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## **Challenges Faced by Madrasa Teachers: A Study of School of Education Project of Aligarh Muslim University under The PMMMNMTT Scheme**

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### **Abstract**

*Teachers, undoubtedly, are the backbone of any education system, and hence, they are considered the architects of the Nation. Madrasas in India are age-old primary and secondary education institutions in the Muslim community. After the independence, not only was the plight of Madrasa institutions far from satisfactory, but they were also one of the most marginalized sections among their counterparts. Comparatively, they are stalling in several areas of the education system, viz., teachers at other levels of education. The Present study reveals that Madrasa teachers have faced challenges like shortage of basic infrastructural facilities, technology, and internet connection issues, resistance to change, indifferent attitude, lack of training, poor evaluation system, and financial crunches, to name a few. In an advancing global scenario, there is a dire need to equip professional and technological training among Madrasa Teachers to upgrade their knowledge levels, acquire innovative approach, and excel in pedagogical skills.*

*In the era of advanced intelligence, continuous upgradation of a blend of technical knowledge to resource pedagogical skills is essential for enhancing effective teaching and furnishing personality. They must possess expertise in the latest teaching methods, communication skills, and best practices to enable them to provide quality education. Among the courses organized, around 35 short-term teacher training courses were offline, and 03 courses functioned online. Thus, 1272 Madrasa teachers were trained under the School of Education Project granted under the Scheme of Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya National Mission on Teachers and Teaching (PMMMNMTT). After the completion, Madrasa teachers were reported to have acquired advanced technical knowledge, new methods, and new skills to enhance their teaching practices; it seems to have boosted their confidence and attitude towards innovative approaches in teaching by integrating ICT. They also realized the necessity of such training from time to time for their professional development.*

**Key Words:** *Madrasa Teachers, Professional Development, Pedagogy, and ICT Skills.*

## Introduction:

Education manifests the continuous transaction of knowledge between students and the teacher. It is a two-way process where the teacher gains knowledge from the teaching experience. Teaching is one of the most essential components of education. It aims to improve learners' various skills and understanding. It involves a learning process where the teacher's moral and professional responsibility is to motivate and encourage learners to grow in all aspects. Education is a multifaceted process. It accommodates areas that include critical thinking, training, guidance, understanding growth, and cognitive processes. Education is a deliberate, systematic activity aimed at making positive changes in learners to promote comprehensive learning. In the process, there is a close relationship between the teacher and the learner. Learning is stimulated, guided, and facilitated by the teacher. The main goal of education is to help children respond effectively to the environment and better integrate and adjust in the society. The integration of ICT in the teaching and learning process enhances engagement and promotes better knowledge

retention. With the help of ICT, interactive learning and more understanding of the content knowledge is fostered among the students in the classroom. Technology imparts the same knowledge through various methods, providing quick, accessible ways to make learning more engaged, grasping and novel.

According to Habibu et al., (2012) ICT acts as a versatile instrument in education. The promise of new ICT tools to change an obsolete educational system, better educate students for the information age, and/or expedite national development efforts has often been found on the global acceptance of ICT into education (Albirini, 2006). One cannot provide best learning environment without using ICT (Nikhat, & Khan, 2020). In fact, ICT has become an important and promising tool for professional success (Noor, 2017).

## Backdrop

The Scheme of Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya National Mission on Teachers and Teaching (PMMMNMTT), launched by the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India on 25<sup>th</sup> December 2014, is designed to improve the quality of teaching and learning process.

The Scheme of Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya National Mission on Teachers and Teaching represents the Government of India's initiative to enhance education quality through improving teachers and teaching at all levels. Teachers are the cornerstone, essence and in fact the backbone of the educational system.

The Mission covers all aspects of teachers, teaching, teacher training, professional growth, curriculum development, assessment creation, pedagogy research, and effective teaching methods. The Mission focuses on addressing pressing issues like the shortage of skilled teachers, attracting talent to the teaching field, and improving the quality of education in schools and colleges. However, the Mission works towards developing a skilled group of teachers and enhancing teaching methods through performance standards and quality facilities for teacher training. The Mission takes a comprehensive approach to these objectives, addressing all areas of education without dividing programmes by school levels or sectors such as higher education or technical education (<https://nmtt.gov.in/home>).

