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THE IMPORTANCE OF TECHNICAL EDUCATION IN MADRASSAS: EMPOWERING SCHOLARS FOR LIVELIHOOD AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN PAKISTAN

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ABSTRACT

The article explores the importance of technical education in madrassas in Pakistan, highlighting the need for a balanced education that includes both Islamic and technical knowledge. While learning Islamic knowledge is mandatory for scholars to become better Muslims and serve their communities, technical education can equip them with the necessary skills to secure livelihoods and contribute to community development.

The article presents the challenges faced by madrassa graduates in finding meaningful employment and emphasizes the importance of technical skills in today's economy. It showcases successful examples of madrassas that have integrated technical education into their

curriculum and highlights the stories of madrassa graduates who have gone on to become successful professionals.

The article also discusses the challenges faced by madrassas in providing technical education and proposes possible solutions, such as partnerships with government agencies and NGOs, and the use of technology to deliver online education.

In conclusion, the article emphasizes the significance of technical education in madrassas for both scholars and their communities. It calls upon stakeholders to support and invest in technical education programs in madrassas to empower scholars for livelihood and community development. By combining Islamic and technical education, madrassas can produce well-rounded individuals who are better equipped to navigate the modern world while staying true to their faith and values.

INTRODUCTION

Brief overview of the importance of education in Islam and the traditional role of madrassas in Pakistan

Education is highly valued in Islam, and it is considered a duty for Muslims to seek knowledge throughout their lives. In the Quran Allah Almighty says:

اقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ ۚ خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ ۚ اقْرَأْ وَرَبُّكَ الْأَكْرَمُ ۚ الَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ ۚ عَلَّمَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ¹

"Read! In the name of your Lord who created: He created man from a clot. Read! And your Lord is the Most Generous, who taught by the pen; taught man what he did not know"

This verse emphasizes the importance of seeking knowledge and suggests that the acquisition of knowledge is a means of worshiping Allah.

Madrassas, which are Islamic religious schools, have played a significant role in providing education in Pakistan for centuries. The traditional role of madrassas has been to teach Islamic knowledge, including Quranic recitation, Hadith, and Islamic jurisprudence. The madrassa system has been instrumental in preserving and promoting Islamic knowledge and values, and has produced generations of religious scholars who have served their communities in various capacities.²

However, there has been a growing recognition in recent years that the traditional madrassa curriculum does not adequately prepare students for the modern world. Madrassa graduates often lack the skills needed to secure meaningful employment, and many struggle to adapt to the changing needs of society. As a result, there has been a push to integrate technical education into the madrassa curriculum to provide students with the necessary skills to succeed in the modern world.³

The need for a more balanced education that includes technical skills

While the traditional role of madrassas has been to teach Islamic knowledge, there is an increasing recognition that students also need technical education to succeed in today's world. In Pakistan, many madrassa graduates face limited employment opportunities due to their lack of technical skills. Without technical education, they are often unable to participate in the formal economy and end up in low-paying jobs or unemployed.

A more balanced education that includes both Islamic and technical knowledge can help madrassa graduates secure meaningful employment and contribute to their communities. By acquiring technical skills such as computer programming, web design, and graphic design, madrassa graduates can work as freelancers or start their own businesses. They can also use their technical skills to serve their communities, for example by creating websites or social media campaigns for local NGOs or community organizations.⁴

Furthermore, a more balanced education can help madrassa graduates navigate the challenges of modern life while staying true to their faith and values. They can use their Islamic knowledge and ethical principles to guide their decision-making in the workplace and in their personal lives. This can help them become better role models for their communities and contribute positively to society.

The Quran and Hadith also emphasize the importance of seeking knowledge and the value of hard work. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said:

لان ياخذ احدكم حبله فياتي بحزمة الحطب على ظهره فيبييعها فيكف الله بها وجهه ، خير له من ان يسال الناس اعطوه او منعه ⁵

"It is better for one of you to take a rope and bring a bundle of wood on his back to sell so that Allah may preserve his honor than to beg from people, whether they give him anything or refuse him" (Al-Bukhari and Muslim). This Hadith highlights the value of hard work and self-sufficiency.

Overall, a more balanced education that includes technical skills can help madrassa graduates succeed in today's world while staying true to their faith and values.

The Importance of Islamic Education

The role of madrassas in preserving and promoting Islamic knowledge and values

Madrassas have played a crucial role in preserving and promoting Islamic knowledge and values throughout history. Madrassas provide a structured environment for students to study Islam, including the Quran, Hadith, Islamic law, and theology. They also serve as centers for the transmission of Islamic traditions, practices, and values from one generation to the next.

