

Identifying the Role of the First 'Qawmi Madrasah' Darul Uloom Deoband in the Indian Subcontinent

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Abstract

When Darul Uloom in Deoband was founded, the Muslims endured a difficult period under the British. Darul Uloom was a ray of light for the preservation of Islamic education. The primary objective of this study is to elucidate the protective role played by Darul Uloom Deoband. The study also investigates the institution's endeavors in safeguarding Muslim principles and promoting educational advancement. Data were obtained and examined through direct observation, texts and articles. The results show how Muslims came to understand defending Islamic values and education against Western harm and how Darul Uloom played a vital role during difficult times under British colonial rule.

Keywords: British Colony; Darul Uloom Deoband; Role; India Subcontinent

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.21834/e-bpj.v8iS14.5055>

1.0 Introduction

The spread of Islam and Muslims in the Indian Subcontinent (1204–1858) was one of the most notable events in world history. It altered India's overall story. The East India Company became India's new political force when the Mughals' fall got underway. Western education, supported by the British, had completely disregarded Islamic learning. They wanted to Christianize the entire Subcontinent. To express this longing, Mangles (1801–1877), a British-born intellectual person who served as chairman of the board of directors, once said in the House of Commons in 1857, "Providence has bestowed upon the empire of India so that the banner of Christ showed wave triumphant from one end of India to the other" (historypak, 2022). British retaliation regarding the Muslim community was brutal and accurately mirrored this anti-Muslim sentiment. The British established a system of education and proscribed ideologies and religions that they viewed as barbaric. They all posed a severe threat to Islam in India with their "Divide and Rule" tactics, "Communal Sense," and "Active Campaign" by Christian missionaries. The Sepoy Revolution's failure in 1857 resulted in a fall in the lives of Indian Muslims, and the educational framework of Muslim society was badly harmed. Muslim academics and leaders were beheaded, shot, and hanged to death. The mosques, madrasahs, and other places of worship for Muslims were destroyed. Wasti claimed that "mass massacres, indiscriminately hangings, brutal tortures, and massive seizures of assets were some of the means utilized by the British for the mission" (Wasti, 1993). Most Muslim educational

institutions that had depended on funding from Muslim rulers and Nawabs to function had all disappeared. The whole Muslim culture and legacy were on the verge of being eradicated.

At this difficult time, an independent institution of learning for Muslims had to be established to safeguard Muslim religious beliefs, traditions, and education. Some Ulama wanted to build a revolutionary institution to spread knowledge and enthuse students to oppose oppressive rulers and the terrible British plan to dominate India cognitively. On May 30, 1866, Darul Uloom Deoband became the first Qawmi Madrasah, which significantly impacted the history of Muslims in India. Students from this area and neighbouring far-off nations began to arrive in significant numbers as Deoband's renown grew. The brilliant rays of knowledge and wisdom quickly enlightened the minds and hearts of the Muslims with the light of Islam and Islamic practices. Their knowledge of religion came from Darul Uloom Deoband. They made priceless contributions to advancing the right religious ideas and research in their different places according to the religious requirements of the period.

Qawmi Madrasahs, affiliated with Darul Uloom Deoband, are crucial to Bangladesh, Pakistan, and India's social, economic, political, and religious development. These institutions have provided extensive religious instruction spanning the Quran, Tafsir, Hadith, and other Islamic disciplines, promoting a deep grasp of faith, spirituality, and commitment to Islamic ideals. They have formed a sizeable section of the Muslim community. They act as hubs for studying and disseminating Islamic teachings, advance free thought and critical analysis, modernise how they approach preserving Muslim culture and produce outstanding scholarly works. Qawmi Madrasahs take part in conversation to combat heretical ideologies and uphold traditional Sunni principles. Millions of these institutions still serve Muslim communities in South Asia as guides and educators today, staying relevant largely due to their dedication to both conventional and cutting-edge teaching techniques. This study attempts to shed light on the protection of Islamic education and values in colonial India, with a particular emphasis on the function of Darul Uloom Deoband during the time of British control in the Indian Subcontinent.

