ISLAMIC INSIGHT

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The views expressed by the authors in their articles, reviews, etc., in this issue are their own.

Scope and focus of *Islamic Insight*

Islamic Insight Journal of Islamic Studies (*IIJIS*) is an academic journal published twice a year by the Faculty of Islamics and Human Sciences, Darul Huda Islamic University. It is a multi-disciplinary journal devoted for publishing original scholarship of exceptional quality on all aspects of Islam and the Muslim world. It covers, for example but not limited to, textual and field work studies on various aspects of the Noble *Qur'an*, *Hadith*, Islamic Jurisprudence, Islamic Theology, Islamic Mysticism, Philosophy, Comparative Religion, Islamic Social Sciences, and History and Culture of Muslims. The relevant topics from other disciplines also will be welcomed. The papers will be sent for a double blind peer review and accordingly will be published.

Contents

Islamic higher educational institutions in a secular country: South Indian lessons of systemic survival

Jafar Paramboor[*] **and Mohd Burhan Ibrahim**[**]

Abstract: In a continuous global transformation of education, with its differing disciplines, debates and discussions on Islamic education also have been going on; especially on the higher education arena. In India, the largest democratic country in the world, despite having no privilege to any particular religion, and thus being marginally developed, Islamic higher education sector has been giving futuristic lessons of a systemic survival. Thus, concentrating on South Indian models of advancement in the area, this paper intends to outline some of the current observations pertaining to Islamic higher education in Kerala as a case. It would also highlight the concept of a visionary planning of education in the light of Islamic Higher Educational Institutions (IHEIs) in a South Indian context. Acknowledging the limitations of current institutional planning amidst communal and cultural differences in Southern region of the country, implications from this paper would be meant to the future planning and development of IHEIs in a secular country.

Keywords*:* Islamic Higher Education, Secular, Systemic Survival, Educational Planning

Introduction

Much has been discussed about the history and development of Islamic education in India, focusing on different regions. Needless to say, whenever the political, economic and social effects of Indian education have been approached by studies, Islamic education has also been discussed; though with a marginal perspective. It should not

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be forgotten that from a secular context, upon which the constitution of the largest democratic country is built, the term 'Islamic' sometimes is at least misinterpreted, if not misunderstood, as postulated by Douglass and Shaikh (2004). He says:

> Islamic, is attached to a wide range of phenomena. Muslims use the term to refer to what relates to Islamic teachings or institutions, but Muslims and non-Muslims alike frequently use the adjective, Islamic, to elevate cultural expressions to the position of normative or consummate institutions or practices. Poorly nuanced use of the term, Islamic, among public commentators often fails to make any distinction between that which pertains directly to Islam and its doctrines, and actions its adherents perform in the cultural or social realm. Thus, terms used to signify Islam and Muslims lack precision when used by both Muslims and others in public discourse. (2004, p. 5)

In the case of Indian *madaris*, the dominant religious higher educational institutions of the country, a myriad of allegations came against them, among which labelling them as the sources of terrorism after the 9/11 incident was the hottest. And still, accusations are going on in a state that all types of religious educational institutions are under regular observation of intelligence bureau. The post 9/11 history shows certain interesting facts to the students of educational studies that all the allegations raised at the time against the religious institutions were rarely focused on those institutions in Muslim majority countries. Instead, almost all the media turned to the countries with a remarkable population of Muslims, like India, Sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asian countries (Hartung and Reifeld, 2006). Interestingly, this made a number of researchers curious about the history and nature of *dīnī madaris* of Muslim populated countries in the world, including India, Thailand, Malaysia, Germany, etc.

It is a fact that the mid-nineteenth century is one of the focal points of Indian education history. The policies related to education were implemented by British crown as a subsequence for the failure of Indians in their early Independence war, followed by the colonization.The British government of India moved on to structure

the higher education institutions according to the model of University of London. Meanwhile, Indian Muslim leaders started up planning and establishing tertiary level educational institutions in the form of *madrasah*, among which the first were those established in 1866 at Deoband as a conservative seminary, Muslim Anglo-Oriental College founded by Sir Sayyid Ahmad khan in Aligarh in 1875 and *Dārul Ulūm Nadwah* established in 1893 by Allāmah Shiblī Nu mānī. For Sir Sayyid, his main plan of establishing the college was to adopt the Western education system in both content and style with which he dreamt of integrating Muslim minds into a modern perspective. The Deoband *Madrasah* system emphasized on rejecting the English interference in Indian education and revitalizing Islamic traditions. Nu mānī, instead, followed a balancing approach between the earlier two (Qadir, 2012).

