

WIFAQ UL MADARIS ARABIA: PERFORMANCE, PROCEDURE AND TIES

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Abstract

Since independence the number of madrasas in Pakistan has grown remarkably. The madrasas growing enormously were in need of a central authority and control which can help them in their organisation, curriculum development and other day to day matters. The establishment of wifaq (board) was not an easy task. It required a lot of thought process and convincing all the stakeholders on one point to give it a physical structure. Maulana Khair Muhammad of Jamia Khair ul Madaris, Multan took this lead initiative to gather all ulama on one platform. The establishment of the education board was a right decision to bring peace, harmony and tranquillity among the madrasas scattered all over Pakistan. Interesting fact is that Jamia Khair ul Madaris and Education Board both established in Multan. Thus the reliable growth of the Board and substantial expansion of the physical structure supported lots of Deobandi madaris in Pakistan. Khair ul Madaris. Multan's continuous social and economic growth from colonial times to postcolonial Pakistan played a vital role in establishment and expansion of Education Board in the city of Multan.

Key Words

Islam, Madrasa, Deoband, Wifaq ul Madaris, Multan.

Introduction

After the partition, many madrasas and institutions were established in Pakistan but there was a dire need to bring all these institutions and madrasa on a unified platform. In this regard, Maulana

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Khair Muhammad gathered the ulama of Deoband school of thought (*maslak*) in Pakistan and invited them to Khair ul Madaris in 1957 (Majid, 2016). This initial meeting of ulama constituted an administrative committee and finally on October 18-19, 1959 *Wifaq ul Madaris Al Arabia Pakistan* was created as an organisation. The new constitution of wifaq was approved with members of the administrative committee for three years (Majid, 2016). The initial committee comprised of Maulana Shams ul Haq Afghani as President Wifaq, Maulana Khair Muhammad Jalandhari as Vice President I, Maulana Yousaf Banori as Vice President II, Maulana Mufti Mahmud as Nazim-e-Al'aa and Maulana Mufti Abdullah as Treasurer. The objective of the wifaq's creation was to coordinate the activities of Deoband madrasas throughout Pakistan. Wifaq ul Madaris since its inception served as madrasa education board for Deobandi madaris throughout Pakistan. The headquarters of the wifaq is based in Multan. Maulana Khair Muhammad was the one who continued his dominance and attachment to Wifaq till his death in 1970 in various capacities. Maulana Khair Muhammad through the platform of Khair ul Madaris also supported "Majlis Tahfuz Khatm-i-Nabuwat Pakistan" as member of the *shura* and advisor to it.

Multan's growth not only supported establishment of Khair ul Madaris but also enabled its remarkable growth after partition. Khair ul Madaris attracted the refugees from the East Punjab at the time of partition. Khair ul Madaris not only attracted students but the initial teachers were also some refugees those who know Khair Muhammad and were looking to settle in Pakistan. The early students were of different backgrounds and localities which included Afghans and Central Asians but also from different parts of India. Maulana Khair

Muhammad and Jamia Khair ul Madaris continued serving Multan, its people and particularly Deobandi Islam in various capacities which I will discuss in this paper with focus on institution building in shape of *Wifaq ul Madaris Al Arabia Pakistan* and obtaining support and strength for Khair ul Madaris and himself. This paper will provide a glimpse into the birth, growth and establishment of Wifaq as platform for Deobandi madrasas of Pakistan and directly or indirectly supporting the base of Khair ul Madaris since 1957 onwards.

This paper will explore aspects of the structure of madrasa education board Wifaq ul Madaris Al Arabia (onwards as Education Board), how it was established by Maulana Khair Muhammad, and how later on it became the sole voice of Deobandi madrasas in Pakistan. This will also explain the nature of the relationship between Khair ul Madaris and the Board from the time of its establishment till the death of Maulana Khair Muhammad in 1970.

In addition, this paper will explain Board's administrative apparatus as education board and curriculum control body of all Deobandi madrasas of Pakistan. Multan's continuous social and economic growth from colonial times to postcolonial Pakistan played a vital role in establishment, expansion and collaboration of institutions like Khair ul Madaris and Education Board in the city of Multan.

