mufti or Shaikh-ul-Hadith* is the highest level of teacher in a madrassah school – who provides instruction in religion or a specialised subject.
school, although senior teachers have fewer responsibilities. There is also no minimum academic requirement for student admission.

4.6.3 Curriculum and pedagogy in madrassahs

This section focuses on the structures of madrassah education and pedagogy. The curriculum of many madrassahs in Pakistan is called Dars-e-Nizami\(^{50}\). However, there are no strict rules which stipulate the teaching of standardised subjects or this curriculum. According to the requirements of the particular school of thought (the Sect) and its Islamic belief, different madrassahs teach various subjects within the Dars-e-Nizami. For an Aalim course, madrassahs offer eight-sixteen years of Islamic education for male. The length of course is dependent on the subjects and the curriculum the Aalim course has been designed to encompass. However, in most of the Sunni madrassahs the Aalim course takes eight years, starting from Sanwiya Amma level up to Takmeel level. The complete curriculum of madrassah education can be divided into six stages. Table 4.4 gives more details about all the stages of the madrassah curriculum - and its equivalent formal education programme (Riaz, 2008 ; Fair, 2008).

The Primary - or Ibtidaya - stage of madrassah often takes place in a local mosque or maktab, which is not necessarily part of the madrassah education system. At the Primary level, the students are taught how to recite the Holy Quran and they memorise some of its key verses. Also some madrassahs teach basic literacy skills. In the second stage, students memorise all of the Quran, in order to become Hafiz (a person who memorise complete Quran). They may

\(^{50}\) *Dars-e-Nizami* was developed in the early nineteenth century by a leading Indian Islamic scholar Nizam-ud-Din Muhammad. This curriculum was developed in response to the Western-influenced education system, and was originally a balance of classical and modern subjects. However, now this curriculum has changed and focuses only on religious subjects.
also study other Islamic subjects, in order to become an *Imam or Khatib*\(^{51}\). The Sanwiya Amma is the third stage – during which students learn the various rules of the Holy Quran, in order to become a *Qari*, a specialised reciter of the holy Quran.

**Table 4.5 Stages of madrassah education and its equivalent in formal education**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stages in Madrassah System</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Certificate (Sanad)</th>
<th>Equivalence to formal education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ibtidaya (Nazara)</td>
<td>4-5 years</td>
<td>Shahadatul Tahfeez-ul-Quran</td>
<td>Primary, 5(^{th}) grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mutawastah (Hizf)</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>Shahadatul Mutawastah</td>
<td>Middle, 8(^{th}) grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanwiya Amma (Tajveed, Qirat)</td>
<td>2 years</td>
<td>Shahadatul Sanwiya Amma</td>
<td>Matric, 10(^{th}) grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanwiya Khasa (Tahanviya)</td>
<td>2 years</td>
<td>Shahadatul Sanwiya Khasa</td>
<td>Intermediate, FA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aliya (Khasa wa Sada)</td>
<td>2 years</td>
<td>Shahadatul Aliya</td>
<td>Bachelor, BA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aalamiya, (Dura-e-Hadith)</td>
<td>2 years</td>
<td>Shahadatul Aalamiya</td>
<td>Master</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Takmeel (Specialisation)</td>
<td>2 year</td>
<td>Varies – with specialisation (Mufti)</td>
<td>Post-M.A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Fair (2008)

\(^{51}\) A person who leads prayers and other religious duties in the mosque
The *Sanwiya Khasa* is the starting point for formal education in the Dars-e-
Nizami curriculum. Each stage takes two years. However, as mentioned earlier,
the Dars-e-Nizami curriculum adopted varies in the different sects’ madrassahs.

Table 4.5 provides information about the traditional and common subjects of the
Dars-e-Nizami curriculum, which are taught in most of the Sunni madrassahs.

**Table 4.6  Dars-e-Nizami curriculum and its subjects for an eight year
Aalim course**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Madrassah Year</th>
<th>Subjects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Year 1**     | Sirat (Biography of the Prophet)  
Arabic-grammar  
(Nahv) Syntax  
Arabic Literature  
Khush – Nafisi (Chirographic)  
Tajveed (recitation rules for Quran recitation) |
| **Year 2**     | Arabic-Grammar Syntax (Nahv)  
Arabic Literature  
Jurisprudence (Fiqah)  
Logic |
| **Year 3**     | Tarjama of Quran (Quranic Exegesis and analysis of text)  
Fiqah (Jurisprudence) Syntax (Nahv)  
Arabic Literature  
Hadith (Sayings of the Prophet)  
Logic  
Islamic Brotherhood  
Chant illation |
| **Year 4**     | Quranic Exegesis  
Jurisprudence  
Principles of Jurisprudence  
Rhetoric  
Hadith  
Logic  
History  
Chant illation  
Modern Sciences (sciences of the cities of Arabia, the geography of the Arabian Peninsula and other Islamic countries) |
| **Year 5**     | Quranic Exegesis  
Jurisprudence  
Principles of Jurisprudence  
Rhetoric  
Beliefs (Aqa’id)  
Logic  
Arabic Literature |
Despite variations, commonly many of the subjects shown in table 4.5 are taught in madrassahs during the complete *Dars-e-Nizami* course. All these subjects are related to Quranic studies, for example, *Fiqah, Hadith, Arabic* learning - including syntax and etymology -, Islamic history, the life and character of the Prophet, and the study of comparative religions. However, since the 1980s some madrassah boards have agreed to include some mainstream or secular subjects, in order to ensure that madrassah students have both religious and worldly knowledge. But, unfortunately, few madrassahs have taken advantage of this and most still do not teach secular subjects (Riaz, 2008). It is also common that branch madrassahs, of a particular sect, follow their main madrassah’s lead - when determining the content of the curriculum. However, during my field study I observed that even within one sect there were different approaches to the curriculum. For example, the Jamaat-e-Islamic madrassahs have a less traditional approach than others. And the Shia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Subject</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year 6</td>
<td>Interpretation of the Quran</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jurisprudence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Principles of Interpretation &amp; Jurisprudence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Arabic Literature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Philosophy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chant illation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Study of the Prophet’s traditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 7</td>
<td>The sayings of the Prophet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jurisprudence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Belief (Aqa‘id)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Responsibility (Fra‘iz)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chant illation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>External Study (Urdu texts)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 8</td>
<td>Ten books by various authors focusing on the sayings of the Prophet</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Riaz (2008, p.83)
madrassahs claimed that they were more organised than the Sunni madrassahs and that they also taught secular subjects.

It is very important to discuss the method of instruction in the Pakistani madrassahs. The language of instruction in many madrassahs is Urdu, but there are some which teach in their regional language, for example, Pashto or Sindhi (Riaz, 2008). Rahman (2004) has explored the languages that madrassahs teach their programmes in. Commonly, for an Aalim course, Arabic and Persian are used; Persian, especially, has greater importance when teaching the Dars-e-Nizami curriculum. This is because many medieval Arabic books were translated into Persian (ibid).

The nature of the curriculum, the instruction language, and the teaching methods used in the madrassahs in Pakistan, has been widely criticised. The main cause of this criticism has been that old subjects are being preserved, at the expense of the introduction of modern science and religious subjects (Chaudhry, 2005; Hussain, 2007; Jalal, 2008). The books used by the madrassah curriculum have been especially criticised. Most of these religious books are very old - for example, the books relating to philosophy and logic were written in the 13th and 14th centuries, and others are out of date (Mumtaz, 2004). This criticism not only comes from outside the madrassahs but also some Islamic scholars have criticised the traditional curriculum, use of old books, and ignorance of modern science subjects – which they say are necessary to learn to survive in the modern world. Molana Mawdudi is a reformist who argues that the traditional method of memorisation does not prepare Muslims for a modern life, and that the madrassahs must have some a good balance of science and mainstream subjects within their curriculum.
The teaching methodology is also criticised for its failure to encourage interactive learning and critique (Riaz, 2008).

### 4.6.4 Funding sources for madrassah education programmes

As mentioned earlier, commonly madrassahs in Pakistan are private institutions. Therefore, the funding of different madrassahs varies. The Islamic notion of redistribution of wealth and charity is the main source of funding for all types of madrassahs (Tripp, 2006). Charitable donations result in different types of funds, for example, Zakat, Sadqah, and Ushar. In addition, religious endowments are made, including donations from shops and traders, in the form of, for example, food and books. Large madrassahs have their own properties, from which they receive an income every month. In the rural areas, landlords donate pieces of lands and materials for building new madrassahs. A few take responsibility for the payment of utility bills every month. This demonstrates that the running of private madrassahs is reliant on community support. And this evidences the trust the local community has in the madrassah and its education programme - which is rare with regard to secular schools. In addition, madrassahs collect money by fundraising tours inside and outside Pakistan. For example, during the Holy month of Ramadan many madrassahs send their representatives to England to fund raise. And people living abroad send money to the madrassahs, operating in their native towns and villages. Whatever their source of funding, Fair (2008) has observed that some large and well established madrassahs have become profitable business for a particular

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52 *Sadqah* is an Islamic charity donation, which Muslims give in order to achieve the will of God. *Ushar* is an Islamic tax which is due on the agricultural production to give charity to needy people.

53 During my field study in the Chach region, a head teacher of a madrassah mentioned how he had received a large amount of money from a family living in Bradford, UK, which was used to build a new madrassah.
family, and some people have used a madrassah’s resources for their personal needs. There are many accountability challenges for madrassahs.

4.6.5 Counting the number of madrassahs in Pakistan

There is no official and reliable data available on the number of madrassahs in Pakistan. Different numbers in different studies and reports – leading to controversial debate on the subject (Fair, 2008). For example, Bano (2007) reported there were 16,000 madrassahs, while Stern (2000) reported 45,000-50,000, and ICG (2002) reported 10,000. There are reasons for these discrepancies. Firstly, there is confusion about the very definition of madrassah, so it is sometimes difficult to decide if a particular institution should be included in the count. Some studies include small mosques as madrassahs. Secondly, some studies only include madrassahs which are registered with the government for this purpose (Riaz, 2008). But this is incorrect because there are a large number of madrassahs which are not registered. Even Madrassah boards cannot be certain of the number because they have no central database of institutions. During my field trip I found there were many madrassahs in rural areas which were not registered with a madrassah board, operating only as a branch of a local leading madrassah. However, it is agreed that the number of madrassahs growth Pakistan continues to grow. According to Riaz (2008), there were only 245 madrassahs in 1947 which have been increased to 13,500 in 2006 as shown above in table 4.2 (ibid). Winthrop and Graff (2010) recently estimated the number of madrassah in Pakistan to be 19,000.
4.6.6 Madrassah enrolment in Pakistan

Definition of a madrassah student includes those who attend full-time courses, to study the *Dars-e-Nizami* curriculum subjects – in order to become an *Aalim* -, and not those who simply learn, or memorise, the Quran every day in a mosque. Madrassah enrolment trends may vary within different sects and between urban and rural areas. However, in Pakistan, there is a common perception that only poor and lower-income families send their children to madrassahs. This is true to some extent, especially in rural areas (ICG, 2000; Singer, 2001). But interviewees for this study revealed that not only poor children but also those from middle class and rich families chose a madrassah education. There are many reasons for madrassah enrolment, which have been discussed by some research studies. For example, Nelson (2006) said many parents favour a religious education for their children. Eickelman and Piscatori (2004) argued that, actually, the issues related to formal educational institutions provided the space to madrassah education. Rahman and Bukhari (2006) said that madrassahs were growing in number because the government was not capable of providing good quality public education.

Unfortunately, there is no reliable source of data which determines the number of madrassah enrolment in Pakistan. Therefore, we have to rely on various estimates - such as that of the ICG (2002), which gave a figure of 1.5 million students in 2000s. But, according to Andrabi et al (Andrabi et al., 2005), the figure is only about a third of the ICG estimate, around 475,000 students. If they are correct this would equate to about one percent of total enrolment of educational institutions in Pakistan.
Cockcroft et al (2009) said that madrassah enrolment among children between the ages of 5-9 years has increased, from 1.5% in 2002 to 2.6% in 2006. To further complicate the picture there are considerable variations between the numbers at different geographical locations, and according to the socio-economic conditions of households. Based on the Pakistan Integrated Household Survey (PIHS) 2001, Fair (2008) derived the following percentages for enrolment, in the different education sectors in Pakistan.

Table 4.7 Distribution of Primary enrolment (%) in Pakistan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education Sector</th>
<th>Urban (%)</th>
<th>Rural (%)</th>
<th>Total (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>62.4</td>
<td>81.8</td>
<td>73.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Schools</td>
<td>36.9</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>26.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madrassahs</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Fair (2008)

The following table shows the number of madrassah enrolments from different resources.

Table 4.8 Madrassah enrolments in Pakistan: Based on different resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Source</th>
<th>Madrassah enrolment</th>
<th>Madrassah enrolment as a percentage of all students enrolled in different education systems</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Census of population - 1998</td>
<td>159,225</td>
<td>0.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PIHS-1991</td>
<td>151,546</td>
<td>0.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PIHS-1998</td>
<td>178,436</td>
<td>0.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PIHS-2001</td>
<td>176,061</td>
<td>0.70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.7 Reforming madrassahs in Pakistan: Key issues

In my earlier discussion, of the development of Islamic education, researcher demonstrated that madrassah reform initiatives are not new and that this system of education has undergone several reform processes before. The early reform efforts were limited to one sect, institution or region (Ali, 2009). However, in recent years, when madrassahs have received much national and global attention, their reform has become a major challenge. Reform seemed to be the only answer; even the contemporary Islamic media, Islamic scholars, and the Muslim population in general, have called for madrassah reform. The feeling is that change is long overdue. The main objection to the current madrassah education system is that its programme is unproductive in terms of socio-economic development (Bano, 2008). These reform issues have become very challenging for India, Pakistan and Bangladesh over the last decade (Riaz, 2008).

In Pakistan, madrassah reform started in 1959. Different policies and approaches were adopted by different regimes, with little success. The main problem was that often reform proposals were led by controversial political agendas – clouding the relationship between madrassahs and the state. Consequently, the madrassah authorities largely refused to implement changes to the madrassah education system (Ali, 2009; Bano, 2007; Riaz, 2008).

The first step of madrassah education reform was taken by Ayub Khan, when he tried to change the curriculum in order to bring the religious institutions under
state control\textsuperscript{54}. The main aim was to replace some religious subjects with science subjects, in order to equip the madrassah graduates for jobs market. However, Ulama rejected this proposal. The concern of the madrassahs was not about the proposed changes per se, but that the reform would rob the institutions of their identity and traditions. Consequently, the reform initiative soon led to conflict between Ulama and the state (Riaz, 2008).

During the Bhutto regime (1972-1977) no madrassah reform was initiated - although his polices encouraged an increase in the number of religious-political parties and he tried to nationalise the madrassah system, as Ayub Khan had done before him. Bhutto wanted to mainstream madrassah education by making the madrassah qualification equal to a certificate from the formal education sector. In this way a Aalim course certificate would become equal to a Masters degree in Islamic and Arabic studies. However, because of many discrepancies the Ulama also rejected this proposal (ibid).

The third phase of madrassah reform started during the Zia-ul-Haq government (1979-1982). The Zia regime provided support to the madrassahs, and their education system, and encouraged their growth\textsuperscript{55}. However, madrassah reform was at the heart of Zia’s policies. In 1979, a large survey was conducted into madrassah education – which resulted in calls for changes to the curriculum and the additional teaching of mainstream subjects. This survey also proposed a National Institute of Madrassahs, which would design the curriculum,

\textsuperscript{54} In 1960 Ayub Khan established the Awqaf (a government system – a ministry to deal all religious organisation in Pakistan) system, under the Ministry of Awqaf, requiring the registration of all religious entities. The registration meant madrassahs had to operate under state department supervision (Riaz, 2008).

\textsuperscript{55} It has been argued that Zia’s policy of supporting madrassahs was a political move to encourage the training of Mujahidin (Islamic militants), who could fight against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan (Ali, 2009; Riaz, 2008).
standardise exams, and supervise madrassahs. This reflected the 1962 reform proposal, in that it would again bring the madrassah education system under the control of the state. Finally, in 1982, the National Institute of Dini Maradis Pakistan was established, tasked with redesigning the curriculum. This had the support of the Ulama. But, unlike the 1962 polices, the Zia government offered unconditional funds to madrassahs. Compared to previous efforts, this reform process was somewhat successful, and some basic changes were made, but largely traditional madrassah education remained the same (Malik, 1996, Riaz, 2008).

However, the earlier madrassah reform efforts were less significant than the reform process post-2001. After the incident of 11 September 2002\textsuperscript{56}, the government of Pakistan faced new pressure from the international community to change the madrassah system. But although there were new political and security concerns, the overall aim of reform remained the same - to modernise the madrassah education system (Haqqani, 2005). However, now there was the added difficulty of having to address the Jihadi culture in the madrassahs (Bano, 2007). In August, 2001 Mushrraf’s administration established the Pakistan Madrassah Education Board (PMEB). This board was given the responsibility to establish a Model Dini Madrassah across the country. A few model madrassah were built under this programme, but again there was criticism from the Ulama (Rahman, 2004 ; Candland, 2005 ). Rahman (2004) has questioned the need for so-called model madrassahs, when some madrassahs were already teaching a common curriculum (a mix of Islamic studies and science subjects), in order to secure state funding. Iqbal (2003)

\textsuperscript{56} Bombing attacks on the World Trade Centre in United State, and it was believed that madrassahs graduates were involved in that activity. (Ali, 2009; Riaz, 2008)
Chapter four

says that model madrassahs are not able to accommodate large numbers of students. After these critiques of the model madrassah, in June, 2002 the government launched a new initiative, called the Madrassah Registration Ordinance, which required all madrassahs to register with the Pakistan Madrassah Education Board (PMEB) (Riaz, 2008). The reason for this programme was, again, the desire of the state to control the madrassahs, the modernisation of the curriculum, and the incorporation of the madrassah education system within the national education system. Only a small number of madrassahs responded to this process, although many madrassahs did oppose the law. These Madrassah authorities rejected the reform because they felt madrassah education was the tool for the transmission of Islamic knowledge, and the means to save their Islamic identity. The Ulama also argued that madrassah education helped to preserve Islamic society, and they saw the reform project as American’s investment\textsuperscript{57}, which aimed to change the Islamic culture of Pakistani society. Although this reform project continued after Musharraf’s regime, it’s progress was limited (Bano, 2007; Fair, 2008).

There are many lessons that can be learnt from the failure of madrassah reform, but it is beyond the scope of this study to discuss them all. However, to summarise this debate, I will discuss the following important points.

With regard to policy, it is necessary to understand the religious values and culture of the country, and to try to appreciate the contextual importance of madrassah education. It is also important that government and policy makers identify the educational problems of madrassahs, rather than to continue to

\textsuperscript{57} After 9/11 the US invested a large amount of money in Pakistan’s madrassah reform programme, via the Musharraf government, with the aim of controlling Jihadi groups and militants (Riaz, 2008).
focus on the political issues they are associated with. Madrassahs have been very politicised in Pakistan, and much of their criticism has come from the secular community - which has little understanding of the religious and educational role of madrassah education (Hetland, 2008). This study argues that, when attempting reform, policy makers must understand the contribution madrassahs make, specifically, to the education sector, and to Pakistani society in general. Rather than imposing a state-led reform agenda, consulting fully with madrassahs would be more helpful (Riaz, 2008).

Bano (2007) said that if the trust of the Ulama is not won, madrassah reform is impossible. The previous reform experience clearly showed that the autonomy and the identity of the madrassahs, and the authority of Ulama, were the main concerns of the madrassah authorities. Therefore, it is necessary for any future madrassah reform project to take these factors into account. As Riaz (2008) and Malik (1996) argue, some madrassahs want to change their education system - but the government has ignored their suggestions and imposed pre-planned state agendas instead. Importantly, this study argues that policy makers need to consider the reform process for madrassah education in other countries, such as Indonesia and Bangladesh – which provide best practice models.

4.8 The trends in girls’ education in madrassahs in Pakistan

When considering the madrassah as an educational institution, it is very important to discuss the gender dynamics of the system, and the role madrassahs play in female education in Pakistan. Madrassahs are often considered to be traditionally biased towards male students. However, during
the last two decades the Ulama felt there was a need to establish female madrassah education - in response the modernisation of society. There were two aims of this initiative, firstly, to enhance female participation in educational activities within the local socio-cultural and religious environment, and, secondly, to distance girls from increasingly modern values. It was thought that female madrassahs could help preserve traditional and religious values. At first his initiative had limited success, and was mostly home-based, but with time it expanded (Bano, 2010). Now female madrassahs are operating all over Pakistan, in both rural and urban areas. They are being run by all the various Islamic sects, and their numbers are growing (Hetland, 2008; Butt, 2009; Bano, 2010a).

Before the 1970s, there was no female madrassah education in Pakistan. However, according to Butt (2009), there are now (in 2009) 1900 madrassahs providing education for girls – that is 15% of all madrassahs enrolments in Pakistan. Butt estimates, 23,600\(^{58}\) girls were enrolled in female madrassahs. This increase in female madrassahs may be seen either as the result of growing demand or as a failure of the public education system. However, Bano’s (2009) study of female madrassahs in Pakistan revealed that a rational choice from parents as well as students was the main reason for the rapid growth in the numbers of this institution.

When female madrassahs began girls were taught only few subjects, such as essential knowledge of the Quran and Hadiths. Now they provide an organised curriculum of Islamic education. Similar to male madrassahs, female

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\(^{58}\) The numbers for female madrassahs and enrolled students are quoted by Butt (2009) in his article (you should give the name of this article). They are estimated figures (based on what?).
madrassahs adhere to the *Dars-e-Nizami* curriculum and operate in the same way as male madrassahs. To accommodate the age\(^5^9\) when girls tend to marry, and other social and cultural issues, (?) the curriculum has been modified to four-five year for girls’ madrassahs (Fair, 2008).

According to Bano (2010), female madrassah education is a good opportunity for girls in a conservative society like Pakistan to acquire an education – and is of particular interest to those who want an Islamic education. That is why the demand for female madrassahs has increased over the last decade. Bano said that madrassa education viewed in terms of providing moral training, in order to preserve religious beliefs, social norms and family values (ibid).

However, female madrassahs have also been criticised. One objection is that they promote gender disparity. Qasmi (2005) disagrees, arguing that single-sex madrassahs are very important from a religious point of view, such that adult male and female must stay separate, and also in the local cultural context of Pakistan, where parents demand for separate educational place for girls. However, Farooq (2007) is critical of the female madrassahs’ curriculum (which only focuses on religious subjects), saying it creates obstacles for an autonomous for women to participate fully in society, and that it fails to empower them. Denuelin and Bano (2009) considered female madrassah from a different point of view. Utilising the example of the *Lal Masjid* (the Red Mosque) female protest in Islamabad against the government\(^6^0\) they argued that female madrassahs enhance women voices to be heard. This study argues that

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59 The age of marriage in rural areas in Pakistan usually starts from 20 years.

60 It was during July, 2007, when madrassah students protest against government polices to close this madrassah.
in developing countries like Pakistan, where there are numerous socio-cultural barriers to the formal education of girls, madrassahs are playing an important role in female education. However, there is a need to inject other subjects into the programme, which will specifically benefit girls who study in madrassahs. Such as, science and computer subjects will provide modern skills to madrassah students.

4.9 Madrassahs, militancy and terrorism in Pakistan

This study focuses on the madrassah phenomenon from an educational point of view. However, it is worth looking at other issues linked with madrassahs, which may aid an understanding of the situation within madrassah education in Pakistan. Therefore, this section discusses madrassahs, militancy and terrorism in Pakistan.