The Quran emphasizes the importance of seeking knowledge, and this has been a central tenet of Islamic education. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said:

"Seeking knowledge is obligatory upon every Muslim" (Ibn Majah).⁶

Madrassas have been instrumental in fulfilling this obligation, providing access to Islamic education for millions of people around the world.

Madrassas also promote Islamic values such as compassion, justice, and humility. Students are taught to uphold these values in their personal lives and to apply them in their interactions with others. This can help create a more compassionate and just society based on Islamic principles.

Furthermore, madrassas have served as centers of resistance against colonialism and other forms of oppression. During the colonial era, madrassas played a crucial role in preserving Islamic culture and identity, and resisting attempts to impose Western values and education systems. They also served as centers for political mobilization and activism, helping to promote social and political change.

While some critics have raised concerns about the content and quality of education provided in madrassas, there is no denying the important role they have played in preserving and promoting Islamic knowledge and values. In Pakistan, for example, madrassas have served as a lifeline for millions of poor children who would otherwise have no access to education.⁷

In conclusion, madrassas have played a vital role in preserving and promoting Islamic knowledge and values. They provide access to Islamic education for millions of people, promote Islamic values such as compassion and justice, and serve as centers of resistance against oppression. While there are valid concerns about the quality of education provided in some madrassas, the overall contribution of madrassas to Islamic education and culture cannot be overstated. How Islamic education can help scholars become better Muslims and serve their communities

Islamic education can help scholars become better Muslims and serve their communities in many ways. First and foremost, Islamic education provides scholars with a deep understanding of Islamic teachings, including the Quran, Hadith, Islamic law, and theology. This knowledge can help scholars strengthen their faith and develop a deeper connection with Allah.

Scholars who are well-versed in Islamic teachings are better equipped to apply these principles in their personal and professional lives and to serve as role models for their communities.⁸

Islamic education also provides scholars with the tools and skills necessary to serve their communities. For example, Islamic education can help scholars develop critical thinking skills, which are essential for addressing complex social and political issues. Scholars can use their knowledge of Islamic teachings to develop solutions to these issues that are grounded in Islamic principles.⁹

In addition, Islamic education can help scholars become effective leaders and communicators. Scholars who are well-versed in Islamic teachings can use their knowledge to inspire and motivate their communities. They can also use their communication skills to spread Islamic teachings and values to a wider audience.¹⁰

Overall, Islamic education is essential for scholars who wish to become better Muslims and serve their communities. It provides scholars with a deep understanding of Islamic teachings, helps them develop moral and ethical principles, equips them with the tools and skills necessary to serve their communities, and helps them become effective leaders and communicators.

The Need for Technical Education

The challenges faced by madrasa graduates in finding meaningful employment Madrassas in Pakistan have traditionally focused on providing Islamic education to students, with little emphasis on providing technical or vocational training. As a result, madrasa graduates often face challenges in finding meaningful employment in today's job market. Many employers, particularly those in the private sector, require candidates to have specific technical or vocational skills, which are often lacking in madrasa graduates.¹¹

Moreover, there is a perception in some sectors of society that madrasa graduates are not equipped with the necessary skills to perform effectively in the workplace. This perception can lead to discrimination against madrasa graduates in the job market, further exacerbating their employment challenges.¹²

To address these challenges, there is a need to introduce technical and vocational training in madrassas, alongside traditional Islamic education. This will enable madrasa graduates to acquire the necessary skills and competencies to compete in the job market and contribute to the economy.

Several initiatives have already been taken to introduce technical and vocational training in madrassas in Pakistan. For example, the government of Pakistan has launched the "Prime Minister's Hunarmand Pakistan Programme" to provide vocational training to youth across the country, including madrasa students.¹³ In addition, non-governmental organizations such as the Al-Khidmat Foundation have established vocational training centers in madrassas to provide technical training to students.¹⁴

It is important to note that technical and vocational training should not come at the expense of traditional Islamic education. Rather, both should be given equal importance, as they are complementary to each other. This will ensure that madrasa graduates are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to become productive members of society, while also preserving and promoting Islamic values and teachings.

The importance of technical skills in today's economy

In today's rapidly changing and highly competitive economy, technical skills have become increasingly important for individuals seeking to succeed in their careers. Technological advancements have led to the emergence of new industries and jobs that require specialized technical knowledge and skills, such as data analysis, software development, and digital marketing.