Under this scheme, the School of

Education (SoE) Project was granted to the Aligarh Muslim University in the Ninth Project Approval Board (PAB) meeting of the Ministry of Education, Government of India. Under this project Madrasa Teachers of Uttar Pradesh along with some other states were given training to improve pedagogical and technological skills. After getting approval from the Hon'ble Vice Chancellor of the Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) Aligarh, the team of the School of Education in the Department of Education AMU organized 37 Short Term Courses.

A distinctive feature of the programme was that Madrasa teachers (in some instances Maulanas/Maulvis) were being trained under Malaviya's Scheme, which reflects our Ganga Jamuni Tehzeeb considerably. The first author was associated with the scheme as Assistant Project Coordinator of School of Education under the Scheme of Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya National Mission on Teachers and Teaching (PMMMNTT), Ministry of Education, Government of India as the following courses were organized:

**SHORT TERM COURSES ORGANIZED BY SCHOOL OF EDUCATION UNDER THE SCHEME OF PANDIT MADAN MOHAN MALAVIYA NATIONAL MISSION ON TEACHERS AND TEACHING (PMMMNMTT).**

Course No.	Themes of courses	Dates
1	How to Teach Effectively	28 <sup>th</sup> January to 02 <sup>nd</sup> February 2018
2	Environmental Education	28 <sup>th</sup> January to 02 <sup>nd</sup> February 2018
3	How to Teach Effectively	18 <sup>th</sup> February to 23 <sup>rd</sup> February 2018
4	Environmental Education	18 <sup>th</sup> February to 23 <sup>rd</sup> February 2018
5	ICT Skills	04 <sup>th</sup> March to 10 <sup>th</sup> March 2018
6	Personality Development	04 <sup>th</sup> March to 10 <sup>th</sup> March 2018
7	ICT Skills	20 <sup>th</sup> March to 25 <sup>th</sup> March 2018
8	Personality Development	20 <sup>th</sup> March to 25 <sup>th</sup> March 2018
9	How to Teach Effectively	12 <sup>th</sup> July to 17 <sup>th</sup> July 2018
10	Personality Development	12 <sup>th</sup> July to 17 <sup>th</sup> July 2018
11	How to Teach Effectively	28 <sup>th</sup> August to 2 <sup>nd</sup> September 2018
12	ICT Skills	28 <sup>th</sup> August to 2 <sup>nd</sup> September 2018
13	How to Teach Effectively	23 <sup>rd</sup> September to 28 <sup>th</sup> September 2018
14	Personality Development	23 <sup>rd</sup> September to 28 <sup>th</sup> September 2018
15	How to Teach Effectively-I	21 <sup>st</sup> October to 26 <sup>th</sup> October 2018
16	Environmental Education	21 <sup>st</sup> October to 26 <sup>th</sup> October 2018
17	How to Teach Effectively-II	21 <sup>st</sup> October to 26 <sup>th</sup> October 2018
18	How to Teach Effectively-I	14 <sup>th</sup> November to 19 <sup>th</sup> November 2018
19	How to Teach Effectively-II	14 <sup>th</sup> November to 19 <sup>th</sup> November 2018
20	Computer Applications	14 <sup>th</sup> November to 19 <sup>th</sup> November 2018
21	How to Teach Effectively	25 <sup>th</sup> December to 30 <sup>th</sup> December 2018
22	Personality Development	25 <sup>th</sup> December to 30 <sup>th</sup> December 2018
23	How to Teach Effectively	20 <sup>th</sup> January to 25 <sup>th</sup> January 2019
24	ICT Skills	20 <sup>th</sup> January to 25 <sup>th</sup> January 2019
25	Personality Development	28 <sup>th</sup> February to 05 <sup>th</sup> March 2019
26	How to Teach Effectively	28 <sup>th</sup> February to 05 <sup>th</sup> March 2019
27	How to Teach Effectively	10 <sup>th</sup> March to 15 <sup>th</sup> March 2019
28	Personality Development	10 <sup>th</sup> March to 15 <sup>th</sup> March 2019
29	How to Teach Effectively	16 <sup>st</sup> December to 21 <sup>st</sup> December 2019
30	Environmental Education	19 <sup>th</sup> January to 24 <sup>th</sup> January, 2020
31	How to Teach Effectively	19 <sup>th</sup> January to 24 <sup>th</sup> January, 2020
32	Personality Development	09 <sup>th</sup> February to 14 <sup>th</sup> February, 2020
33	How to Teach Effectively	09 <sup>th</sup> February to 14 <sup>th</sup> February, 2020
34	ICT Skills	01 <sup>st</sup> March to 06 <sup>th</sup> March, 2020
35	Online Teaching	08 <sup>th</sup> September to 13 <sup>th</sup> September 2020
36	Online Teaching	15 <sup>th</sup> September to 20 <sup>th</sup> September 2020
37	ICT Skills	15 <sup>th</sup> October to 20 <sup>th</sup> October 2020