As discussed in chapter one, since the incident of 11 September, 2001, madrassahs have received remarkable attention all over the world, and, more specifically, in Muslim majority countries - such as Pakistan (Hefner and Zaman, 2007; Ali, 2009; Fair, 2008; Riaz, 2008). It has been alleged that there were close links between the madrassah graduates who attacked the United States (US) and those involved in the bombing in London on 7 July 2005 - although, none of them were directly linked with a specific madrassah (Fair, 2008). It is also thought that Islamic institutions, especially madrassahs, are teaching hatred against western countries to young Muslims (Goldberg, 2005; Benjamin and Simon, 2002). These beliefs gave rise to increased media coverage of madrassahs and people involved in these organisations. Therefore, since 2001 madrassahs have become a major international security concern. A large
number of reports have been published on the subject, and new topics of social science research have started to explore the world of the madrassah education system. However, these reports have been inherently flawed. They are based on general observation, arguments are not supported by reliable data, and many issues are incorrectly \cite{Malik2008}. Thus, after 2001, a little known, and previously ignored, institution became a controversial issue – which is now seen as a challenge for the world \cite{Riaz2005, Riaz2008}.

The madrassah-militancy link and the war on terror spot-lighted madrassahs in Pakistan - and they have recently received more attention at the international level than ever before. After the 11 September 2001 incident Pakistani madrassahs emerged, to the western eye, as the training centre of Jihad, and they were even described as militant and terrorist producing factories \cite{ICG2002}. Since then many studies have been conducted into these alleged links in Pakistan. For example, an in-depth study by Stern \cite{Stern2000}, argued that madrassahs in Pakistan were creating Jihadi groups. Benjamin and Simon \cite{Benjamin2000} also highlighted madrassahs in Pakistan and their links to militant groups. And a more recent study by Ali \cite{Ali2009} also discussed madrassah education and conflict in Pakistan. According to Babajanov and Olcott \cite{Babajanov2003} some madrassah organisations teach some rigid religious knowledge. And a detailed study, conducted by Fair \cite{Fair2009}, concluded that not all but a few\footnote{Loony \cite[p.3]{Loony2003} said that 10-15 % of madrassahs are involved in militancy, and Beren and Pandey \cite{Beren2004} concluded that very few militants come from madrassahs.} madrassahs and a small number of students are involved in militancy. Fair explains that, although madrassah students have a tendency towards Jihad is more than their counterparts in formal schools \cite{Hetland2008}. Hetland \cite{Hetland2008} showed that a small number of madrassahs, which have political agendas, are involved in
extremism. However, according to Blanchard (2008) anti-American and anti-Western thoughts are not only limited to madrassah graduates.

Madrassah involvement in Jihad and militancy has not occurred over night. According to Riaz (2008) there were many reasons for the growth of madrassahs in Pakistan. By analysing the madrassahs in the Pak-Afghan border areas, Rana (2003) discovered they were associated with many different political and ideological stances. And Mortenson and Relin (2006) believe that the Afghan-Soviet Union war gave birth to Islamic militant groups, such as the Taliban. On the other hand, Hussain (2007) has linked militant growth to sectarianism between different religious groups in Pakistan. Similarly, according to Jalal (2008), sectarian divide has become the reason for conflict and extremism in Pakistan. But Singer (2001) and Loony (2003) conclude that the failure of the state to provide good public education has given rise to madrassah education - and thus the growth militancy in Pakistan. They said the madrassah is the best option for many people, as it offers free board and lodging. However, close contact with extremist Islamic groups is also on offer within the madrassahs (Loony, 2003). This has become the subject of continuous academic debate.

The above discussion shows that the various studies have many different points of views concerning madrassahs and their links with militancy and conflict in Pakistan. However, according to Sikand (2005) and Riaz (2008), all these studies have overlooked the local context of madrassahs, which are working within local socio-cultural norms, and religious beliefs and practice. Moreover, madrassahs are also influenced by many local factors, for example politics, changing government structures and ideologies. In addition, Riaz (2008) looked
critically at many studies that have linked madrassah education challenges only to the Dubandi sect in South Asia (and specifically in Pakistan), and have not looked in detail at the madrassahs of other sects, which have the same importance in this debate.

This study argues that, while it is important to study madrassah education and its links with militancy, at the same time there is a need to look at other issues related to madrassah education, which are more important. Fair (2007) argued that there is a common neglect in various studies of madrassahs as social institutions within the local context; rather, they have been much politicised in Pakistan. In conclusion, it is true that, at the present, terrorism is an immense challenge at the national and international level. However, it is necessary for the media, academics, social scientists and policy makers to understand the existence of madrassah education within the local socio-cultural and religious context.

4.10 Madrassah outreach and welfare work

Madrassahs and their links to militancy and terrorism have been much discussed. However, the media, researchers and policy makers have commonly ignored the other side, the voluntary welfare and community work done by many madrassahs. There are many examples of different organisations working under the madrassahs on different community projects. In addition to free education, their work includes helping in emergencies, water projects, food projects and health projects. The overall aims of these projects are to achieve
the will of God by helping humanity. On the other hand, madrassahs also work to help people with their religious, moral and spiritual issues (Rahman, 2009). For example, local Aalim in mosques or madrassahs help people solve their daily life problems, such as resolving disputes between people; Mufti in the large madrassahs also provide Fatwa for complicated religious and other issues. Moreover, this study revealed that socio-religious networks of madrassahs are active in community work.

In recent years, an important development has been seen in the form of Islamic NGOs and different FBOs. Basically, these NGOs are a more organised form of madrassahs’ welfare and humanitarian works. These NGOs have become more active at the local and national level, and receive a large amount of funds from Islamic charities. Interestingly, in addition to religious goals, the aims of NGOs working within religious boundaries are to work in parallel with other, non-religious or secular NGOs, and sometimes to oppose their work (Mumtaz and Nelson, 2009). Generally, the views of Ulama and other religious communities are that secular NGOs are working with Western money to achieve their goals and have many agendas (such as making education more modern); therefore, their work is unfaithful towards Islam. The other objective of madrassah-based NGOs is to enhance the outreach of madrassahs and also the teaching of their school of thought at the national and local level (Riaz, 2008).

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62 All these different nature of projects and the aim and objectives were expressed in many interviews by madrassahs authorities. Specially they gave the example of their work for earth quick displaced people, also their construction work during the recent flood the north of Pakistan. In addition, large madrassah also running free dispensaries and health services at remote areas in Pakistan.

63 During one interview madrassah head specifically mentioned that he is always taking part in local Jirga (village committee of leading people) to solve the problems of village people.

64 Fatwa is an Islamic rules and normally issued by an Islamic scholar – called Mufti

65 By Islamic charity I meant, a range of different charity ways Muslims donate for the sake of God’s will and to achieved their religious goals and personal-religious satisfaction.
Jamaat e Islami (JI) and several other religious NGOs run by leading madrassahs (such as Minhaj welfare organisation) are common in Pakistan (Ahmad and Nelson, 2009).

This study argues that there are several factors behind the recent increase in religious NGOs. First, as mentioned above, secular NGOs mostly work to achieve donor-oriented goals and have a negative image in the eyes of Ulama, providing a space for religious organisations to play their role. Secondly, the failure of the state in many sectors is also an important reason for madrassahs and other religious institutions becoming organised within civil society institutions. Thirdly, the rapidly changing socio-political situations at national and international level have influenced the madrassahs to become more active in order to save their religious identity and traditions, and also to make closer links with the local community by social work.

4.11 Conclusion

This chapter provided a detailed historical background to madrassahs and their growth as well as their education system in Pakistan. The main focus of the chapter was to provide an understanding of the traditional madrassah education system in Pakistan and also to highlight different issues related to madrassah education in Pakistan. The historical overview explained that madrassahs are centuries-old organisations that have been institutionalised over different periods of time. However, throughout their history, the preservation of religious values and the transmission of Islamic knowledge has been at the heart of the madrassah education system.
Historical accounts of the development of madrassahs in Pakistan revealed that madrassahs evolved under different regimes in Pakistan; they have therefore been influenced by many socio-political factors. Discussion also showed that madrassahs have been ignored and politicised right from the start in Pakistan. In addition, there was a continuous conflict between the state and madrassahs, not only on the religious nature of education but on other issues as well, such as the establishment of Islamic courts. Despite this challenging environment, however, the number of madrassahs eventually increased from hundreds to thousands. A more significant increase has been noted since the 1980s. This chapter also highlighted the number of madrassahs and levels of enrolment in Pakistan.

By looking at the structure of the madrassah education system in Pakistan, it became clear that these are voluntary religious organisations, always initiated and run by the local community; they are therefore embedded in local religious beliefs, social norms and cultural values. By providing religious education, their main aim is to serve Islam, transmit religious knowledge and produce Islamic scholars. A discussion of the different sects of madrassahs also helped to understand their practice in education provision and their interactions with each other. This chapter also highlighted new trends and the growth in female madrassah education in Pakistan.

This chapter also gave an overview of the process of madrassah education reform in Pakistan. Discussion revealed that, so far, many political reform projects have failed. This failure suggests that the madrassah education system need significant attention beyond political and state-led reform, also that there is a need to accept madrassahs as an existing reality in Pakistan, not only in the
education sector but also as social institutions. To achieve the reform goals, policy makers need to get the trust of madrassah authorities by making possible participation by all stakeholders. In addition, reform must start by recognising the madrassah system as a part of the overall education system in Pakistan. Similarly, madrassah authorities also need to identify the weaknesses of the madrassah education system and make the necessary changes. The chapter also briefly discussed the post-9/11 situation concerning madrassah education and its alleged links with militancy, which may be true in some cases. However, madrassahs also play a role in voluntary community work.
Chapter Five

Preferences for madrassah education: views and perceptions of study participants

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter provided an understanding of madrassah education in general, its historical background and how it evolved. Specifically, it demonstrated the context of the madrassah education system in Pakistan. This chapter aims to present and discuss empirical findings about preferences for madrassah education in the Chach region. The main aim of this chapter is to address one research question: why do people prefer madrassah education and what types of factors shape their preference? The analysis of data collected from a range of study participants revealed interesting and insightful realities about why people go to madrassahs for education.

This chapter is divided into three main parts. The first part provides an overview of the background literature and a brief profile of the Chach region. The second part presents the findings revealed through analysis of the data and provides a detailed discussion of them. The third part of this chapter consists of the conclusions.

5.2 A brief overview of background literature

In Chapter Two, a human capital approach explained the importance of education in achieving economic benefits, while the human development and Capability Approach (CA) places education among the basic capabilities and believes that education enhances further capabilities and opens up new ways
towards a good life (Sen, 1999; Nussbaum, 2000). In other words, education is an opportunity to improve one’s life. CA approaches to education go beyond a narrow focus on education and development (such as the human capital approach) to a ‘human-centred’ development which emphasises the ‘freedom’ and ‘agency’ of the individual. CA also focuses on equality and social justice in education (Walker and Unterhalter, 2007).

Chapter Four revealed that there is an ongoing debate around madrassah education in Pakistan. There are two aspects of madrassah education related to this study; first, they provide free basic education to people living in remote areas and those who have many other socio-economic constraints that prevent them obtaining formal education (Evans, 2008; Bano, 2010b). Moreover, madrassahs also provide education to those people who have different needs of education and who prefer an Islamic education as being more valuable for achieving a better life. Second, there are some concerns about the relevance of madrassah education to modern times, and also its implications for socio-economic advancement. Other studies have often argued that a madrassah education only provides the teaching of religion, and that it fails in providing various modern skills which would be helpful for the future life of students. Thus, it has been argued that madrassah education creates obstacles to rather than opportunities for a better life amongst those who receive it (Singer, 2001; ICG; 2002; Haider, 2011). Therefore, adding modern subjects to the madrassah curriculum has been suggested; many efforts have been made, but madrassahs

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66 For example, some religious people prefer a madrassah education for their children, and they believe that it is better than formal education. Findings in this chapter show such perceptions amongst participants.
have largely rejected changes to the existing madrassah system (Bano, 2007; Riaz, 2008; Ali, 2009).

Previous studies that focused on Pakistani madrassahs have presented varying arguments about madrassah education. For example, Singer (2001) points out that madrassahs provide a considerable part of the education of many children. Nayyar (1998), Hussain (2007) and Mazari (2009) viewed madrassah education as an opportunity for poor, orphaned and vulnerable children, many of them from rural areas. Talking about the role of madrassahs, Hetland (2010) said that, in Pakistan, madrassahs are filling the gap left by the state for the provision of education and they are normally better integrated into the local community and society. Hetland further added that madrassahs have the potential to become a partner in the public education system. According to Bano (2010), in Pakistan, female madrassahs as well as the rate of female enrolment is increasing.

On the other hand, Fair (2008) argued that madrassah education only produces religious graduates, who have no skills and less opportunities in the job market. As a result, madrassah graduates tend to have an inferior role in society (ibid). Therefore, a common perception is that the madrassah education system limits the opportunities in life of its students. However, Evans (2008) argues that, in the current debate around madrassah education, the issue of preferences, which is of great importance in understanding madrassah education, has been neglected. Evans also suggested that there is a need to investigate madrassahs empirically to understand why people go to them for education. Along the same lines, Nelson (2006) suggested that we should focus on the empirical investigation and also take a bottom-up approach to understand the local
demand and, more specifically, the preferences for Islamic (madrassah) education (ibid).

Drawing on the theoretical framework discussed in Chapter Two, this chapter considers the notion of freedom, agency and preferences for education (Sen, 1999). Therefore, by displaying the findings of the study, this chapter intends to show how various factors, for example, household income, gender, socio-cultural issues and religious interest shape preferences for madrassah education.

The first category of findings explains parents’ preferences and household-related factors that shape preferences for madrassah education. It also explains how parents value a madrassah education in different circumstances. These factors are: impact of household income; influence of family background and parents’ religious affiliation; parental educational background; parents’ perceptions and expectations. The second category of findings explains how the local social norms and cultural values become the reason for female madrassah education. The third category of findings shows how individual personal religious interest, motivations and inspirations become the reason for madrassah education. However, different factors are interconnected and also overlap with each, which makes the situation complex, but, aiming to interpret the different views and perceptions of the study participants, researcher has categorised the different factors so as to provide an understanding of why people go to madrassahs.
5.2.1 Adaptive preferences and madrassah education

Whilst this study focuses on analysing factors that shape preference for madrassah education, it is also important to examine the concept of *adaptive preference*. Nausbaum (2000) has defined this process as being how oppressed or deprived people ignore sub-optimal choices to make decisions, which take account of their particular circumstances - for example, when women accept a lesser role or subordinate status in the household. Nausbaum argues that satisfaction of this type of choice does not enhance well-being. According to Khader (Khader, 2011) adaptive preference describe choices which are, firstly, “inconsistence with basic flourishing”; secondly, that “are formed under conditions which are non-conducive to basic flourishing”; and, thirdly, “that we believe people might be persuaded to transform upon normative scrutiny of their preferences and exposure to conditions more conducive to flourishing.”

Adaptive preferences have been discussed with regard to education. For example, Unterhalter and Brighouse (Unterhalter and Brighouse, 2007) argue that a girl in a particular condition (or a society) may believe that she needs less education than her husband, so she is satisfied with a very low level of education for herself. This demonstrates that socio-cultural values - or some other condition, for example, poverty - influences the a child’s (in this case a girl’s) choices, ambitions and aspirations for education. also shrink capability for education (Unterhalter, 2007). Consequently, Unterhalter has argued, these conditions must be scrutinised and debated to enhance female participation in education (ibid).
The questions which must be asked about the preference for a madrassah education are, firstly, whether some parents and/or adults are making adaptive decisions to study in these institutions - due, for example, to the socio-economic or religious factors of their particular context? And, secondly, does that decision, to study at the madrassah, impact negatively on what might otherwise have been a flourishing life, achieved through a formal education? Bano (2012, p.152) argued that even if a preference is adaptive in the case of madrassah education, it maximises the gain within constraints. She added: “as preferences are either for their practice relevant, under given constraints, or for their appeal to reason, also it is important to understand the incentives inherited in the madrassah education, in a given context, if the optimality of the preferences are to be assessed” (ibid).

Before discussing the findings of this study, the following section provides a brief introduction to the Chach region. This will add an understanding of the attitudes of people in this area towards madrassah education.

**5.3 The Chach region - a brief profile**

The Chach region is a small rural area of Pakistan, located in the district of Attock, in Punjab province. Attock district shares its boundaries with the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province in the west, the district of Rawalpindi in the east, the district of Chakwal in the south, and the district of Hazara in the north. The Indus River, which is the largest river in Pakistan, flows through the Chach area. Hindko and Pashtu are the two main languages spoken in this region (Khan, 2004).
People in Chach belong to different Biradries (tribes), which determine the Zaat (caste) system in the area – the majority being from the Pathan Biraderi, while others belong to the Syed, Malik, Rajput, Gujar, Kashmiries, Awan, Kumhar, Mochi, and Jula Biradries. This type of division between people, and social hierarchy based on the castes, has a significant impact on social and communal life in Chach. For example, Pathans and Maliks consider themselves to be superior to people from the other castes – who they sometimes describe as Kami (servant class). Therefore, the Pathans often take the lead in socio-political activities, and fewer voices are heard from the people of other castes. In Chach social norms and cultural values are strictly adhered to, for example, females (especially young girls) cannot go out without a male family member. As a result female participation in community affairs is very limited (Khan, 2004).

In terms of economic activity, the inhabitants of Chach largely generate their income through agriculture labouring. A small number of people find work in the Arabian countries, and a limited number work in Pakistan’s public sector - for example, as teachers and health workers. Others run small business, for example, food shops and timber merchants. It is important to mention that Chach is a totally male-dominated region, therefore, women are not involved in economic activity67 (ibid).

With regard to religious practice, the people of Chach are devoutly religious - famous for upholding their Islamic traditions, and maintaining their Sufi Shrines - for example, Pir Hafi Saeed, and Pir Abdul Haq. A large number are connected

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67 However, during my field trip I noticed that some women in poor households work at home making handicrafts, which generate a small amount of money.
to the *Tablighi Jamaat*\(^{68}\) religious network, and some teach Islamic studies at the local, national and international level. Chach is a popular place for students across the Attock district to acquire a madrassah education (ibid).

### 5.3.1 Public education in Chach

Although this study focuses on an exploration of the factors that shape the preference for a *madrassah* education, it is important to have some understanding of *public* education in the Chach region, because it might indicate the reasons for a preference for a madrassah education, would be data on how accessible a public education is for boys and girls; the public school literacy rate; and the male/female enrolment figures for public schools. During the field trip researcher has noticed that in almost every village of the Chach region, a public primary school education for boys and girls was easily accessible. And public elementary schools and degree colleges were also available, *separately*, for girls and boys. Table 5.1 shows the public education institutions in Chach.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School/College</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary Schools</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Schools</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colleges</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Data Analysis

The total literacy rate (aged 10+ years) in Attock district is 64% - which is less than in the nearest district of Chakwal (78%). Within Attock the total literacy rate

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\(^{68}\) Pakistan’s largest religious network, with its main centre in Raiwind – Lahore.
in rural areas is 53%, which is less than the 76% in urban areas. There is a notable difference between the literacy rate for rural girls (42%) and for urban girls (65%). The Net Primary Enrolment (NPE) figure for Attock is 74% 75% boys and 72% of girls are enrolled in public schools (UNDP, 2011). These figures confirm the availability of public education in the area, both for boys and girls. Since the government stopped charging a fee for primary education for last five years the primary enrolment rate has increased in rural areas (UNDP, 2011). The only way for children who do not attend public school to get an education is through their local madrassah. In the following part of this chapter I discuss the reasons why a madrassah education might be preferred.

5.4 Parents’ preference for a madrassah education

In many developing countries parents are the main decision makers when it comes to the education of their children. There is a close relationship between household characteristics and school choice (Watkins, 2000) – this is also true in Pakistan (Nelson, 2006). Household decisions about children’s education are shaped by different factors. In Pakistan, the number of madrassahs, and students attending these institutions, has been steadily rising. This is despite the fact that they offer only a religious education – often of poor quality -, which can restrict or promise fewer prospects than a formal education might. The question must, therefore, be why some parents send their children to madrassahs? The assumption is often that only children from disadvantaged families have this kind of education (Singer, 2001; ICG, 2002; Rahman, 2008). However, this study explores how other factors may be involved in the choice of a madrassah education.
The following section demonstrates how different household factors shape the choice of a madrassah education in Chach. It also shows how a madrassah education is the \textit{rational} choice in certain circumstances. And my findings also explain why parents value a madrassah education, with regards to the future of their children.

\textbf{5.4.1 Impact of household income}

This section discusses how poverty can impact upon educational choice. There is a widespread belief that poverty is the major constraint for parents in developing countries, with regards to whether children are sent to school or they drop out at an early stage (Dreze and Sen, 1997; Watkins, 2000). In Pakistan this has been a relevant factor – evidenced by the fact that the government is still unable to achieve its educational targets (Bano, 2008). However, in recent years, the government has made an effort to provide free primary education in many parts of the country. It has also offered incentives for girls to obtain an education, improved school facilities, and provided quality teacher training and new schools. But still more effort needed, along with a well defined policy which could address the issues of public education provision (UNESCO, 2011).

Utilising interviewees’ responses, the following section demonstrates the reasons why poor parents opt for a madrassah education for their children, and in what ways they value it over a formal school education. But before that analysis, and in order to aid understanding of the economic conditions of the Chach community, it was noted that there were three categories of households – based on their income. See Table 5.2 below.
Table 5.2  Classification of local community by income status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Income per month</th>
<th>Source of Income</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>Rs 6,000-10,000</td>
<td>Casual work, labouring, government jobs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Class</td>
<td>Rs 10,000-15,000</td>
<td>Small land owners, small businesses, government jobs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well-off</td>
<td>Rs 25,000 +</td>
<td>Land owners, businesses, family members working abroad, or public and private jobs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Data Analysis

(i) Limited family income: Public education is available but not affordable for family

Of those interviewed, some parents - who send their children to madrassah - and students said their low income affected their choice of education. The majority of students enrolled in madrassahs were from poor family backgrounds. Poor and low income parents gave different reasons for preferring a madrassah education for their children. For example, generally madrassahs in Chach do not charge a tuition fee; there is no requirement to wear a uniform; and madrassahs provide free books and lunch. They can also provide free board and lodging, and even – if the student lives a long way away - a small amount of money for travel expenses.

Parents in study cohort, who could not afford to send their children to public school, said they wanted to send them to madrassah because this meant they could acquire some literacy skills and learn about Islam. The following interview response is from a father on a limited income. He spoke of why he has chose madrassah for his two sons:
I am Auto Raksha driver, and I work on daily wages. I earn about Rs 200-250 daily but our household expenses are more than that. I do not want my wife to work. So my income is the only source for our family. Me and my wife wish to send our children to school but we cannot afford it...[he speaks about himself] I know there is no fee in the primary school, but still we need to provide uniform and other stuff, which are not affordable for me. So, we have decided to send our children to the local madrassah, where there are no such things to pay...I know they provide only Islamic education and no science subjects...but something is better than nothing. (Interview: P2)

There were other respondents who said their low income was the reason why they preferred a madrassah education for their children.

(ii) The family’s income constraints: school dropout goes to madrassah

As mentioned above, there is now no fee for primary school. This would enable some parents to send their children to school up to primary level, but not beyond - so they prefer a madrassah education, either from start or after some year of schooling. An interview respondent said:

I work in an agriculture land as a casual daily worker...some time I have continuous work, but in the case of bad weather or in the off season of crops there is no work..... and to help family income, my wife makes some handicrafts at home and we can get some small money from there...we have 1 daughter and 2 sons.....our all three children attended primary school....me and my wife always wanted to give at least high school level education to our children but our financial situation never allows us to do so. So after primary school, now we send our children to madrassah. (Interview: P8).

69 In Pakistan, and specifically in Punjab province, the government provides free primary education and free books.
There were similar responses from other parents and students, and examples of when children first completed a public primary school before moving to madrassah to complete their education. Usually when children dropped out of school, due to household poverty, they went to a madrassah.