2.0 Literature Review

Some scholars have examined the effects of British control on education from various perspectives. Others have looked at Muslim attitudes toward Western education throughout that time, while some have concentrated on the detrimental repercussions on Muslim society. Islamic scholars' establishment of Darul Uloom Deoband was crucial in safeguarding Muslim culture and raising awareness. The study seeks to examine the significant achievements of Darul Uloom Deoband in this context. In this dynamic research area, an analytical review of literature is classified under three streams.

2.1 Colonial Education Policy

The British employed the "divide and rule" policy to incite animosity between Hindus and Muslims. This approach has its roots in education legislation that welcomed Hindus but shut out Muslims. Muslims suffered as a result, and the British did nothing to help them catch up economically. Their strategy in India was to produce a class of English-educated people with Indian blood but European tastes. The British supported the Christian missions that arrived in India alongside European commerce and contributed to the dissemination of knowledge on the goals of Christianity. Some academics have explained colonial educational policy, which was used against Indians as a tool of subjugation and dominance. This system is comparable to banking education because it produces and consumes items for the European market (Freire, 2012; Pennycook, 2017). According to one research study, colonial education served as a template for producing trained clerks who assisted the coloniser in collecting revenue, as well as for eradicating native cultures, establishing political dominance, and creating an efficient administrative bureaucracy (DeSousa, 2008; Rahman, 2018). Hunter also demonstrated the adverse effects that British policies had on the Muslim population (Hunter, 1968). According to some scholars, British policies contributed to expanding global illiteracy and maintaining political, economic, and cultural dominance (Carnoy, 1974; Thorpe, 1965). However, other scholars claimed that a strong sense of enlightened paternalism underlay colonial policies (Whitehead, 1991).

2.2 Muslim Attitude to Colonial Education

One of the main traits of the Indian colony of the British is discrimination. This approach eradicated Muslim identity and recognition because they intended to make things easier for Hindus. Although one of its main goals was to advance Christianity and Western culture, other aspects of it also catered to Hindus' interests. Some academics outlined the political, economic, psychological, and other consequences of Muslims choosing to speak English rather than Persian and how Muslims suffered the most (Metcalf, 2016; Masselos, 1996; Belmekki, 2021). The reactionary attitude grew among Muslims for their historical glory during the Muslim period (1204-1858) and the discriminatory policies of the British. According to several studies, Muslims have divergent views on education goals (Ashraf, 1982). Another study showed how Muslim reformers and group leaders took on the work and established new institutions to further the objective (Muhammad & Mazher, 2017). Christian missionary education and its harm to Muslims and Islamic values were discussed by some academics (Altaf &

Rizvi, 2018). On the other hand, a different study revealed British educational policies that influenced and forced Muslims to consider modern education (Zayed, 2016).

2.3 Darul Uloom Deoband, the first Qawmi Madrasah

The Darul Uloom Deoband is an Islamic institution in India that was started by the Sunni Deobandi Islamic movement. Maulana Rashid Ahmad Gangohi (Rh.) and Maulana Muhammad Qasim Nanautawi founded it in 1866. It adheres to the Hanafi School of Islamic law and emphasises revealed sciences (Manqulat) more than logical sciences (Maqulat). The curriculum relies on a highly altered version of the Indo-Islamic curriculum from the eighteenth century, Dars-i-Nizami. The significance of Darul Uloom and its curriculum was studied by several academics (Reetz, 2006). Other academics have discussed this madrasah's founding history and guiding principles (Qasmi, 2001).

3.0 Methodology

To better understand the subject of the issue, this paper uses a qualitative research approach that entails gathering and interpreting information from various sources. Primary and secondary data are sorted and analyzed, and the results are integrated with a literature review to provide a thorough grasp of the problem. Governmental (Archives) and organizational records, proceedings, and interactions were used as the first sources for this study. Books, biographies, reports, magazines, and articles offer background knowledge, context, and sometimes historical data about the research topic. This study reviews the literature, identifies major themes, and combines information from these secondary sources. Internet sites offer more background information and up-to-date perspectives. This study collects and examines data from online sources by assessing the reliability and relevance of the originals.

