



Madrasa

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Editorial

Modifying Madrasa

Islam is under the spotlights. That didn't begin with Fukuyama's *The End of History and the Last Man*, nor Huntington's *Clash of Civilisations*, nor Bush's 'War on Terror'. But since the 9/11-inspired War on Terror in the Middle East, the word Islam has been tainted with different connotations. Everything Islam comes under scrutiny, especially anywhere Muslims gather; just like their educational institutions, popularly known as madrasa.

Western policymakers and leaders of security institutions want to understand them and the contents of the curriculums in schools attended by young Muslim children. Such a school and its attendee must be watched for signs of radicalisation. Some Muslim scholars argue that the current wave of violence being blamed on Islam emerged from the Middle East when the United States turned to arming Islamic groups to fight the Russians in Afghanistan and many other nations during the Cold War. Such scholars argue that knowing the origin can lead to where NOT TO look for solution to the problem.

The mystifying challenge lies in West Africa's variegated political and cultural landscape. High rates of unemployment and destitution have bred equally soaring rates of insecurity especially in the territories that Huntington classified as 'cleft' countries, like Nigeria and to lesser extents Togo and Benin Republic. Huntington had listed Islamic Resurgence as one of the factors for the hypothetical clash of civilisations because 'missionary' Christianity (which is fleetingly grouped with Westernisation) will resist attempts to convert its adherents. The Boko Haram's demands for operationalisation of Islamic law in many states of Nigeria would lend credence to the hypothesis that "the principal conflicts of global politics will occur between nations and groups of different civilisations" and that "[T]he clash of civilisations will dominate global politics."

Thus, to mitigate conflicts, madrasa-style education will attract funds and attention with the intention of modifying their curriculum for standardisation and to assist Muslims participate more effectively in politics and business. This might breed more suspicion, if funds are traceable to the United States or Britain.

--Odoh Diego Okenyodo

MADRASA: NIGERIA, GHANA, GUINEA AND SENEGAL

Throughout the history of Islamic civilisation, Muslims have always travelled in search of knowledge following the Prophetic injunction to “seek knowledge even (to) faraway China.” The Islamic educational system, even though similar, has been influenced by local culture, history and tradition throughout the Islamic world, particularly in West Africa. Though the French did not practice indirect rule like the British, the picture of Islamic education situation remains the same in the francophone and anglophone countries of the region.

The almajiranchi system in northern Nigeria is unique to Daular Usumaniyyah, founded by Sheikh Uthman bin Fodio. The word almajiri in Hausa comes from the Arabic al-Muhajirun - referring to the people who migrated from Makkah to Madinah in the footsteps of the Prophet Alaihis Salam. It was initially used to refer to the boys who travel away from home to study the Qur'an with a malami (teacher) whom parents considered trustworthy and pious enough to entrust with children. The

word is however now erroneously used to refer to anybody who begs for alms.

Two broad types of Islamic schools exist in northern Nigeria. Makarantar allo (the traditional Quranic school) refers to schools where the emphasis is teaching the Qur'an. The pupils use wooden slates and locally made ink. The slate is reusable, and all it requires is to wipe the slate clean and a new lesson can then be rewritten. This is the first stage of Islamic education, and in some cases, underage children get sent to teachers far away from their homes and parents.

For older students who have graduated from the Quranic

schools and who want further Islamic education, the next stage is the makarantar zaure or ilm schools (originally called “madrasa”). Here, they study under one or more malams depending on their level, type and depth of specialisation. The core subjects in the curriculum of ilm schools comprise Qur'an exegesis (tafsir), traditions of Prophet Muhammad (hadith and sira), principles and rules of Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh and usul al-fiq), theology (Ilm al-tawhid), mysticism (tasawwuf), Arabic language and literature (al-luggha and al-adab), mathematics (al-



Special Report

hisab), medicine (tibb), and history (tarikh).

These two types of schools represent the old Islamic educational system, which are strictly traditional and completely private, with no formal funding (usually) from the state. The malamai (plural for teachers) took care of the education and spiritual development of children on behalf of the society and parents. The society and parents in turn took care of the malamai through fees, zakkah (tithes), sadaqah (offerings) and the baitul mal. The society also took care of the almajirai through giving them leftover food, and offering them opportunities as house helps. This unique system did not exclude willing students even if they were poor; it produced world class scholars in every field of Islamic knowledge, required little infrastructure and maintained social cohesion by promoting the interaction of the rich and the poor.