### **Objectives:**

The current study was conducted with the following objectives:

1. To study the advantages gained by Madrasa teachers after attending the short-term courses.
2. To study the challenges faced by Madrasa teachers in their respective Madrasas.
3. To provide practical and reasonable suggestions for addressing the challenges faced by Madrasa teachers in their Madrasas.

### **Methodology:**

An in-depth literature review was conducted for the study, utilizing secondary sources such as research papers, articles, e-newspapers, e-books, and different websites. A survey was carried out by researchers from the School of Education at Aligarh Muslim University, in which Madrasa teachers were requested to give feedback through both oral and written means. They were requested to discuss the difficulties faced in their Madrasas before taking short-term courses and the key advantages gained after completing short-term courses arranged by the Aligarh Muslim University's

School of Education. The feedback collected from 319 Madrasa teachers is part of the survey.

### **Advantages gained by Madrasa teachers after completing the short-term courses organized by the School of Education, AMU:**

Madrasa teachers after attending the short-term courses have gained following advantages:

1. Madrasa teachers were convinced that they had enhanced their learning.
2. They have broadened their horizons of knowledge and understanding.
3. They also acquired ICT skills for its integration with teaching and learning process.
4. They learnt how to improve their educational skills.
5. They learnt how to improve the entire organization.
6. They learnt how to improve time management skills.
7. They learnt how to improve their technical knowledge.
8. They learnt better ways to motivate students.
9. They learnt about new and innovative

teaching methods for teacher education programmes.

10. They learnt new strategies and techniques to clarify the concept to the students.
11. They learnt not only how to learn, but how to enjoy themselves.
12. They also expressed their desire to attend these courses in the future so that they can teach better and progress professionally.

### **Challenges faced by Madrasa Teachers:**

Madrasa Teachers have reported to have been facing numerous challenges pertaining to some of the following concerns:

1. **Lack of basic facilities:** There is a lack of adequate infrastructure, classrooms, furniture, and teaching equipment, such as blackboards, ICT facilities, etc., in their institutions. Quality school resources enhance academic initiatives (Olugbenga, 2019). Studies have demonstrated that academic success is linked to clean air, proper lighting, and quiet, comfortable, and safe environment (Cotton 2001).
2. **Apprehensions about the use of**

**technology:** Teachers are concerned about the unknowns associated with new technology and are hesitant to try new techniques. Also, the concept of having to learn everything at once discourages them from integrating technology.

3. **Lack of internet connection:** Due to the high cost, schools do not have internet connectivity, specifically high-speed internet connection. The most serious is a lack of access (Ansari, 2019). The emergence of an information society requires access to the Internet at optimal speed. The lack of high-speed internet access hinders extensive internet usage in education. The challenge is beyond the issue of connectivity. Access to Internet should be affordable and readily available for Madrasas. Madrasa teachers and students must learn digital literacy and other necessary skills to make proficient use of the Internet with the support of their teachers.
4. **Resistance to change from traditional to modern methods of teaching:** A simple solution is to maintain the status quo. Teachers are accustomed to and prefer traditional



teaching methods and therefore, refuse to be dynamic or escape from the comfort zone.

5. **Teacher's indifferent attitude:**

Most teachers were found to be apprehensive about ICT integration during the pandemic. In the online teaching-learning process, teachers were waiting for offline mode and hence, were not fully involved in the integration of ICT into the teaching and learning process.

6. **Lack of training:**

Lack of training among teachers deters them from using technology in creative educational practices. Before COVID-19, most teachers had never received formal ICT training. In addition, their training was not intended to be taught in calamitic situations like COVID-19. All Madrasa school teachers who participated in the survey confirmed that they did not receive formal professional training to integrate technology into their classrooms. The integration of ICT into the new normal era is hampered by a lack of training.