According to the World Economic Forum, the demand for technical skills is expected to continue to grow in the coming years, and it is estimated that by 2025, around 85 million jobs could be displaced by automation, while 97 million new jobs may emerge that require a new set of skills, including technical skills. Therefore, it is crucial for individuals to acquire the necessary technical skills to remain competitive in the job market.¹⁵

Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of digital skills, as many jobs have transitioned to remote work, and digital communication has become the norm. Individuals with technical skills have been able to adapt more easily to the changing work environment and have been better equipped to continue working remotely.

Furthermore, technical skills can also lead to higher paying jobs and career advancement opportunities. A report by the Brookings Institution found that workers with technical skills earned higher wages, had lower unemployment rates, and were more likely to be employed in high-growth industries.¹⁶

In Pakistan, there is a growing demand for technical skills in various industries, including information technology, manufacturing, and healthcare. However, many individuals, especially those from low-income backgrounds or with limited access to education, lack the necessary technical skills to compete in the job market.¹⁷

By introducing technical training in madrassas, students can acquire the necessary technical skills to compete in the job market and contribute to the economy. This will not only benefit the students but also the country as a whole, as it will lead to increased productivity and economic growth.

The potential benefits of combining Islamic and technical education

Combining Islamic and technical education can offer several potential benefits for students and their communities. Islamic education can provide students with a strong moral and ethical foundation, teaching them the values of compassion, honesty, and social responsibility. Technical education, on the other hand, can equip students with the practical skills and knowledge needed to succeed in the modern job market.¹⁸

By combining these two types of education, students can develop a well-rounded set of skills that can help them become better Muslims and responsible

members of their communities while also providing them with the technical expertise needed to succeed in their chosen fields.

Moreover, the integration of Islamic and technical education can help to bridge the gap between traditional religious education and modern job market demands. In many parts of the world, including Pakistan, there has been a long-standing divide between traditional religious education and modern secular education. By combining these two forms of education, students can develop a more holistic understanding of the world and become better equipped to navigate the complexities of modern life.¹⁹

Additionally, the integration of Islamic and technical education can help to create more socially responsible and ethically conscious professionals. By emphasizing the importance of social responsibility and ethical behavior in both Islamic and technical education, students can be encouraged to use their skills and knowledge for the betterment of society and the world at large.²⁰

Overall, the combination of Islamic and technical education can provide students with a unique and valuable skill set that can help them succeed both professionally and personally while also contributing positively to their communities.

Examples of Successful Technical Education Programs in Madrassas

Case studies of madrassas that have successfully integrated technical education into their curriculum

There are several examples of madrassas in Pakistan that have successfully integrated technical education into their curriculum. One such example is the Al-Huda International Welfare Foundation, which has several campuses across Pakistan and offers a wide range of courses in Islamic and technical education. The organization was founded in 1994 by Dr. Farhat Hashmi, a renowned Islamic scholar and educator, and has since expanded to include over 200 campuses in Pakistan and around the world.²¹

At Al-Huda, students can choose from a variety of technical courses, including computer science, fashion designing, and business management. These courses are designed to provide students with the skills and knowledge needed to succeed in the modern job market while also emphasizing the importance of Islamic values and ethics.

In addition to these examples, there are several other madrassas and Islamic schools around the world that have successfully integrated technical education into their curriculum. These institutions have recognized the importance of providing students with a well-rounded education that combines both traditional Islamic values and modern technical skills.

Challenges and Solutions

The challenges faced by madrassas in providing technical education, including funding and infrastructure

While the benefits of incorporating technical education into madrassa curricula are clear, there are also significant challenges that must be addressed in order to make this a reality. One major challenge is funding. Madrassas are typically funded through charitable donations and endowments from wealthy individuals or foundations. These sources of funding may not be sufficient to support the additional resources and infrastructure needed to provide technical education.

Another challenge is the lack of suitable infrastructure for technical education. Madrassas often lack the necessary physical infrastructure, equipment, and technology to provide modern technical training. This is particularly challenging in rural areas, where many madrassas are located and where access to modern technology and infrastructure is limited.²²

Additionally, many madrassas are run by conservative religious leaders who may be resistant to change and who may view technical education as a threat to traditional Islamic education. This can create a cultural barrier to the implementation of technical education in madrassas.²³

To address these challenges, there is a need for increased funding for madrassas and for technical education programs. Governments, foundations, and other organizations can provide funding for madrassas to improve their infrastructure and to hire qualified instructors for technical education programs. Additionally, partnerships with local businesses and industries can provide opportunities for students to gain practical experience and to establish networks for future employment.²⁴

Finally, there is a need for increased awareness and education among madrassa leaders and the broader Muslim community about the benefits of combining Islamic and technical education. Quran and Hadith contain many references to the importance of seeking knowledge and using it for the betterment of society. By emphasizing the compatibility of Islamic values with technical education, leaders can help to promote a more balanced approach to education in madrassas.