When Western education came into Nigeria with colonialism, however, the development of the Islamic education was completely ignored. Even the ajami system of writing local languages in Arabic script, which existed as the official means of communication, was not recognised officially, thus marking the commencement of a slow death process for Islamic education. Despite initial resistance, it became

necessary for Muslims to enrol their children and wards in Western education or lose the opportunity to participate in running the affairs of the country. This led to the establishment of the new Islamic educational institutions in the 1950s-1960s by private initiative. They adopted all the features of a formal school system that were absent in Qur'anic and ilm schools with varying curricular emphases on Arabic and Islamic Studies. Thus, variation in curricular emphases on Arabic and Islamic Studies calls for classifying the new Islamic schools into two types: schools operating madrasa curriculum, and schools operating modified national curriculum of public schools.

“Increasingly high levels of poverty coupled with an uncaring and irresponsible society and leadership are contributing to an almost inevitable collapse of Islamic education systems. In major towns where the problems are most acute, Islamic education is becoming elitist and exotic”.

The new Islamic schools differ from Nigeria's modern public schools in their fundamental institutional orientation toward promoting a broad Islamic cultural orientation. The school environment is saturated with Islamic images (murals, maps of the Islamic world, posters, Arabic calligraphy, and mosques). School administrators actively foster Islamic identity and awareness among students and teachers, not only in classrooms but

also in all school activities. Islamic congregational prayers are regularly observed in school mosques. Islamic dress, particularly for female students, is employed as a visually powerful way of fostering Islamic identity and awareness in these schools.

The most significant effect of the new Islamic educational institutions is that they provided a channel for the entry and spread of US-backed wahabi Islam into Nigeria (and other West African countries). This coincided with the formation of Izala by Sheikh Abubakar Mahmud Gumi in 1979. Many islamiyyas were opened with direct and indirect funding from Saudi Arabia. Additional funding came from parents, but the pupils of these schools were not of the almajiri type.

The development of almajirai in Ghana is similar to that of Nigeria because of the similarities of the Muslim societies in both countries. Both were colonised by the British, using the indirect rule. The Muslims in Ghana are to a large extent also Hausa-speaking, and are also found in the northern part of the country.

Both Guinea and Senegal were colonised by France. Unlike the British, the French did not practice indirect rule. However, the picture of almajiri situation remains the same as in the anglophone countries. Nothing illustrates this like the following blog post:

“...Travelling through

Senegal, we have been astonished by the visibility of large numbers of religious students, called talibes, in the country.

"Talibes are an interesting phenomenon. For the most part, they seem to be quite young children who come from all over the countryside to learn from religious leaders called marabouts. The students finance their education--feed themselves and pass along money for their upkeep to their teachers--by begging for alms, which in addition to being their only possible source of income, given that most come from poor families and are too young to do most kinds of work, is intended to teach them humility and give fellow citizens an opportunity to fulfil their religious requirement of charity. In a city such as St. Louis, the old French colonial capital where we are now, the little kids can be found by the dozens, carrying around their characteristic empty tin cans or plastic buckets and begging for money and food...

"In Senegal, talibes are poorly clothed and often dirty, indistinguishable from child beggars found in Senegal or other poor countries around the world."

As Okoye and Yau have documented, Qur'anic schools have increasingly failed to fulfil their traditional educational mission. Instead of educating their pupils and giving them skills and knowledge necessary for functioning effectively in

society as they used to, Qur'anic schools have deteriorated to the extent that many people regard them as no more than a breeding ground for street-beggars. Many of the almajirai are in fact receiving little to no education at all, but simply being used by their so-called malams/marabouts as a source of income--a troop of semi-enslaved children to go begging for them, and in some cases with beatings for children who do not bring home specified amounts.

"Increased terror activities linked with Islamic sects such as the Boko Haram is attracting interest in madrasa-style education"

Increasingly high levels of poverty coupled with an uncaring and irresponsible society and leadership are contributing to an almost inevitable collapse of Islamic education systems. In major towns where the problems are most acute, Islamic education is becoming elitist and exotic. Western-educated elite Muslims (incidentally members of the class that embraced wahhabism) despise and look down upon the traditional madrasa and when they give out zakkah, which they rarely do, the teachers are not priority. In fact the wahhabis allow their adherents to use tithe money on schools and hospitals, instead of paying it to the poor directly, as stipulated by the Qur'an.