(iii) Limited family income. A child with madrassah education can find work

Some interview respondents said they had opted for a madrassah education for their children because it meant they could study and work at the same time. This is because madrassah study schedules are flexible and students can choose to study in the mornings or afternoons. Therefore, low income households of large families, which are dependent on only the income of the father, said they prefer to send children to madrassah rather than school. A father of five children said:

I am a watchman in the local school. My income is not enough to support all family needs. My three daughters are young, and even the eldest is just reaching the age of marriage. My both sons are studying in madrassah in the morning and also they do some part time work in the evening from where we can get some money.....and it is a big help for our family (Interview: P6)

Some middle class families also said this was an advantage of a madrassah education. In these families at least one son (in most, the eldest son) goes to madrassah - but at the same time he does part-time work to help support the education of his siblings. A respondent from a low income family, who wants to educate his children, explained:
I am working in army, my salary is not enough for the household needs, and my wife stays at home and looks after children and family, we have two sons and two daughters. The oldest son left the school after middle school (after grade 8), and now he is studying in a madrassah, while the other children are still studying at different school levels. The eldest son, who is studying in the madrassah, also works in evening as a sale assistant in the local general store, his earning is small, but it helps us to continue the schooling for his other brother and sisters. (Interview: P3)

Another factor that influences the education of girls in poor and middle income families is gender-biased, educational preference. This gender divide, in relation to educational opportunity, is based on the religious affiliation of parents, their own educational background, and local socio-cultural issues - which will be discussed in more detail in subsequent sections.

(iv) Limited family income: A girl’s education

Those, who had limited resources for the education of their children - and also in households where fathers make decisions about children’s education - boys go to school and girls go to madrassah. If a girl is lucky enough to have some years of public schooling she has to stop at the end of primary school - or after elementary school at the latest - and then stay home, or go to madrassah. Interview respondents said they believed that there was no return on money invested in a girl’s education, because she will later stay at home, but there is a tangible return on a boy’s education – in the form of a job or other skills. A girl attending madrassah said:

*Due to my family’s limited economic resources, they have chosen school educations for my brothers and madrassah education for*
me, so while my brothers are studying at school and college, my father sends me to the madrassah. (Interview: S6)

Some parents said they were aware of the importance of formal education for every child, but that a madrassah education was chosen for their daughters because of family income constraints. A mother who was interviewed revealed:

My elder daughter neither attended school and nor went to any madrassah, because that time there was no female madrassah in the area. We have to manage money for the education of our son, I always wish to send me this [second] daughter to school but we cannot afford, so that is why she is studying in madrassah. (Interview: P11)

Other respondents, who had constraints on their income, said they also preferred a madrassah education for their children. These responses demonstrate that poverty creates an obstacle for children to participate in the formal education system - impacting on their prospects and their capacity to live an autonomous life. These responses also confirm the valuable role of madrassahs, in providing basic education for poor children with limited resources - who may have no other opportunity to secure their future. A madrassah provides an opportunity especially for girls, who might otherwise have no education.

5.4.2 Influence of family background and parents’ religious affiliation

From cohort responses it became clear that family background and parents’ religious affiliation are important factors to consider when determining the nature of family preference for madrassah education. As mentioned earlier, in
Chach people belong to different Biradries\(^\text{70}\) (for example, Pathan, Awan, Gujar, and Syed). As a local resident myself it was easy for me to identify the families that belonged to a specific Biradri. Caste plays a less important role than Biradri, but it does underpin close family relationships and networks.

Each Biradri has its own family norms, traditions and culture – which play an important role in daily life. For example, members of family networks associated with religious Biradries, can be identified by their overt religious practices and their links with the mosques. A few family networks could be identified as being more openly religious than others in the same area. It was also easy to identify families who had an affiliation with a specific school of Islamic practice - for example, the Dubandi or Brelvi – by observing local mosque attendance.

While an education system is generally about the attainment of skills and knowledge, there are other incentives for choosing a particular kind of education – related to social positioning and identity –, which are taken into account before decisions are made in Pakistan (Rao and Hossain, 2011). This was evident from the preference of religious people in the cohort for a madrassah education. Irrespective of their socio-economic situation, the majority of parents from religious families sent their children to madrassahs. This preference offers insight into how the religious parents valued a madrassah education, and how their expectations of their children differed. Many students in madrassahs come from religious families. One, a boy, described his family’s tradition of attending madrassah. He said:

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\(^{70}\) Biradri is a word most commonly used in Punjab province. It basically describes a network of families that belong to one caste, and in some cases there is a mix of different castes in one Biradri but importantly, they constitute a strong family network.
We belong to a Sye\textsuperscript{71} family; in our family it is very common that parents prefer madrassah education for their children, either from the first stage of schooling or after some formal education. As far as I have heard from my elders, this trend is coming from generation to generation. You can say it is our family tradition, as our elders do not want to lose our family identity, therefore they prefer madrassah education.(Interview: S13).

He explained that parents preferred their children had a madrassah education, in order that their religious identity be protected. I observed that this religious identity secured for these children a prominent position in the local community. Therefore, parents attach more value to religious education than to formal schooling. It is important to say that few parents from religious families actually said they were not against a formal education, but religious education gave children a more respected and honourable position in the local community. In the other words, they valued the social returns of a madrassah education, and did not consider the economic aspects of madrassah education.

Researcher also noted that almost all the teachers in the madrassahs send their children to madrassahs. There are two reasons for this, firstly, to protect their own identity (reputation) as religious teachers. Secondly, they want to help their children get jobs. A teacher’s son can take a position in a madrassah or mosque - a very honourable role in the local community, which is rewarding Islamically. A madrassah teacher explained:

\begin{quote}
I am teaching in this madrassah for last 8 years or so, and being a madrassah teacher I am very happy and satisfied with my life...A doctor wants to see his son as a doctor and a lawyer wants to see
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{71} In Pakistan, the Syed, or the Shah family, has its roots in the family of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). They are one of the most religious families in the study area.
his son as a lawyer, in the same way an Aalim want to see his children as Aalim. So my son is studying in madrassah...and I hope he will follow me and will serve Islam by teaching in madrassah or as an Imam\textsuperscript{72}...in our family we are all studying madrassah since my grandfather was ‘Aalim’ he send my father to madrassah and then my father send me to madrassah and in the same way I have sent my son to madrassah, for which I am happy that our family is serving Islam...with confidence...Allah provides us our needs. (Interview: T10).

Another madrassah teacher said:

I teach in madrassah and I try to convince other parents to send their children to madrassah education, so I prefer the same for my children. (Interview: T1).

However, there were a few interview respondents - both parents and students – without a strong religious family background, who said Islamic values had motivated them to secure a religious education for their children. Some male family heads in this group were connected with a mosque or a madrassah, while others strongly believed that a madrassah education was better for their children than a formal education (see section 5.4.4 for more information on parents’ perceptions). There is a strong relationship between the parents’ religious interest and level of Islamic practice, and madrassah enrolment of their children. Some religious parents said they would always prefer a madrassah education for their children. A respondent gave his reason of this. He said:

We have our own agricultural land also some other reasonable source of income, and we can afford school education but I believe that Islamic education makes our children a good practising

\textsuperscript{72} Imam is the leader of a mosque. He conducts the prayers and teaches the Holy Quran to children.
Muslim... we are here in this world like a traveller, only for a short time and we need to prepare ourselves and our children for hereafter, the life which will never end...and that is all madrassah teach. (Interview: P7)

It was interesting to find that middle income and well-off religious parents also sent their children to a madrassah. A practising religious father, who has a good business and is generating a good income (so he could have send his children to a public school, or even a good English private school) said:

I went up to high school and then my father took me to his business. I never studied in madrassah education. But, Alhamdulillah (thanks God), for last few years I am very regularly attending a local religious circle. I found that Islamic education gives a complete way of life. People send their children to schools to become a doctor, engineer or pilot but I am not worried about job and money. I just wanted to see my son as a good practising Muslim which is good for his future life and also it is good for our family......at least he will pray for us after our death......[he smiled and said]....it is long term investment in that way. (Interview: P9).

This demonstrates that people can have a strong tradition of madrassah education in religious families – passed on from generation to generation. Despite the availability of public education, they prefer a madrassah education for their children. In addition to these interview accounts, other general observations and informal discussions in the local community confirmed that religion and religious values played an important role when choosing how a child would study.

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73 English private schools are separate from public schools, and are considered to be of better quality than public schools.
5.4.3 Parents’ educational background

This study also took account of the educational background of the parents, in order to understand their preference for a madrassah education for their children. It became apparent that a child had less chance of going to a madrassah if the family head (or both parents) had a formal education. A significant number of students in madrassahs, especially girls, were from families where parents had very little or no formal education - and thus had no interest in formal education. During the field trip researcher has observed that parents’ educational background had more impact on a daughter’s education than a son’s (also discussed in section 5.2). Majority of girls interviewed, said their mothers had no formal education. Key informants from the local community who acquired a good formal education said they wanted a formal education for their children.

During an interview, the head teacher of the high school - who is also a local resident and in the position to closely examine the educational choices of parents - explained how parental education impacts on the education of children. He talked about a single mother with high school a qualification, who was trying to secure an education for her children. He said:

*Her husband died at a very young age, and she has three children. She is doing tailoring work at home to fulfil the family needs. Due to the limited resources there were many chances for her children not to go to school (and to go to madrassah), but she is very keen to send them to a public school, and I think it is due to her own formal schooling background and she knows the importance of formal education in the present time (Interview: KI1).*
General observations also revealed that parents who had had a formal education did not want to send their children to madrassahs. This is because a madrassah education often only offers religious teaching, and restricts instruction in modern subjects - limiting future opportunity.

A girl in a madrassah said her father could afford to send her to public school but that after primary school he was not interested in her further education. She said this was due to his poor educational background, and his lack of interest in girls’ education. She said:

After finishing my primary school, I was very excited to go to high school with my other fellows, but my father did not agree to further education for girls......my father said primary school is enough for me.....I stayed at home for some time and then decided to start madrassah. (Interview: S16)

There were other examples where the extent of parents’ education impacted on their children’s participation in education. Most household heads (fathers), who had little or no education, attached more value to religious education and sent their children to madrassahs instead of public schools.

5.4.4 Parents’ perceptions and expectations

A common belief among parents was that madrassahs taught how to behave in a good Islamic manner, while other types of secular education taught only technical skills and knowledge. It was also commonly thought that children who went to madrassahs were more respectful to their parents, and that they would be good practicing Muslims. This is another factor that contributes to parents’ preference of a madrassah education for their children. In addition, formal schools have reduced the number of religious subjects in their curriculum.
Parents wanted a complete Islamic way of life to be taught to their children, in order to secure their success in this world and in the hereafter. In this way they felt they were fulfilling their religious duty. This was demonstrated in the following response:

A child who is well educated from college/university but is not a good Muslim, if he doesn’t respect his parents and other elders, and he does all wrong things, so what is the advantage of that type of education?...Just to earn money?..But you can compare students from madrassahs, they are very well behaved, they know how to speak to elders, how to treat others, simply their every action is according to Quran and Sunnah...and this is a real success both for the parents and the children to learn about Islam and act as a true Muslim and no one can teach all this other than the madrassahs. (Interview: P9).

Some respondents also believed that a madrassah education was good for building a child’s character, for his or her moral development, and for helping them to become a practicing Muslim. A few parents said that the eternal life after death was more important than the temporary life in this world. They believed that by giving their children a religious education they would secure their lives after death. They considered a madrassah education as a form of worship, for which they expected a reward from God. I observed that parents believed that by sending children (at least one) to madrassah they would earn more rewards from Allah. This belief is evident in the following response:

I sent my son to madrassah because it is good for the whole family, as one Hafiz could take ten family members to Heaven... can you imagine the reward Allah is giving to an Islamic education.. (Interview: P5)
Some interviewees said that they felt female madrassahs were the response to a rapidly changing environment. Parents feared that if they sent their daughter to a public school she would adopt modern ways and move away from her traditional and religious values. This was mentioned by parents who believed that girls in schools and colleges adopted the wrong path of modernisation, and moved away from their Islamic value. A mother said:

*I am so worried about rapidly changing modern environment..as girls in school and college learn about modern values and there is no moral development there...new fashion trends and also Ishq (love affairs) are very common...while madrassahs teach simplicity and their environment is safe from all wrong things...and I believe madrassah education teaches how to become a good human and a productive family member. (Interview: P14).*

Bano (2010) has also argued that, in Pakistan, the demand for female madrassah education is a response to modernisation of society. Some parents felt a madrassah education would protect their daughters from the negative impact of modernity, and also provide them with a complete moral training – enabling them to function effectively within existing resources, in the local context.

In addition to the above, there is another very common perception among parents who send their daughters to madrassah - that is, a girl who graduates from a madrassah is more likely to receive a good marriage proposal. This is because it is believed that a girl with a madrassah education will exhibit a more pious and family-oriented attitude. Interview respondents made it clear that this belief was common in Chach, where men want to marry a religious girl who will
preserve family values and structures. This is the main reason why the demand for female madrassahs in Pakistan is increasing (Bano, 2010).

Although few people believed a madrassah education prepares children for this world also, it was expected that it would enable its graduates to find a job in a Mosque or madrassah - enabling them to support their families, maybe while people who graduated from college and university struggled to find a job. Moreover, madrassah teachers are regarded highly, enjoying a good social status within the local community. And if someone teaches in a good madrassah this increases their social standing even more. The following interview quotation indicates how people value a madrassah education and what they expect from it.

*Even it is very difficult to find a job after school education, jobs are for them who are rich or have good links...but you can see that no one from madrassah is unemployed, any madrassah graduate can get quick job in any madrassah or mosque..*(Interview: P8)

Parents from low and middle income families can only afford a limited public school education for their children - who are then not able to compete with graduates from rich families, who have a full formal education. Therefore, many parents argue this kind of limited public education is a waste of time and money, especially if it does not help children secure a job at the end of it. A madrassah education can lead quickly to employment, which may be lowly paid but which is honourable and offers spiritual satisfaction. Bano (2007) also confirmed that madrassah graduates are more likely to get a job within the religious sector before private school graduates can secure work applicable to their education.
This demonstrates why people whose opportunities are constrained, and whose employment options may be limited, prefer a madrassah education because it can offer socio-economic activities they may take advantage of.

In some families fathers could afford a private school education for all his children, but they chose to send their sons to private school and their daughters to madrassah. This is because of the different economic return he expects to accrue from variously educating his sons and daughters; this is closely allied to the assumption that when a girl marries she will move to her husband’s home. The family is more likely to invest in her marriage than her education. A mother said:

My husband does not want to spend money for our daughter’s schooling, he says that sooner or later she will get marry and will go to the family of her husband. But an investment into the boys will give some return to our family. (Interview: P12).

When researcher asked a girl in a madrassah whether her education was her own choice or that of her parents, she said:

I have attended primary school, but then my family got admission for me in madrassah, because they think at the end of the day I will get married, and will move to another home...so I think, my parents want to spend more money on my brothers schooling so that they can get a good job and can support the family...(Interview: S17).

This demonstrates how parents’ determine their preference for a madrassah education for their children. It also shows that people value a madrassah education for different reasons.
5.5 Socio-cultural influences and gender dynamics

This section looks at cultural values and their relationship to preferences for a madrassah education for girls. In Chach, in additional to religious beliefs and practice, cultural values, traditions and social norms also play a significant role in people’s lives. Hence, they affect decisions about children’s education. A researcher observed that there was more impact of culture and social norms on the education of girls, rather than boys. Different Biradri social norms create many barriers for girls, for example, as mentioned earlier, they cannot go out without a male member of their family; and every female has to wear a veil.

As per these cultural values, in most cases girls left school after completing primary - or at the latest - secondary education. They then stayed at home and did not participate in external socio-economic activity. An interviewee explained:

In our village it is considered bad thing to send girls to school when they reach at the age of 10 years or so. It is because girls are izat (honour) of family...so parents are very much conscious about girls and related issues...and want them to stay at home...otherwise if there is any small thing happens it becomes very bad image...not for girl but for whole family...(Interview: P13).

This demonstrates that local cultural values and social norms are the main barriers to girls participating equally in the education system. Moreover, even if a girl is lucky enough to complete her education she may still have to stay at home, because of the perception that a girl with a job brings dishonour to her family. Because of this parents pay less attention to a girl’s formal education than to her brother’s. Within these cultural constraints many girls have no other option than to attend a madrassah, if they want to get an education. It was also
found that some traditional parents, who were very strict about not sending their
daughters to school beyond primary level, were willing to send them to
madrassahs for higher levels of Islamic education – even to study to become an
Aalima⁷⁴. One student in a female madrassah said:

\[I\text{ belong to very traditional family and it is not allowed for girls to go for higher education and same was the case with me but my father allowed me to study in madrasah....which is good for me.}\]

(Interview: S22)

A mother said:

\[When\text{ we were young, my father was very strict and we all sisters were not allowed to go to school, so I have not even attended primary school or madrasah. But I am happy that after primary school my husband allowed our daughter to get admission in madrasah and to become Aalima. Our eldest daughter only attended primary school and then staying at home. She is the first girl in our family studying madrasah education and it is very honourable for all of us when she will become Aalima.}\]

(Interview: P15).

The above demonstrates that family preferences for children’s education are
also shaped by culture, and social values and norms. If we look at these reasons why people choose a madrassah education, it is difficult to conclude to what extent they are viable.

⁷⁴ Aalima is the word to describe a female Islamic scholar, who completes the full course of madrassah education over 5 years.
5.6 Student’s personal interest in a madrassah education

5.6.1 Pursuing personal religious goals

Personal religious inspiration is another factor which has impacted on madrassah enrolment. Irrespective of family background, family preference, and the socio-cultural factors discussed above, there were some student interviewees who said they wanted a madrassah education. This has led me to ask how these students developed their interest in a madrassah education, and why they valued it so highly. The researcher also wanted to discover the main reasons which shaped their preference for the madrassah instead of private school. Respondents who said they attended madrassah because they wanted to said their main reason was to learn more about their religion, and to achieve their personal religious goals. By that they meant to become good Muslims, and to live in such a way that reflects the teachings of Islam - according to the will of God.

Before discussing the findings of these interviews, it is important to understand how these students developed their interest in a madrassah education. The basic teaching of Islam starts at home with the parents, for example, learning prayers – such as the Dua;as\textsuperscript{75} - and basis Islamic manners. Parents also teach children how to be good and practical Muslims, and how to follow the Islamic way of life. The focus of these teachings is not only how to live a righteous life in this world but also how to be successful in the life hereafter - which is a one of the pillars of Islamic faith. This plays an important role in developing children’s interest in Islamic education. In Pakistan almost every young child goes to the

\textsuperscript{75} Dua;as are prayers to recite when doing daily activities, for example eating, going to the toilet, and going to bed. Muslim parents teach these prayers at home. The child then goes to Mosque to learn the Holy Quran - through a more formal Islamic learning process.
Mosque to learn the Holy Quran; which also helps develop their interest in Islamic education.

The personal interests of students in madrassah education are demonstrated by the following response from a student who had the opportunity to go to a public school but chose to have a madrassah education instead. It is also important to mention that he was the sibling in his family studying in a madrassah, while his brother and sister studied in good private schools. He said:

My father has some agriculture land and we are getting reasonable income from there, we are two brothers and one sister. Our family is religious but not that much as others. Our parents are very much conscious about our education; therefore they send us to Shaheen College. When I finished my high school my parents were interested to get admission for IT course and then wanted to send me to university to become an engineer. But I was not interested for that, my own interest was to learn more about my religion, so I got admission in madrassah. It is all about to learn my Deen (religion) and to spend my life according to Quran and Sunnah, according to the life of Sahaba Karam (Companions of the Prophet)...they had all Islamic education and no other education, and they become the example for whole Islamic world, I know we cannot become like them, but at least we can learn as much as we can and to implement that in our lives. (Interview: S19)

There were other responses similar to this, which clearly demonstrated that some madrassah students make a rational choice about their religious education, free of parental pressure – their only goals being to learn more about Islam and to spend their lives in accordance with its teachings. In order to

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76 Shaheen College is very popular army college
determine what students who were interested in religious practice expected of their lives, I asked them to tell me what they wanted to do when they finished their madrassah education. A male student said:

I know what you mean....I am aware that after finishing madrassah my job opportunities will be limited or I will have no formal job. So it means I will have less money. But I have strong believe that Allah will give me good life and if I am learning about Islam Allah will fulfil my needs...Allah has decided our Rizq (Needs) and so I am not worried about that. I do not want big money as people making from other means [He pointed about corruption and other wrong ways from where people are making money by doing formal jobs in public and private sectors]. I will be happier with less money...if my Allah (God) is happy from me, and this is what I want, not the money and trouble full life. (Interview: S4)

A teacher in a male madrassah also spoke of his students personal reasons for studying there. He said:

What do you think all these students come from poor families.. No, not at all...Look at this A, B, C;77 they do not come to madrassah because their parents wanted to or any other reason but they come to study in madrassah because it is their personal interest to study Islamic education for their own religious interest, for their better knowledge, for their better life. (Interview: T4).

Some parents also confirmed that their children wanted to study in a madrassah. A mother said:

When he finished high school, he started insisting that he will study in madrassah. Me and his father try to convince him to get admission in college but no result...he said if you want me to study

77 He gave the names of students, from middle class or wealthy families, who wanted to study in a madrassah because of their personal interest in Islamic education.
further I will study in madrassah...we know he is different from our other children, he is bit more religious and it is his interest to learn more about Islam ..(Interview: P12)

These, and other, accounts demonstrate that a madrassah education is sometimes chosen for no other reason than to gain an Islamic education. This implies how religious beliefs and values are embedded in the local community and how they affect educational preferences and, thus, future prospects. (Chapter six explains the role of religion in more detail.) These accounts also show how some people attached great value to their religion and their religious life, and how they valued the religious outcomes of a madrassah education. Their only wish was to live according to Islamic teaching - which offered them more of a chance of personal happiness than material gain could bring to their lives.

With regard to girls' madrassahs, there were some informants who said they had wanted a madrassah education. However, girls valued this education differently from boys. Although girls also had a personal interest in Islamic education they were also concerned with what it could offer them in their future lives. A girl from a middle class family, in her final year at a female madrassah, said:

No, there was no other reason.... It is my personal wish to study in madrassah. I have studied in school up to 8th class. Beside all cultural barriers, my mother was interested for me to go to high school and even if I wanted, it was a possibility that my parents send me to college. But I request my mother to join madrassah. Main reason was my personal interest. I always read Quran and some other Islamic books, but I think to understand Islam completely everyone need to get full Islamic education. In my view,
Islamic education is more important than worldly education... it is very common, people get formal education to get good job, good status, but Islamic education is more rewarding than all that. It makes your connection with Allah, who is Qadir (can do everything)... studying all about my religion gives me more peaceful thinking... on the other hand, Islamic education is very important for girls, as one day she is going to lead a family, her children, family life, so if she is practical Muslimah, she will be able to play a good role as a wife, as a mother and also as a sister in-law, and daughter in-law. (Interview: S26)

This demonstrated how female madrassah students, albeit with an interest in Islamic education, were also concerned about their future – that is how they could best become pious wives and good mothers.

5.6.2 Getting inspirations from others

This section explores how a small number of madrassah students got their inspiration from others to develop their interest in having a madrassah education, and how they perceived their future life – as a result of it. People in Chach live in a very close extended family system, enjoying close relationships with others in the local community – who play an important part in their lives. Moreover, attending prayers in the local mosque five times a day makes the community even more tight. When somebody has a prominent position in their family, or in the local area, this motivates others to emulate their success - and this is also true with regards to obtaining a madrassah education. Because of the prevailing cultural values and social norms, and a sense of religious belonging, villagers regard the mosque Imam, and other religious personalities, with great respect. In the same way, if there is a Hafiz, an Aalim, or an Alima in a family, he or she receives more respect from the family and the local
community than any siblings. Therefore, people in these positions become role models for others, encouraging them to study in a madrassah and to aspire to the same status. Some respondents said they had been inspired to attend a madrassah, because they valued what this kind of education could bring them in the future. A final year student explained how he was inspired and why he decided to study in a madrassah. He said:

*Molana ABC*\(^{78}\) is my role model ... wo bahoot bazurg hasti hain\(^{79}\), if look at any aspect of his life, it seems very inspiring. He is very simple and practising in the real sense; whenever I meet him I feel peace and satisfaction on his face, when he delivers speech on Friday, his every word is heart catching... on the top of all this, you can see how people respect him in the community, he has a very honourable position not only in this village but also in the surrounding areas, and I think all this is due to his Islamic education he learned... and he got all this from madrassah.... I just wanted to be like him...*(Interview: S18)*

This account demonstrates how people are inspired to have a madrassah education. It is also interesting to note that people prefer a madrassah education because of the improved *social return* it can offer - for example, higher social status in the community. In Pakistan there is a huge gap between rich and poor people, and high and low castes. Some people, especially in rural areas, use a madrassah education to secure a better social position.