However, it should be emphasized that, as pointed out by (Zafarul Islam, 2010), there were thousands of *madaris* in Indian subcontinent long before the British colonization in the region; for instance, in southern regions like Malabar, which is Kerala today, prevalence of *madrasah* has been reported from 7th century, as the Arab traders brought their traditional teaching and learning system to the area. Following that idea many of the Keralite parents urged their children to study under *mulla*, the traditional instructors of religious affairs. Thus, the post-1857 *madaris* revolution was a mark of reorganization and modification of the institutional concepts and plans. In other words, as mentioned earlier, the political situation in India created by the British government after 1857 has significantly contributed to the emergence of a new system of *madrasah* all over India. Then after, the independence of India from British rule "gave a new twist to the state-*madrasah* relationship, as the former was bound by the Constitution of the country to accord Muslims the status of a minority community in the country and to ensure the fulfilment of their rights and duties. It also brought with it a vibrant democratic and political environment"(Nair, 2008; p. 10).

Defining a 'secular India' is redefining secularism

The term 'secular' has different connotations according to the contextual variations, and debates are still going on when it comes to the notion of secularism and secularization as theory, practice and process. The historical development of secularism clearly shows that for the West, where the idea came into existence, it was an entity to separate between church and state. Religion was regarded as conservative while state as an agent and symbol of modernity. That is to say, being secular, by and large, indicated towards being modernized in a Western context; it also meant that to be secular, i.e. modern, religion has to be abandoned by 'the process of unchurching' (Veer, 2011) in a sense.

This has not been the case in India, a place where the pre and post-independence history has remarkably dealt with an idea of 'religious secularism'. In other words, religions have always played a key role in identifying, shaping and developing the Indian society with all means. Also, the political and economical surroundings are always bound to certain religious identities despite the fact that the constitution begins with stating India as a secular democratic country. In her lecture at Jamia Millia Islamia made on 19th of August, 2015, Romila Thapar clarified the idea of being a secular Indian in the following way:

> A secular society and polity does not mean abandoning religion. It does mean that the religious identity of the Indian, whatever it may be, has to give way to the primary secular identity of an Indian citizen. And the state has to guarantee the rights that come with this identity, as the rights of citizenship. This demands that the state provides and protects human rights…Such an identity, while adhering to human rights and social justice, would also be governed by a secular code of laws applicable to all (p. 1).

It is explicit that the Western perception about secularism, thinking religion as sometimes problematic and irrational, is in sharp contrast with the Gandhian conception of secularism. According to Gandhi, the father of a secular Indian nation, people live with a set of beliefs; be it secularism, atheism, or spiritualism, and these beliefs

need to be accommodated in a secular polity. It means that religion can always be an integral part of society, even though they are considered as secular. That is why a redefinition of secularism has taken place in the context of India, connecting religion and state dialectically (Sen *et al.*, 2014). The country became a secular democratic state in a theoretical sense after the insertion of the term into the preamble of the constitution in its 42nd amendment in1976 (Forty Second Amendment Act, 1976, Government of India).

Concerning the meaning and usage of 'secular' as a notion, Chatterjee (1994) has made his arguments underpinning the idea that there is a new meaning for secularism in Indian context being the standard meaning cannot, in any way, be applied in the country due to the dominancy and influence of religions on the social, political and economical growth of this sub-continent. He further articulates that the advocates of Indian secularism had already identified certain difficulties in applying the prevalent meaning of the term in India, and thus were cognizant of the fact that this specific concept with its original meaning is contradictory with the Indian circumstances. In other words, the political elites were not unaware of the original secularism; their focus was on whether the idea, which bears a modernized India, is suitable for India, the cradle of versatile religious identities.

Although the secularist West idealized and wanted to implement secularism in the nation by denial of indigenous religions, disconnecting religious studies from institutions, and abolishing religious scriptures, as it was proposed in the higher education policy by Macaulay (Qadir, 2012), India responded to it by redefining the idea of secularism, introducing an inclusive approach to religions within a secular thought, having no dominance for a particular religion in idea. That is why a proper translation of Indian secularism is in no way to be congruent with Western worldview related to the concept.

Islamic higher education development in south India: emergence of Kerala models
Geographical profile

The present day India has much to show how Islamic educational empowerment in different parts of the country has been taking place since independence. With regards to Kerala, the picture is some more prosperous because of its political, economic, and social diversity engrossed with toleration among communities to a great extent. Kerala is a southern state of India, formed on 1st of November, 1956. The region is spread over 38, 863 km² bordering Karnataka to the north and Northeast, Tamil Nadu to the east and south, and Lakshadweep Sea to the West. According to 2015 calculation, the population of Kerala is 34,040,350, being distributed in fourteen districts. Kerala has been one of the prominent hubs of spice exporting since 3000 BC; Portuguese was attracted to this spice land during 15th century which consequently led to the European invasion of the region. Among all other Indian states, Kerala has the highest literacy rate of 93.91%according to the census held in 2011.