Increased terror activities linked with Islamic sects such as the Boko Haram is attracting interest in madrasa-style education. Education programming has

taken on an ever more political role in recent years in U.S. Government aid activity. American officials make the case that providing education in developing nations improves U.S. national security, on the assumption that education contributes to stability, moderation, and democratic tendencies in developing nations and transitional societies. But open support for madrasa can spawn suspicion and lead to further decline, even as curricular amendments introduce secular ideas into the schools.

Governments within the countries under examination are likely to set up special agencies to oversee the overhauling and running of the traditional Islamic educational systems. I believe we should invest in research to see how it can be adopted and utilised to solve our educational problems. The potential for the almajiri situation to exclude future generations of Muslims from the mainstream national life that should raise some concerns at least at the domestic level.

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<http://www.paulstravelblog.com>, "Religious Education in West Africa" 28th November, 2008

Secularism and Religious Education in Senegal: Policy Perspective

One of the specificities of Senegal is that its public sphere is often the scene of a bitter struggle between secularism and religion. A major question is whether the state still has the means to preserve secularism in line with the Constitution. During the Abdou Diouf presidency, a stakeholders meeting on the educational sector was organised in 1981/2. At these meetings a strong recommendation was made favouring the introduction of religious education in the public school system and especially a financial contribution by the Republic to the informal education provided by Christians as well as Muslims.

Starting in 2002 the Senegalese state introduced reforms that constitute a de facto nullification of the political compromise endorsing its secularism in favour of a political doctrine that is more Anglo-Saxon than French, which allows explicit religious symbols to be displayed in public institutions. They made "the fundamental and irreversible decision" to introduce religious education in the official school system.

In 2006, the Islamic Institute was established as a modern daara (Senegalese Qur'anic School) in Tivouane teaching youth religious practices as well as in the



trades of mechanics and carpentry. President Wade claimed to have brought to fruition an idea ending the discriminatory treatment of religious education. He did not fail to mention that his idea was to build not only modern schools for the daara but also high schools and even a university.

It is true that since its creation, the school has been a source of tension between the religious figures on one hand and the secular and republican ones on the other. The system of education (especially elementary education) founded on the triple values "free, secular, compulsory" is being called into question more and more. Secular education made compulsory for every young citizen is seen as the Republic declaring itself the guarantor of the balance of powers and being independent of religious power. On the other hand, society is often governed by a religious code

shared by the majority while the school declares itself to be sovereign yet in the exclusive service of society. This is what places education in a vicious circle between the rock that is the Republic and the hard place that is society. But in Senegal's case the imbalance is even more pronounced because of the role played by the brotherhoods.

Senegal also has the Arabic language schools that are hardly distinguishable from daara whose principal aim is teaching the Qur'an which, for the Muslim faithful, must be completely memorised in Arabic. The Qur'anic school "does not prepare one for a trade or a role but only to be a believer, a perfect man, by using all the techniques of inculcation designed to domesticate the body and the spirit." However, the peda-

gological methods used in the daara are becoming more diversified, particularly because they are receiving more contrastive demands. So, while certain traditional daara continue to make children learn the Qur'an by heart without understanding its meaning, others teach Arabic first, so that it accompanies the memorisation of the sacred texts. Another difference is that urban daara function only outside of school hours which allows the children, the talibés, to go to formal school as they progress in their religious instruction.

There are the examples of good practices such as the daaras of Coki, of Keur Mame Mor Cissé which are boarding schools with a minimum of amenities where the youth learn the precepts of Islam and also technical skills preparing them for success in their professional life. Others, especially in urban centres, send their children out into the streets to beg for food and money without necessarily providing them with the Qur'anic instruction for which they were sent there. The justification for this forced regime is a religious one: a lesson in humility, so that the child will know what abject poverty is and will then show compassion to his fellow man and be generous upon succeeding in life. The number of children enrolled in daaras is estimated at between 600,000 and one million while 1,100,000 children are enrolled in formal

school.

Returning to the campaign against the mendicancy of the talibé, the right of each child to education must be placed in the context of both national and international norms of the promotion of human rights. The crisis of the family and the growing impoverishment have contributed to the disorganisation of the Senegalese educational system. The mendicancy of children is the most visible consequence because it is linked to the disintegration of the Senegalese family, the gulf separating the educational sites from the politicians and an inversion of the pedagogical model.