As mentioned above, a madrassah education is the preferred parental option for girls - whether this is due to economic constraints or socio-cultural issues.

\(^{78}\) He mentioned the name of a local Aalim. Due to ethical constraints I have disguised his name.

\(^{79}\) This is a sentence in Urdu, mostly used to summarise the religious life of somebody in a respectful way, and to demonstrate how he/she is a practicing Muslim.
When interviewed, some girls said they had been inspired by others to attend a madrassah. Mostly they wanted to emanate the success of former female madrassah students and achieve their social status. A girl from a madrassah said:

*I belong to a middle class family; I studied up to high school, there were chances to continue my education in college but I decided to get admission in madrassah. Main reason for this was the motivation I got from my cousin. She is Aalima; she has a good respect in family than her counterparts who have got some formal education. Everyone in family and also outside family respects her...it is due to her madrassah education she got married in a very good family and her husband family also respect her very much. In our local culture and traditions, there is no girl in our village work outside even teachers in our primary schools comes from cities. But my cousin is intending to start her own madrassah in her husband's village...So I thought instead of doing formal education why not to get madrassah education...which may provide me more opportunities at the village level.* (Interview: S26)

The above account demonstrates how girls desire a madrassah education, because of the social benefits they perceive they can gain from it. This evidences the socio-cultural significance of madrassah education in the local context. Some girls feel a madrassah education can offer them more social benefits than a formal education – given the socio-cultural constraints of their lives.

5.7 Conclusion

By analysing the interview responses, this chapter has explored the different factors that shape preferences for a madrassah education. It also demonstrated how people valued a madrassah education in different ways. By the various
responses the complex nature of educational preferences in the Chach region can be clearly seen. I have been able to divide the people I interviewed into three categories: (a) Those who had limited resources and/or family and socio-cultural constrains – so had no other option to obtain an education, other than studying at a madrassah. (b) Those who had a choice of school education options, but who preferred a madrassah education. (c) Those who wanted a madrassah education, whether they had an option or not.

To aid understanding, first it will discuss the group of people who go to madrassah because there are persistent structural factors, which constrain their choice – which have been discussed above. As stated in chapter two, education is a basic capability which enhances other capabilities. Vaughan (2007) argues that, with regard to education, we must separate capabilities into two different spheres - the capability to achieve educational goals themselves (that is, the capability to participate in education) and the capability achieved through education. Therefore, it is also important to discuss my findings in relation to the capability to participate in education.

If being educated by formal education\(^{80}\) is a function in itself, then a child must have the freedom (capability) to participate fully in a formal learning process (Vaughan, 2007). If this condition of participation in a formal education system is viewed as a basic capability - important for the underpinning of other future capabilities - this study must argue that familial structural factors, that emerged during the interviews, constrained the freedom of children to participate in the

\(^{80}\) Looking at education from a capability perspective some studies, for example Flores-Crespo (2007), have argued that - in the case of education - genuine capabilities can only be enhanced through formal, liberal education. This is because this kind of education promotes reasoning, personal autonomy, and independence. This is what Terzi (2007) identifies as the basic capabilities of a good education system.
formal education system. Instead, they had to participate in madrassah education programmes, which offered only a religious curriculum and not science subjects. This might prevent them from benefiting from knowledge of modern subjects, which are necessary for them to be socio-economically active. This study can also argue that depriving of a child of a formal education, and providing only the religious education, may have serious implications for his/her future capabilities.

So far as capability enhancement is concerned, formal education may play a direct role in the achievement of some functioning - for example, obtaining a job requires that an applicant have good technical knowledge and skills. And this, in turn, contributes to other freedoms, which may help individuals to achieve different functioning and a better life. Thus, unequal educational opportunity creates constraints, which prevent the achievement of important functioning and capabilities in education – and, through education, future life. (Vaughan, 2007; Walker and Unterhalter, 2007; Saito, 2003). Walker (2007) argues that education, other than formal schooling, may also be important for human development. A good quality education shapes both intrinsic and instrumental opportunities, and is also constitutive for other aspects of human life (ibid).

Now it will discuss the second and third categories of people, mentioned earlier, who attend madrassah. It is necessary to consider their preferences for a madrassah education, and the madrassah education itself, from different perspectives - within a capability (and human development) framework. A capability approach is premised on the achievement of personal happiness and

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81 There may be other types of functioning, and also capabilities, which can be helpful in some way - such as the social benefits of a madrassah education.
satisfaction. Therefore, the *freedom* aspect of the capability approach is very important - as people differ they may want a different education (Vaughan, 2007).

There are two points to consider, when looking at the preferences of those who only wanted a madrassah education. Firstly, as Sen (1995) argues, people must have the *freedom* to achieve what they consider to be valuable. Secondly, the capability approach evaluates human development by considering human diversity, and not by evaluating people’s capability by the input and output of a particular system - for example, education. CA also considers resources, different socio-cultural setting, different religious background, individual preferences, people needs and what they value for themselves varies in the different contexts for education (Walker and Unterhalter, 2007; Terzi, 2007).

Interview respondents said that some people in Chach value a madrassah education for the influence it can generate in future life. They attached more importance to their religion, the social and religious outcomes of a madrassah education, and the future career it could nurture. They felt being madrassah graduates would have a positive effect on their lives. But these outcomes are shaped socially, religiously, and by individual circumstances. Theoretically, people must have freedom to participate in a madrassah education if they so choose – as this may enhance not their capacity to acquire a religious education but also their future capability. However, as madrassah teaches only religious education, so there could be a question looking at outcomes of religious education, would the madrassah outcomes would be helpful for larger development at village or regional level?. The capability approach critiques this method of amplification and suggests it is evaluated at the individual level.
(Vaughan, 2007). This study argues that the educational functioning, which is achieved through a madrassah education, could be different from that achieved through a formal education. But it may enhance the capabilities of people in the local socio-cultural and religious environment.

To conclude, this chapter highlights the different factors related to parental, or the student’s own, preferences for a madrassah education. It also demonstrates how religious people, both parents and students, value a madrassah education. This study concludes that, on the one hand, family and other factors constrain the participation of some students in formal education. This may limit a child’s educational functioning, as well as its capabilities within the madrassah and in the future. On the other hand, this study also argues that a madrassah education has become a valuable capability for those interested in religious education (and those who have no other education option) to achieve different functions, which may enhance their current and future capabilities.
Chapter Six

The impacts of madrassah education: evidences from the field

6.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the impacts of madrassah education in the Chach region. The main aim of this chapter is basically in line with one of the research questions for this study, which is *What are the socio-economic impacts of a madrassah education on individuals and at community level?* Therefore, this chapter is divided into three broad sections. The first section explains the impacts of madrassah education at an individual level, such as how a madrassah education has different impacts on the socio-economic activities of individuals. The second section examines the impacts of madrassah education at the community level, for example the role of Ulama (as graduates of a madrassah are known) in the community, and also how madrassah education has different impacts on different activities in the community. The third section provides a discussion of the findings and conclusion.

The previous chapter has demonstrated the views and perceptions of different people on why they prefer madrassah education. The findings revealed how various factors shape people’s preferences for madrassah education. They clearly showed that poverty is not the only reason for a madrassah education, but that middle class and rich families send their children to madrassahs as well. It was explained that madrassah education is embedded in the socio-cultural values and religious beliefs in the local context. During the fieldwork, it was observed that use of madrassah education in the Chach region has been
increasing; female madrassahs especially have increased in recent years. Therefore, this study argues that the demand for madrassah education is the main reason for the increased number of madrassahs in Pakistan. As discussed in Chapter Two, madrassah education is different from formal education; there is, therefore, a need to address questions regarding the impacts of madrassah education on individuals as well as communities.

Various studies in Pakistan during the last few years have addressed different issues related to madrassahs and their education system. For example, madrassah education reform, the state-madrassah relationship (Bano, 2007), and madrassah education and conflicts (Ali, 2009) are a few recent subjects studied. However, little empirical research has been done to look into the socio-economic impacts of madrassah education. Therefore, this study aims to critically investigate the impacts of madrassah education. As was explained in Chapter Three, the present study selected Chach, which is a rural area, as a single case study; madrassahs in this area are more traditional and the education is also different from that in urban areas. The justification for this selection is that the present study aims to explore the realities of more traditional madrassah education, and to provide a more holistic understanding of the madrassah education phenomenon. In this way, this study provides some important insights to understanding madrassah education within the local socio-cultural and religious contexts. Looking at madrassah education from human development perspectives may also be helpful for its practical implications, as well as opening up new ways to further research.

Before going on to discuss the findings, it is important to provide an overview of madrassah education in the Chach region.
6.2 A brief overview of madrassahs in the Chach region

The history of madrassah education in the Chach region goes back to the 17th century; however, an organised system was started in the early 19th century (Asim, 2008; Ranjha, 2008). At present there are many madrassahs (see Table 6.1), both male and female, working in the Chach region. Like elsewhere in Pakistan, madrassahs in Chach are divided along sectarian lines (for example, Dubandi, Brelvi, Ahl-e-Hadis, and Jamat-e-Islami). These madrassahs are mostly private initiatives and built with the help of community funds. They also receive other funds from different sources to cover the regular expenses of a madrassah. Therefore, there is no fee in a madrassah, books are provided and, in large madrassahs, students can get lunch. Accommodation is also free for those students who come from other areas.

Female madrassahs are similar to male madrassahs, though it was noted that female madrassahs are mainly residential (even a local girl has to stay in the madrassah). Therefore, a few female madrassahs charge a very small annual fee (Rs. 1000, which is very little when compared with the fees and other expenses for formal schools).

Compared with urban madrassahs, both male and female madrassahs in Chach are still working on the traditional paths for the provision of Islamic education. For example, they teach the Dars-e-Nizami curriculum through rote learning.

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82 In the Chach region, there is no Shia madrassah, but there are in some other areas in the district. A detailed justification was given in Chapter Three for how a Shia madrassah was selected for this study.

83 Madrassahs in Chach receive different types of funding from the local community, such as cash donations, a piece of land for building a new madrassah or for the extension of existing buildings, donations in the form of food, books and other needs (fan, carpet, loudspeakers etc.). Some madrassahs mentioned that they do not even ask people for donations, people bring them voluntarily, while others convince people to donate. Ahl-e-Hadis madrassahs receive small donations from individuals and organisations in Saudi Arabia.
methods. During the field visit, it was noted that no madrassah in Chach taught science subjects. There were no libraries in the madrassahs visited for the purpose of this study. In the female madrassahs, it was told that, if a female teacher is not available, then a male teacher would teach the students on a speaker system while sitting in a separate room. Moreover, each madrassah is a small world in itself, and there is no exchange of education experience or other contact between madrassahs belonging to different sects.

The majority of madrassahs belong to the Dubandi sect, the Brelvi are a long way behind and the Ahl-e-Hadis, Shia and JI have only one or two each. Table 6.1 gives an overview of madrassahs in Chach.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Madrassah sect</th>
<th>Total number of madrassahs</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dubandi</td>
<td>18 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brelvi</td>
<td>3 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahl-e-Hadis</td>
<td>1 0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamat-e-Islami</td>
<td>1 0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shia*</td>
<td>1 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Data Analysis

In addition to this, Table 6.2 provides information about the madrassahs that participated in this study.
### Table 6.2 Numbers of students, teachers and course durations for madrassahs participating in this study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Madrassah sect</th>
<th>Total number of students</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Years required for completion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dubandi</td>
<td>347</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>8 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brelvi</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahl-e-Hadis</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamat-e-Islami</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shia</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dubandi (female)</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brelvi (female)</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Data Analysis

### 6.3 Impacts of madrassah education on individuals

As discussed in the earlier literature review chapter, it is commonly accepted that education plays a vital role in the socio-economic development process (Watkins, 2000). Alternative approaches to education and development discussed in Chapter Two also explain the importance of education from different points of view. For instance, the human capital approach stresses skill development through formal education and technical knowledge to enhance economic growth at both individual and national levels (Becker, 1993). Meanwhile, the capability approach contrasts with the human capital approach and argues that education is among the basic capabilities that also help the expansion of further capabilities (Sen, 1999). Focusing on the importance of education, the capability approach is more flexible and it not only recognises the
heterogeneity of human beings but also many other contextual factors that may affect the education process (the findings in the previous chapter are evidence of this). It has been argued that education must be according to the learner’s requirements, and it should support what they want to achieve and the type of life they are interested in living (Sen, 1995; Unterhalter and Brighouse, 2007). However, Robeyns (Robeyns, 2006b) argued that, if education needs to match the learner’s requirements, then what type of education is good for agency freedom and well-being? According to Saito (2003), the kind of education that best articulates the concept of education as a basic capability appears to be the one that makes people autonomous and develops their judgment about further capabilities and their ability to achieve them. Flores-Crespo (2007) agreed with Saito, and further added that the type of education that encourages personal autonomy is the ‘formal (liberal) education’ and reasonably formal education is situated in the capability concept of education.

However, the findings in the previous chapter make it clear that people go to madrassahs for education due to several factors, because different people have different perceptions and expectations related to such education. The madrassah education is completely different from formal education and it is mainly based on a religious curriculum. Therefore, many questions could arise about the influence of madrassah education on a good life.

As discussed in Chapter Four, madrassah education has been widely criticised for preserving the religious curriculum and for its rejection of modernity. The common allegations are around the focus on a religious curriculum, which is centuries old and leads to almost no economic benefits (Chaudhry 2005; Hussain 2007; Jalal 2008). Others, such as Haider (2011), argue that, due to
the curriculum taught in madrassahs in Pakistan, madrassah students have no technical skills and they are ill-equipped for productive employment in the globalised and knowledge-based economy. Indeed, such arguments are very common and mostly based on assumptions. Empirical studies with a direct focus on investigating the socio-economic impacts of madrassah education in Pakistan are very rare. Therefore, conceptualisation of the alternative theories of ‘education and development’ provides the basis for this study to investigate the different impacts of madrassah education.

Many different questions were asked to the participants, for example: what do madrassahs teach? What type of skills do madrassah students achieve? To what extent have they access to the labour market? And what types of job opportunities do madrassah graduates have in order to get economic benefits from a madrassah education and become economically autonomous? What are the social impacts of madrassah education on an individual level as well as on the community level? The following section discusses the findings related to the madrassah curriculum and its impacts on students’ skills.

6.3.1 Madrassah curriculum and its impacts on students’ skills

Before discussing the economic impacts of madrassah education in more detail, it is important to look into the skills students achieve through such an education. According to Unterhalter and Brighouse (2007), without some formal level of skills attainment one cannot achieve agency and well-being; that is, the life one has reason to value. But, at the same time, they further added that the skills one needs to live a life one has reason to value is dependent on the context; people living in different socio-economic situations may need different sets of skills.
Given the criticisms discussed above about the curriculum taught in madrassahs, during the interviews in both male and female madrassahs, many questions focused on the types of subject madrassahs teach. The main aim was to understand the nature of the education that madrassahs impart and how it may influence the skills as well as the future job prospects of the madrassah graduates. Interviews with teachers in different madrassahs revealed that all madrassahs in Chach provide the traditional Dars-e-Nizami\textsuperscript{84} curriculum. Chapter Four has already discussed in detail the Dars-e-Nizami curriculum and that it includes only religious subjects with no science subjects included. Interview responses revealed the aims and objectives of madrassahs as well as the perceptions of teachers about the madrassah education. A head teacher explains:

\begin{quote}
Madrassahs are the religious institutions and they have their own aims and objectives which are different from other types of education. So, we teach only the religious subjects... you many have a question that why madrassahs preserve their traditions for religious education; I will explain it to you by a very simple example... The aim of engineering college is to produce engineers who can help for the problems related to engineering, and the aim of medical colleges to produce doctors who can help people for their health related problems... and it is same for other fields. In the same way, the aims of madrassah education is to produce Islamic scholar who can help Muslims not only for Islamic teaching and learning but also to guide them for different religious issues and problems...All I mean is that madrassah education is a specialised
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{84} As mentioned in Chapter Four, Dars-e-Nizami is slightly different for different sects of madrassahs; the Dars-e-Nizami course is also different in female madrassahs.
field and its aim is to equip our students with religious knowledge and skills. (Interview: T1)

Repeatedly, the majority of teachers explained their views about madrassah education in the same ways. Generally in Pakistan, Jamat Islami, Shia and also, to some extent, Brelvi madrassahs are known as moderate in their approach. However, it was observed that, in the case of Chach, all madrassahs belonging to the different religious sects have the same traditional system. In my view, this is due to the personal attitudes and perceptions of many conservative Ulama who believe that the madrassahs have to provide only a religious education that aims to produce religious scholars. Further probing questions were put to all the participating teachers to find out about the kind of changes they would like to see in the existing curriculum, which includes very old books in the Arabic and Persian languages. They were also asked for their opinion regarding the addition of some science subjects to the madrassah curriculum in order to provide a better future for the students. The following reply from a teacher represents the perceptions of many teachers in madrassahs:

I believe that madrassahs have a perfect curriculum which is required to train an Aalim (Islamic scholar); it includes Quran, Hadith (sayings of the Prophet) and Fiqh books. The Quran and Hadith do not need any modification; these are for every Muslim for life, for all the times and in every context. The other books are also important to learn the Fiqh (Islamic law)...as far as the issue is to include the other sciences subjects in madrassah curriculum, I do not think that the science subjects are necessary to include in madrassahs....I am not against the science subject at all, but, in my

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85 In urban areas some of the large Jamat Islami, Shia and also a few Brelvi madrassahs teach other subjects with Dars-e-Nizami, and they also have some computer classes. Madrassahs of all these sects in rural areas, however, do not have science subjects in the curriculum.
view it will divert the attention of madrassah students from their religious subjects.... and they may not achieve their original goals for what they were entered into the madrassah.. (Interview: T5)

Again, this reveals the views of Ulama in Chach who believe that only the existing religious curriculum is essential for the madrassah education and it does not required any changes. Certainly, there is no change or any modifications required for the sacred texts of the Quran and Hadith. But, as discussed earlier, the key concern is to substitute the other ancient books (many of which are in Arabic and Persian), which are quite irrelevant in modern times and difficult to understand for students speaking other languages. Therefore, those books need to be replaced with other subjects that could possibly help madrassah students to acquire some modern knowledge and keep abreast of the labour market, as well as other aspects of life (Ali, 2008).

However, in general, the perceptions of madrassah teachers were that science subjects are centred on worldly knowledge, which might impact negatively on the religious devotions of the students and, by studying secular subjects, they might be more attracted towards the modern world. Thus, students might depart from the religious path. In addition, it was also noted that madrassahs are in fear that teaching secular subjects in madrassahs may reduce their religious identity and authority. However, it indicates a certain opposition to reform of existing madrassah education and, in my view, it is deeply rooted in the traditional mentality of the Ulama. Because of all these reasons, the

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86 For example, in the present Aalim course there are several books on old philosophy, logic and theology that are unnecessary and have little relevance for the current time, and these subjects could be replaced with modern subjects without burdening the students.

87 It was noted that Dubandi, Brelvi and Ahl-e-Hadis madrassahs are relatively more rigid in this regard.
madrassahs in Chach only teach religious subjects, leaving no space for other, modern subjects. I argue that this type of approach put limits on the students’ freedom to gain up-to-date knowledge, and it may affect their future employment prospects.

Moreover, the interviews with students from different madrassahs revealed some other realities of the madrassah education system. For example, in some madrassahs it is even prohibited to study any books of modern books, such as those on current affairs, English learning etc. Interviews with students further illuminated that it is not even allowed to read Islamic books written by Ulama of other sects or books about other religions. It was also observed that there were no library or computer facilities available in any madrassah in Chach. Furthermore, it was observed that teaching methods in madrassahs are traditional, which has profound impacts on the learning of students. For example, instead of enhancing the student’s critical thinking skills, the main emphasis is lecturing and rote learning. It was commonly noted that, in all the madrassahs in Chach, most emphasis was placed upon memorising the books and there were no interactive discussions, questioning and enquiry between teachers and students in order to understand the real meanings of a subject.

As a result of all these circumstances, with the exception of those who come to a madrassah after some formal education, large numbers of students in

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88 Various interviews with students from Dubandi madrassahs talked about such restrictions.

89 During the interviews, when students were asked about the library facilities at madrassahs and access to other books, many students revealed these types of restriction that they face from their institutions. But madrassahs all of sects in urban areas have good libraries.

90 For example, by looking at the course structure it was noted that in an Aalim course there are three to five different books included to learn Arabic. But interviews with students revealed that they cannot speak or write Arabic fluently. The same was the case with Persian books, with which students struggle a lot.
madrassahs know little about contemporary subjects and have no formal skills in science and technology. Consequently, they attain only religious knowledge, spiritual development and the moral and ethical values of the specific sect with which a madrassah is affiliated. There is no doubt that madrassahs are meeting the demand of those who want a religious education; however, this study argues that neglecting modern subjects in madrassah education in today’s globalised world creates not only a rigid educational dualism between madrassah and formal education, but also increases marginalisation in educational functioning and capabilities, which may have serious implications for the future lives of madrassah students (Vaughan, 2007). The following section examines how madrassah education impacts the careers and employment of madrassah students.

6.3.2 Employment, career opportunities and economic impacts

In general, people invest in formal education in the confidence that it will offer better employment opportunities, good earnings and varied careers (Gould, 1993). Therefore, traditionally, the economic returns for formal education are measured in terms of employment and income. An empirical study, by Psacharopoulos (Psacharopoulos, 1994), identifies the link between education, education, and economic outcome. However, despite these empirical findings, there is a debate about the type of calculation to be used to measure the economic returns from education. However, this is a separate debate for a separate study. A madrassah education is unique; as explained in the previous section (6.3.1) it offers a limited religious curriculum and its graduates often lack

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91 For example, Sen (1999) and Unterhalter and Brighouse (2007) argue that even with the same educational resources different people might experience different economic outcomes.
the modern skills required for the mainstream labour market. This section will discuss what career opportunities there are for madrassah graduates and how their unique education impacts on them economically.

In order to study the economic impact of a madrassah education researcher asked research participants a number of questions about what they considered to be their potential career prospects. The teachers interviewed said that a madrassah education should be undertaken in order to explore faith and to serve Islam - and not with possible economic gains in mind. A teacher explained what madrassahs expected from their graduates. He said:

\[\text{There is no advantage of spending eight years in madrassah and getting Islamic education if a madrassah graduate do not work in the field of Islamic education or in any related religious field...In my view the best place for an Aalim is to work in the mosque or madrassahs...and a practicing Aalim is one who teach to others whatever he learned about the Islamic teachings from the madrassah.. it is true other than small Wazifa}^{92}\text{ (stipend) there are no attractive financial benefits...but Allah (God) gives more rewards to those who work in His path. (Interview: T1).}\]

Similar statements were made by other teachers who felt that madrassah graduates had to serve for Dee (religion), and commit a lot of time to religious pursuits. However, this approach has led to madrassahs being criticised for disconnecting their students from economic activities (Khalid, 2002 ; Khalid, 2008). An interviewee argued:

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92 In the past, leading prayers as a Imam, and teaching in a Maktab or madrassah, were voluntary roles which attracted a small monthly payment, known as a stipend (Wazifa). Now money paid to a religious scholar is known as a salary.
Islam never prohibit doing business and employment...And also never exclude different conditions of living in this world...even teaching of Islam encourages everyone to make efforts for Rizq-e-Halal (lawful good income)...In the past Islamic scholars were working voluntarily for madrassahs and at the same time they were doing businesses and jobs...take the example of Imam Abu Hanifa\textsuperscript{93} who was a great Islamic scholar but at the same time he was running his own business...there are many more example you can find from the history...madrassahs need to think the same for their student...madrassahs need to consider both aspects – religious values and practice as well as needs of daily life...then madrassah education will be more beneficial for an Islamic society.