Diversity in knowledge tradition

Among all other states of India, Kerala has different narrative when it comes to the history of Islam and development of Islamic education. This is due to the fact that the north Indian Islam was identified with a *Sufi* tradition, having the religion been introduced and established by the Muslim rulers whose ancestors were rooted in Turkey, while in Kerala, Islam began to expand its roots by the Arab Muslim traders, prior and during the Prophetic era, some of whom preferred settlement over here, the land of versatile spices.

In North Indian case, with the advancement of Sufism from third century A.H., educational movements also started from *Sufi*s chools of thought (Sikand, 2005). The earliest *madrasah* marked in history dates back to late twelfth century at the tenure of Sultan Muhamad Ghori, after he conquered Ajmer in 1191. It was he who established an institution for teaching Islamic disciplines in the present day Rajasthan. Afterwards, other Muslim rulers set up

institutions in different regions as they stretched out their power to various parts of the country; the establishment took place in a way that some of these institutions, such as the *madrasas* of Gujarat, Ucch (Sind), Multan (Panjab), Delhi, Padua and Gaur (Bengal), Bidar, Gulbarga, and Aurangabad (Deccan), were globally known to the Muslim academia (Siknad, 2005). However, the situation changed when the British Empire entered to the land with full power; thereby, *Madrasas* faced severe identity crisis. Religious existence was totally privatized without giving proper acknowledgement in national development. Applications of Muslim laws became a personal affair for Muslims despite the replacement of state-employed *qāḍīs*-juries with British-trained judges. Persian language was taken over by English. And this was a gradual process for the birth of a new type of Islamic education system under British administration. The result was the emergence of intellectual depression among Muslims followed by the question of survival for an established religious identity (Sikand, 2009).

The aftermath of British monitoring of religious institutions and the residual conditions of the revolt in 1857 adversely affected Muslim intellectual tradition in the country, as deep as the scholars started perceiving their education as a way that could possibly lead the Muslim youth to apostasy. They thought that all types of Western knowledge would corrupt the Muslim mind in one way or another being the Christian missionaries were the founding fathers of such an education system. This led the Muslim scholars to establish their own educational institutions, without any patronage from the government side, only to restrain the religious spirit among the generation. Public donations were the only means of finding the expenditure for the institutional community. Meanwhile there was an automatic bifurcation of religious knowledge and secular knowledge which occurred due to the mentioned perception of traditional *ulamā* on English education. This continued for a long time which has resulted negatively on the status of Muslim community, looking from both social and educational perspectives. The present paper would not be suitable to detail it further.

Concerning the Muslims of Kerala, they are being identified as the most educated Muslim community in India. This is because of the fact that despite many of the traditional types of Islamic educational institutions, such as the North Indian *madrasas* exist, a myriad of other modern integrated Islamic institutions have been uplifted by different Islamic religious and political organizations (Jaireth *et al.*, 2008). All of these educational institutions have been contributing significantly to establish the identity of Muslim community in terms of its political, economic, intellectual and educational sphere at various levels. Muslim organizations including *Samastha Kerala Jam iyyatul Ulama*, *Jamaat-e-Islami*, *Tablghi Jamaah*, and *Kerala Nadvatul Mujahideen* run Islamic higher educational institutions, some of which are affiliated to government tertiary level colleges and universities, while others are administered parallel to state education system unrecognized by the government (Jeireth *et al.*, 2008).

One of the unique systems of public Islamic education was and is still referred to as *dars* tradition, which is found nowhere else in India. Scholars from different Muslim countries including Yemen, Egypt, and Hijaz have been reported to have instructed students at various locations of Kerala (Islamic Encyclopaedia, 2005). Some of the oldest *dars'* which are mainly a mosque-centred education system (Jeireth *et al.*, 2008), as students from various parts of the regions come over and stay for a long tenure in order to complete a particular term and attain *ijāzah* from the *mudarris*, include Tanur *Valiya Kulangara Dars,* and Ponnani *Valiya Jumu at Palli*.

Besides the *dars* tradition, as described by al-Hudawi (2013), currently there are three main higher education trends in practice, with which the socio-cultural characters of the community are greatly pointed in the region; these include (1) the *Sharī ah* College tradition, (2) the Arabic College tradition, and (3) the integrated tradition, which can also be called as Islamic university tradition (Jeireth *et al.* 2008), as both Islamic and modern subjects are purposefully

incorporated in order for the students to have a comprehension of classical and modern worldview regarding the present day globe.