Today the combined effects of the crisis and the conflicts explain that in certain zones of Africa abandoning children is legitimised (sorcerer children, for example). On the other hand, in Senegal the most obvious phenomenon is the Senegalese men's abdication of their responsibilities. Traditionally our societies were based on a matrilineal system in which the authority fell to the uncle. But today the uncle cares neither for his nephews nor for his own children. Meanwhile there is a total incoherence in the social policies of the state, the reduced number of structures in no way insuring efficient action. The talibé phenomenon is incomprehensible in a modern world; a child has the right to education, to training and to healthcare. Today the child must be reinstated in his right to education; the first step is to outlaw mendicancy by children, then raise the awareness of families; enforce compulsory education starting with elementary education for it is not a

question of seeing the child as a beneficiary of education but rather as one entitled to a right. The State must set about finding solutions for the crisis in Qur'anic schools, beginning by granting them subventions. Parents must also get involved in seeking solutions. Working in true synergy we can envisage the following strategies:

- Encourage organisations such as the Fund of Islamic Solidarity to help in providing resources.

- Offer real salaries to Qur'anic teachers but also enact measures encouraging them to make teaching more comprehensive.

- Outlaw mendicancy which in the traditional context lasted only thirty to forty minutes a day and allowed the talibé to feed himself.

- Develop comparative research to determine the rationale that will guide the children's progression.

The State must assume its responsibilities and insure the protection of the child who, in the talibé's predicament, has no recourse but the street. 50% of all street children come from the daaras having fled the marabout and so have no more social connections. At the programmatic level, we must involve local councils in the search for solutions and organise meaningful action in the neighbourhoods. It is also necessary to raise awareness of families so that they will not send their children off to beg.

-Penda Mbow, Cheikh Anta Diop University, Dakar, Senegal

Alongside the reading and memorisation of the Qur'an, the Qur'anic schools have shown that they are able to assume other functions such as the eradication of illiteracy, community development and vocational training. The curriculum of Qur'anic schools rests on the Qur'an, which is the basis of faith and knowledge and the precepts woven into the fabric of the Islamic nation in every field---social, economic, political, constitutional and intellectual. However, Qur'anic schools should focus the minds of students on problem solving strategies and on contemplation of the world and creation surrounding them. They should be trained to tolerate other religions and cultures.

Islamic schools have to link their Islamic education to general education system to give it an Islamic perspective rather than a western perspective which most Muslims fight against. It should be the responsibility of the educational institutions to cooperate with Islamic institutions, as well as Islamic States, to find an effective means of meeting their overall educational goals. In this day and age of modern science, Islamic states have to find a way of teaching Qur'an and at the same time equipping students with the education of modern science and technology.

Curriculums that focus on religious tradition and

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Madrasa Curriculum



Characteristics of Madrasas

- ✍ Emphasis on teaching the Qur'an as source of knowledge, faith, piety, and civilised behaviour
- ✍ Community supported and directed
- ✍ Very simple buildings and teaching materials
- ✍ Classes of mixed age groups with one teacher trained primarily in the teaching of the Qur'an
- ✍ Curriculum focuses on learning of the Qur'an utilising individual instruction and peer teaching
- ✍ Memorisation of the Qur'an is the objective of each pupil and once successful, pupils may go on to study other Islamic science
- ✍ Teaching is individualised and the teacher is assisted by senior students who take care of supervision the new comers and teaching them the alphabet
- ✍ Has the capacity to overcome the barriers of age and time. It caters for pre-school, primary and adult education with no restriction on age
- ✍ Students are trained to self- reliant through working on the school farm in the rural areas, collection of water and wood, preparing their own food, washing their own clothes and in some places manufacturing ink and pens from local materials.
- ✍ A reformed Qur'anic school can be a model for reconciling tradition with modernity. Some schools are providing technical and vocational training.
- ✍ The school day starts at dawn and ends late in the evening for the older children
- ✍ Tuition and board is free, but parents can make a voluntary contribution

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general knowledge must enable children meet the challenges of modern life. This will enable them to compete for entry into primary schools and ensure they follow through with their education. Teachers even at the kindergarten level need to be trained on subjects such as school management and planning, the growth and development of children, hygiene, nutrition, and in the making of education materials and aid.