Madrasa Education Boards in Pakistan

The gradual growth of madrasas in Pakistan over the decades have been explained in previous pages. This growth kept rising with each passing year. Madrasas in Pakistan are usually independent community initiatives run and organised by *ulama* and local

community with the help of popular subscription. However, there are some madrasas run and managed by the government under *auqaf* system. Madrasas also vary in terms of their location (urban, rural), size, available resources, education level and their ideological attachment with a specific sectarian orientation. For having proper check and balance and control over the madrasa activities and curriculum, enriching madrasas with modern subjects as well as standardized examinations, each sectarian orientation has established its own education board which is called *Wifaq*.

There are five madrasa education boards in Pakistan, three are Sunni, one is Shia and one is associated with Jamat-i-Islami, a known religious political party. Each madrasa education board represents its own sect or affiliation.¹ The three Sunni boards are *Wifaq ul Madaris al Arabia*, *Tanzim ul Madaris* and *Wifaq ul Madaris al Salafia*. The Shia madrasa education board is called *Wifaq ul Madaris Shia* and *Rabitatul Madaris al Islamia* is one associated with Jamat-i-Islami. Out of the existing large number of madrasas, only registered madrasas have been controlled by their respective central boards and organizations (*wifaq*). These boards set the syllabi, collect student registration details, forms, fee and examination fee in addition to arrange examination in both Urdu and Arabic languages and later on declaration of their results.

Five Madrasa Education Boards

Sr. No	Name of Madrasa Education Board	Sub-sect	Headquarter	Established
1.	Wifaq ul Madaris	Deobandi	Multan	1959

	al Arabia			
2.	Tanzim ul Madaris	Barelvi	Lahore	1960
3.	Wifaq ul Madaris (Shia)	Shia	Lahore	1959
4.	Rabitatul Madaris al Islamia	Jamat-i-Islami	Lahore	1983
5.	Wifaq ul Madaris al Salafia	Ahl-i-Hadith	Faisalabad	1955

Admission and Examination Procedure of Wifaq ul Madaris

The establishment of the Board was to provide uniform curriculum to all madrasas. Board was also responsible for conducting examination at all levels. Board adopted a procedure for conducting fair and transparent examinations. Some of the rules and regulations of admission and examination which were approved and adopted by the Board for different levels are mentioned here.

Ibtadia

At the time of admission for this level candidate must submit Form “B” to prove his date of birth and address. Course duration for this level is five years. This madrasa will be responsible for overseeing the full examination. Besides madrasa curriculum, only approved provincial textbooks by relevant textbook board will be taught (Majid, 2016).

Mutawasta

Preliminary qualification for admission in first year of this level is that the student should possess a primary certificate (of general education) or equivalent credentials. While progressing and being admitted to the third year of this level, the candidate should be of twelve years of age. The duration of this course is three years. The madrasa will conduct the examination for the first two years and Board will only conduct exams of third year (Majid, 2016)

.Sanwiah Ama

For this level, student should have passed secondary board examination and he should be able to read Quran accurately. Madrasa will conduct the examination for the first two years and Board will only conduct exams of third year. For progressing to third year, student should submit attested copy of middle certificate from his/her madrasa or school's headmaster/mistress attestation would be required (Majid, 2014).

Sanwiah Khasa

Those candidates who have qualified sanwiah amma are eligible to be admitted to this level. At the time of admission, sanwiah amma certificate is to be submitted. The course duration for this level is two years. The madrasa will conduct examination of first year and Board will conduct exam of second year (Majid, 2015).

Aliyah

Sanwiah Khasa qualified candidate may be admitted to the Aliyah level. The course duration for this level is two years (Naveed, 2016).

Almiah Awal

To be eligible for admission in this level, candidate should have passed Aliyah from the Board. The Board will conduct the examination of this level and the duration of this will be one year (Naveed, 2015).

Almiah Daum

To be eligible for admission in this level, candidate should have passed Almiah Awal from the Board. The Board will conduct the examination of this level and the duration of this will be one year (Naveed, 2016).