As for the first category, the *Sharī ah College*, it was a developed model of the conservative *dars* system led by the traditional *ulamā* of the region, many of whom were graduates of the conventional Indian *madāris* such as *al-Bāqiyāt al-Ṣālihāt, Latīfiyyah Arabic College, Dārul Ulūm Umarabad*. These colleges meant for disseminating knowledge from the classical religious scriptures in various disciplines including *Tafsīr, Hadith,* theology, and Islamic jurisprudence-*Fiqh* (Al-Hudawi, 2013). In addition to these subjects, as Miller (1974) has indicated, *Sharī ah Colleges* also taught a variety of subjects, among which Arabic Semantics and Philology, Arabic Rhetoric, Logic, *Taṣawwuf*, History, Astronomy (*Ilm al-Falak*), and Engineering (*Handasah*) were of first preferences. The development of such colleges was a gradual process of mosque-centred knowledge transformation into institutionalized knowledge dissemination; one of its prime examples is *al-Jāmi ah al-Nūriyyah al- Arabiyyah*, founded in 1962 (Hudawi, 2006), which is also referred as the premier *Sunni* training college in Kerala (Miller, 1974).

The Arabic College tradition also was a by product of the first type of institutions, in which the teachers from traditional scholarly background teach the mentioned Islamic disciplines, while other subjects are tutored by those skilled in each at least to a certain extent. Most, if not all, of such institutions do not require officially qualified teachers, who have passed the state level examination in order to get the teaching certificate, since (1) the payment allotted to all types of teachers in Arabic Colleges with no affiliation to the government sector will be comparatively less and varied depending upon the financial stability of the institutions; and (2) the administrative bodies would be primarily concerned about the staff's individual commitment towards teaching and tutoring their students. The point to be noticed is that all of the students from both the aforementioned categories of institutions do not have the necessary practical skills to acquire a job in government sector unless they have simultaneously

completed any certified degree or diploma level courses, the thing which happens rarely from the students, having no motivation from others.

This is what make the third type of tradition distinguish from others, despite having both classic and modern education been integrated according to the current need of society. In other words, the incorporation of traditional Islamic and secular disciplines facilitates students to cope up with present day terrain, being updated in both fields to a certain extent. It was the dissatisfaction of some visionary scholars towards a separating trend of knowledge and language from the 'living world', which led to visualizing and attuning all types of human knowledge in one institution; that is to say, the institutions which came into existence with such a vision were by and large microcosms of an Islamic university. For instance, *al-Jāmi ah al-Islāmiyyah* was founded as a *madrasah* in 1955 to produce quality graduates who could survive gently coping up with modern stream (Al-Hudawi, 2013). As indicated in the official website, the institution aims at making students aware of serving the Islamic educational tradition, and training scholars, leaders and academicians for the purpose of contributing towards Muslim *ummah* in contemporary India.

Those admitted to JI go through a two-year preparatory (*tamhīdī*) course, and then through degree programs offered in *Uṣūl al-Dīn* and *Sharī ah* which run for four years. After completing the degree courses at JI, students can do a two-year Master's course eith in *Qur'an* Studies or *Hadith* Studies or Islamic Mission (*Da wah*) or a two years Leadership and Orators' course. One of its peculiarities is that it facilitates for researchers to carry out varieties of scientific research and strategic studies with regard to issue related Muslim community in India (al-Hudawi, 2013, p. 6).

Also, their mission and vision statement explicates that the planning made by the institutional authority is a mark of systemic survival in the most plausible ways by enhancing woman educational planning, and backing up potential leaders who can undertake various

leadership responsibilities, especially throughout Kerala. As part of this survival, they are keen to conduct special courses for everyone regardless of gender in order to identify and utilize their skills in Islamic propagation, social activities and administration.

Another example of such tradition, which also has paved the way to the systemic survival of Islamic knowledge and educational convention, is Darul Huda Islamic University (DHIU), previously known as Darul Huda Islamic Academy (DHIA). Turning away from the usual Arabic- *Sharī ah* College systems in India, the planners of this particular institution visualized the production of scholars capable of doing authentic intervention in both religious and secular type of knowledge and sciences. In the following session, DHIU is discussed as a case for interpreting the idea of systemic survival.