(\textit{Interview: KI2})

(i) Employment and income of male madrassah students

A significant number of teachers interviewed said that even with a good formal education many people in Chach today could not find a job - whereas madrassah graduates can secure a paid position within the religious sector. Even though religious jobs are low paid, the possibility that a madrassah education will lead to work remains a key reason why parents send their children to study in a madrassah. A teacher said:

\textit{Demand for a good Aalim will never end. There is always a need in madrassahs or in mosque...it is normal practice in our madrassah that for our final year students, we try our best to find a part-time placement in a mosque or in an evening madrassah where he can teach to children or can lead prayers. To do so, there are two advantages for student. Firstly, students get some experience;}

\textsuperscript{93} Imam Abu Hanifa (699-767 CE) is one of the four Imams of Islamic jurisprudence (Bijnauri, 2007).
secondly there is a chance to get full-time paid position at the same place after finishing studies. (Interview: T9)

But when researcher asked madrassah students what they thought about their job opportunities and earnings potential, after completion of their education, they gave varied responses - which offered insight into the reality of their position. A large number of students said that it was very difficult for a madrassah graduate to find a job in either the public or private sectors. Therefore, their only option was to work in the religious sector, as an Imam or a teacher in a madrassah. The students also said that a madrassah graduate had more chance of getting a job in the religious sector, but they said these jobs are very low paid. I found there was no defined salary structure for madrassah jobs, and what was paid was mostly dependent on the financial conditions of the particular madrassah or mosque where the Aalim was providing his services. Respondents gave different monthly salary figures. Table 6.3 shows the average salaries for an Imam and a madrassah teacher in Chach region. This table also compares the madrassah salaries with the salaries of primary and high school teachers, in order to examine the income differentials.

**Table 6.3 Comparison of average monthly incomes of Imams and madrassah teachers, with equivalent positions in public schools**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position in mosque or madrassah</th>
<th>Salary per month (approximate)</th>
<th>Equivalent position in public schools</th>
<th>Salary per month</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Imam</td>
<td>Rs.3,000</td>
<td>Primary school teacher</td>
<td>Rs.13,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madrassah teacher</td>
<td>Rs.4,500</td>
<td>High school teacher</td>
<td>Rs.20,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Data Analysis
This table shows that the Imam and madrassah teachers are not only getting a very low salary - in comparison to equivalent positions in the public sector - but also that their income is even less than the casual worker, which is around Rs.6,000 a month in Chach. This means that madrassah graduates will probably earn less than their counterparts in the public and private sectors, leaving them in a very weak economic position.

However, despite their low salaries - and challenging financial situations - it was interesting to note that respondents were satisfied with their positions and willing to continue working in the same job. These were, generally, the people who had been interested only in acquiring a religious education, and who valued most the chance to live a life that helped to achieve the will of God and his rewards. This group of people interviewed were more interested in attaining religious satisfaction, through their madrassah education, than reaping economic benefit. A teacher in a madrassah said:

*It seems difficult to manage basic needs with this salary...but Allah put Barakah in it...Alhamdulillah (Thanks to God)...I am satisfied that I am able to do something for my Deen (religion) and I believe only Allah can give me reward for that which is more than high income and material life in this world...but a peaceful life hereafter.* (Interview: T4)

A similar attitude was found among people who valued more the social benefits associated with their religious position, rather than the economic outcome of their madrassah education. They were satisfied with what they were earning, because it was not their goal to benefit economically. A few informants said they

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94 Barakah is an Arabic word meaning beneficent force for the physical and spiritual things which come from Allah (God). It is given to practicing Muslims who are doing good works.
receive Hadya (a gift) from local people, in addition to their salary, which helped them satisfy their daily needs. But even with the Hadya the income of an Imam or madrassah teacher is still low, and it is difficult to support a family on it. Therefore, these poor economic situations impact on the basic needs of whole households, making it impossible to send children to a formal school.. This study argues that it is irrelevant whether a madrassah graduate is employed as an Imam or a teacher by personal choice of because he or she has no option, the low salaries for jobs in the religious sector are a disadvantage of a madrassah education.

Another group of respondents attended madrassah because of some structural failure - discussed in the previous chapter – and not because they had a personal interest in studying religion. They were very anxious about their job prospects, and had no idea what they would do when they finished madrassah. What they had learnt in madrassah did not meet the demands of the mainstream job market. They said working as an Imam or madrassah teacher, on a very low income, would not enable them to support the needs of their households. It was especially difficult for students from poor families, who had no formal education. They felt their madrassah education was creating obstacles to them earning a living. A new madrassah graduate said:

Due to poor financial circumstances my parents sent me to madrassah, It was good for me than not to study...but now am puzzled about my job...there is a possibility to work in madrassah or as a ‘Khatib’ (Imam in mosque) but it is very low paid...I am trying to find a job from which I can get some reasonable income...I am applying here and there for last few months but still there is no success... (Interview: G2)
Other graduates, in the same situation, were also worried about their job prospects and their potential earnings. They were trying to find a suitable job but had been unable to get work in public or private sectors. The only work which seemed to be available was manual labouring. We have already seen, in chapter four, that during the 1980s the government recognised the madrassah Aalim degree course certificate - issued by a madrassah board – as being equivalent to a masters degree in Arabic or Islamic studies. The main aim was to help madrassah graduates obtain public sector jobs, for example teaching Arabic or Islamic study in public schools, or working in the army as a Khatib (same a Imam in mosque). However, all the madrassahs participating in this study felt that, despite this move to regularise their accreditation, they had not seen a significant increase in the employment of their graduates in the public sector. The graduates themselves felt this equivalency of certification had not helped them get a job in the public sector. A madrassah graduate explained:

*Initially when government provided equivalence certificate some madrassah graduates were able to get job in public sector...But now this certificate is nothing than a piece of paper... Because in public sector now they are also asking at least metric (secondary school certificate) with madrassah education, even in public sectors for some positions, the requirement is bachelor degree with Aalim certificate...so there is no chance for a madrassah graduate who has studied only madrassah education... (Interview: G4)*

This clearly demonstrates that because of the nature of the education they received, madrassah graduates have little chance of getting a job in the public sectors - unless they also have some formal education. When they find they
cannot secure work in the mainstream market they have only two options, to accept a low paid job in the religious sector or work as a labourer.

In general, the above discussion reveals that madrassah graduates are largely disadvantaged in terms of their employment and income. This situation is worrying for those madrassah graduates who wanted to earn a good salary and support themselves. This study argues that in this situation, when a madrassah graduate is discontented with his job and income, he could easily be misled into participating in negative activities, such as militancy.

By comparison, the employment and income prospects of female madrassah students are different from their male colleagues. The following section investigates their position in more detail.

(ii) Employment and income of female madrassah students

The previous chapter demonstrated that, due to different factors, girls in Chach are likely to study at a madrassah either from an early stage or after some formal schooling. In chapter two the relationship between a girl’s education and her employment was discussed in more detail. For girls, education plays a vital role - helping them to become more economically independent, and empowered enough to enjoy some freedom and participate in the democratic process (Watkins, 1999; Watkins, 2000; UNESCO, 2003). This section looks at the impact of having a madrassah education on female employment and income. However, first it is important to look at the broader trends of female employment and income in the Chach region.
During my field visit to Chach I noted that there were no women in mainstream jobs and that the whole labour market was male dominated. Female participants of this study said that, because of cultural constraints, it was considered wrong to send a female to work. The main duties of women are in the home, doing the housework. If a woman wants to work, to make some money, she is allowed only to do something which can be done at home. Interviewees said women do handicraft work at home, in order to help support their families. A female respondent explained why women do not work outside their homes in Chach:

_Traditionally in our cultural it is the men duties to do jobs earn money and manage all needs of household, while the females are responsible to do all household work. Women are considered as the honour of whole family and men do not want to send them out, also if a woman doing a job, socially it is bad sign for men of that family, as the people in the local think that men of this family are depending on the women money which is considered a big dishonour for men._ (Interview: FMT18)

Another female informant added:

_I was the first female who started work as a teacher in public school, and you cannot imagine the response me and my family faced for this act...while the people in Chach have been changed for many cultural and social norms, but still female jobs are considered as dishonour for family...therefore those girls who were lucky to study at college and university level become house wives...even many wish to do job but are not able to do so..._(Interview: KI6)

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95 There were some exceptions, for example, female health workers. But, generally, sending a women out to work is culturally wrong.
Other participants spoke of the reasons why women do not work in mainstream jobs. Respondents confirmed that when locally-embedded social values and cultural norms prevent women from participating in the open labour market, female madrassah graduates can get teaching jobs in a madrassah. A female madrassah teacher said:

*If I have studied from College or University, I would have never been allowed to work outside. But being an Aalima I am teaching in madrassah because the madrassah environment is safe for female...there is no objection from my family for working in madrassah...even it is more honourable for family...Though it is very small paid job, but I am happy because it gives me an opportunity to come to madrassah every day, interact with other teachers and students and learn more new things which have build my confidence ...also it is more good for me than staying at home like other females in our village.* (Interview: FMT7)

Researcher was also told that some female madrassah graduates had opened their own madrassahs. They were happy working as teachers, albeit earning a small amount of money\(^{96}\). Other madrassah graduates, who do not work in a madrassah – preferring to stay at home to fulfil household responsibilities - teach girls at home on a voluntary basis. I argue that many female madrassah graduates - who live within the prevailing socio-cultural constraints – are advantaged employment-wise, when compared to other girls in Chach who did not even have the opportunity to attend madrassah.

\[^{96}\text{While most madrassah education in Chach is free, there were some small female madrassahs which recently started charging a small fee. This is one way the owners of madrassahs can earn some money.}\]
6.3.3 Social impacts on individuals of a madrassah education

After discussing the impact of a madrassah education on skills, employment opportunities, and income, this section will examine its social impact - for both male and female graduates. In chapter two, there was a detailed discussion of the alternative approaches of education and development, which demonstrated how education can be seen in terms of social benefit gain. So far as formal education is concerned, a numerous studies have documented the social or non-marketable importance of education - for example, the impact of formal education on individual agency, civic partnerships, health, and child mortality (Behrman and Stacey, 1997; Heward and Bunwaree, 1999; UNESCO, 2000; Watkins, 2000; Kiluva- Ndunda, 2001). However, despite the current increase in research on madrassah education, there is an absence of empirical work which investigates the social impact of a madrassah education in Pakistan.

The previous section demonstrated that, unfortunately, a madrassah education has an unconstructive impact on an individuals’ skills, employment opportunities, and potential income. However, as some interview respondents said, material gain is not always what students are looking for from their madrassah education. Rather they seek to secure religious rewards from Allah (God) - as well as some social benefits. During the field work researcher asked participants if they were not seeking economic gain from their madrassah education what return did they hope for The following were common responses:

(i) Inculcation of good character and enhanced personal attributes

Teachers said that the Islamic nature of madrassah courses nurture the development of a different world view (that is, the Islamic world view) in their
students. This is a different worldview from that developed by their counterparts, who study in the formal education system. Researcher was also told that madrassahs not only teach religion but also focus on providing teaching that how to live individual as well as collective life. A madrassah teacher said:

Secular education is purely based on materialistic foundations that lead a person towards the Western world views. Whilst, madrassah education develops the mind set of their students according to the Islamic way of life – which focuses on the moral development and to teach our students how should they cultivate their entire lives and perform worldly actions according to the will of God and the ways of life as taught by Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Therefore, you can see an apparent difference in the attributes of one’s life graduated from a madrassah. A madrassah student possesses more good attributes which in the other case are very rare to find at the present time. For example, they well behaved and respect their parents and other family members, they are thankful to Allah in any situation and spend simple lives – so they keep away from speaking lie, dishonesty and corruption. They never do anything bad for others and help people also they make efforts to teach people not to do any immoral activities. (Interview: T11)

Other teachers gave examples of how the attitude of madrassah students differs from that of children who go to public school - even within the same family. A respondent said:

A female madrassah graduate has more sustainable married life than girls graduated from university. As she knows what are the rights of her husband and how to give him respect and look after his family (in-laws). Therefore, there is a very little chance of family conflicts and also divorce. There are other social benefits of female madrassah education, for example, as a mother she is aware that how to do ‘tarbiyah’ (development, growth and education of
children in well-disciplined manners) of her children. (Interview: FMT14)

Parents, of various backgrounds, said that a madrassah education inculcated good moral values into students – helping to prevent children from participating in evil things and the negative aspects of society. A father identified why he had sent his two sons to madrassah:

“First of all, madrassahs teach good Ikhlaq (good manners and ethical values), respect for elders specifically for parents and how to behave with others which are the basic things for a good character development of a child but unfortunately so called Roshan mizaji (modernisation) has thrown away all these good things from children of today’s society and many parents both living in rural and urban areas are stressed how to protect their children from this rapidly changing environment...So, I find madrassah education a best way to teach my children all good things in a very simple way. Secondly, in my view, madrassah education teach and makes the children aware that what is good and what is bad and also provide a straightforward guide lines how to accomplish good and what are the possible ways to protect yourself from immoralities. As a result, in my view, madrassah plays a very good role in protecting children from many bad doings, such as, Zina\(^{97}\), bad social circles involvement, disgusting habits (like smoking, drugs, gambling) and many more sins.(Interview: P7).

Other respondents said that, despite minimum economic gain from a madrassah education, parents thought there would be valuable, long-term social returns for their children and their families. This study argues that, in

\(^{97}\) Zina is an Arabic word. According to Islamic law, Zina is unlawful sexual intercourse – for which a punishment has been defined (Ahmed, 1999).
order to understand the real impact of a madrassah education, it is important to take into account the intrinsic benefit individuals (and their families) receive, and not just the economic outcome. This study also agrees with Bano (2012) that whatever changes there are in Pakistani society, and whatever the reforms of madrassah education, some people will always prefer to study at a madrassah. The main reason for this is the desire to secure religious rewards in the afterlife. This plays an important role in the nurturing of the preference for a madrassah education.

(ii) An opportunity for upward social mobility

Social structure in Pakistan is divided into various social classes, known as Zaat or Biraderi. This type of stratification is more apparent in rural areas, and is a key dimension of the economic, social and political activities of rural people (Gazdar, 2007). For example, an individual born into a Chaudhry or Malik family will have a better chance of obtaining an education, a professional career, good social relations, and a reasonable economic position, than a child born in a family belonging to a low cast (Qadeer, 2006). Stratification of people by Zaat and Biraderi creates multidimensional inequality. People belonging to a low social class are disadvantaged in society, and it is difficult for them to escape this condition. These are the non-economic factors that keep people poor (Mohmand and Gazdar, 2007).

Social division based on zaat and Biraderi was also evident in the Chach region. I observed that this had become a marker of identity – which was basically linked to social status (and social power) in the villages. In Chach,

98 A study, conducted by the Asian Development Bank in the rural areas of Pakistan, analysed how people from lower Zaa or Biraderi had been excluded from social, political and economic opportunities. This study also explored whether there was a correlation between marginalisation (and exclusion) and multidimensional poverty in the rural areas of Pakistan.
Pathan and Malik were among the most powerful *Biradries*, whose members have larger properties, good economic conditions, and very strong political relationships. Mochi (shoe makers), Tarkhan (carpenters), Kumhar (potters) and Julah (weavers) are some of low casts in the Chach region. Researchers saw that this social hierarchy was culturally embedded, and deeply rooted in Chach’s social life. For example, lower caste village people have less *honour* in communal life. Even if a family from a low caste has reasonable economic status, they are still considered *Kammi* (servant class) by the Pathan, and other higher castes, because they are marginalised, people from the lower casts have less representation and influence in public and social life.

Researchers, from the lower strata of society—those who were trapped by caste hierarchies—said they thought a madrassah education was a viable tool to achieving rapid upward social mobility. As previously discussed, people in Chach are aware of the prestige in the community, associated with being a religious scholar (an Aalim, Aalima or Imam). Respondents also said that it was difficult for them to achieve such an honour, or social position in the community, by any other means. A father of an Aalim explained:

> In the age of our forefathers there used to be a huge gap in all aspects of life between different castes. The people from low casts were treated as inferior humans by the people of high social classes. The trend has changing now, but still there is a social gap between high and low castes. Whatever is the economic condition of a family but a person from low cast will be considered as Kammi by Pathan. However, despite these circumstances, it is also true that regardless of Zaat, an Aalim receive very much respect, honour and a good social status in the village. There are many such examples in our village you can look at, for example, if the
son of Kumhar and Mochi becomes an Aalim, he will receive more respect than his counterpart who have receive formal education from college and university. In addition to this, not only an Aalim himself but his family too will be treated with respect from other social classes in the village. For example, being a father of an Aalim I receive good welcome and respects in all communal sittings. (Interview: P3)

Some respondents said the same honour was associated with a female madrassah education. For example, a girl from a low caste family, will be respected and honoured by the community for being an Aalima. This is because, in Islamic societies like Pakistan, a girl who has studied an Islamic education is admired and respected for her commitment to the preservation of the teachings of Islam and the Islamic traditions. An Aalima, who came from a low caste family, said:

Women from Pathan families think that they are socially in high rank than women from Kammi families, therefore, they are being impolite with the women from Kammi families. For example, if there is any social gathering for women (like marriage ceremony), Pathan families most often do not invite women from low castes families, or if there is a chance that they are together in some party, Pathan women ignore them, they do not talk much with them and make their separate group of Pathan women for gossips. But I have always been invited to all social gatherings, Pathan families invite me for Khatam (Quran recitation gathering), they send their daughters to my house for learning Quran. Also being an Aalima including Pathan family all gave me very much respect and honour also give me special attention. Simply, it is because of my religious education, I know I would never get respect like this even if I have good formal education from college or university. (Interview: G5)
Mohmand and Gazdar (2007) argue that social exclusion on the basis of cast is not only deprivation to public services and other types of socio-economic scarcities, but it is also closely connected with dignity and social status in the community. It is clear that in Chach a madrassah education enhances social status and can prevent the stereotypical and disrespectful behaviour, which women from Kammi families routinely face.

Some interview respondents also said that an Aalima, from a poor or low cast family, could acquire upward social mobility through marriage. As already mentioned, in the previous chapter, some parents prefer a madrassah education for their daughters so they can secure good marriage proposals. A mother of a girl attending madrassah explained how her chances of marrying into a good family had increased:

*My daughter has not completed her Aalima course yet, but we have received many proposals for her from different families. Not only our own extended family but well-established families from outside too approach us from different channels. Normally Pathan never get marry with a girl from a cast like ours, but surprisingly, some of them too send proposal for her. Being a mother I am happy for such interest for my daughter, as in recent times, many parents are worried to find good Rishta (marriage proposal) for their daughters in a good family, even many girls have bachelor degree but did not find good proposal and crossing age limit for marriage.* (Interview: P14)

However, it was noted that male madrassah graduates have fewer marriage proposals - because many parents think they will work in the religious sector and, therefore, have limited resources for their families. Many families are reluctant to accept proposals from an Aalim. Also I saw that many secular minded parents, or those who wanted to live a modern life, did not want to marry their daughters to an Aalim. But girls from religious families, and Aalima females, preferred to marry an Aalim.
This response demonstrates why rural people may value a madrassah education. While it is true that there are less tangible returns on a madrassah education, this study shows that people have different life goals – which a madrassah education may help them achieve. Two major advantages of a madrassah education are, what it can offer Muslims seeking reward from Allah, and the respected social standing graduates – living in constrained communities, like Chach – can attain.

Researcher was told that both male and female students travel from rural areas to study in large madrassahs in the main cities. This also represents potential for social mobility, for those who otherwise would have no chance of experiencing life outside the village. When madrassah students travel from backward villages to the cities they make new social contacts, live with others from different backgrounds, become part of more organised madrassahs, and enjoy the benefits of urban life. This helps them develop their interests in formal education, learn new language skills – very important for a religious scholar - and encourages them to grow in confidence.

(iii) Madrassah education and individual’s agency

Clearly a madrassah education, and the upward social mobility it can afford, helps individuals to escape from marginalised (or ignored) situations and to become respected in their families and communities. Researcher observed that changes in social status had a critical impact on the agency of individuals in Chach. The following section presents study findings which relate to how a madrassah education influences individual agency.
In Pakistan, especially in rural areas like Chach, society is largely male-dominated. Consequently, the impact of gender difference is very apparent in daily life. Researcher observed that, because of socio-cultural and religious constraints, females were not able to make and implement their own decisions about their social and economic activities, and to live a life they valued. Typically, women have always been excluded from participating in any decision-making process at the community level. And the traditional male headship of households also limits women’s agency. For example, a girl cannot make a decision about her education, her job (business), or her marriage – a very important decision. However, it was interesting to find that a madrassah education enhances the agency of women – especially those living in rural areas, whose families have a low socio-economic status. An Aalima explained how her community now listened to her and how she could now make important decisions in her household. She said:

...Normally in the rural areas when a girl goes to her husband’s family after marriage, the early time for that girl is always difficult to acquire a good status in the new household (traditionally in joint family system). She remains limited to take part in the internal affairs and discussion and also to give some suggestions on important family decisions. After marriage, I came to my husband house and we start living in the large joint family. I was bit nervous and also reluctant as a new family member. However, I was very happy to see that because of my religious education, all household

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100 During the interviews I was told that women have always been excluded from the decision-making process in the family and in the community. For example, when the World Bank launched a project to build a large canal for a hydro-power plant near the village, only the men participated in the consultation meetings. It was thought, by traditional men, that it was not the women’s role to participate in such discussions. Also, in Chach, as in many villages, women still do not vote.

101 In Chach, regardless of cast, and social and economic conditions, women have rarely been given control over household assets, and men – father, husband or brother - always make household decisions. Aslam (2007) and Mohmand and Gazdar (2007) have discussed this.
members treaded me very differently than the other outsider girl in the same family (e.g., wife of my husband's brother). From the very first day I received very much respect. Everyone asked me questions on different religious issues and also they seek suggestions and advice for their daily life matters. It was my wish to start teaching Islamic education for girls at home; they all welcome my idea and gave me a separate room for my class. (Interview: FMT14)

Another Aalima, living a successful and happy married life with her husband and children, said:

Through madrassah education I have learned about the rights of a wife as well as what are the rights of my husband and how I need to give respects to his parents and look after his other family members…it makes our life peaceful…as a result my husband never abuses me (in the other cases, it is very common that for not giving proper care to his parents there is always fight and husbands abuse their wives)...In addition, being an Aalima I can see the difference, my position as a wife is different than many other women in my village. Such as, in almost all families only men control everything from finances to children education and so on. It is because men think that women are Naqisul Aqal (women have less thinking power, and they cannot make good decisions). But my husband believes that I have more religious knowledge, so I am aware of good and bad. Therefore, he gives me all his income and leaves it to me so that I can spend money adequately for family needs. In this way, we mutually take decisions for household matters – such as, our children’s education etc. In my view, it is all because of my madrassah education, otherwise I would have to spend my life as many other women here – always dependent on their husbands’ decisions, with no voice of their own choice. (Interview: FMT5)
The above demonstrates that within constrained communities, a madrassah education can provide new agency for both male and female madrassah graduates. Specifically, a madrassah education teaches girls about their rights\textsuperscript{102} - which enable them to avoid exploitation by their families and by society. Bano (2012) says that women accumulate a range of significant social and physiological empowerment skills, through a madrassah education. This may be similar to the civic engagement and empowerment of female in India, which has been discussed by Saigal (2008). However, this study argues that, this does not necessarily mean that a madrassah education increases agency in all aspects of a woman’s life. There remain many examples of patriarchal domination – which needs to be understood in the light of Islamic teachings, and addressed significantly in order to increase women’s agency (Sikand, 2005). However, in general, the value attached to a madrassah education in Chach, provides significant means for graduates, especially women, to deal with many real life challenges – which is why it has become the choice for many individuals.

A madrassah education also enhances the agency of male graduates in Chach. Section 6.3.1 provides responses and findings related to the agency aspect of the Ulama in Chach. Table 6.4 provides a summary of the impact of a madrassah education and a comparison with the impact of a formal school education in Chach.