4.0 Findings

The justification of the establishment background of this institution was examined. The method used in this study, known as historical methodology, allows researchers to acquire information and create ideas about the past.

4.1 Establishment of Darul Uloom Deoband, "The First Qawmi Madrasah

Following the Sepoy Mutiny's abortive attempt in 1857, Muslims became the primary target of colonial hostility and oppression. Many Muslims were to be executed, while refractory villages along the march line were demolished and all male residents slain (Metcalf, 2016). In these conditions, it was crucial to safeguard the Islamic values and social identity of the Muslims in this region. Some ulamas intended to create an independent institution that would transmit knowledge and inspire enthusiasm among students to fight against repressive and colonial powers to resist the evil British aim to subjugate India culturally. Maulana Muhammad Qasim Nanautawi (1832-1879), the foremost figure in Islamic learning, officially opened Darul Uloom Deoband on May 30, 1866.

4.1.1 Main Principles

One of Darul Uloom Dewband's own, reasonably technical terms, taken from the madrasa's own website's Urdu mission assertion: The Darul Uloom is Muslim in terms of faith (dinan), Ahl-i Sunna wal-Jama'a in regards of sect (firqan), Hanafi in the context of school (madhhaban), Sufi in phrases of temperament (mashraban), Maturidi Ash'ari in the context of theology (kalaman), and Chishti in the sense of the Sufi path (sulukan), despite combining all Sufi orders, Wali Allahi based on intelligence (fikran), Qasimi in aspects of its core values (usulan), Rashidi in grounds of its branches (furuan), and Deobandi in respects of its lineage (nisbatan) (Ingram, 2019). Rizvi enumerated a few key points, including: establishing additional madrasahs to propagate the lessons of the religious texts and Islam as a whole; spiritual modification and elimination; safeguarding Muslims' social and individual pursuits; jihad as self-defence; rectification and reformation of society; and helping other Islamic brotherhood member countries as well as the safeguarding of an Islamic state, such as the Ottoman Empire (Rizvi, 2014).

4.2 Religious roles

4.2.1 Protecting Muslims from Christian Missionaries: With British help, they forcefully and dishonestly converted Muslims. Therefore, in order to safeguard Islamic cultural values, religious instruction was urgently needed in this situation. The Ulamas then guarded Muslim society.

4.2.2 Defending Muslims against anti-Islamic forces: Following the war of 1857, Muslims' religious identity was in grave danger. Darul Uloom stood up to protect Islamic principles from all anti-Islamic forces. It made a valiant effort to preserve Muslim identity. It developed Islamic ethics, which describe value as "good character", influenced by the teachings of the Qur'an, the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) as well as countless precedents established by Islamic jurists (Ebrahimi & Yusoff, 2017).

4.2.3 Preparing knowledgeable Muslims: This institution aimed to instruct Muslims in scriptural observance. Such Ulama would become imams, preachers, authors, and teachers, disseminating their knowledge.

4.2.4 Providing Spiritual Aspects: Sufism and Muslim spirituality have a significant societal role. It gave rise to several Sufi tariqahs throughout the world, including in South Asia (Rizvi, 2014).

4.2.5 Contributing Inner Mind Development: The Ulamas actively pursued *tasawwuf*. They served as mentors for millions of Muslims in this way. They assisted Muslims in discovering what is true. They illumined their hearts with the light of Eternal meditation (*marifah*) through spiritual enlightenment pledges of allegiance (*bayat*), cleansing of the inner life of the heart, and spiritual cleansing. Darul Uloom set up a person as a proper Muslim because Islam demands its adherents to obey and do what is right following the Qur'an while forbidding them from engaging in wrong contracts (Ebrahimi, Yusoff & Rosman, 2021).

4.2.6 Acting as Counter-Efforts: The British supported various groups to spread misinformation about Islam. It is worth mentioning the Arya Samaj movement, Shuddhi Sangathan, and institutions of Oriental learning that worked to convert Muslims back to Christianity (Miftahi, 2012). The Ulamas of Deoband took up the challenge, and the movement was a complete failure, losing British prestige.