Systemic Survival: DHIU as an Example

Arguably, it seems to the present author that the term 'systemic' which relates to an entire system of anything (Systemic, n.d.) is accurate, to a great extent, in the case of DHIU as an exemplary-though with its own limitations and delimitations- initiative with no previous models in the state. It was one type of bold proposal, as assured by Sikand (2009), by the traditional *Sunni ulamā* of Kerala in order to promote reforms in education system. Darul Huda was established in 1986 as part of an expansion in Islamic education movement by the largest *Sunni* organization in the state, *Samastha Kerala Jam iyatul Ulama*. Within a short span of years, as Darul Huda was upgraded into a private university and renamed Darul Huda Islamic University (DHIU) in 2009, with the membership at Federation of the Universities of the Islamic World (FUIW) and The League of Islamic Universities (LIU). Simultaneously, DHIU has been recognized by a bunch of universities abroad such as Al-Azhar University (Egypt), International Islamic University Malaysia (Malaysia),Omdurman University (Sudan), Tripoli University (Libya), Kuwait University (Kuwait), and Ez-Zitouna University (Tunisia), Fatih University (Turkey) and Rotterdam Islamic University (Netherlands), along with Indian universities like Aligarh

Muslim University, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Jamia Millia, Moulana Azad National University, and Hamdard University(DHIU, 2016).

In order to fulfil their mission viewed from different angles, being dynamic and dutiful, holistic and harmonious, integrated, unified, excellent and innovative, and the institutional vision, stated as 'to be the bastion of expertise in Islamic education that they can restore the dynamic role and educational superiority of past Muslim society in all intellectual programs and that seeks to rekindle the spirit of scholarship in Islamic sciences in the era of ever- changing society due to the innovative growth of modern sciences' (DHIU, 2016), DHIU provides a 12 years *Hudawi* program starting from primary, secondary and tertiary to PG levels of education integrating traditional Islamic and modern disciplines, with four languages, namely Arabic, English, Urdu, and Malayalam as media of instruction. That is to say, by the time of graduation, a DHIU student would be well-versed in languages, in addition to a thorough knowledge in both Islamic and modern sciences. Throughout the whole tenure, a variety of traditional Islamic subjects including *Tafsīr*, *Hadith*, *Mantiq*, *Balāghah*, Islamic history, Philosophy, *Taṣawuf,* coupled with secular subjects including Mathematics, Social Sciences, Classical and Modern History, and the likes are being provided as compulsory papers to the students. Currently, there are at least a dozen of institutions affiliated to DHIU from Kerala, as well as out of the state such as Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Assam. In addition to this, as Hudawi (2014) explains, DHIU has been running a special 10 year program, recently labelled as National Institute for Islamic and Contemporary Studies (NIICS) for Urdu medium students, who are from the neighbouring states such as Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and also some other northern states of India.

The mentioned profile of DHIU seems to have an inevitable importance in the context of systemic survival lessons when we revisit the post-independence history of secular India relating it to the

Muslim educational arena. Such a history has been clearly described by Jafry (2006) while discussing the problems faced by *madrasah* education after the independence as follows:

The employability and social status of the *madrasah* graduates has been narrowed even more after the independence of India from British rule in 1947. While in earlier times they had the option to aspire to the office of *muftī* or *qādī*, in the present scenario, the office of the *qādī* having been abolished in India, the only available position is that of a *muftī*, which is neither official nor secular. Today, quite a few of them join a *madrasah* or *Dār al- Ulūm* as faculty; the larger number go to serve the mosques as leaders of the prayers (*imām*) and preachers (*khaṭīb*). Some graduates, however, are admitted to such institutions of higher learning as they allow them to continue their education at the undergraduate level, like the universities of Lucknow, 'Aligarh, the *Jamia Millia Islamia* in Delhi, and a few others. Rather significantly, *madrasah* graduates in the streams of humanities and social sciences do fairly well' (p. 42).

Jafry further elucidates the current situation of Indian *madaris* and its graduates saying that, majority of the *madrasah* graduates are unable to get acquainted with an Indian university system mainly due to their concentration on religious subjects in the syllabi, which consequently have led to the loss of benefits from the liberal education in a secular context, such as getting along with government service postings. It is expected, in this post-modern era that a university graduate who reads his modules in humanities, philosophy, social and natural sciences and other modern type of knowledge would be living with an open mind acknowledging and giving due respect to other worldviews and opinions. However, 'It is in this context that the *madrasah* graduates seem to be lagging behind and this often results in a siege mentality and near total alienation from society' (2006, p. 43).

Evidently, this is the situation whereby DHIU has been approaching the aforementioned problems, since its graduates have not only established a separate identity in their leadership as well as

scholarship positions among the Muslim mass, but also have enlightened themselves as credible lawyers, media persons, government servants, researchers, and lecturers in different national and international universities. For instance, saying about the educational circle of the graduates, as is stated in the website (DHIU, 2016) many of them pursue higher studies in both Indian universities, including Jawaharlal Nehru University, Jamia Millia Islamia, Aligarh Muslim University, Indian Institute of Mass Communication, and Indian Institute of Technology Bombay, as well as prestigious foreign Universities such as University of California Berkeley, International Islamic University Malaysia, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, Leiden University of the Netherlands, and Marmara University of Istanbul.