\textsuperscript{102}A female madrassah graduate can challenge her rights, in relation to divorce and inheritance. And by interpreting the teachings of the Quran and the Hadiths, she can also claim other rights that Islam has granted to women.
Table 6.4  A summary of the impact of a madrassah education and comparison with the impact of a formal school education in Chach

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Different Impacts</th>
<th>Madrassah students</th>
<th>School student</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modern knowledge and skills</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job opportunities in labour market</td>
<td>No - only in a madrassah</td>
<td>No - only in a madrassah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social status in family &amp; Community</td>
<td>very good</td>
<td>very good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marriage proposals</td>
<td>less</td>
<td>more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation in family and community decisions</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Data Analysis

The next section presents the findings related to the impact of a madrassah education at the community level. Firstly, it will consider the active social role of the Ulama in the community. Secondly, as a madrassah education is often seen as a reason for conflict, I will also look at the sectarian divide between different madrassahs, and how this can cause problems. Thirdly, I will discuss how a madrassah education impacts on welfare work and community development.
6.4 The impacts of a madrassah education at the community level

The previous section considered the impact of a madrassah education on the individual. This section now focuses on the impact of an individual’s madrassah education at the community level. As discussed in chapter four, in Pakistan there is a long history of madrassah education, and madrassahs work closely with the local community - not only providing education. They are very influential in the social sphere of the community (Qasmi, 2005). Over the past few years madrassah education in Pakistan has attracted immense international attention, and they have often been examined in the national and global political context. This kind of meta-analysis - utilised by recent studies - might be appropriate for an investigation, for example, into the links between madrassahs and militancy (Ali, 2009), but the local context of madrassah education has been ignored. The madrassah education system is rarely seen as being part of the social establishment, as other educational institutions are (Riaz, 2008). This study argues that within specific contexts, like Chach, madrassahs also interact with the local community. Therefore, madrassah education has a direct and indirect impact at the community level. Furthermore, as Sikand (2006) said, when investigating madrassah education it is important to consider how these schools operate within their particular contexts of social norms, cultural values, and religious practice. However, the existing literature on madrassah education, especially in Pakistan, largely ignores the impact of madrassah education in the rural context.

The following section will discuss the impact of madrassah education in the Chach region. By analysing interview responses and observation data, major themes emerged – those being the role of Ulama as an agent in the community,
madrassah education and the formation of socio-religious groups, the involvement of madrassahs in welfare work, and the sectarian divide between madrassahs and the conflict this can cause.

6.4.1 A closer look at the role of the Ulama\textsuperscript{103} in the community

Modernity has affected the traditional role of the Ulama in the contemporary Muslim world (Zaman, 2002). However, the socio-religious roles of the Ulama continue to exist and impact on Muslim societies. As discussed in chapter five, the madrassahs in Chach are predominantly local initiatives, managed and run by local Ulama and some leading community members. The relationship between the madrassahs and the local community in Chach was obvious – creating a kind of social networking, which encourages people to adhere to the madrassa’s teachings. My interviewees said that the madrassahs in Chach are not simply Islamic education providers, and the work of the Ulama is not limited to leading prayers in the mosques or teaching students in the madrassah. The Ulama interact with the wider community by performing different socio-religious functions. As a result, the involvement of the Ulama in the public sphere in Chach was noticeable. For example, the Ulama provide advice on marriage and other social issues, and resolve conflict between community members.

In order to study the practical role of the Ulama, at the community level, researcher asked interviewees in the madrassahs, and other participants, a few questions. Researcher was told the first responsibility of the Ulama is to spread Islamic teaching to the general public, and guide them in an Islamic way of life.

\textsuperscript{103} By Ulama I mean the madrassah graduates who works in the community.
The aim is to build a society on Islamic principles, and bring social change through the teaching of Islam. A madrassah teacher explained:

_Ulama play their role as a Khalifa of Prophet (successor of Prophet) to spread the teaching of Islam to everyone in the community, to guide the people that how to be a practicing Muslim and spend their life according to the Sharia (Quran and Hadith)...Also to teach the people that practicing Islamic life is more than praying five times and reciting Quran...therefore, an Aalim living in a community, interacting with people very closely, teach them how to be practical on the lessons of Quran and Hadith, that is, to know your rights, to respect others rights in the community, help the needy, respect you parents and elders, give the women their rights...and so on...In the other words...Ulama make their efforts to establish a good society by teaching of Islam._

(Interview: T5)

Another respondent from a madrassah said:

_A sustainable society is based on practicing the teaching of Islam, and the Ulama guide the people about the code of life provided by Quran and Hadith...Ulama play their role to broaden good deeds by teaching of Islam...for example, teaching people about Zakat which helps to reduce poverty...also to inform the people about the social evil and sinful doings which are not only harmful for individuals but also for society._ (Interview: T17)

The above responses demonstrate the religious role of the Ulama, however, it is also influential on individuals and the collective life of the community. Teachers, who were interviewed, also spoke of the importance of teaching Islam and its practices. They emphasised that a madrassah education not only impacted directly on its students, but also indirectly on broader society. A madrassah graduate, living a complete Islamic life, can help create an environment of
equality, justice, patience, tolerance, and unity in the community. Respondents said it was the sharing of Islamic knowledge with others, that was the core aim of a madrassah education. Hence, the role of the Ulama in the community is to encourage people to live in accordance with Islamic teachings. At the community level the impact of madrassah education, and the work of the Ulama, was evident in Chach. A community member explained how different social issues were addressed by the Ulama in the area:

"Few year back in our village there were many bad things at the very high ratio, for example women were always ignored for their rights in the property inheritance, gambling through bird fighting and inequality between high and low casts are very common social issues, but with the increase of number of Ulama and their work has tackled these social problems by imparting the Islamic teaching to general public." (Interview: KI3)

The Ulama who were interviewed said that present-day Muslim societies face the challenges of modernisation, and the rapid changes that are occurring through the process of globalisation. They said individuals were becoming more westernised, and they were especially concerned about younger people - who were not practicing the Islamic teachings as they should. Some Ulama felt the younger generation was moving away from Islamic values and culture, which was creating many social problems in society. And the Madrassahs believed that the religious education they provide, and the work done by the Ulama, not only spreads Islamic teachings but also promotes Islamic culture and values in Muslim societies.

Researcher was also told that people seek spiritual guidance from the Ulama, and they are consulted about different common problems of daily life, and
asked to provide Islam-oriented solutions (according to Sharia law). These
issues included marriage, divorce, inheritance, and financial matters (for
example, Zakat and interest).

The above discussion has highlighted the religious role of the Ulama and its
impact on the community. However, this study was equally interested in finding
out about the active social role of the Ulama in the community. Therefore,
researcher asked informants, outside the madrassahs, about the social role of
the Ulama in the community. From their responses, it was evident that the
Ulama were actively involved in different social matters and rituals in the
community. For example, families invite an Aalim to conduct a Nikah (Islamic
marriage ceremony) ceremony, a Khutba (speech), or a Namaz-e-Janaza\textsuperscript{104} at
a Muslim burial. The Ulama also lead Eid festival prayers. The Ulamas’ role as
community leaders was also identified by my informants. For example, the
Ulama are encouraging the social engagement of marginalised, rural people,
and also motivating individuals to carry out community welfare work (as
discussed in more detail in section 6.4.3). Some respondents also said that the
Ulama play an important role as mediators, resolving social problems and
disputes in the village communities. A community member described how the
Ulama help sustain social life in the area. He said:

\begin{quote}
Whenever there is some serious social problem or a dispute
between individuals, families or tribes, people sit in the Jirga\textsuperscript{105} to
resolve it. And in the Jirga with some other prominent community
members, an Aalim plays an important role to solve the problem
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{104} Funeral prayers before a deceased Muslim is buried.

\textsuperscript{105} Jirga is normally a panel of prominent community members, including an Aalim, who resolve an issue -
such as a land dispute between two local people.
between both parties, to remove the conflict, and hard feelings and animosity toward one another in the community. People believe that an Aalim reaches to an unbiased, honest and fair decision. Therefore, any decision made by an Aalim between parties involved in a Jirga is given supremacy and people therefore accept it without any doubt and further questioning. (Interview: KI4)

The above demonstrates the social role of the Ulama, as active members of the Jirga system. The respondents said there were two reasons people sought help from the Ulama, and were willing to put their trust in their decisions - more than other people in the Jirga system. Firstly, because they believed an Aalim would make a fair decision - according to the teaching of the Quran and the Hadiths. Secondly, by enlisting the help of the Ulama people avoided the difficult, expensive and long and complicated process of the police and courts systems. In my view, the Ulama play a vital role in the Jirga system, solving problems and providing justice for poor and marginalised people, in a convenient way, in the local community.

Respondents said that the honour and prestige an Aalim received from his local community, and his social standing, was associated with his practice of religion and piety in his daily life. For example, if he is a practicing Muslim who reveals his piety through his actions and his words, when dealing with others in the community, he is listened to and respected. Thus, only a practicing Aalim can have a good social role as a religious leader. If an Aalim does not practice the teachings of the Quran and Sunnah, as it is required to do, he will not receive the respect of the people, and may even be considered to be polluting society. This kind of behaviour by one Aalim may damage the image of madrassah education, and set a bad example for all Ulamas. Respondents said that this
type of Ulama is the reason why people lost their confidence in the role of the Ulama, and also why there is increased suspicion about the religious teachings of the entire madrassah education system.

It is important to mention that few Ulama misuse the honour - the source of their power - given to them by their local community. But a few Ulama (or madrassahs) want to establish Jirga and/or exercise Sharia law. As that would contradict state law it creates local and national conflict. Sharia courts aim to overrule the supremacy of state law and implement Islamic law; but the government does not permit the practice of any law defined by a specific group of Ulama. This tension leads to conflict between different groups of Ulama, and between some Ulama and government\(^\text{106}\). The behaviour of some Ulama has caused social instability in society.

The following section looks at the madrassah, the mosque network, and the formation of different religious groups. It was interesting to note that, on the one hand, these religious groups, were involved in welfare activities in the community, while on the other, they created, or become the part of, the conflict.

6.4.2 Madrassah education and the formation of socio-religious groups

The previous section explored the role of the Ulama (madrassah graduates) and the impact of their education at the community level. This section will explore the formation of different socio-religious groups - by focusing mainly on the direct impact on the students of their madrassah training. In addition, I will discuss the madrassah-mosque networks and the grassroots affiliations of individuals. The study focus was not particularly on group formation but rather

\(^{106}\)For example, during 2009, there was a serious dispute between Ulama and government on the issue of Sharia court in the Swat Valley
to acquire an understanding of the significant impact of a madrassah education at the community level. This will be discussed in more detail in the following sections.

In Pakistan, there are different formal and informal Islamic networks, groups, and movements working at the regional, national and international level. These groups can be divided into two types, the fundamentalist Islamic movements (for example, the progressive Islamists and jihadi groups) and the madrassah-based *Tablighi Jamat* and *Sufi groups*, which operate for the purpose of *tabligh* (that is, teaching of Islam). These latter groups are also engaged in welfare work and the provision of social services. This study focuses only on the madrassahs and their work. As already discussed, in the previous chapters, during the last decade an enormous amount of research has been conducted into madrassahs in Pakistan. Some of these studies have looked at the madrassah networks, how they operate and their influence (Magouirk et al., 2008; Farish et al., 2008). However, the existing work addresses only the national and transnational networks, and groupings, of the madrassahs. In particular, much attention has been paid to political activism within the madrassahs, and their links to militancy (Alam, 2004; Bergen and Pandey, 2005). Although examination of the transnational networks of the madrassahs is important, this study argues that empirical research in Pakistan has ignored impacts of madrassah education at the micro level – that is, in a particular context (especially rural areas). In the same way, the micro level socio-religious groups have also been ignored in the madrassah debate. Therefore, the primary emphasis of this section of the present study is to answering questions, such as: How has madrassah education impacted on communities? Has
madrassah education played a significant role in the formation of different socio-religious groups? What has been the impact of these groups on the community?

Generally, in the discussion of the formation of informal social groups, the existing literature - by social capital theorists – has emphasised one of two points of view. The first, known as the rational choice point of view, is premised on the basic idea that informal social groupings have a straightforward, predictable return for individuals – that is, an individual derives more benefit from being in a group than acting alone (Lin, 2001). The second advantage of informal social groupings is based on the idea that affective ties of friendship and social cohesion, especially in fragmented societies, can replace the traditional bonds of family and community, which have disappeared (Putnam, 2000). It was noted that the religious groups, formed through madrassah education in Chach, were based, somewhat unsurprisingly, on faith, and a common feeling of having a duty to achieve the will of God. Candland (2000 & 2005) said that religious groups are formed in a very specific way, different to that of social capital formation, or collective action (e.g., Olson, 1965). This study also argues that the method of group formation in Chach is different from any other type of social capital formation. In other words these madrassah education groups can be described as faith-based capital groupings (Candland, 2000) – or, more specifically, Islamic capital groupings (ibid). It is also important to mention that these groups were based on sectarian lines, relating to specific teaching methodology, ideology, culture, and the values of particular madrassah sects. Therefore, these groups differ from each other.

In Chach, it was observed that each mosque was connected with a madrassah of a particular sect. All mosques connected with a madrassah follow, and work
according to, the teachings of that madrassah. Respondents said that a mosque committee seeks guidance from a madrassah on different matters, for example, the appointment of Imam, and organisation of ceremonies and *Ramadan* events. In this way, a madrassah becomes a hub for many mosques and other small madrassahs of one sect. A madrassah head teacher explained the relationship between the mosques and the madrassah. He said:

> There are more than 80 mosques from different villages are in contact with this madrassah. However, there is no any formal way or any essential registration process that a mosque needs to follow to get affiliation with this madrassah. This madrassah is prominent due to its historical as well as religious position of this institute in Chach...This is the main madrassah of Duband, so those who follow Duband Maslak so they seek guidance from this madrassah...therefore you can say, it is a religious bond, and also people’s faith that they will get proper guidance from us. While, on the other hand, in many mosques of Duband Maslak, our graduates are working as an Imam, which is the another reason mosques are in contact with this madrassah. (Interview: T5)

A community member added:

> People follow whatever Molana [ABC]¹⁰⁷ says, and every mosque is connected with one madrassah in one way or the other and working very closely with that madrassah. (Interview: KI1)

It was also observed that all sects establish the same associations between mosques and madrassahs. However, in Chach the *Dubandi* and *Brelvi* sects predominate, and have very large networks. The *Ahl-e-Hadith, Jamat-e-Islami*

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¹⁰⁷ Informants mentioned the name of an Aalim, who is head of a madrassah and very influential - not only in his own sect but elsewhere in Chach, and outside the Chach region.
and, *Shia* were in small numbers. From the interviews it became evident that, due to ideological differences, there was no inter-sect cooperation. Informants said conflict occurred between the sects about different religious issues, which sometimes led to serious fighting between different groups in the community. Madrassah education and conflict will be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter.

Analysis of the interviews revealed that there were two types of mechanisms taking place during the formation of the madrassah education-related religious groups in Chach. The first type of group emerged *top-down*, the creation of the madrassah for its teachers and students. An example would be how madrassahs of all sects offer students, in addition to their Islamic education, instruction on values, norms, and culture\textsuperscript{108} - related to the particular school of thought the madrassah is affiliated with. As mentioned above, the mosques are connected madrassahs, so mosque students who never attend madrassah – but are learning the Quran – can join a joint madrassah/mosque group. I also observed that madrassahs and mosques teach their students along the sectarian line. As a result, every madrassah student becomes a faithful and committed\textsuperscript{109} member of one *particular* madrassah group, within a particular sect. Very rare does anyone leave their madrassah group. A madrassah student said:

> For every Muslim it is important to follow a correct Aqidah (Maslak)...and for a madrassah students it is more fundamental to make sure that where he is studying, because, madrassah

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\textsuperscript{108} In different madrassahs, I observed different traditions -- which were sect-specific. For example, the green caps of the Brelivi madrassahs.

\textsuperscript{109} However, it is argued that this faithfulness and devotion is actually indoctrination and radicalisation - madrassahs teach their students to develop their rigid attitudes (*Magouirk & Atran*, 2008).
education is not only the learning of books but it is also an affiliation with one Maslak which ensure the future line (as an Islamic scholar)...I am studying in madrassah, and I am satisfied, as in my view they are teaching us on the right way than the madrassahs of other Maslaks, who are doing many things which are not according to Quran and Hadith and even some of them are doing against the teaching of Islam...and I will never go to that madrassah for seeking any knowledge. (Interview: S2)

Students from different madrassah sects said their personal madrassahs were more on the right path than others. Their responses demonstrated a passionate affiliation to a madrassah of a particular sect, which this study would argue that, it enables them to derive an identity from the madrassah - which encourages harmony and cohesiveness within a sect. However, it is important to note that this process also widens the gaps between different sects.

The second type of religious group formation emerges from the local community and involves people with the same religious interests, within a particular sect. This can be seen as a bottom-up process of group formation, due to madrassah education. In contrast to the groups which develop within madrassahs, discussed above, this second type of groups includes the general public from the community who have no direct link with madrassah education. Notwithstanding, individuals are affiliated to a particular sect (e.g. Duband or Brelvi) and inspired to follow and practice their teachings. The madrassah-mosques networks, discussed above, play an important role in reaching people at the grassroots level, in order to form religious groups along sectarian lines. A community member explained:

In mosque Imam occasionally deliver Wa’az (speech) and also Friday sermon, which always focused on the teaching of one
specific sect of Islam...and people who come to mosque to participate for five times prayer start following whatever Imam deliver to them. Therefore with time their faith becomes stronger on the teaching of one particular sect. (Interview: KI7)

Religious groups emerging from the community are not as rigid in their views and practice as the groups consisting of people who have direct links with the madrassahs (e.g. teacher and students). However, both types of groups are affiliated to a particular sect, and they can become one unit to support a cause. In my view, these grassroots socio-religious groups have a significant, but varying, impact on the community.

6.3.3 Madrassah education, volunteerism and welfare work

As discussed in chapter two, over recent decades a largely forgotten part of civil society - faith-based organisations (FBOs) - have again attracted a significant amount of attention in the discourse of development studies. Now policy makers and donors consider FBOs as potential partners in development work, recognising the efforts made by them in various fields. They provide health services, education, shelter, and food in many developing countries (Clarke and Jennings, 2008a). Recently, in Pakistan FBOs have become more active in development (Iqbal and Siddiqui, 2008) – but while madrassahs are fundamentally FBOs, their work is hardly recognised. This study wanted to find out how having madrassah education had impacted on the actions of madrassah students, or those affiliated with a madrassah, for example through a mosque.

Madrassahs in Pakistan are known as the providers of free Islamic education to many poor children, or to those who want a religious education. However, in
reality, in Chach, this study found that madrassahs were not simply education providers. They had moved beyond their traditional role into various aspects of community and welfare work. Earlier in this chapter, there was a detailed discussion of madrassah education and the formation of socio-religious groups. This demonstrated that madrassahs are engaged in the wider community. Also Aalims are not merely teachers or Imams in mosques, they also interact with people outside the madrassahs and play an active role as a social agent in a variety of important community functions. In addition, a large number of very well-organised welfare organisations\textsuperscript{110} are run by madrassahs all over Pakistan. However, this study will focus on the functionality of rural madrassahs, with regards to their voluntary and welfare work.

Madrassah respondents, of all sects, spoke of the numerous ways they were engaged in different types of voluntary welfare work. A madrassah head teacher said:

\begin{quote}
I can give you many examples of madrassahs’ works in the community. For instance, mosque is a basic need for Muslim community, and madrassahs always play an important role in building new mosques. Recently people from Plots colony (a new residential area in Chach) came to me and requested help from madrassah to building new mosque\textsuperscript{111}…During the Jummah (Friday) sermons I requested people for donations; therefore, within few weeks we collected enough money to start construction work. At the same time, we motivated people to help at the construction site; also, on the daily basis groups of students from madrassah were volunteering in the construction work which
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{110}For example, Akhuwat is run by Jamat Islam and the Al- Rashid trust is run by a Dubandi madrassah.

\textsuperscript{111}I was told that in rural areas mosques are built and run by charities. There is usually no government funding or management, and many mosques in rural areas are not registered with a government department.
reduced the labour costs. Moreover, from madrassah we have appointed one Imam in the mosque who will lead prayers voluntary. In the same way, we have constructed roof for Janaza-gah (a community place for funeral prayer) with help of local donations. (Interview: T16)

This is an example of madrassah involvement in community work. In fact, one could say that constructing and running a mosque is another example of community work. Although it might be argued that the religious work done by madrassahs does not materially benefit rural people this study demonstrates how the mosque has a vital role to play in the community - by providing a space for people to come together at least five times a day, and from where they can plan more collective community action.

Other interviewees identified how madrassahs played an active role in community welfare work. A madrassah teacher said:

In our village there is no public service for roads cleaning; also over flow of water from an open sewerage becomes problem for everyone and sometime it becomes very difficult to walk through the road. In this situation, our madrassah always takes initiative and mobilise people to clean blocked drains and also clean roads. If major maintenance required for drains we call for donations, and always on one call we collect enough money for required work. Even last year, due to heavy rains road at the entrance of village was damaged, therefore, we collected donations and repaired it, otherwise it become more worse if we wait for a local councillor to contact district public services department to repair, as normally they take several month to look at the problem may be more time to repair. (Interview: T4)

Speaking of the role of madrassahs, key informant said:
There were only two rooms in the girls’ primary school, and the place was not enough for the students; also there was no toilet facility at school. We requested to education department many times but there was no reply. Local madrassah took step forward and requested people for donations to build one room and one toilet in the girl’s school by self-help. Therefore, this long waiting problem was solved with the help of madrassah initiative. (Interview: KI5)

Other respondents gave examples of the voluntary work done by madrassahs – which confirmed, in my view, that madrassahs are not only engaged in religious social work but also other general welfare work, which benefit the community at large.

It was interesting to find that key informants, and other community members, appreciated the voluntary work madrassahs had done. A local journalist, who had investigated the welfare work of civil society in the local area, explained:

There is no doubt; madrassahs are very quick during any emergency, and I think I am not wrong to say that even they are faster than other secular NGOs to reach in affected areas. For example, recently in 2011, during flood destructions, madrassahs of Chach help a lot to the people in other areas (like in Nosehra). They organised emergency donation camps and collected different things to fulfil the needs of displaced people. They have also done the same during massive earthquake in 2001 in northern areas of Pakistan. They do not only send food, blankets and medicines, but during such emergencies they mobilise their students to provide possible help to effected people; they reach at the remote places where other organisations do not want to go. (Interview: KI8).
Many other respondents spoke of the social and civic engagement of madrassahs and their students, and I observed that their counterparts were less active in such work. It is also important to note that, despite religious and ideological differences, all the madrassahs worked together when there was a large-scale emergency. However, this study also observed that there was no consistency in the activities of different madrassahs, and concluded that they needed more mutual cooperation and understating, so they could better utilise their potential and resources.

It was interesting to see how madrassahs could mobilise people to give generously when necessary. Other secular civil society organisations had to work much harder to gain public confidence for their work, before donations would be made. It is important to note that the socio-religious groups, discussed above, are the main social capital for the madrassahs. They actively participate in all welfare work initiated and managed by a madrassah. A community welfare organisation manager (partially funded by the World Bank) explained:

*First of all, at the grassroots level the rural population gives more respect and authority to Ulama than a political leader in the same village. This is the main reason people follow them. So, Ulama are able to quickly mobilise people for any social and humanitarian cause, it because of their religious followings. People think if this call is by an Aalim then there must be something good in it. Secondly, people donate to madrassahs and mosques with confidence, because they believe that Ulama will honestly use their donations for good cause. Therefore, they eagerly support any initiative by madrassahs and Ulama. While, in the perceptions of rural people secular NGOs do lot of corruptions and often associated with nepotism. (Interview: KI3)*

*Chapter six*
I found that making donations to madrassahs, towards their welfare initiatives, was usually the result of the rational decisions of believers - seeking high religious reward, not in this world but the hereafter. It was frequently heard participants, both from the madrassahs and individual donors, say:

_Hum tu Allah ki raza ka lye kartyhan_

_(We give donations just to achieve the will of God)_ (Interview: KI9)

In conclusion, this study argues that madrassahs have the potential to educate people for community work. A madrassah education also helps individuals achieve what they value - such as religious rewards. Therefore, people may experience enhanced well-being in their religious lives as well as in other aspects of daily life (Bano, 2012).