4.3 Social and Educational Roles

4.3.1 Preserving the genuine and authentic Islam of trustworthy religious writings: This was the most notable exhortation to adhere to the authentic Islam of trustworthy religious texts on the Indian Subcontinent. The *Sihah Sittah* (Six Authentic Hadith texts) were formally integrated into curricula for the first time ever. According to Sanyal (1996), it continues to represent the essential sectarian ties among Sunni Muslims.

4.3.2 Raising Awareness in Muslim Society: The British educational strategy inspired the Ulema to raise Muslims' awareness of their unique and outstanding Islamic identities.

4.3.3 Providing a Revolutionary Movement: It gave anyone who wished to learn about Islam a place to study. It is a vibrant institution that would foster a passion for independence in its pupils. Along with its modified Dars-e-Nizami curriculum, the academic approach connected the studies with India's socio-political situation. Darul Uloom established the practice of using education to engage in conflict with hegemonic structures.

4.3.4 Contributing to the field of research: The teaching and learning methods followed as the modern, efficient tools of cognitive learning, including remembering, understanding, applying, analysing, and creating (Momen, Ebrahimi, & Hassan, 2023). Because of this, it has made a significant contribution to the world of writing and study. It generated academics who were perpetually working on books and treatises on theological and spiritual topics. Thousands of their writings have been publicised. They authored writings and works that covered the many aspects of theology.

4.4 Political Roles

4.4.1 Supporting Political Identity: It helped Muslims unite politically to establish their distinct identities. Equal social, political, and economic rights for everybody were another goal. It contributed to achieving freedom (1947) from the colonial power. Scholars like Hussain Ahmad Madani and Ubaid ullah Sindhi, as well as the new head of the Darul Uloom, Mahmudul Hasan, symbolized highly politicized thoughts considered and aimed to oppose British rule, which they observed as the main barrier to the practice of true Islam in India as well as the rest of the Islamic world.

4.4.2 Creating a Political Platform: Darul Uloom Deoband intellectuals founded political organizations, including Jamiat-e-Ulma-i-Hind and Jamiat-e-Ulema-e-Islam. One faction backed the Muslim League's demand for a separate Muslim region, while the other collaborated with the All India National Congress to resist subcontinental partition (Rabbani, 2009).

4.4.3 Setting political Objectives: The political philosophy emphasizes the adoration of one God, spiritual development, fairness, and order. It operated under three fundamental tenets: to make India a great country in Asia, to unite all local sates, and to implement standard laws to achieve socio-economic justice for all. Deoband's ulama offered their skills to assist Muslims in obtaining their distinct identity (Azam, 2008).

4.4.4 Producing Spread for Independence Struggle: The Ulamas of this institution not only advance Islam but actively participate in the fight for the establishment of a distinct homeland. Deoband's youngsters were instrumental in the fight against British colonial rule. The intellectuals of Deoband worked tirelessly to free India from British domination, and their efforts were primarily responsible for this.

4.4.5 Considering the entire Muslim community: The Ulamas of Deoband had a well-thought-out strategy to join forces with them as soon as hostilities between Britain and Turkey were declared. They primarily sided with Ottoman rule and organized individuals to defend it after it was defeated in the First World War (1914-1918). They collaborated on this endeavour with Mohan Das Karam Chand Gandhi (1869–1948), but ultimately unsuccessful figure in the Khilafat movement (Reetz, 2005).

5.0 Discussion

This study's main goal was to investigate the role of Qawmi Madrasah, "Darul Uloom Deoband", in Muslim society during the turmoil of their education and values under colonial rule in the Indian Subcontinent. The two main elements have been disproved by the evidence discovered regarding the founding of the first Qawmi Madrasah, Darul Uloom Deoband. First, there are the historical regulating forces, which include the socioeconomic and educational structures that existed throughout the roughly 700 years (1204–1858) of Muslim dominion in the Indian Subcontinent. Education and society were structured under the Delhi Sultanate (1206–1526) (Mobasher, 2014). Advancements in financial climates and the creation of curricula were notable during the reign of the Great Mughals (1526–1858) (Momen & Hossain, 2022). The Muslim community had this historical backdrop instilled in them, and they brought it with them. Many Muslim intellectuals disapproved of British culture and educational policies after British rule was established. The Muslim community made efforts to protect Islamic values and Islamic education. With the help of the qawm (people), they established the first Qawmi Madrasah, a separate educational institution in this area.