Current Moving Pattern of IHEIs in South India: a Critical Evaluation

Undoubtedly, attempts have been made by central government of India to modernize the *madrasah* education system by, for instance, a sponsored initiative called 'Area Intensive and Madrasa Modernization Program' held under the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), as a first of its kind. This program was launched in 1983 by the then Congress government in a '15 point program' for the educational, social, and economical advancement of minority communities throughout the nation (Nair, 2008). As a continuation to it, another program labelled as 'Scheme to Provide Quality Education in Madrasas (SPQEM)' has been initiated since 2009 by MHRD with the purpose of coming up with qualitative improvement in *madrsas* of all states to help Muslim children attain standards of the national education system in formal education subjects (SPQEM, 2016). Other centrally sponsored proposals for minority and *madrasah* education system include, (a) Scheme for Infrastructure Development of Private Aided/Unaided Minority Institutions (IDMI), (b) Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), (c) Extension of Mid-day Meals to *madrasas*/*maktabs*, (d) strengthening of the National Council for Promotion of Urdu Language (NCPUL) and (e)

Establishment of the National Commission for Minority Educational Institutions (NCMEI) (SPQEM, 2016).

However, the facts that (1) the abovementioned projects are only meant for upgrading the elementary education system of the traditional Muslim religious institutions, and (2) its primary concern is uplifting the students into a secular-oriented standard of comprehending only the 'formal education subjects' such as Mathematics, Science, Language, Social Studies etc., make us rethink about the prevalent Islamic higher education institutions in the country, even though certain states including Kerala have comparatively shown their educational advancement in all levels. Nonetheless, even Kerala is not exceptional if the cases are more specifically and critically evaluated in the light of the analytical comments articulated by Hartung (2006), as he contended that three structural features have shaped the discourse on *madrasa* education in national level.

First, the minority status of Muslim community in a secular India has led to their severe argument for the existence of a secular polity, who could maintain their rights to keep their own identity and execute all religious duties. As a consequence, Muslim's autonomy in relation to religious education has 'posed the problem of conformity and non-conformity towards the valid constitutions of the respective states as the legal framework for the entire polity' (2006, p. 20).

Second, the inability of government to provide elementary education to everyone in the society leads to the emergence of *dīnī madaris* by which the underdeveloped community educates their children with the only support from traditional sources or external funding. Thus free education is offered widely for Muslim children who are economically backward. As a result, the government cannot take a one-stand holistic approach towards national education (2006, p. 20). This feature is not particular to primary education dimensions of Muslim community, but also higher education is also greatly affected in a sense that the national or state governments have not even approached, let alone acknowledged any types of IHEIs with a

proper concern, except in a way that would contribute to their political acceptance among the community. The case is similar to other states of India.

Third, it should be admitted that there is lack of unanimous central leadership from part of religious authority, who can not only define the standards of Muslim religious education but also function as an interlocutor between state and community with regards to, specifically, their rights for education and other rights in general. This reality is more disturbing when it comes to IHEIs, as the absence of united leadership adversely affects the higher education policy making and arguing for state support by any means. In other words, the religious authority drastically fails to come into common terms of making a standard definition of Islamic higher education to which the state and national government can refer for inclusion of the IHEI-related issues while planning and implementing certain educational policies.

In addition to the mentioned drawbacks, IHEIs lack stable administrative bodies who can contribute towards academic leadership in addition to their non-academic support. That is to say, each member of the administrative bodies is to familiarize with moving pattern of their institutions in accordance with their proposed mission and vision. Then only it can be asserted that the institutional leadership is capable of effectively promoting Islamic higher education endeavours by comprehending and interfering in the ongoing secular-oriented or liberal type of education, and establishing a standard identity, not to demolish, but to survive, in congruence with the national educational system. Thus, this paper puts forth the following recommendations for the organizational authorities of IHEIs.

What ahead is brighter: recommendations for South Indian IHEIs

Concerning the further development and continuation of the past systemic survival of IHEIs, it is an immediate, but never ending, need

to identify the specific problems, pertaining primarily to administration and management aspects. This includes having proper leadership practices in the organization with identifiable vision planning, which is a specific outcome of strategic educational planning. However, admittedly, institutional leadership in general is a vacuum as mentioned earlier. In this context, it seems suitable to be specific with five recommendations for practicing proper leadership in IHEIs to survive in a systemic approach.

