

Role of Financial Aid in Socio-Economic Empowerment of Madrasa Students in Lucknow City: A Pilot Study

Abstract

A pilot study on the role of financial aid in socio-economic empowerment of Madrasa students in Lucknow city was undertaken by taking a sample from seven Madrasas of Lucknow city. The findings have indicated that in case of most of the students, financial aid from the government was useful in socio-economic empowerment of Madrasa students. It was also found that most of the students got employment after getting Madrasa education and went for mainstream education after its completion. It is suggested that greater financial assistance may be provided by the government to empower Madrasa students economically and socially.

Keywords: Madrasa, Financial Aid, Muslims, Empowerment, Mainstream Education

Introduction

Education is the key to remove poverty and upgrade the social status of any community. In India apart from taking mainstream education, quite a large number of students take Madrasa education along with mainstream education.

India has one of the largest Muslim population in the world, 110 million and smaller only than that of Indonesia. Madrasa (educational institution) has been an integral part for education of Muslims in India. However, the facts are also available that towards the end of eighteenth century, Hindus were also studying with Muslims in Madrasas. With the passage of time, Madrasa education system gradually became an enclave for education of Muslims in India. This observation supported the fact that number of Madrasas have increased very quickly over these years in states, like Uttar Pradesh, where sizeable population of Muslims are there. It is estimated that more than ten thousand Madrasas are functioning in the state of Uttar Pradesh alone. This goes to probe that Madrasa education system has been adopted by Muslims as an alternative system of education apart from adopting the main education system. By realizing the weakness of the system in terms of expenses to provide education to Muslim children which is relevant from day to day needs of the society, the government has undertaken the initiative of Madrasa modernization programme and redesigned the curriculum of Madrasa education to bring it at par with the mainstream education. For this government of India has started giving scholarship to students of Madrasas. Lucknow, the capital of Uttar Pradesh has many Madrasas both aided and unaided. The aided Madrasas receive grant from Indian government. Financial aid is provided in the form of scholarships.

The ministry offers national as well as external scholarships to the needy students. Madrasa students are generally from poor families, so government schemes will provide an incentive for their enrolment and retention. It becomes the duty of government to treat Madrasa students equally at par in terms of recognition of their courses with the mainstream courses and providing various incentives and facilities as given to the students of government schools. (Fahimuddin,2004).

The main purpose of financial aid and scholarship is to provide scholarship, tuition fee, education, books and reading material etc. The average amount of scholarship is meagre. The amount of scholarship is inadequate. Students are not getting scholarship in time. Though scholarship significantly contributes to the educational development of Madrasa students, however, per capital scholarship amounts meagre to



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sustain and afford higher studies. Moreover, they also face problems related to quality education. The amount of scholarship should be increased and the quantum of amount (grant) should be based on strength of students of various classes in institutions. There should be uniformity of scholarship channelizing agencies to the traditional educational institutions.

In a society, a person of any class wants a better and smooth life. However, perception of the people can vary about what is better and smooth life in urban and rural areas. In which backdrop, ongoing economic reforms were initiated in India in 1991 claiming reduction of poverty (multidimensional) existed in the large chunk of the population or improvement in their living standards or development or enhancement in their wellbeing, at the time of conceptualization of the study, it was a question whether Madrasa students were able to meet their entire educational requirements throughout the years with least difficulty and could improve their life by accessing the developmental opportunities, what the economic reformists had promised to provide. Though socio-economic status, standard livings and wellbeing may be different but they are associated with poverty reduction.

The Socio-economic Status (SES) usually refers to components of economic and social status that distinguish and characterize people. Indicators of SES are meant to reflect access to social and economic resources that may vary over time. Frequent measures of SES in developing countries include proxies of wealth, income, expenditures, education and housing conditions. By SES, it is meant that both absolute and relative levels of wealth, the power and prestige closely associated with wealth, which may be reflected in measures of income, accumulated economic assets, occupational status, and educational attainment, among other measures (Doocy and Burnham, 2006). The socioeconomic status (SES) is often measured as a combination of education, income, and occupation (Braveman. P and others, 2001). The socioeconomic status is commonly conceptualized as the social standing or class of an individual or group. When viewed through a social class lens, privilege, power, and control are emphasized. Furthermore, an examination of SES as a gradient or continuous variable reveals inequities in access to and distribution of resources (American Psychological Association Centre, n.d.). The socio-economic status is a classification indicating the close relationship between a person's social status and his financial standing (Wisegreek.org, n.d.). The definitions of SES emphasize that, as a construct, (1) it is conditional, (2) it is imposed on people, (3) it is used for comparisons and (4) it is based on economics, opportunity, and means of influence. It is also defined as the grouping of people with similar occupational, educational, and economic characteristics. SES is also called the relative standing in society based on income, power, background and prestige. An important qualification is the ability to control resources and participate in society's rewards. The factors that are usually