ISESCO (The Islamic Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation) can be a huge resource to Islamic states in West Africa since they have programmes for the support of Qur'anic schools and training of Qur'anic schools teachers, by supplying them with books and equipment and also provide them with multidisciplinary education in religious studies, as well as human and natural sciences. Muslim countries must strive for cooperation between themselves and international organisations such as UNESCO, UNICEF, WFP, ISESCO, and the World Bank.

If the state is to play an effective role in the development of these institutions, it is necessary to

establish a flexible administrative structure to facilitate channels of communication between the Qur'anic schools, members of the community and state educational institutions. Systems should be introduced for registration, monitoring, evaluation, health care and counselling.

Teachers need to be trained to teach self-study skills to students and to prepare them for continuing education. They should also be given the training needed to teach special groups, such as rural and nomadic communities. Teachers should be trained to use their spiritual and moral authority in educating the young and to refrain from the use of corporal punishment. The teachers should also be trained in modern educational methods so that they are able to give their students a well-rounded Islamic education.

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Three Muslims, two viewpoints

I had an interesting conversation with Garuba (an almajiri) and Mallam Alli. Garuba did not know his age, but he looked like he belonged to the 8-12 age range. In the course of our conversation, he made some remarkable statements that illustrated the degree of ideological control exercised by the malams.

"I am an almajiri," he told me early in the conversation. "I want to acquire no other knowledge than Islamic knowledge. I am an almajiri because Allah has predestined me to be one. Working hard for my mallam and trying to survive are not hardships for me, as Allah doesn't belabour a person beyond his means. I have to obey my mallam's orders at all times."

I prodded him further about whether this unquestioning obedience included waging jihads. He replied that Jihad is recommended in Islam. He proudly exclaimed, "If I fight the infidels and die doing it, then I will go to Aljanah (heaven)."

I further asked him whether he had any realisation of the harm to ordinary people caused by religiously motivated violence. Garuba confidently responded, "My malam encourages me to do Jihad. As long as our teachers say that jihad is worth it, we must obey him. We have

been told by our teachers that the Qur'an says that we must obey our leaders."

Mallam Alli is a tsangaya teacher with over seventy pupils in Maigateri, Jigawa State. He is in his mid-thirties, hails from Borno State and has friendly mien. I asked him whether it was time to stop madrasa education and focus instead on basic literacy education, including increasing access to formal occupational and income-generating activities.

"What education?" he responded. "My father didn't get any western education, and lived a fulfilled life. He fathered 25 children and he is now dead. We all pray for him regularly".

"What education?" he responded. "My father didn't get any western education, and lived a fulfilled life. He fathered 25 children and he is now dead. We all pray for him regularly. If we had western education, we would never have prayed for him. See all the yanbokos, the supposed products of decadent western culture, who have no respect for their family members and religious institutions. I was trained as an almajiri and I am doing well. My life is predetermined by Allah and I believe His rewards supersede the life of the world".

I now moved to the central question concerning religious violence. I asked, "Would you do Jihad?" The malam gave an immediate response, "If I get the

opportunity to, then I will do it." Following his answer, he proceeded to ask me whether I too was a Muslim. I responded in the affirmative. He now retorted back, "Will you do jihad?" I said, "Yes."

At this point, he did not understand that we were working with two very different conceptions of Jihad. My idea of Jihad is essentially the scripturally-based peaceful spread of Islam and its fundamental tenets. However, before I had a chance to debate with him, Malam Alli tried to justify his statement with a consideration of the expected rewards of his activities. He said, "I listen to my teachers, they are our leaders and my students also listen to me, one day I will also become a big teacher with huge followings". We now moved to the sensitive topic of education. I asked him whether he knew that under the UBEC law in Nigeria it was an offense to deny children their primary education. At this point, Malam Alli could not contain himself. He shouted, "What law! They had better not move to enforce such laws or blood will flow, let them leave us alone with our system. I was an almajiri and am happy so my children will have to be almajiri as well".

-Idayat Hassan

Monthly News and Current Affairs

Compiled by Oluchi Agbanyim



STUDY REVEALS FEMALE ALAMAJIRI

A disquieting revelation arising from a recent USAID funded study using the Creative Associates's State Education Sub-Accounts methodology in Nigeria's northern capital cities of Kano and Gusau has shown that 30 percent of the 1.6 million students attending Almajiri (Qur'anic) schools are girls. The finding is expected to have impact on policy making and encourage the government to work with Imams and the communities to add broad range of literacy subjects.