There should be an urgent revisit, by the organizational leaders, including those in superior administrative positions such as chancellors, rectors and managers, as well as those in head of academic positions, such as registrars, deans and heads of departments, to the current terrain of state and national types of education in order for them to either reiterate or reinterpret the notion of integration in education according to the needs of current Muslim society. This might need an effective communication between the two systems using the 'appropriate language' followed by mutual collaboration among them, to be always in a win-win situation. It should be emphasized that rejection of existing traditions is not always the best solution, when there are better ones of inclusion and gaining proper recognition.

Lack of strategic planning for gaining the institutional aims should be identified, so that it could solve the problem of not having enough focus on year-based objectives. The absence of a visionary planning for IHEIs has been noted by the present author by his occasional individual observations and communications to the authorities in various positions. It is known that scientific planning is one of the purposeful steps for smooth advancement of an organization. This type of planning is mandatory not only in curriculum, which is observed as the most emphasized entity in South Indian IHEIs such as DHIU, but also in enhancing institutional quality, staff potential, graduate quality, and students' performance.

Once the authority is ready for strategic planning, certain steps should be followed such as identifying the specific needs and

working to accomplish them. Interestingly, Kaufman (1987) has defined the idea of 'educational system planning' as 'the identification of needs, and the determination of what must be accomplished to effectively and efficiently meet the needs' (p.21). He himself has come up with an explanation to the definition; the best of planning starts with identification of needs, and that is what we mean as a system approach to education. The identification of problem and the process of resolutions are two important elements of system approach. By bringing up the application of a system approach, the planner tries to foresee the learner-oriented results. The results which are called 'ends' and the 'means' or the way to achieve the ends are inextricably linked by this system approach. Therefore educational system approach is a proactive way for the planner to identify the proper needs and important problems affecting the organization. Here, the planner is supposed to function as the main 'mediator' between the means and ends creating a normative way of dealing with present and future. This is possible with the positive analysis of the existing educational system in developing IHEIs.

In order to ensure the quality of IHEIs pertaining to the mentioned fields including curriculum, staff, and graduates, a variety of systematic evaluation methods should be introduced to IHEI authorities, so that they would be able to select the appropriate ones according to the organizational needs. These evaluation methods, under which there are many other minute approaches as well, include objective-oriented evaluation, scientific evaluation, designing evaluations, improvement-oriented evaluation, client-centred evaluation, and illuminative evaluation. An explanation of all these types has been made by Stufflebeam and Shinkfield (1985). However, this could be practical in the institutional context of IHEIs only if the staffs and respective administrative bodies are properly instructed and given ample time for practice.

For practicing the curriculum and instructional leadership, the authority should be vigilant of making necessary amendments and practical updates in curriculum and pedagogy, effectively engaging

both staff and students in developing higher level syllabi with an inclusion of all taxonomies. To make this happen, the second recommendation should be employed with strict adherence to year-based planning of curriculum. In addition, there should be continuous sitting among the organizational community members including students, staff, and selected nominees from the administrative hierarchy. Notably, despite the fact that the viability of the aforementioned recommendations is still debatable, the flexibility of current Islamic education system allows us to constantly 'think aloud' of a reformist approach.

Concluding remarks

It is fascinating to go deep into the historical background of IHEIs, especially the way they emerged, developed and established their identity in a secular state. Higher education sector in relation to the modernist approach from Islamic knowledge tradition has been evolving and trying the best to cope up with the present trend of Indian education system. However, it should be admitted that during this journey, the conservative religious scholarship has taken different stands on adopting the levels of national education structure. It has been proved that the case of higher education was also not different. In Indian context, redefining secularism has positively affected the *madrasah* system in a sense that the past and present religious education tradition has been forced to constructively engage and battle with the overflow of a total 'British interference' in the 'Islamicity' of Muslim norms. The question that still remains is, to what extent has this engagement been fruitful, notwithstanding the exceptional religious and social advancement among the community from different regions. It should also be admitted that it has taken time for Muslims to understand the true meaning of Indian secularism, and once they dealt with it, they could identify the plausible ways to overcome such 'phobia' though there is still a significant percent having not comprehended even its basic meaning after living long in a pluralistic society. The paper has highlighted the context of Kerala, with regards to systemic survival outlining the case

of one leading Islamic university, DHIU, giving a new model of advancement in the field of Islamic higher education tradition. A critical evaluation of the current scenario of IHEIs, with special reference to the leadership and planning practices is thought to have helped identify three main problems, which need instantaneous attention from the authority. Finally, acknowledging the limits of immediate practicability of the five recommendations made above, the paper urges the IHEI leaders, including planners and policy makers to concentrate on visionary planning, and practice of critical evaluation in all vital areas.

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Note for contributors

Author guidelines

1. Articles submitted to *Islamic Insight* should not have been published elsewhere and should not be under consideration by other publication.