considered in establishing SES are income, occupation, education, neighbourhood, and political power (Brogan. R 2009). The socioeconomic status (SES) is a measure of an individual's or family's economic and social position in relation to others, based on various variables responsible for that like income, education, occupation, family effluence, physical assets, social position, social participation, caste, muscle power, political influence etc. Majority of researchers agree that income, education and occupation together best represent SES, while some others feel that changes in family structure, family effluence etc should also be considered. Wealth is also considered a determinant of SES, which is a set of economic reserves or assets, presents a source of security providing a measure of a household's ability to meet emergencies, absorb economic shocks, or provide the means to live comfortably. Wealth reflects intergenerational transitions as well as accumulation of income and savings (Gaur. K.L. 2013). Considering the above backdrop and definitions of these terms, a new simple definition of socio-economic status was developed, which covers the aspects of development, living standards and wellbeing as follows: housing condition, educational status, electricity connection and its availability; drinking water and in-house toilet facilities; household assets, agricultural landholdings; occupations and their contribution in the household income, household level expenditure, fulfilment of household requirements; savings and access to loans from the financial institutions, access to the social security and poverty eradication schemes and social and political status.

Objectives of the Study:

The specific objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To assess the impact of scholarships on the education of Madrasa students.
2. To find out the aspiration role of financial aid for Madrasa Students.
3. To find out career path of Madrasa students..
4. To evaluate the impact of financial aid in the socio-economic development of Madrasa students.
5. To find out the problems and challenges Madrasa students face in getting quality education and employment.
6. To find out the integration of Madrasa education with mainstream education.
7. To suggest policy measures for improvement of the standards of Madrasa education.

Methodology of the Study

The study is pilot one and based on the case study of few Madrasas of Lucknow city which have been shown below. A questionnaire was developed to collect primary data from Madrasa students which focussed on the socio-economic status of Madrasa students in relation to the financial aid provided to them by the government.

Sample of the study

The following aided Madrasa of Lucknow were selected for the study:

1. Madrasa Hanfia Ziaul Quran, Aliganj, Lucknow.

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2. Madrasa Al Firdaus Rehmani School, Dubagga, Lucknow.
3. Madrasa Lucknow Cambrige School, Picnic Spot Road, Lucknow.
4. Eram Model School, Akbar Nagar, Lucknow.
5. Madrasa Faruqia, Kakori, Lucknow
6. Jamia Arabia Khazinatul Uloom, Nakhhas, Lucknow.
7. Darul Uloom Warsia, Gomti Nagar, Lucknow

school level, five students from high school level and five students from intermediate level were interviewed. In this way, a total of 105 Madrasa students were selected but at the end, hundred questionnaires were found to be fit for the use in the analysis.

Responses of Madrasa Students of Lucknow

Following are the responses to the questions asked to the Madrasa students:

From each Madrasa fifteen students were selected for the study. Five students from Junior high

Do you receive scholarship from the government for your studies? Yes/ No

No, of Students from Lucknow Madrasa	Response		Response Percentage	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
100	85	15	85%	15%

From the responses of students, it is clear that 85% students received financial aid provided by the government.

If yes, then is it sufficient for the expenses of your Madrasa education? Yes/ No

No, of Students from Lucknow Madrasa	Response		Response Percentage	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
100	75	25	75%	25%

Among those students receiving financial aid from the government seventy five percent students feel that it is sufficient for them for their studies.

Do you face difficulty in taking scholarship from the government? Yes/ No

No, of students from Lucknow Madrasa	Response		Response Percentage	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
100	17	83	17%	83%

Seventeen percent students felt difficulty in obtaining scholarship from government, whereas a majority of 83% students did not feel difficulty in getting scholarship from the government.

Could you study and continue your studies in your Madrasa if you had not received this scholarship? Yes/ No

No, of students from Lucknow Madrasa	Response		Response Percentage	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
100	33	67	67%	33%

Thirty three percent students were found to be dependent on the scholarship they received from the government, without which they would have discontinued their education. This shows how important was this financial aid provided by government to them.

In your friends circle are your friends from Madrasa only or are they from other schools taking mainstream education?

From Madrasa only/ Both from Madrasa and Mainstream education

No, of students from Lucknow Madrasa	Response		Response Percentage	
	From Madrasa only	Both from Madrasa and Mainstream education	From Madrasa only	Both from Madrasa and Mainstream education
100	24	76	24%	76%

Seventy six percent of Madrasa students had their friends from outside Madrasa may be they were taking mainstream education. While twenty four percent students had their friends from their Madrasa only.

Do you feel comfortable interacting with your friends who do not undertake Madrasa education? Yes / No

No, of students from Lucknow Madrasa	Response		Response Percentage	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
100	100	00	100%	00%

Surprisingly all students of Lucknow Madrasa that is hundred percent students said that they did not have any sort of hesitation and felt completely comfortable interacting with people outside Madrasas.

Do you face adjustment problems with people who are not from your Madrasa? Yes / No

No.of students from Lucknow Madrasa	Response	Response Percentage
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100	Yes	No	Yes	No
	00	100	00%	100%

None of the Madrasa students of Lucknow had any adjustment problems with people outside Madrasas. All of them showed good adjustment signs.

If yes, then what type of problems do you face?

Some of them said that other people who are not aware of Madrasa education felt that they were inferior as they do not study the modern subjects by which they can become doctor or engineer. Some others also felt that some section of people in the society consider them backward.