6.3.4 The sectarian divide of madrassah education and conflict

In contrast to the role of madrassahs in welfare work, discussed above, this study also explores how madrassah education is linked to communal conflict and violence. As mentioned earlier, each madrassah is associated with one specific sect. This study wanted to know whether education programmes of particular madrassahs might so impact on students as to increase sectarian gaps, escalating conflict and violence with individuals and groups of different sects. This type of religious conflict - between different religious groups - creates uncertainty and insecurity in society.

Before discussing my findings, it is important should mention that the sectarian divide between madrassahs is not a recent phenomenon, but rather there is a long history of this kind of conflict in Pakistan (Jafri, 2006). Until 1979, the relationship between the two major sects of Islam, Shia and Sunni - and also
intra-Sunni sect relationships - were relatively cordial. However, as mentioned in chapter four, during the 1980 Islamisation programme of the Zia-ul-Haq regime madrassahs became more involved in politics - increasing the sectarian tendency between the sects. When the Zia regime favoured the Sunni sects\textsuperscript{112}, the minority Shia community struggled to maintain its identity. As a result, competition developed between the Shia and Sunni sects, as they strove to assert their authority and maintain their identity and power in the country. Both sects now have many Islamist movements, which they have used against each other in violent conflict. At the same time, different sub-Sunni sects (for example, the Dubandi, the Brelvi, the Ahl-e-Hadis, and the Jamat-e-Islami) started their own Islamic movements, which also work against each other (Ali, 2008).

In short, studies show that all sects have established Islamist movements, which are based in madrassahs. As explained earlier in this chapter, madrassahs offer the primary platform for religious group formation; sectarian organisations have taken advantage of these groups - using them for their own purposes\textsuperscript{113} (ICG, 2005).

To understand the connection between madrassah education and conflict, it was asked participants to assess how madrassah students and teachers interact. This study was interested in two areas. Firstly, it wanted to understand how madrassah education can become a source of conflict between the Shia

\textsuperscript{112} During the Zia regime Sunni inheritance law was implemented, and many Dubandi Ulama were appointed to government positions (Ali, 2008).

\textsuperscript{113} For example, a study conducted by the International Crises Group (2005) revealed that the growth of madrassahs in some areas have a correlation with the emergence of extremist groups and violence. For example, in the Jhang region there are a large number of madrassahs of the Shia and the Duband sects. Every year there are a large number of fights between Islamist groups in the area.
and Sunni sects. Secondly, I wanted to understand how madrassah education can become a source of conflict between the sub-Sunni sects.

As mentioned in the previous chapters, all the madrassahs in Chach are associated with the Sunni sect. Although, there are few Shia madrassahs working in the surrounding areas. It is common knowledge that most of the Sunni madrassahs in Chach have very rigid views about the Shia sects – views which they pass on to their students. An analysis of the teachers’ responses in the Sunni madrassahs revealed their views about the Shia sects. They felt Shia people did not follow the true path of Islam. A Sunni madrassah teacher said:

*Shia people have made many changes in the Islam...they do not believe on all Khulfa-e-Rashidin and their teaching who were the true successors of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUP), and they follow their own Imams and their teaching which are mostly modified. For example, Zakat is a basic pillar of Islam, but they do not believe in it and do it in their own ways. Also it is the same with many other things...Similarly, they recite Azan (call to pray) in different way, they have added other words to the first Kalima (word of testimony)… they have not only modified the teaching of Islam but they have also very much bad views about many Sahaba Karam (The companion of Prophet).* (Interview:T5)

Students in most of the Sunni madrassahs inherit similar views about Shia people – that the Shia Islamic belief is not in accordance with the true teachings of Islam, so Shia people are not true Muslims. A madrassah student explained:

*What the Shia believed in and practice is very much different than the teaching of real Islam. They are only following the teaching of Hazrat Ali (son-in-law of prophet) and his successors….but beside all this...Simply, I will say, how they can be Muslim if they have bad views and even use bad language about the Sahaba (companion*
On the other hand, the perception of teachers and students from Shia madrassahs revealed that they have the same thinking about the beliefs and practices of Sunni madrassahs. According to Shias, Sunni people are not on the right Islamic path, and they reject their beliefs and practices. This research does not allow me to discuss further religious differences between Sunni and Shia. However, responses from both sides showed that the religious differences, disagreement and opposition towards each other have become the main cause of conflicts. For example, discussion on the key question who is a real Muslim is the main issue that keeps this conflict alive. Sometimes, these types of religious conflict reach a very extreme level including physical violence between these two main sects.

Despite the fact that the Sunni sect in Attock District, and specifically in the Chach region, are in the majority and, as mentioned above, they have very rigid views about the Shia, no serious case of violence has been recorded between the sects, according to the information provided by the participants. However, it was also mentioned that, due to the religious opposition to each other, any small arguments between these two sects can start big riots between active groups of Shia and Sunni madrassahs in the area. Furthermore, it was mentioned by key informants that some Ulama having prominent positions on both sides do not want to sit together to discuss and resolve religious issues that may cause problems. In my view, this is because of the authoritative approach of both Sunni and Shia Ulama.
However, in Chach, more incidents of conflict were described among the Sunni madrassahs than between Sunni and Shia. Again, this is due to disagreements of religious belief and practice that always increase the sectarian divide and, consequently, become the main cause of religious conflict between sects. In my view, madrassah education is the main source of violence as well as religious disagreement. Through the books and teachings, students in each madrassah inherit negative and hate-filled views about the other sects. Nayyar and Salim (Nayyar and Salim, 2005) noted the same; they argued that the propaganda in madrassahs against each other has become the reason for the strict sectarian divide and thus increases the violence. However, to explain the religious difference between all Sunni sub-sects, a detailed discussion in a separate study would be needed. To provide an explanation for this study, one example of religious conflict between Brelivi and Dubandi madrassahs is discussed in the following part of this discussion.

In Chach, the Brelvi and Dubandi make up two large groups of madrassahs working in the area. Interview responses revealed that religious conflicts and incidents of violence occur mostly between these two groups. During the interviews, participants cited different religious (ideological) differences on which they disagree and they refute each other’s beliefs and practices. For example, the celebration of *Eid-e-Miladun Nabi*¹¹⁴, the concept of *Hazir-o-Nazir*¹¹⁵, whether the Prophet Muhammad was Noor or Basha¹¹⁶, Sufi ritual and

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¹¹⁴ *Eid-e-Miladun Nabi* is the annual celebration of the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

¹¹⁵ The Brelvi believe that the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) can see the actions of all Ummah everywhere, while he is in the grave. While the Dubandi do not believe that He is present everywhere and can see their actions.

¹¹⁶ The Dubandi believe that the prophet was a human, with the greatest position in mankind, while the Brelvi believe that the Prophet was a divine light
congregations at the graves of Muslim saints are all very common religious issues on which the Dubandi and Brelvi have different views. To understand their differences, basic questions were asked of madrassah participants of both sides. A teacher in a Dubandi madrassah expressed his views about the Brelvi sect saying:

> Basically Dubandi and Brelivi are the follower of (?) Hanafi Fiqh, however, still there are many things for which I am not agreed with Brelivi Ulama. For example they believe that Allah has given the power of administration to Prophet for the matters of this world, but according to Quran and Hadith, Allah is the only who manage and runs each and every thing in this world. Similarly, they do Bidah in many Islamic matters, such as, they worship at the Mizars (graves of Muslim saints) to make them as a source for the acceptance of their Dua’aa. Moreover, they celebrate many yearly, monthly and weekly events that are not proven by Quran and Sunnah Brelivi also celebrate Urs (death anniversary) of many Sufi Saints and perform Qawali (a type of Sufi music), such type of activates are totally Bidah and have no place in Islam. (Interview: T9)

In a similar way, participants from the Brelivi madrassahs criticised the beliefs and practices of Dubandi followers. A senior teacher in a Brelivi madrassah said:

> Dubandi Ulama criticised the Brelivi Maslak wrongly without knowledge. Dubandi themselves do not believe that Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) knows about the unseen knowledge, also Dubandi do not believe on the omnipresence of the Prophet. They

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117 When the Dubandi Ulama use the word Bidah against a Brelivi follower, they are referring to everything which is not proven by the four Imams. For example, making Dua’a (prayer) after Janaaza (the Muslim Funeral Prayer), and reciting Darood (prayer for Prophet Muhammad) before or after Azan (the call to pray).
are also against the celebration of Eid-e-Miladun Nabi. Therefore, in actual they are the Gustakh-e-Rasul (disobedient of the Prophet). They do not believe on the authority, knowledge and Karamat (miracles) of Sufi Saints that has been blessed to them from Allah. In my view, they need to correct themselves. (Interview: T8)

The above responses demonstrate how the madrassahs refute each other’s believes and practices. Although these examples refer to Dubandi and Brelivi differences there is similar conflict between the other sub-Sunni sects. For example a Ahl-e-Hadith Aalim said:

Both Dubandi and Brelivi are the same; they do many Bidah (action that are not allowed in Islam) and do not follow the correct way of Quran and Hadith. (Interview: T18)

All sects write books, organise Munazras (debates), and issue Fatwas against each other, in order to try to prove that the other sects are practicing the wrong creed (Malik, 2008). Responses from community members, and other key informants, revealed that the race to disprove the others’ beliefs has the potential to cause community violence and create uncertainty in society. This study observed that some Ulama have a vested interest in promoting the sectarian divide, because in this way they can secure a prominent position and establish their own authority in their respective sect. Some Ulama are known to be involved in politics, which provoke religious divides and instigate sectarian violence (Zaman, 2002; Khalid, 2008).

As mentioned earlier, students studying in madrassahs learn about the religious differences between the sects, and, as a result, they have inflexible and negative views about people from other madrassahs. Likewise, the general
public - who are inclined towards one specific religious sect - also have biased views against the followers of other religious sects. The socio-religious groups, discussed above, actively defend the particular sect which they are affiliated with or inspired by. Researcher observed that in the Chach region the sectarian divide has created an on-going, religious gap between all sub-Sunni sects (and specifically between the Dubandi and the Brelivi), which effects their social relations and communal life in the village. For example, a very serious incident of religious conflict and community violence occurred during my field work. In one village there were two religious groups, Dubandi and Brelivi. They were involved in conflict on the celebration *Eid-e-Miladun Nabi*. Researcher observed that not only were the students of the mosque and the Imam involved, but the community elders from *both sides* participated. The Brelivi group, which was in the majority, organised *the event* but both groups fought with each other, opened fire, and killed three individuals from one group and one from the other. Some informants told me this kind of thing had happened before between different religious groups.

This study argues that it is not possible to eliminate the religious differences between the different sects, however, the Ulama – and other people affiliated with the sects - need to learn how to live together, despite their ideological and religious divides. They also need to realise that there are many pressing and persistent issues which need to be addressed, for example, limited education, poverty, poor health, and damage to the environment. It is more important to focus on these issues than continue to debate religious differences and keep fighting – with no positive outcome. This study also argues that the only way to resolve the Sunni-Shia and the intra-Sunni disagreements is for everyone to engage in peaceful dialogue. This is only possible if the Ulama, and other
religious scholars, from all sects participate, as a matter of urgency. However, unfortunately, no coherent effort is being made to promote dialog between all the religious sects and they are still not being encouraged to live in peace and harmony.

6.4 Conclusion

The analysis in this chapter aimed to highlight the impact of a traditional madrassah education on students and their communities. This study was conducted in the Chach region of Pakistan, where there are many madrassahs - affiliated with different Islamic schools of thought and sects. They provide a full Aalim/Aalima course of religious education. The findings, based on the information collected from numerous participants, revealed the varying impact of a madrassah education on individuals and communities. Findings showed that people from diverse socio-economic backgrounds and religious beliefs have different views and expectations about the outcome of a madrassah education.

The findings, which emerged in this analysis, reinforce the arguments posited in existing work on alternative approaches to education and development (as discussed in chapter two). However, this study mainly focused on madrassah education from a human development perspective. Therefore, the framework discussed by Unterhalter and Brighouse (2007) - concerning the acquisition of education in different settings - and Vaughan’s (2007) conceptualisation of educational gains in different circumstances provided the foundation for critical discussion of my study. In essence, this study was able to apply education and
human development literature to an examination of madrassah education in Pakistan.

Drawing on Unterhalter and Brighouse (2007), the impact on the individual of a madrassah education can be discussed from three different perspectives – the instrumental value of education, the intrinsic value of education, and the positional value of education. Conception of these three fields provides a preliminary understanding of education.

Firstly, discuss is on the instrumental aspects of madrassah education, as revealed in my findings. With regard to the Dars-e-Nizami curriculum, findings reveal that madrassah graduates do not have the right skills to succeed in the wider jobs market. In only providing religious subjects the traditional curriculum of the madrassahs in Chach do not satisfy the instrumental aims of an educational institution. Reflecting on the basic enabling conditions which underpin an education (as discussed in chapter two) my findings reveal that madrassahs graduates lack knowledge of science and technology, a learning disposition (to enquire), and practical reasoning (critical thinking). The madrassah graduate respondents told me they had no or fewer (than their formal education counterparts) opportunities to secure a reasonable job in the mainstream labour market. This situation had a direct impact on the economic success of madrassah graduates. This study argues that, an absence of such basic enabling conditions in the madrassah education system disadvantages its graduates, preventing them from to achieving well-being and financial autonomy (Vaughan, 2007). Moreover, this study argues that this type of limitation, in the madrassah education system, prevents the accumulation of the skilled human resources required by the community (at village or regional level) - such as new
agricultural technologies. This type of madrassah education may also have a direct or indirect effect on the economic growth of the country.

Interestingly, findings also revealed that some respondents had no interest in economic gain but only the religious rewards a madrassah education could bring them. Bano (2012) called these types of people rational believers, who prioritised the non-material benefits of a madrassah education. A group of participants said that being an Aalim meant they could maximise religious rewards in both their present lives, as well as in their lives hereafter. Respondents believed that through a madrassah education rational believers could also experience enhanced well-being at an individual level. This type of well-being can be described as ideal well-being (Bano, 2012). However, this study would question whether this type of well-being is helpful for the enhancement of further capabilities, which are necessary for a good life.

Findings clearly demonstrate that a madrassah education can offer an some instrumental impact for women who are living a constrained rural life. However, despite this, one might ask whether female madrassah education arises as the result of adaptive preferences, which ignore other options for girls to study, for example, formal education. Based on evidence from the field trip this study argues that, in the given circumstances of Chach, a madrassah education is a positive - if not an ideal - choice for girls.

Secondly, it is also important to look at the intrinsic aspects of a madrassah education. By using the word intrinsic This study refers to the different (non-material) impacts of a madrassah education - which are not purely instrumental. However, these impacts may offer value gain for madrassah graduates. The
findings in this chapter highlight the different types of intrinsic impacts of a madrassah education – while recognising that these types of impacts might be invisible, or have less value, for those who have no specific interest in a madrassah education.

Interview respondents said that religious satisfaction was a common intrinsic impact of madrassah education - which enhances the well-being and freedom of graduates. In general, the benefits of madrassah education are of a very small and personal nature, which is not measurable. However, this study argues that these type of impacts interplay with other facets of people’s lives. For example, it was noted that madrassah education offers different benefits\(^\text{118}\) (religious and social) which empower marginalised people, specifically women, who live in remote rural areas having a poor socio-economic structure and who face various socio-cultural barriers. Another such example commonly found in the interviews was about income scarifies. People believe that a madrassah education is an investment to achieve the will of God as well as some other worldly (mostly social) benefits to accomplish the type of life they want to live. Therefore, interviews with different participants and observations of their daily activities suggest that the convictions of people about the payback of a madrassah education are a complex set of (non-material) rewards they want to achieve for good lives. This study, therefore, argues that these types of reward are different compared to the returns they can achieve from a formal education, but significant to those who value them. Within a specific socio-economic and

\(^{118}\) These incentives include not only religious satisfaction and inspirations. Madrassah education provides some psychological benefits, such as providing ways to deal with practical issues of daily life which have no solution through material means. For example, confidence building to live in social hierarchies also empowers women to deal with their social and cultural problems. Good character building through madrassah education is also an incentive for madrassah graduates (Bano, 2012).
cultural context, such gains from a madrassah education may have positive impacts on the type of well-being they want to achieve. Therefore, this study also argues that a madrassah education may enhance the well-being and agency freedom of those who otherwise have no options for their education.

In addition, upward social mobility and the respect an Aalim/ Aalima receives in the community, and also enhancement in the social status of women, were among the other intrinsic or non-material impacts found in this analysis which madrassah graduates may start enjoying. Again, these are complex returns on a madrassah education and difficult to quantify. However, they can be considered as basic (or proxy) elements (Bano, 2012), which may help to achieve other valuable aspects of a good life, i.e. agency freedom and well-being. While there are limited direct benefits of a madrassah education for an advantageous life, intrinsic gains intersect with important aspects of life which are concerned with the agency and well-being freedoms. The findings show that madrassah graduates will have more chances for participation in various activities, and female voices will be heard. In my view, such considerations will help to better understand madrassah education and its impacts in the human development perspective.

Thirdly, the positional aspect of madrassah education is also important for this analysis. This refers to the ways a madrassah education impacts on the position of a person. That is, to what extent a graduate from a madrassah has been more successful than his/her counterparts. After the above discussion on instrumental and intrinsic aspects, it is now clear that the economic benefits of a madrassah education are not as good as a person can achieve through formal education. However, the social gains are better for a madrassah education, thus
the social position of an Aalim/Aalima. For example, interviewees clearly articulated that a madrassah education helps a person to escape from a low social class to some social position with more respect. This supports the existing work done by Alkire (2002), who argued that there are some non-economic effects of a literacy programme which are beneficial for capability enhancement amongst poor people.

On the other hand, this chapter also explored the impacts of madrassah education at the community level. The findings revealed that madrassah education also has significant impacts at the community level. For example, the roles of Ulama in communities and the emergence of socio-religious groups is an important impact of madrassah education at the community level. The findings clearly demonstrated that these groups are engaged in collective welfare actions but, on the other hand, can also create conflict. Specifically, it was noticed that inspirations (for religious rewards) attained through madrassah education play a vital role in mobilising people to build socio-religious networks for collective actions and to engage in welfare work at the community level. Findings provide evidence of such welfare activities by religiously inspired people. This means that madrassah education contributes to the formation of informal institutions for development work (Bano, 2012). This study argues that these types of networks may increase the (collective) agency freedom of those who live in remote rural areas and have been largely marginalised. For example, civic and political participation may enhance their different activities and capabilities (Sen, 1999). However, at the same time, sectarian divides and conflict between different madrassahs will leave negative impacts on the attitudes and capabilities of people, and that may be crucial to the achievement or not of the desired well-being.
To conclude, at the heart of this discussion are three intersecting fields that provide significant reflections on the different dimensions of madrassah education, that is, how it impacts the instrumental, intrinsic and positional aspects of individuals. Those who traditionally look to madrassah education for its income generation potential might not agree with this study. However, this analysis takes account of the differing perceptions (and also preferences) of people about the types of things they value. Therefore, this analysis is situated in the belief that the impacts of a madrassah education are different for different people. For those who come to madrassah education due to structural factors and not of their own choice, it may become a barrier for them to achieve the vital aspects of agency and well-being freedom – the type of life they want to live. For other people who only want religious education or those living a constrained life, a madrassah education helps them to achieve the attitudes and capabilities they value for their desired life. This study therefore argues that, whether we accept it or not, madrassah education is part of reality for many people in rural regions and we need to take account of its different aspects.
Chapter Seven

Summary and conclusions

7.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to understand madrassah education and its impacts in the Chach (Attock) region of Pakistan. The underlying motivation for this investigation was to explore traditional madrassah education and study its impacts, with regard to contemporary development debates. The general perception is that these institutions work for the preservation of Islamic beliefs, values and traditions. They are also known as institutions which focus on the transmission of traditional Islamic education. In recent years – because of alleged links with militancy and other conflict - madrassah education has been widely debated by researchers and policy makers in Pakistan and at international level. Both critics and supporters have produced a considerable amount of literature on various aspects of madrassahs and their education systems. Specifically, over the last decade or so, madrassah education in Pakistan has been under the spotlight. Despite the challenges, however, there has been a significant increase in the number of madrassahs in Pakistan, and in the number of students enrolling (Riaz, 2008; Ali, 2009; Bano, 2010a). The intention of this study was to explore different aspects of madrassah education. Through a review of literature and empirical evidence researcher collected in the field, researcher was also able to examine the following key questions: What kind of educational institutions are madrassahs? How did madrassahs evolve? How do madrassahs function? Why people prefer a madrassah
education? What is included in the madrassah curriculum? What teaching methods are used? What kind of students do the madrassahs produce? What is the impact of a madrassah education on individuals and their community?

This study attempted to answer these questions through critical engagement - employing qualitative methods - rather examination of quantitative validations embedded in the madrassah education system.

This chapter summarise the preceding chapters and provides a reflection on the theoretical, methodological and empirical components of this thesis. This chapter also aims to revisit the research questions and highlight the contribution made by this study to the relevant literature stable. In conclusion, this chapter provides insight into the practical implications of this research and discuss further area for research, and identifies areas for further research.

7.2 A summing up: theoretical and methodological reflections

Earlier in this thesis, in chapter two, researcher explored various concepts, applicable to this study, in the existing literature. The aim of this review was to establish an appropriate theoretical framework that could underpin the madrassah education phenomenon - within the education and development discourse. This study wanted to conceptualise madrassah education by providing an understanding of how they evolved and what their education system entailed. A discussion of Islamic education highlighted how it is based on revealed knowledge – revealed by The Quran and Hadith - which is different from secular knowledge and education. This chapter also presented an overview of the philosophical considerations of Islamic education, providing an understanding of the aims and objectives underpinning the madrassah (Islamic)
education system. This discussion highlighted three overlapping concepts of Islamic education – *Talim, Tarbiy,* and *Tadib.* Discussion of these three terms revealed that Islamic education emphasises the acquisition of sacred knowledge for individuals, and for the development of society. Acquisition of knowledge - from the perspective of Islamic philosophy - must be integrated with *divine* knowledge, and no aspect of individual or collective life should remained untouched by religion. This discussion also revealed that the overall aim of Islamic (madrassah) education is to achieve the will of God, and to secure a successful life in this world and the life hereafter. Discussion about the *Islamisation of education* demonstrated the argument, posited by Muslim philosophers, that there are many inadequacies in secular education systems, which are simply a product of Western ideas, and which do not reflect Islamic aims. Moreover, this chapter also reviewed the work of critics of Islamic education, who claim that the theory of Islamic education is seriously flawed. Secular writers have identified the *serious consequences* of Islamic education. For example, they claim it promotes indoctrination, and creates a barrier to critical thinking and personal autonomy (Halstead, 2004b). However, reviewing the critical accounts, of both scholars who defend and those who criticise madrassah education, has helped to identify different issues and the research vacuum within which to locate my study into madrassah education and its impact.

Moreover, chapter two also contextualised madrassah education in different developing countries - which helped aid an understanding of the characteristics and diversity of madrassah education in different contexts. The existing literature showed that provision of madrassah education is context-specific. For
example, madrassahs in Indonesia can demonstrate the impact of successful
reform and a balanced Islamic education – which benefits individuals and
society at large. In addition, the discussion on madrassah education – and its
contemporary issues and challenges – clarifies its implications for socio-
economic development.