7. **Not able to apply what they have learnt:**

Even if Madrasa teachers

have some ICT training, they do not have time to practice what they have learned. Analyzing their answers revealed that the majority of teachers are overworked. The foremost hurdle for teachers was lack of time. They consume considerable hours exploring internet resources, planning lessons, and experimenting and practicing using technology to integrate into the teaching-learning process.

8. **Isolation from modern developments in other peripheral areas:**

Rather the fields of natural and social sciences, Madrasa education overemphasizes traditional subjects that may take a negative attitude towards contemporary subjects. Madrasa teachers have kept themselves away from social and contemporary knowledge (Ismail, et al., 2015).

9. **Lack of coordination:**

Lack of coordination between different Madrasas is prevailing, it makes securing cooperation with other institutions challenging.

10. **Poor evaluation system:**

Madrasa teachers often do not get the opportunity to equip themselves with



evaluation skills that would involve creating a balanced, well-rounded approach to help them grow and adapt to traditional and modern educational needs.

**11. Poor planning and quality of**

**management:** Often, inadequate planning such as ill-defined curriculum leads to inconsistent learning objectives. Moreover, poor administrative support results in a lack of communication between the teachers and administrators, which renders teachers to handle the challenges independently.

**12. Financial crunches:**

Limited funding leads to financial instability within the institution, e.g., low salaries, irregular payment schedules, and minimal opportunities for financial growth for teachers and administrators, which impact their quality of life and ability to perform effectively in their roles.

**13. Negative perceptions of teachers**

**by society:** Due to negative perceptions rooted in misunderstandings, Madrasa teachers are considered conservative which is the stigma that impacts their

morale, sense of value, social standing, and quality of teaching.

**Suggestions:** The following suggestions are presented in light of the above-discussed challenges as reported by Madrasa teachers:

1. Proper infrastructure such as buildings, furniture, and equipment like blackboards and classrooms are essential for effective teaching and learning; without these facilities, the learning process is negatively impacted. Classrooms should be spacious enough to accommodate students comfortably and contain necessary items like desks, chairs, whiteboards, blackboards, and audiovisual tools, if available. A library with a range of books, magazines, reference materials, and online resources is indispensable to meet teachers' and students' educational needs and interests. Physical education tools to promote students' overall development. A dedicated clinical area with necessary medical supplies and potentially trained staff is required to manage medical emergencies. Clean restrooms and

handwashing stations are necessary for schools to uphold cleanliness and prevent diseases from spreading. Schools must ensure that these facilities receive regular cleaning and maintenance to sustain hygienic and health standards.

2. Anxieties and uncertainties regarding technology usage need to be dispelled. It has been noted that when psychological barriers or obstacles are eliminated or controlled, technology usage has no issues.
3. Providing Madrasa teachers with Internet access is essential for achieving excellence in teaching, as access to the Internet can enhance the quality of education. It is a gateway to a vast array of information, knowledge, and educational tools, broadening learning experiences both within and outside the classrooms of Madrasas. Teachers can incorporate online resources to prepare lessons, whereas students can clear doubts and broaden their understanding horizons. Teachers can be more attentive to individual

students' needs and improve their teaching using interactive methods backed by the Internet. This may aid in the correction of educational inequities experienced by Madrasa teachers. Internet access aids school administrators in cutting expenses and improving the quality of Madrasas.

4. Teachers should be sensitized to prefer modern teaching methods. Modern teaching methods are more activity-based and impact the students' minds, involving them completely in the learning process, as curricular teaching and preparation are done with the learner in mind. Learners actively participate in the entire process to enhance their skills. Students in Madrasas should embrace contemporary teaching strategies that encourage collaboration among peers and promote a positive learning atmosphere. Interactive teaching methods have been integrated into modern teaching, resulting in a shift towards a focus on questioning, demonstrating, explaining, practical, cooperation approaches,

and activity-based learning compared to traditional teaching methods. To deal with the present world and its challenges, modern teaching methods like, collaborative learning, spaced learning, flipped classroom and self-learning should be used.