What is your aim to become in life?

Most of them said that they wanted to lead a decent life, with a decent and respectable job or business.

Do you aspire to get government job after completing Madrasa education? Yes / No

No, of students from Lucknow Madrasa	Response		Response Percentage	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
100	73	27	73%	27%

Seventy three percent students aspired to get government job after completing their education. While twenty seven percent students did not think of it seriously and were ready to do any decent job or business after completing their Madrasa education in Lucknow.

Will you switch on to mainstream education after completing Madrasa education? Yes / No

No, of students from Lucknow Madrasa	Response		Response Percentage	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
100	84	16	84%	16%

Eighty four percent Madrasa students wanted to attain mainstream education after completing their Madrasa education

Do you know any Madrasa students who have completed their Madrasa education and now in job? Yes / No

No, of students from Lucknow Madrasa	Response		Response Percentage	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
100	78	22	78%	22%

Seventy eight percent of students said they have met their seniors who had completed their Madrasa education and now doing job and living decently.

13- If yes, then what type of job are they doing?

(1) Government Service (2) Private Service (3) Business

No, of students from Lucknow Madrasa	Response			Response Percentage		
	Govt. service	Private service	Business	Govt. service	Private service	Business
	04	76	20	04%	76%	20%

Among those students who have completed their Madrasa studies, and also known to Madrasa students, four percent of them were involved in government jobs, seventy six percent of them were doing some private jobs and the rest twenty percent were either doing their own business or working with someone in some business.

Are your parents satisfied with your studies? Yes / No

No, of students from Lucknow Madrasa	Response		Response Percentage	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
100	94	06	94%	06%

Ninety four percent parents or guardians of Madrasa students were found to be satisfied with the studies of their wards, whereas six percent of them were found to be dissatisfied with the studies of their wards.

15-What is the reason for you to take admission in Madrasa rather than in a school imparting mainstream education?

Madrasa education is more economical than mainstream education. They also said that they are

able to learn moral and religious values from Madrasa education. They said that in Madrasas there is regular teaching and their teachers teach very well and their time is utilised as there is regular teaching and learning. After completing this Madrasa education they can also join mainstream education if they wish so. Thereby we can apply for government jobs, private jobs. Some people also preferred doing business.

16-Are you satisfied with your studies in your Madrasa ? Yes / No

No, of students from Lucknow Madrasa	Response		Response Percentage	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
100	94	06	94%	06%

Ninety four percent Madrasa students were found to be satisfied with their studies in their Madrasa.

Are you satisfied with the method of teaching of your teacher ? Yes / No

No, of students from Lucknow Madrasa	Response		Response Percentage	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
100	84	16	84%	16%

Eighty four percent students were satisfied with the method of teaching of their teachers. This was a very good sign for teaching learning community.

Are you satisfied with the facilities provided to you in your Madrasa? Yes / No

No, of students from Lucknow Madrasa	Response		Response Percentage	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
100	57	43	57%	43%

Fifty seven percent Madrasa students of Lucknow were satisfied with the facilities provided to them by their Madrasas. But forty three percent students were dissatisfied with the facilities. Since this is quite a big percentage of students, this matter has to be considered and taken up seriously by the managements of Madrasas.

If not satisfied, then what is the reason for it?

When asked the reason for dissatisfaction, the hostel students complained about the food they were getting in their mess. They also wanted to have more facilities like good computer lab, good library, a little more better infrastructure provided to them. They also wanted themselves to be linked with some skill development programmes and have more facilities to get good employment opportunities in future.

Conclusion and Suggestions

The study is based on a sample of seven Madrasas located in Lucknow city. In this way, the study is a pilot one which will be developed into a comprehensive study covering all major districts of Uttar Pradesh where Madrasas are located in fairly good numbers.

On the basis of pilot survey of seven Madrasas of Lucknow city, it is found that 85% of all sample students in these Madrasas received financial support from the government. Out of these, 75% reported that they found the financial aid sufficient to meet their expenses. Most of them reported that they did not face any difficulty in getting financial support from the government. Majority of them found that due to financial aid they were able to continue their studies. It was also found that friends of 76% of Madrasa students were from Madrasa as well as from mainstream education. All the Madrasa students had no problem interacting with people or students outside Madrasas or Madrasa education. All of them had no adjustment problems with people in their society. Most of them aspired for a good job and a decent life. As high as 73% of sample Madrasa students aspired to get government jobs and majority of them (84%) desired to shift to mainstream education after completing their Madrasa education. A very high percentage of sample students have informed that

they knew Madrasa students who got job after completing Madrasa education. Mostly the employment of such students has been in private sector.

The sample Madrasa students are of the view that their parents are satisfied with their education. They preferred Madrasa education because its cost is relatively economical and most of them were found satisfied with Madrasa education and method of teaching there. More than half of them were found satisfied with the facilities in Madrasas where they were studying. On the whole, Madrasa students were positive in their attitude towards life and education. On the basis of findings it can be suggested that government should provide greater financial support to boost socio-economic status of Madrasa students. In this way, the mainstreaming of Madrasa students and scope of their employability will also be enhanced.

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