This led this study to review alternative theories of education and development
and to look more critically at different aspects of madrassah education, in order
to situate it within the development discourse. Broadly, two education and
development approaches were identified: the human capital approach and the
capability approach. This review helped to develop a conceptual framework to
understand different dimensions of education and development. Central to this
theoretical discussion was the education and (human development) capability
approach - which provided a useful analytical premise to answer different
questions related to madrassah education. This theoretical framework
highlighted how people have different resources, needs and preferences for
education, and it also enabled the explanation that people have different
expectations of the outcome of education – in relation to the kind of life they
value.

In chapter three demonstrated that the study was explanatory in nature, and
that it adopted a social constructionist standpoint. Focusing on madrassah
education as a social phenomenon, a qualitative case study strategy was
employed. This methodological approach enabled an examination of
madrassah education, embedded in a specific socio-economic, religious and
cultural context. It also helped facilitate holistic analysis of madrassah
education, for example, a study of participants’ views about why they preferred
Chapter Seven

a madrassah education, and what they expected its impact to be on their lives. The selection of participants from different madrassahs in the Chach region, in a single case study, provided the opportunity to empirically identify the realities of traditional madrassah education - which is embedded in religious beliefs, diverse economic situations, and socio-cultural values. Researcher spent more than six months in the field gathering the required information, by employing ethnographic methods - that is, in-depth interviews, informal observation, and documents reviews. Data was collected from different participants. This helped to gather rich information from madrassah teachers, students, parents, and other key informants in the community. In the analysis process, data were carefully simplified and interpreted, also issues of validity and reliability were considered. Throughout this study, significant attention has been paid to ethical issues, especially informed consent, and every effort was made to maintain anonymity and the confidentiality of participants and data. A strenuous effort was made to avoid harming participants or researcher himself.

The aim of Chapter four was to provide an understanding of madrassah education in Pakistan. It identified Pakistan as less-developed country, facing many challenges of low socio-economic progress and weak political and democratic structures. Exploration of appropriate literature revealed the historical background of madrassah education in the Arab world and, especially, in South Asia. After independence in 1947, many madrassahs moved to Pakistan and start working very rapidly. Despite this, it became clear that from the start madrassahs were ignored and often politicised by different regimes in Pakistan. The madrassah education system in Pakistan is based on traditional practice, which contrasts with Islamic education in other developing countries,
such as Indonesia. The literature revealed that madrassahs in Pakistan are largely private initiatives (voluntary organisations), aiming to transmit Islamic knowledge and to preserve Islamic teaching and values. Because they are run and organised by the Ulama, with the help of local community, they are embedded in local religious practice, social norms and cultural values. This study also discussed the sectarian divide between madrassahs, which aided an understanding of the diversity of madrassah education in Pakistan. Different religious and sect practices make madrassah education a more complex operation. The literature also showed that, unfortunately, there is no cooperation between the different madrassah sects, and also there is continuous conflict between the state and madrassahs about educational reform. However, the number of both male and female madrassahs has grown significantly in Pakistan (Riaz, 2008; Ali, 2009). This literature review also revealed that while the recent debate about madrassah links with militancy and conflict has intensified, madrassahs have become more active in the voluntary sector. The discussion highlighted criticism about the inadequacies of a madrassah education - which may be valid - but also identified that the contemporary, religious and social, roles of madrassahs have been largely ignored by researchers and policy makers.

**Chapter five and six** examine different aspects of madrassah education in the Chach region, which helps to address the main research questions. The following section provides conclusions of my findings, and revisits the research questions.

**7.3 Conclusion of empirical findings and re-visiting research questions**

The analysis of this study was focused on two main research questions:
Why do people prefer a madrassah education, and what type of factors shape their preference?

What are the socio-economic impacts of a madrassah education on individuals and at community level?

These questions were answered using a qualitative analysis approach. The followings section provides the conclusion of study findings.

7.3.1 Factors shaping preferences for madrassah education

Chapter five addressed the first research question, Why do people prefer a madrassah education and what types of factors shape their preference? A preliminary analysis revealed that Chach is a remote rural area of Pakistan, where livelihoods are largely dependent on agriculture, and the majority of people have a low economic profile. Communal life is bounded by socio-cultural values and most people are religiously inclined (Islamic). Public education is available from primary to degree level, both for males and females. Madrassah education is also available for boys and girls. Informants revealed that the trend of female madrassah education in Chach region has been rapidly increasing.

The data collected from the field provided the necessary information to answer the above mentioned research question. Analysis of the views of various participants revealed information about the different factors that influence preference for a madrassah education. Analysis also showed how different people, in different situations, valued a madrassah education differently - demonstrating the complex nature of preferences and decisions, with regard to education.
The low income of a household is a strong factor for choosing a madrassah education. The findings showed that parents who cannot afford a formal education usually send their children to a madrassah – either from the start of their schooling or later, after they have attended a formal school for some years. Some parents on low incomes send their children, at least one son, to madrassah because of the opportunity to do part-time work while studying. This will help the family’s financial situation, and may mean siblings can go to school. The findings revealed that girls from low or middle-income families are more likely to go to madrassah than formal school – because the education there is free. Parents can then invest in a formal school education for their son(s), which will realise some return for the family.

The study showed that family background and the parents’ religious affiliation are other factors that influence the preference for a madrassah education. For example, some religious families prefer to send their children to madrassah, regardless of their financial position or social status, and whether they can afford a formal education or not. They have a specific view of the value of a madrassah education, believing it will protect their religious identity and the future life of the child. These parents most valued the religious and social benefits of a madrassah education.

Parents’ educational background was evidently another factor that influenced a preference for madrassah education. Parents with a low educational background tended to choose different educations for their sons and daughters – there was a gender bias. Female madrassah students said that a rich father (who could afford a formal education for his children), with a low educational background, would prefer a madrassah education for his daughter and a formal
education for his son. However, it was noted that parents with some formal (secular) education send their children to school.

The findings revealed that the different perceptions expectations of parents in relation to madrassahs education were also a common factor that shaped their preference for a madrassah education. For example, some parents could afford a formal education but sent their children to madrassah because they thought they would learn to respect their parents and become good practicing Muslims. They were also conscious of the religious rewards of a madrassah education. On the hand, some parents said that their reason for opting for a madrassah education had more to do with the modernisation of formal schools and colleges – which they felt would have a negative impact on their child. So, they, especially, sent daughters to madrassah. Other parents thought a girl educated in a madrassah would receive more good marriage proposals.

In addition to the above, cultural factors impacted on the choice of a madrassah education. The findings confirmed, for example, that cultural barriers to girls studying and working outside the home encouraged parents to send their daughters to madrassahs. Within the prevailing cultural constraints girls had no option, if they wanted an education, than to go to madrassah.

The study revealed some interesting factors about madrassah students. Some (male and female) said they attended madrassah because they wanted to pursue personal religious goals, and also because they were inspired by other students to attend – this was irrespective of family background, parental preference and socio-cultural factors.
Overall, the findings revealed interesting facts about the reasons for preferences for a madrassah education – and explain why there a demand for this service. This study argues that even if public (formal) education is available (and affordable) some people prefer a madrassah education. However, demand for a madrassah education may reduce if public education becomes more affordable for poor.

To summarise, the study findings can be divided in three sections. Firstly, it became evident that people have different constraints on their lives, and sometimes a child (especially a girl) will be sent to madrassah when there is no other option to obtain an education. Secondly, there are some people who could choose a formal education but instead opt for madrassah, often for religious reasons. And, thirdly, there are people who only want a madrassah education - whether they have an option or not.

It is important to view these findings through the lens of the theoretical framework discussed in chapter two. Drawing on Vaunghan (2007), this study argues that different factors emerged which constrained children from participating in a formal education. Hence, these constraints impact on educational function – that is, they push beyond reach what could have been achieved through a formal education. This thesis argues that this type of deprivation – that is the removal of the formal education option and the provision of only religious education - may affect a child’s future capability and autonomous socio-economic life (Unterhalter, 2007). This study also argues that if people value a madrassah education for their present and future lives (from a spiritual perspective) they must have the freedom to pursue what may be helpful to them (Sen, 1999). However, the question arises that they may lack
the skills necessary to attain their goals, which are only available through a formal education. This study also argues that, although there might be weaknesses in, and disadvantages to, a madrassah, it does present an opportunity for those living constrained lives to obtain an education.

7.3.2 The impacts of a madrassah education

Chapter six analysed data, in order to address the second research question: What are the socio-economic impacts of madrassah education on individuals and at community level? The analysis considered information from students, teachers, parents, madrassah graduates, and key informants. A preliminary analysis of madrassah in Chach revealed traditional Islamic education is taught by rote learning methods. No science subjects are included in the madrassah curriculum.

The study focus was to determine the impacts of a madrassah on individuals and at community level. The findings showed that people from various socio-economic and religious backgrounds have different expectations of the outcome of a madrassah education. For individuals, the findings revealed that the traditional curriculum (consisting of using old books) and teaching methods had serious consequences for madrassah students, who failed to acquire the skills necessary to get employment in the mainstream job market. The evidence suggests that this has a direct impact on the economic position of madrassah graduates. On the basis of these findings, this study argues that, in the absence of modern knowledge and suitable teaching methods in the madrassah education system, students are disadvantaged – and this affects their future autonomous economic life (Teri, 2007). This study also argues that the
limitations of the madrassah education system have an impact on the accumulation of the skilled human resources required by the community.

However, the findings also revealed that some people do not especially value the economic return of a madrassah education but rather the religious rewards they can attain through it. But, this study argues that the low economic position of these people, as a result of a madrassah education, may affect their further capabilities – such as health –, which are necessary for a good life (Sen, 1999).

At the individual level, the findings also highlighted some social or non-material impacts of a madrassah education. For example, an Aalim / Aalim can achieve good upward social mobility and social standing in their family and their community. The natures of the returns of a madrassah education are multifaceted, and it is difficult to measure them subjectively. However, this study argues that these types of rewards are different, when compared to the social returns one can get from a formal education. However, these social returns of madrassah education may be significant for those living in remote rural areas who face many socio-cultural constraints. It is clear that a madrassah education can enhance a woman’s agency in this situation.

Based on these findings, this study concludes that, due to the religious nature of the curriculum, the economic outcome of a madrassah education is not as good as that of a formal education. However, the social impacts of a madrassah education can be better. Moreover, this study argues that within the given economic, socio-cultural and religious circumstances of Chach – and despite its shortcomings – a madrassah education is a favourable option for girls.
The second part of this analysis explored the overall impacts of a madrassah education at community level. The findings showed that a madrassah also imparts its teachings to the community, through mosques and the Ulama (the madrassah’s graduates) – who educate people on different issues, such as women’s rights. Moreover, the findings showed that madrasah education becomes (and other community members) a reason for the formation of socio-religious groups in the community. The evidences demonstrated that these networks are effective in different community development activities. This study argues that these groups may, especially, help those who live in remote rural areas and who have been marginalised - for example, social and political participation may enhance their agency, and lead to different functioning and capability options (Sen, 1999). However, the findings also revealed that a madrassah education can promote the sectarian divide between religious sects and cause community conflict and violence.

7.4 The contributions of the study

Despite the current increasing focus on madrassahs, there remains a need to understand madrassah education and its context - at the theoretical and empirical levels. Therefore, this study can be seen as a step forward in the current debates about madrassah education. Moreover, so far as Pakistan is concerned, studies focusing on madrassahs - from the human development perspective - are rare. This study represents an initiative examination of madrassah education, which addresses different issues underpinning the education and development discourse. Consequently, this study has made a valuable contribution to the existing development studies literature. The findings have revealed, and explained, different aspects of madrassah education - which
could help improve the system and, equally importantly, assist researchers in the field of development studies. The contribution of the study is, therefore, three-fold: theoretical, methodological and practical.

In terms of my theoretical contribution, the aim of this study was not to introduce a new theory but to develop a theoretical framework from the existing theories and literature. By conducting a critical literature review this study has clarified a knowledge gap and provided a clear picture of madrassah education, both in general and in the context of Pakistan. Recently, much have been discussed - and written - about madrassahs, however there has been a gap in the understanding of the context within which madrassah education is provided in Pakistan. By providing a detailed discussion on the conceptualisation of Islamic education, and its philosophical viewpoint, this study has clarified that the aim and objectives of madrassah education are different from those of formal education. Also, a discussion on the contextualisation of madrassah education has provided an understanding of how it is different in changing socio-economic, religious and cultural environments. The discussion on alternative theories of formal education also provides the foundation for an examination of the various aspects of madrassah education, which have not been examined by previous studies. All these points should be considered when conducting related research in the future.

Furthermore, the empirical findings of this study have also contributed to an increased understanding of the several important issues related to madrassah education. For example, the study findings reveal the various factors that are involved in shaping preferences for a madrassah education, like religious beliefs and the personal interests of parents and individuals. These need to be taken
into account when reform of the madrassah education programme is planned. This study explores the impacts of a madrassah education in a rural area, and the findings reveal some important information - for example, about the social impacts of a madrassah education on individuals and their communities, which have been largely ignored by previous studies. The study also reveals information about the impacts of a madrassah education, which can inform various theoretical debates within the broader spectrum of the education and development discourse. For example, the findings respond to one of the following approaches: the education and human development approach; the education and capability approach; and the education and human capital approach.

The study has also made a methodological contribution. It has utilised a qualitative case study, instead of the quantitative (statistical) method previous research has often used to determine the economic aspects of religious education (Asadullah and Chaudhury, 2010). The qualitative data, which emerged from this study, provided in-depth knowledge and information about madrassah education. Adopting a qualitative research strategy helped to capture detailed information directly from participants. The selection of the Chach region for field work marks another methodological contribution, in that I was able to examine traditional madrassah education in a rural area. By selecting participants from different madrassahs, and various backgrounds - and employing a qualitative approach - the study findings demonstrate that these methods are effective for answering research questions about madrassah education.

The practical contribution of this study is discussed in the following section.
7.5 Rethinking madrassah education: practical implications of study

This study is of practical importance in three ways: firstly, to enable the Ulama and madrassah authorities to take the action necessary to improve madrassah education. The study findings provide a clear understanding of madrassah education, which government and practitioners at the national and international level can utilise for any project related to madrassah education. This work will also be helpful for further academic research related to madrassah education.

This study has important implications for the Pakistani government, as the findings demonstrate that madrassah education is embedded in socio-cultural values and religious practice. Therefore, there is a need to pay sufficient attention to the development of madrassahs and their education systems. The findings suggest that, for any future reform programme, the government needs involve madrassah stakeholders (students, teachers and parents), in order to properly understand their views on any proposed change to the madrassah education system. The findings also suggest that government needs to recognise the potential of madrassahs in the field of education provision. For poor children - especially girls - in remote and rural areas, a madrassah education can play an important role.

This study also has some practical implications for madrassahs too. It revealed that the vision of a madrassah education is totally different from that of a modern formal education system. This suggests that the madrassah authorities need to change their traditional attitudes and recognise the important of some formal education in today’s globalised world. This study also suggests that the Ulama must introduce some science - which will be beneficial for the future of madrassah students. In this regards, The Ulama in Pakistan can utilise the
model of the Indonesian Islamic education system. Moreover, the madrassahs need to change (improve) their resources and teaching methods, which will help enhance student learning and critical thinking. Moreover, cooperation between the different madrassah sects would not only improve the education system – and eliminate misunderstanding - but it would also increase everyone’s tolerance of each other. This study suggests that if more madrassahs participated in research about madrassahs this would provide more empirical information and understanding of how they operate - which would, inevitably, help improve the education system itself. But without the commitment of the Ulama, and their willingness to make changes, madrassah education will remain the same.

This study also has implications for national and international development research institutions and researchers. The study suggests that, like other educational institutions, madrassahs also need the support of development research institutions – and research conducted into the different dimensions of madrassah education and its implications in the contemporary environment. However, this study suggests that while focusing on madrassah education today it is also very important to consider historical, religious, and socio-cultural context of these institutions.

7.6 Areas for further research

Although there have been other studies on madrassah education, few of them have focused on understanding madrassah education and its impact - especially in terms of socio-economic outcome. Therefore, this was the first study to explore the preferences for a madrassah education, as well as its socio-economic impact, in the Chach region of Pakistan. However, the study
was not without its limitations. There were several methodological and contextual issues. Bearing these, and my findings in mind, I can suggest some areas for future research. They are:

- A similar study could be conducted with a different sample, and also utilising different methods - which may offer an understanding of other reasons for choosing a madrassah education. Such a study might also offer more insight into the impact of madrassah education.

- A study could also be conducted to compare madrassah education in rural areas with urban madrassahs in Pakistan. This could provide better understanding of madrassah education in these two different contexts. Similarly, a study could be done which compares formal school education and madrassah education.

- A study could be conducted which provides inter-country analysis of madrassah education - for example, comparing madrassah education in Pakistan with madrassahs in other developing countries, or in the Islamic context – and in relation to development challenges - such as in South Asia or Sub-Saharan Africa.

- A study could be conducted into female madrassahs, in order to understand the increasing demand for female madrassah education, and its impact in rural and urban areas.
References


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References


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References


## Appendices

### Glossary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aalim</td>
<td>Male Islamic scholar singular of ‘Ulama’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aalima</td>
<td>Female Islamic scholar singular of ‘Aalymat’</td>
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<tr>
<td>Azan</td>
<td>Call to prayer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Biraderi</td>
<td>Network of families, similar as tribe</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deen</td>
<td>Islamic religion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eid</td>
<td>Muslim’s annual festival</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiqah</td>
<td>A technical term for the science of Islamic jurisprudence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fatwa</td>
<td>Verdict based on Islamic legal schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hadith</td>
<td>Sayings of Prophet Muhammad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hadya</td>
<td>Anything as a gift</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hifz</td>
<td>Memorising the holy Quran</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ikhlaq</td>
<td>Good manners and ethical values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imam</td>
<td>Prayers leader in mosque, community leader</td>
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<tr>
<td>Janaaza</td>
<td>Muslim funeral prayer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jihad</td>
<td>An armed struggle against non-believer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khatib</td>
<td>Similar position as of ‘Imam’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khatam</td>
<td>Quran recitation gathering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kammi</td>
<td>People belongs to low castes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Madrassah</td>
<td>Institute for higher Islamic education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madrassah</td>
<td>Islamic educational institute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maslak</td>
<td>Particular interpretative aspect of Islamic doctrine</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mizar</td>
<td>Graves of Muslim saints</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Munazra</td>
<td>Debates between Islamic scholar</td>
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<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Definition</td>
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<td>-------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mufti</td>
<td>Islamic jurist qualified to issue fatwas</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pir</td>
<td>A Sufi master</td>
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<tr>
<td>Qawali</td>
<td>A Sufi music</td>
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<tr>
<td>Qoum</td>
<td>Tribe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rishta</td>
<td>Marriage proposal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Roshan mizaji</td>
<td>Modernisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sadqah</td>
<td>Religious donations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ulama</td>
<td>Plural of Aalim, Islamic scholars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urs’</td>
<td>Death anniversary of a Muslim saint</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U’rs</td>
<td>Remembrance and celebration of anniversaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wa’az</td>
<td>Speech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wafaq</td>
<td>Central madrassah board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wazifa</td>
<td>Stipend</td>
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<tr>
<td>Zaat</td>
<td>Caste</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zakat</td>
<td>Islamic tax—an eligible Muslim pay annually</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Interview Questions

The followings are some common questions that were asked to different study participants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Male Madrassah Teacher | • Please tell about yourself and about the madrassah?  
• Why people send their children to madrassah for education attainment?  
• What is the curriculum of this madrassahs and how do you teach?  
• In your opinion, are there any changes required in madrassah curriculum? If yes, what type of changes you want to bring in curriculum for Aalim course? If no, why?  
• In your opinion, is current curriculum helpful for students in the current time?  
• What is your opinion to add science subject in madrassah education?  
• What are the job prospects for madrassah graduates?  
• What is the role of madrassah a graduate in the community?  
• What do you think about other sects of madrassah and their teaching s?  
• In your opinion, what are the advantages or disadvantages of madrassah education?  
• What do you think about the impacts of madrassahs education at the community level?  
• What is the role of Ulama in the community? |
| Female Madrassah Teacher | • What is the curriculum of madrassah? How it is different from male madrassahs?  
• Is there any change needed in the existing curriculum for female?  
• What is your opinion to add science subject in the madrassah education?  
• What do you think, why girls come or parent send them to madrassah, while school and college are available?  
• In your opinion, what are the weaknesses and strengths of female madrassahs?  
• What are the job opportunities for female madrassah graduates?  
• Is the role of Aalima is the same as Aalim?  
• How do you compare a girl graduated from madrassah with a girl graduated from college or university?  
• Is there any role of Aalima in the community  
• Do this madrassah provide any training to students, for example, cooking? Sewing?  
• What are the extra curricula activities of madrassah? |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Madrassah Student | • Please tell about yourself and your family background?  
|         | • Was this your own choice or your parents send you to madrassah? Is any other your brother or sister studying in madrassah?  
|         | • How many of your brothers and sisters studying in madrassah?  
|         | • Have you attended any school or you directly come to madrassah?  
|         | • What type of books you study in madrassah? And how?  
|         | • What are the other extra curricula activities in madrassah?  
|         | • What are you expecting/possibilities for your job after finishing madrassah?  
|         | • If you have a chance to study in school, would you like to study in school?  
|         | • How do you compare yourself with students in school?  
|         | • In your opinion, what type of changes could benefit madrassah students? |
| Parents | • Please tell about yourself and your family background  
|         | • What do you so for income generation?  
|         | • What is your religious affiliation?  
|         | • What was the reason you send your children to madrassah?  
|         | • How many your children studying in madrassah?  
|         | • How do you value madrassah education for the future of your children?  
|         | • How do you compare madrassah education with school education?  
|         | • If there is free school education, providing books, uniform and food, will you send your children to school?  
|         | • What type of changes you suggest for madrassah education?  
|         | • What are the advantages or disadvantages of madrassah education?  
<p>|         | • What do you think about female education and its importance? |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key informants</th>
<th>What do you think about the role of madrassah education in the community?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What is the role of Ulama in the community?</td>
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<td>How different sect of madrassah / and people interact with each other?</td>
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<td>What do you think, why people send their children to madrassahs?</td>
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<td>Would you like to send your child to madrassah for education, if not, why?</td>
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<td>In your opinion, what types of changes needed in madrassah education system?</td>
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Sample extract from interview transcripts in Urdu and its translation in English

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Code</th>
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<th>Interview responses in Urdu</th>
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| P2             | Q: Why you chose madrassah education for your children? Restaurant | سوال: آپ نے اپنے بچوں کیلئے مدرسے کی تعلیم کر کے ترجمہ کی دی؟  

“I am Auto Raksha driver, and I work on daily wages. I earn about Rs 200-250 daily but our household expenses are more than that. I do not want my wife to work. So my income is the only source for our family. Me and my wife wish to send our children to school but we cannot afford it...[he speaks about himself] I know there is no fee in the primary school, but still we need to provide uniform and other stuff, which are not affordable for me. So, we have decided to send our children to the local madrassah, where there are no such things to pay. I know they provide only Islamic education and no science subjects...but something is better than nothing” |
Q: What do you think that what are the advantages of madrassah education for your daughter?

"My daughter has not completed her Aalima course yet, but we have received many proposals for her from different families. Not only our own extended family but well-established families from outside too approach us from different channels. Normally Pathan never get marry with a girl from a cast like ours, but surprisingly, some of them too send proposal for her. Being a mother I am happy for such interest for my daughter, as in recent times, many parents are worried to find good Rishta (marriage proposal) for their daughters in a good family, even many girls have bachelor degree but did not find good proposal and crossing age limit for marriage."
Q: In your opinion what is the role of madrassahs in community?

“First of all, at the grassroots level the rural population gives more respect and authority to Ulama than a political leader in the same village. This is the main reason people follow them. So, Ulama are able to quickly mobilise people for any social and humanitarian cause, it because of their religious followings. People think if this call is by an Aalim then there must be something good in it. Secondly, people donate to madrassahs and mosques with confidence, because they believe that Ulama will honestly use their donations for good cause. Therefore, they eagerly support any initiative by madrassahs and Ulama. While, in the perceptions of rural people secular NGOs do lot of corruptions and often associated with nepotism.”
## Interview Codes

<table>
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<td>T</td>
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<td>FMT</td>
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