The anti-Muslim attitudes of the British government were the second reactionary component. They considered Muslims their enemies and used trickery to grab control of the Muslim nation. Several Muslim establishments were destroyed, including mosques and madrasas (Ghazanfar, 2004). The vast majority of Muslim institutions of learning that had depended on funding from Muslim monarchs and Nawabs to function had disappeared, and the entirety of Muslim culture and history was at risk of being lost forever. After 1857, the colonial rulers executed thousands of Muslims in general and ulama in particular (Altaf, 2018). In these dire circumstances, the establishment of Dar al-Uloom in Deoband (1866) was a glimmer of hope for the survival of the centuries-old standard Islamic education of Quranic study, notably the Qur'an, Hadith, and Fiqh. Young men from remote parts of the Indian Subcontinent and intellectuals from far-off countries, including Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Burma, Samarkand, Bukhara, and numerous African countries, had gathered here. They all came to this location as seekers of truth, departing with money and a strong desire to light up their home nations with the knowledge they had gained at Deoband. It gives its graduates entrance to a vast knowledge base, exemplary conduct, and an impression of superiority. The students at Darul Uloom display scholarly self-respect, sophistication, self-control and kindness, simplicity, and cleanliness. Everyone who is just and fair-minded is aware of the prominent position that the Darul Uloom has held among educational institutions in the Subcontinent. It was the first institution that received all of its funding from individuals (Qawm) and performed a great job of educating Muslims about social justice through their religious practices. According to research, graduates of this learning institution assumed it upon themselves to meet Muslims' "legal and spiritual" demands (Metcalf, 2002: 91).

6.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

When Darul Uloom Deoband was founded, the Muslim community in general and the Indian Subcontinent specifically were going through a difficult period under the British. The horrific and disastrous events occurred in the post-1857 situation, during which the colonial government executed hundreds of thousands of Muslims in general and ulamas in particular. The founding of Darul Uloom was a ray of hope for preserving Islamic values and education under such hopeless circumstances. Since its ulama actively participated in the struggle against the rule of colonizers, it quickly gained international recognition as a prestigious centre of higher learning for Tafseer, Hadith, and Fiqh, and its educational system attracted learners from all over the world. Deoband and the great religious leaders it generated attempted to withstand it with the true tenacity of mountains and

succeeded in trying to save the Muslim religion from being destroyed by the British. Similarly, the contribution provided by this outstanding institution's graduates to the cause of the Subcontinent's political freedom unquestionably represents a triumphant period in India's history.

Despite the wide disparity in the range of various aspects of modern life, the world is changing quickly. On the one hand, science and technology are drastically altering people's lives overnight. The curriculum at Darul Uloom Deoband has to be improved. The insignificant contributions of individuals to art, literature, culture, science, etc., challenge its effectiveness. The following recommendations were made in light of the findings, discussion, and conclusions.

- Including some vocational courses
- Attempting to gain international recognition for research through degrees such as M.Ph., PhD
- Making career-oriented curricula compete with secular education
- Authority should introduce skills development training, making efforts to train and utilize this population.

Due to their skill in Arabic, they may find a market in Arabic-speaking nations.

Darul Uloom Madrasah's modifications to the curriculum should not affect the essential Dars-e-Nizami subject matters. The main limitation of this study is that the original texts of that period written in Arabic and Persian were not used.

Acknowledgement

We would like to acknowledge the authority and management of the conference.

Paper Contribution to related Field of Study

Compared to other areas of study in the history of the Indian Subcontinent, this study can help us understand the vast scope of British colonial education. This article may provide insight into Islamic education and its development over time. It will assist in developing future research questions, such as "Is Madrasah education effective, justified, and modernized?"

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