Drasat Dinia

For this level admission is granted to those candidates who have passed the middle certificate of general education and can read Quran accurately. The Board will conduct its examinations. Time duration of this level is two years. For promotion to the second year, candidate should have passed and qualified in year one (Naveed, 2016).

Besides these above requirements for admissions to all levels, candidates should bring filled registration card of madrasa, Form “B”, National Identity card of guardian at the time of admission.

This religious education setup of admission and examination is more or less equal to that of the public sector schools providing education from early classes to middle and matriculation level. For example, if a candidate is admitted to Ibtadia level, he/she should also study approved provincial textbooks of relevant subjects in addition to madrasa syllabus. Another example is of the Sanwiah Amma level, in which, a candidate who has passed middle certificate from a government school is admitted directly.

Administrative Setup

Board was established on the pattern of some leading seminaries of India. Maulana Khair Muhammad and other scholars who helped him in establishing Khair ul Madaris and Board had all graduated from leading seminaries in India including Dar ul Uloom Deoband and Mazahir ul Uloom. All of these scholars have taught at various institutions. Board, to some extent, followed the pattern of administration of Dar ul Uloom Deoband (Saif, 2016). This enormous infrastructure and administrative apparatus of Board had some impressions of institutions where the shura members were taught and trained before the partition. This very systematic official operating bureaucratic model of religious clerics in madrasas and Board shows a very high level of discipline. Maulana Khair Muhammad, Maulana Ihtsham ul Haq Thanvi, Maulana Idress Kandhalvi and Maulana Shams ul Haq Afghani all were very vocal in recommending and advising Board's administration and took this responsibility to establish a good model of administration of Board on patterns of Dar ul Uloom Deoband.

Since its inception, Board has been working to provide a platform to all its affiliated madrasas. As per the Board record twenty thousand six hundred and eighteen madrasas are registered with it. Board's administrative structure is comprised of following offices (Saif, 2016):

- a. Administrative department
- b. Finance department
- c. Information Technology department
- d. Registration department

- e. Examination department
- f. Postal and Correspondence department
- g. Record Maintenance department
- h. Affiliation department
- i. Publication department
- j. Reception department
- k. Security department

Here you will find brief description of above mentioned offices. It will also be explained how the people from Khair ul Madaris or its graduates or affiliate governed Board in various capacities.

Nazim central office of Board is in charge of this office. In the absence of Nazim, finance officer will take care of this office. This office is responsible for taking care of matters pertaining to administration, examination and meetings (Saif, 2016). Since its inception, Board was under the control of Khair ul Madaris and initially for almost ten years its Nazim office was run by Khair ul Madaris. The following table shows the names and duration of the service of individuals served as Nazim Board (Naveed, 2016).

Sr. No.	Name	Madrassa/ Jamia	From	To	Total Duration in Office
1.	Malik Abdul Ghafoor Anwari	Jamia Khair ul Madaris, Multan	October 19, 1959	April 30, 1969	9 years and 6 months
2.	Maulana Mufti Muhammad Anwar Shah	Jamia Qasim uul Uloom, Multan	April 30, 1969	August 01, 1996	27 years and 3 months
3.	Maulana Sher Muhammad	Jamia Khair ul Madaris, Multan	August 01, 1996	March 02, 1998	01 year and 7 months

4.	Maulana Abdul Hayee	Jamia Matla ul Uloom, Queeta	March 02, 1998	January 27, 1999	01 year
5.	Maulana Abdul Majid	Jamia Farooqia, Karachi	January 27, 1999	To-date	To-date

Finance department assists administrative office in addition to maintenance of the financial record of the Board. This office is also responsible for preparing monthly and annual expenditure chart and preparing budget. This office also maintains annual audit of the financial income and expenses (Naveed, 2016). It was formally initiated in 1959 but was reorganised in 2000. It works under a treasurer who is appointed by the main shura. For long two decades Khair ul madaris was at the helm of affairs for all financial matters of the Board and first three Khazan’s hailed from Khair ul Madaris. The following people served as the treasurers of the Wifaq since its inception (Tawruf Wifaq, 2016). This list also explains that from 1959 till 1980 for long twenty-one years the finance office of Board was under single command and control of people from Khair ul Madaris. This financial office and appointees in Board indirectly strengthened the Khair ul Madaris position in the circles of ulama.