<http://creative-associates.us/2009/12/nigeria-30-percent-almajiri-students-are-girls-usaid-study-reveals/>



INDEPENDENCE CELEBRATIONS

Three West African countries celebrated their independence on August 1, August 5 and August 3 respectively. Benin then Dahomey, Burkina Faso then Upper Volta and Niger all gained their independence from France in August 1960. The then US president Dwight D. Eisenhower official recognised the nations same month. It is hoped that these

countries will continue to pursue democratic principles.

<http://allafrica.com/stories/201108091565.html>



AFRICANS UNITE AGAINST CHILD ABUSE - AFRICUA

A two day international conference organised by AFRICUA holding from 8-9 November in London is expected to have participants from Africa, Asia and elsewhere deliberate on issues of Witchcraft branding, spirit possession and safeguarding African Children. The conference will explore the issue in all its dimensions and factors including religious beliefs and also consider the impact, policies and strategies to curb the ever present menace.

<http://www.afruca.org/images/stories/events/Inovember%202011%20conference%20brochure%20final%20final.pdf>



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DEVASTATING FLOODS OYO STATE NIGERIA

No fewer than 102 people have died in the past week when torrential rainfall caused the Odo Ona River to overflow its banks, causing the Eleyele Dam to burst. The Oyo State government spokesman described the incident as disastrous. Illegal homes and structures built along waterways, impeding the flow of water have been blamed for the flooding. Buildings, bridges and a dam collapsed at the impact. It would be recalled that since June, there have been cases of flooding leading to deaths in Kano, Lagos and some other parts of the country.

<http://digitaljournal.com/article/311016>

“Madrasas must modernise” –Olurode

Prof Lai Olurode is a Fulbright Senior Fellow and author of the book *Glimpses of Madrasa from Africa*. He spoke with *West Africa Insight's* Terfa Philip Hemen. Excerpts:



Does madrasa education adequately prepare the students to face the challenges of today and those of the future?

For the madrasa to sustain its relevance in a rapidly globalising society, it and the state must address or respond to the challenges of social inclusion, of increasing internationalisation of citizenship and the demands of participation in global conversation. The training given to the children who attend madrasa should be such that they would be able to fit into global skill architecture while they simultaneously retain some of their core, enduring and distinguishing features in terms of making them to be good and morally ethical citizens.

In view of the rise of terrorism and the perception in certain quarters that madrasa are breeding grounds for terrorists, do you still think West Africa needs these schools?

This is a misconception. People tend to distrust Western education; they see it as a spoiler, as an immoral kind of platform where pupils learn bad habits. Some Muslims, particularly, from their past experiences of discrimination by Christian church missionary society nurse a sense of siege and thus see a typical madrasa as a shield and trust that madrasa education offers sanity, a kind of purity. All you therefore need to do is to find ways of assuaging this distrust. This has been done very well in Kenya, to some extent in Ethiopia and to a greater extent in Tanzania. The fear that the wards would lose their religion is not there; the fear of the loss of the teachings of Islam is removed.

Concerns about child safety always arise as young persons have to leave their parents and migrate to other places. What modification to madrasas can assuage this?

Teachers are not well remunerated, that's why they exploit the labour of those children; sometimes you see the pupils carry bowls to beg. They have no means

of livelihood, sometimes there are up to 200 hundred pupils under a teacher. This makes the pupils vulnerable as they can sometimes be recruited to engage into acts of violence. Record keeping is poor.

If you modernise and re-structure like the Western style school they would have more time to stay in school.

Where do you see madrasa education in the next 10 years? Would it still be relevant?

Of course, it would still be relevant. Madrasa is a centre for transmission of culture, values and tradition. For many it is not only a shield from the tremor of globalisation and its immense uncertainties, it simultaneously presents a platform upon which they can do some good and give back in charity to society. The madrasa enables people to live in accordance to their beliefs and also provides avenues to carry out some of their religious obligations. It is therefore difficult to see how the madrasa would go away. In any case, it makes little sense to have a view of madrasa and being in competition with western-based values or as oppositional. Islam's contribution to western scholarship is well acclaimed, it cannot be *haram*.