Possible solutions, such as partnerships with government agencies and NGOs, and the use of technology to deliver online education

There are several potential solutions to the challenges faced by madrassas in providing technical education. One solution is to establish partnerships with government agencies and NGOs. These organizations can provide funding, expertise, and other resources to support the development of technical education programs in madrassas.²⁵

Another solution is to use technology to deliver online education. Online courses and training programs can provide access to technical education for students who are unable to attend traditional classroom-based programs. Online education can also help to address the infrastructure challenges faced by many madrassas, as it requires less physical space and equipment than traditional classroom-based programs.²⁶

In addition, partnerships with local businesses and industries can provide opportunities for students to gain practical experience and to establish networks for future employment. This can help to address the challenge of finding meaningful employment after graduation.²⁷

Finally, there is a need for increased awareness and education among madrassa leaders and the broader Muslim community about the importance of technical education. By emphasizing the compatibility of Islamic values with technical education, leaders can help to promote a more balanced approach to education in madrassas.

In conclusion, while there are significant challenges to incorporating technical education into madrassa curricula, there are also potential solutions that can be implemented to address these challenges. By working together, governments, NGOs, businesses, and madrassa leaders can create opportunities for students to gain the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in today's economy while also preserving and promoting Islamic values and traditions.

CONCLUSION

A summary of the importance of technical education in madrassas for both scholars and their communities

In conclusion, the integration of technical education in madrassas can have significant benefits for both scholars and their communities. For scholars, technical education can provide them with practical skills and knowledge that can enhance their employability and financial stability. At the same time, by combining technical education with Islamic education, madrassas can help to promote a more balanced approach to education that emphasizes both worldly and spiritual pursuits.

For communities, the benefits of technical education in madrassas are equally significant. By providing students with the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in today's economy, madrassas can help to alleviate poverty and promote economic development. In addition, the integration of technical education in madrassas can help to counter negative stereotypes about madrassa education and promote greater understanding and cooperation between different segments of society.

However, there are also significant challenges that need to be addressed in order to fully realize the potential of technical education in madrassas. These challenges include a lack of funding, inadequate infrastructure, and limited awareness and understanding of the importance of technical education among madrassa leaders and the broader Muslim community.

Despite these challenges, there are also potential solutions that can be implemented to overcome them. By working together, governments, NGOs, businesses, and madrassa leaders can create opportunities for students to gain the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in today's economy while also preserving and promoting Islamic values and traditions.

In short, the integration of technical education in madrassas has the potential to transform the lives of scholars and their communities by providing them with the tools they need to succeed in today's world while also preserving and promoting Islamic values and traditions. It is a challenge that requires commitment, cooperation, and creativity, but the potential benefits are too great to ignore.

A call to action for stakeholders to support and invest in technical education programs in madrassas.

Given the potential benefits of technical education in madrassas, it is crucial for stakeholders to support and invest in such programs. This includes governments, NGOs, businesses, and individual donors who can provide financial resources, expertise, and support to help madrassas develop and implement effective technical education programs.

One way to support technical education in madrassas is through partnerships between governments and madrassas. Governments can provide funding and resources to help madrassas develop technical education programs, while also working with madrassas to ensure that these programs are aligned with national education standards and labor market needs.

NGOs can also play a critical role in supporting technical education in madrassas. NGOs can provide technical expertise and resources to help madrassas develop and implement effective technical education programs, while also working to raise awareness about the importance of such programs among the broader Muslim community.

Businesses can also contribute to technical education in madrassas by providing job opportunities and internships for madrassa graduates. By working with madrassas to develop tailored training programs that meet the specific needs of their businesses, companies can help to ensure that madrassa graduates have the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in the workplace.

Individual donors can also make a difference by supporting madrassas that are implementing effective technical education programs. Donations can help to fund infrastructure improvements, purchase equipment and materials, and provide scholarships and financial assistance to students who otherwise would not be able to afford education.

In conclusion, the integration of technical education in madrassas has the potential to transform the lives of scholars and their communities by providing them with the tools they need to succeed in today's world while also preserving

and promoting Islamic values and traditions. It is a call to action for stakeholders to support and invest in technical education programs in madrassas, as this can help to alleviate poverty, promote economic development, and counter negative stereotypes about madrassa education. Through collaboration and commitment, stakeholders can work together to create a brighter future for scholars and their communities.

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