Sr. No.	Name of the Treasurer	Madrassa/ Jamia	From	To	Duration in Office
1.	Maulana Mufti Muhammad Abdullah	Jamia Khair ul Madaris, Multan	October 19, 1959	May 30, 1973	13 years and 6 months
2.	Maulana Muhammad Sharif Jalandhri	Jamia Khair ul Madaris, Multan	May 30, 1973	May 15, 1978	5 years

3.	Maulana Mufti Muhammad Abdullah	Jamia Khair ul Madaris, Multan	May 15, 1978	November 30, 1980	2 years and 6 months
4.	Maulana Faiz Ahmad	Jamia Qasim ul Uloom, Multan	November 30, 1980	February 24, 1999	18 years and 3 months
5.	Maulana Mufti Ghulam Qadar	Jamia Khair ul Uloom, Khairpur (Bahawalpur)	February 24, 1999	June 09, 2002	3 years and 2 months
6.	Maulana Musharraf Ali Thanvi	Dar ul Uloom Islamia, Lahore	March 17, 2004	To-date	14 years and continued

The current assistant to treasurer is an ex-banker and he has maintained all financial matters and the Board started saving money and used this saved money in purchase of eighty-four kanal land and one kanal house in Islamabad. Board also purchased two vehicles for its official use. All this property and purchase amounts almost to eighty million rupees (Naveed, 2016).

Sr. No.	Name	From	To	Total Duration in Office
1.	Rashid Naeem Azad	August 2000	May 19, 2001	10 months
2.	Chaudhary Muhammad Riaz Abid	May 20, 2001	To-date	To-date

This office maintains four bank accounts for the facilitation of students and business matters. Accounts are maintained in Muslim Commercial Bank (MCB), United Bank Ltd., (UBL), Allied Bank Ltd., (ABL) and Meezan Bank (Naveed, 2016).

The importance of technology and its usage in this global world is inevitable. Board adopted computerised systems for maintaining its records in 2005. Rashid Mukhtar has been heading this

section in the main office of the Board since its establishment (Naveed, 2016). This department has maintained record of each madrasa which is affiliated with the Board. This office also maintains the Board website and official email address for correspondence.

Another office deals with registration of new students on annual basis and later on same registration number is kept for maintenance of the record for each year's examination and results. Each year one hundred and twenty five thousand male and female students are registered (Naveed, 2016). Board is an education board. Its examination department is considered one of the main departments. Board has conducted examinations since its inception. The very first batch of two hundred and thirty one students appeared in 1960 (Saif, 2016). Slowly and gradually Board attracted more madrasas and affiliation of madrasas increased day by day.

A glance into this table can tell us the number of students applied, appeared and centres established for students in year 2015 throughout Pakistan (Saif, 2016).

Sr. No.	Students Applied for all levels	Students Appeared for all levels	Total Exam Centres maintained	Total Staff deputed at Centres for duties
1.	2,65,795	2,50,894	1,691	10,076

Board offers different degrees, levels and certificates to male and female students (Saif, 2015). In the examination department, an individual is assigned one level (darja) to look after all the matters relevant to it starting from registration to the despatch of degree and certificate (Saif, 2016).

Each and every letter is received by postal department in the Board. Whole mail is entered into the record register and computer system. All letters are delivered and receiving signatures of letters from the relevant department are sought. This department is also responsible for distribution of fifteen thousand copies of monthly magazine Wifaq (Saif, 2016). Another office is responsible for maintenance and preservation of the records of Board. All the records are maintained in registers since 1960 to-date.

Affiliation of the madrasas is an on-going process which started immediately after the establishment of the Board. All five Boards have total twenty-eight thousand madrasas registered with them and out of this total registration only Wifaq ul Madaris has total twenty thousand six hundred and eighteen madrasas including their branches registered (Yasin, 2015). This gives Board a unique stature that around eighty percent of the students in registered madrasas are affiliated with the Board.