2. Articles must be in English and should not exceed 10,000 words. Book reviews should be around 1,000-1,500 words.

3. All submissions must be typed double spaced and should be 12-point Times New Roman font.

4. All articles must include a 200-250 word abstract. Five to seven keywords may be provided at the end of the abstract.

5. Full name(s) of the author(s), along with their affiliation and email address, may be typed at the beginning of the article.

6. Headings and sub-headings of different sections should be clearly indicated.

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Style of referencing:

1. Papers should follow the in-text parenthetical citation style of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (APA).

2. Endnotes may be given along with in-text citation to supplement the paper with extra information.

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a) Single author(in-text):Fakhry (1983)

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Multiple authors (first citation in-text): Hair, Black, Babin, and Anderson (2010)

Multiple authors (first citation in parenthetical): (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010)

Multiple authors in-text and parenthetical formats in subsequent citations: Hair et al. (2010) (Hair et al., 2010)

Reference: Hair, J. F., Black, W. C., Babin, B. J., & Anderson, R. E. (2010). *Multivariatedata analysis: A global perspective* (7th Ed.). Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Pearson Education.

Journal:

In-text: Jacoby (1994)

Reference: Jacoby, W.G. (1994). Public attitudes toward government spending. *American Journal of Political Science*, *38*(2), 336-361.

Chapter in a book:

In-text: Dar (1963)

Reference:Dar, B.A. (1963). Ethical teachings of the *Qur'an*. In M.M.Sharif (Ed.), *A history of Muslim philosophy*. Weisbaden: Otto Harrassowitz.

Qur an:

In-text :(i) direct quotation, write as 114:5

(ii) Indirect quotation, write as *Qur'an*, 114:5

Reference: *The glorious Qur'an*. Translation and commentary by A. Yusuf Ali (1977). US: American Trust Publications.

Arabic transliteration guideline

Transliteration of Arabic letters

ب =	B	ذ=	dh	ط=	ṭ	ل=	l
ت=	T	ر=	r	ظ=	ẓ	م=	m
ث=	TH	ز=	z	ع=		ن=	n
ج=	J	س=	s	غ=	gh	و=	w
ح=	ḥ	ش=	sh	ف=	f	ه=	h
خ=	KH	ص=	ṣ	ق=	q	ي=	y
د=	D	ض=	ḍ	ك=	k	ء=	
Arabic Short Vowel	ا=	a	إ=	I	أ=	U
Arabic Long Vowel	آ=	ā	إي=	ī	أو=	ū
Arabic Double Vowel			أو =	aw	أي =	ai

Note on transliteration

a) Transliteration refers to the representation of Arabic writing by using the Roman alphabet. Some Arabic letters have direct equivalent. Therefore, they need not to be transliterated. For instance, 'ب' is represented by 'b'. But some other letters have no direct equivalents in the normal Roman alphabet. Therefore, a number of special characters have been created for the purposes of transliterating such letters, such as 'Ṣ' for the Arabic letter 'ص'.

b) Transliteration has to be done with Unicode system. Unicode is a system provided in Microsoft word to facilitate transliteration system. In this system, each such letter is represented by an alpha numeric character which helps the writer to select and insert the letter from '*symbols*' in '*insert*' to the word file. For more details: *http://islamicinsight.in.*

c) Some examples of transliteration are given below:

كَتَبَ	*Kataba*	Verb is italicised
كَوَّنَ	*kawwana*	Verb is italicised
أَخَّرَ	*akhkhara*	Verb is italicised
كَاتِبٌ	*Kātib*	Agent noun is italicised
مَرْءَةٌ	*mar ah*	Common noun is italicised
القَاهِرَة	Al-Qāhirah	Place is not italicised
المدينة المنورة	Al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah	Place is not italicised
إحياء علوم الدين	*Iḥyā Ulūm al-Dīn*	Book's name italicised
محمد بن إدريس الشافعيّ	Muḥammad ibn Idrīs al-Shāfi ī	Person's name not italicised
من يرد الله به خيرا يفقهه في الدين	*Man yurid Allāhu bihi khairan yufaqqihhu fī al-Dīn*	Phrase is italicised
الْعِلْمُ بِلَا عَمَلٍ كَالشَّجَرِ بِلَا ثَمَرٍ	*Al- ilmu bilā amalin ka al-shajari bilā thamarin*	Phrase is italicised
بسم الله/لله/والله	*Bismillāh/lillāh/wallāh*	Such combinations with Allah are written as single words
عبد الله/كلام الله/ خشية الله	Abd Allāh/*kalām Allāh*/*khashyat Allāh*	Such combinations with Allah are written separately

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