5. Teachers with a positive attitude towards technology can easily integrate ICT into their classrooms. Studies have shown that teachers with a positive attitude towards technology are usually willing to integrate ICT into their classrooms (Summers, 1990; Albirini, 2006). Teachers' effectiveness in the classroom is significantly enhanced and transformed through the utilization of ICT in the teaching and learning process. ICT helps teachers and students expand their academic horizons by promoting a welcoming environment and making information sharing smooth. It is assumed that teachers have a very positive attitude towards using ICTs in the teaching-learning process because they enable them to meet the

diverse needs and demands of their students, make teaching faster and learning easier, and save valuable time when presenting their ideas on the subject (Meher, Suna, and Baral; 2020). Therefore, ICTs should be incorporated in all areas of education, and Madrasa teachers should inculcate a positive attitude toward ICT usage in the teaching-learning process.

6. Teachers should be trained regularly regarding technology usage. In the pre-COVID-19 period, most teachers had never received formal ICT training, and their training was also not designed for emergencies like COVID-19. All Madrasa teachers should receive professional training to integrate technology into their classrooms.
7. Some Madrasa teachers are not able to implement their learning into practice. The most significant hurdle for teachers is the lack of time to excel and practice before preaching. They have to reserve considerable time exploring internet resources, planning lessons, and experimenting and practicing using technology to

- integrate into the teaching and learning process.
8. Madrasa education needs to transition from emphasis on traditional subjects extensively and pay attention to natural and social sciences as well.
  9. Better coordination and increased collaboration should be facilitated amongst various Madrasas by smooth and positive cooperation.
  10. Madrasa teachers lack knowledge of the examination system as there is more subjectivity in the evaluation system. Therefore, the evaluation is not holistic. Teachers need to be able to use the latest evaluation methods to estimate whether learning has taken place or not. If the answer is satisfactory, there is hope. The assessment methods should allow the teacher to consider which aspects of the course need to be changed to best support the student's learning.
  11. According to several Madrasa teachers, poor planning is evident in Madrasas, indicating they lack effective plans to adhere to. Teachers lack a definitive understanding of what is required from them. There is no specific timeline or deadline for reaching the goals. The primary reason why certain Madrasas did not achieve their goals was that they neglected to plan. For institutions, planning saves time, money, and perhaps the future. For an organization to succeed, and flourish, effective planning needs to be embedded in the institution's culture.
  12. Due to the financial crisis, the families of Madrasa teachers find it challenging to achieve their goals. Most Madrasas await donations from people all year round during the holy month of Ramazan. Many teachers in the Madrasas died due to COVID-19, suffered from several medical problems, and were unable to receive treatment due to the financial crisis. Many teachers reported that they have not received their salaries for the last many years; therefore, much needs to be done in Madrasa, especially when it comes to low wages.
  13. Madrasas educate the poor for free of cost. Madrasa teachers wander door to door and ask parents who cannot

afford education to send their children to Madrasa because attending formal school is a distant idea for some poor Muslims. Low incomes, ghettoization, and lack of awareness in the community keep Muslim children away from formal schools. Non-payment of regular salaries unintentionally affects the quality of education in Madrasa, as teachers are exposed to great psychological stress due to financial distress. The quality of Madrasa education has always been criticized. Society sees Madrasa as a place where education and learning do not take place. There is a prejudiced opinion of Madrasa teachers that they teach nothing apart from the Holy Quran. Another problem reported is that Madrasas are generally resistant to new educational tools, and modern education is disregarded as corrupting students. The main reason for such opposition is the growing uncertainty that the Government wants to bring reform to interfere with the Madrasa, and the possibility of entirely doing away with the Madrasas at some point in future.

### **Conclusion:**

The quality of a nation's education system depends on the quality of its teachers. The standard of a country's education system is defined by the excellence of its teachers, who are the true assets of any nation. Hence, it is crucial to enhance the quality of Madrasa teachers to enhance Madrasa education. Most Madrasa teachers are currently not satisfied with their situation due to low and irregular salaries, as well as a lack of promotion opportunities. They do not have ICT equipment and are belittled by the society. The government needs to increase funds for Madrasas for Madrasa teachers to be able to compete with teachers in the formal education system. Madrasa teachers should arrange regular training programmes like Faculty Induction Programmes (FIP), Orientation Programmes (OP), Short-Term Training Courses (STCs), and Faculty Development Programmes (FDPs) to improve their teaching methodology, like those held by the School of Education at AMU. Teachers should be acquainted with the most effective methods used in other schools and encouraged to enhance their knowledge and abilities in teaching and learning in the field of education.

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