In 1999 during the Musharraf regime, the affiliation department was reorganised at government level and all the madrasas which were previously affiliated with the Board were informed to renew their affiliation with the Board (Yasin, 2015).

Publication department serves as mouthpiece of the Board's performance and progress. It publishes a magazine Wifaq which was started in 2001 as three monthly magazine and later on in 2005 it was made a monthly magazine. This office publishes fifteen thousand copies per month for distribution. This magazine contains policies of the Board, important decisions, minutes of various meetings, issues

related to curriculum or other possible changes in rules and regulations (Yasin, 2015). This magazine is sent to all affiliated madrasas.

The Department of Reception is responsible for greeting people coming to the Board. It provides information to visitors and guides them to concerned departments where one wants to go. This office also attends phone calls of the Board.

The security of the Board is responsibility of Security office. This department is comprised of security guards and closed circuit tv cameras (CCTV) are installed throughout the Board building. This office enters the record of visitors going inside the building and withholds original Computerised National Identity Card (CNIC) of all visitors till they come out of the building and get their CNIC's back (Yasin, 2015).

The Role of Jamia Khair ul Madaris

Maulana Khair Muhammad was the man behind the entire idea of the establishment of Board as educational board and creating a platform for the madrasa network. Maulana Khair Muhammad and his Khair ul Madaris were at the forefront of all the major meetings and activities since the inception of Wifaq ul Madaris and Khair ul Madaris served as venue and birth place of the Board.

Few meetings were held to discuss and deliberate before embarking on the establishment of the Board. Maulana Khair Muhammad and his Khair ul Madaris got direct and indirect support form the establishment of Board. Maulana Khair

Muhammad started his administrative service of Board in addition to Khair ul Madaris. Maulana Khair Muhammad was *muhtamim* of Khair ul Madaris and his first appointment in Board was as Vice President from 1959 till 1963 for four years in office and from 1963 till his death in 1970, he was President of the Board. For these eleven years, Maulana Khair Muhammad represented Khair ul Madaris and Board in both administrative capacities. Maulana was head and convenor of the curriculum formation committee and part of selection of other office bearers like first treasurer of the Board.

Besides Maulana Khair Muhammad's own appointment to the top slots in the Board as President and Vice President in lieu of his services and being pioneer in floating the idea of Board, other colleagues from Khair ul Madaris got important positions as office bearers of the Board. For example, Board's treasurer (*Khazana*) office was run by the Khair ul Madaris people for twenty-one years from 1959 till 1980 and the people who held positions include Maulana Mufti Muhammad Abdullah for fifteen years and Maulana Sharif Jalandhari for five years.

Two other important offices of the Board named *Nazim Wifaq* and *Nazim-i-Ala'a* also remained under the control of Khair ul Madaris. The office of *Nazim Wifaq* remained for eleven years with people of Khair ul Madaris Malik Abdul Ghafoor Anwari and Maulana Sher Muhammad. Other office of *Nazim-i-Ala'a* is with current *muhtamim* Board Qari Muhammad Hanif

Jalandhari since 1999 and who is also secretary of the Board.

Another important feature and resemblance of Khair ul Madaris and Board was having common members and direct or indirect followers of Ashraf Ali Thanvi serving on both *shuras*. Maulana Khair Muhammad was able to gather people from all over Pakistan for supporting and strengthening of his own institution Khair ul Madaris and later on Board. The tremendous network of Ashraf Ali Thanvi continued to support each other after the partition as they arrived in Pakistan. Some prominent and leading names include Maulana Shams ul Haq Afghani, Maulana Khair Muhammad, Maulana Muhammad Yousaf Binori, Maulana Mufti Mahmud and Maulana Mufti Muhammad Shafi.

Conclusion

The establishment of the Board in 1959 as an immediate response continued providing direct and indirect support to Khair ul Madaris for its establishment and strengthening its position within the madrasa network. This strengthening and support of the Khair ul Madaris having the platform of Wifaq ul Madaris gave Maulana Khair Muhammad a central place and authority in deciding many important issues and appointments within newly established Board. This struggle for the creation of central education board was also the need of the hour for maintaining a close relationship, ties and collaboration among the Deobandi madrasa network throughout Pakistan.

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