CHAPTER - 5

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This chapter is a unified one. Here it is aimed at discussing all the matters relating to the establishment of various institutions in different periods with a view to analyzing and criticizing the state of affairs relating to the teaching and learning of Arabic language and literature in detail so that the teachers as well as the learners change their way of teaching and learning of the language as it takes place in case of other subjects.

In pre-colonial period, there were three systems of education. i.e. (1) Patshalas where all were entertained to learn. (2) Tools, where only the Brahmins were concerned and (3) Maktabs and Madrasas where only Muslims were entertained to learn except in some cases. In colonial period it is found that education in general field changed its dimension. In late colonial period Schools, Colleges and Universities were established in India. On the basis of such principles that Tolls gradually were losing their relevance. But Schools, Colleges and Universities were established by the colonials and the courses and the syllabi were formulated in such a way that Muslim scholars could not forget the relevance of Maktab and Madrasa education in India and as
such in Assam also. But the colonial rulers could understand the Muslim mentality. So, they introduced Arabic in school curriculum to attract the attention of the Muslim masses to the institutions established and promoted by the colonial rulers. Side by side, the government established Madrasas so that they pour their inspirations in to the minds of the Ulama who come out from those Govt. Madrasas.

On the other hand, the pious Ulama understood the colonial motives and did not find themselves delighted with the activities of the rulers, rather they continued establishing Qaumi Madrasas where from pure Ulama of Islam or Islamic scholars in true sense are possible to be produce.

So, keeping all the above mentioned matters in mind, the whole affairs are to be discussed and analysed with sharp criticism. Only then the defects will be identified. In everything there must be some defects when it becomes old.

In teaching and learning of a subject, there must have a particular purpose. Otherwise, its teaching as well as learning can not be effective. The teaching and learning of a language, which is not a native one, has some particular purpose and of course in the teaching and learning of Arabic also. Again, the purpose may be of more than one kind. It is obvious that in medieval period, people wanted to establish houses on the bank of rivers. But in modern period, they want to establish houses and all other establishments on the site near the high ways instead of the banks of the rivers. But in spite of this change in motives, the rivers flow as they did earlier. So the relationship of a language is natural.
Though its purpose changed, its nature may change, but its relevance cannot be ruled out.

It is found that the Arabic language got its way to be taught in Assam with the spread of Islam in this region. Islam is not merely a religion. It is a complete way of life. Its successful existence is primarily based on education. Basically thinking, we may say that where there is no education, there is no Islam. The first heavenly order was to read in the name of Allah. Islam’s basic aim is to make a relation of the creatures with Allah, the Creator. So without knowledge, the conception of the Creator can’t be cleared and hence the creatures may commit sins while obeying or worshiping the creator. So wherever Islam was propagated, spread of education and knowledge was arranged. This education is termed as Islamic education. Islamic education is basically the composition of a number of subjects which are primarily related with the teaching and learning of the Arabic language.

Islam got its way in to this North Eastern part of India; i.e. Assam, not by the invaders or the rulers, but by the spiritual activities and teaching of the Sufi saints as in other parts of the world. In Poa Makkah at Hajo, it is found that Jalaluddin Tibrizi founded the Khanqah; in Sylhet, the great Saint Shah Jalal Mujarrad al Yemeni established the Khanqah which later became known as Shahjalali Dargah; in Gargaon in Sibsagar district, Muhiyuddin Baghdadi or Azan Faqir established a mosque cum Khanqah; in the Sylhet region, 360 disciples of Hazrat Shahjalal were scattered to spread Islam and as such
at every place where they lived and stayed, established a Khanqah to teach Islam and Islamic learning at its primary level.

As time went on, Khanqahs and Dargahs were replaced by Maktabs and gradually developed up to Madrasas and their process continues till today. So this is a process which has a linkage from primary to higher level. This system was available in colonial period, that Arabic teaching had been started at Maktab and then bifurcated in to two ways, i.e. Madrasas and Schools. In colonial period, it is found that, though Arabic was introduced in school curriculum and Madrasas were established by the rulers, yet Muslims were opposing the English education as it was propagating a culture unfit for the Muslims. They found the path of preserving the Islamic heritage in establishing Madrasas. So they established the famous Darul Uloom at Deoband in 1866 just after one decade of establishing three Universities at Calcutta, Bombay and Madras. It was a mistake in the part of the Ulama opposing the English education, rather they could advocate a separate system of education where Muslims would have a religious and cultural share, and simultaneously Madrasa education would run for the purpose of religious as well as social need.

The Darul Uloom Deoband conception was spread all over the country and as such Qaumi Madrasas were established in this eastern part of the country. These Madrasas are following the syllabus of famous Dars-e Nizami formulated by Mullah Nizamuddin of Sihal in Lucknow. But the Madrasas established in Assam, though very old, could not reach the perfection level which their counterparts in other places of the country reached. Darul Uloom, Deoband; Nadwatul
Ulama, Lucknow; Madrasa Alia, Rampur; Jamia Nizamia, Hyderabad; Madrasa-e-Rahmania, Patna; Darul Uloom Firingi Mahal, Lucknow; Mazahirul Uloom, Saharanpur; Madrasa Aminia, Delhi; Jamia-e-Qasimiya Madrasa Shahi, Muradabad; Madrasatul Islah, Sarai Mir; Jamia Arabia Talimuddin, Dhabel; Darul Uloom Tajul Masazid, Bhopal; Darus Salam, Omarabad are the famous Madrasas. These Madrasas are able to produce thousands of Ulama every year. These Ulama or the Islamic scholars are leading the society and the country as well.

The reason behind the weak academic performance of the Qaumi Madrasas in Assam may be identified by discussing all its elements. It is obvious that the outcome becomes excellent when the management, process of production and ownership become excellent or strict. All these three are very much available in those Madrasa which are famous in India and abroad. Another element of good production is marketing. Marketing has a great effect on production. The Madrasas in Assam are facing problems in all the above mentioned elements.

If we critically analyze the outcome of the Qaumi Madrasas in Assam, we find so many problems that cause the low outcome of those Madrasas in modern context. These are:

a) Management problem.
b) Standard of teaching problem.
c) Medium of instruction.
d) Problem of non-recognition of degrees of these Madrasas.
e) Problem of inferiority complex.
f) Employment problem.

a) Management problem: The first and foremost element of an institution is its management machinery. It is like the heart or mind of a man. If this organ remains proper and humane, the whole body remains proper. If this becomes improper, the man functions improperly. Like wise, the Qaumi Madrasas solely depends on its management. In almost all the Qaumi Madrasas, except in some cases there is a problem of management. The managing committees are constituted in most of the cases with the persons having no relation with education. Either village politicians or property owners or Mahajans are found to be attached with the managing bodies. So, these people in most cases deserve narrow outlook. They do not feel the necessity of innovation and renovation of the system. As such, these Madrasas do not be able to reach their goal properly.

b) Standard of teaching problem: The standard of teaching depends mainly on the course-curriculum and the quality of the teaching skill of the teachers. In Qaumi Madrasa system, there is no imposition system out of public demand regarding the inclusion of any subjects or contents. Therefore, the relevant board selects the contents to be taught according to the religious need. These boards also select the contents according to the general skill of the teachers. In these Madrasas, the literature in its true sense is ignored. Therefore, the teachers as well as the learners do not possess the change cum broader outlook. The most negative feature of these Qaumi Madrasas in Assam is the absence of training system for in service teachers. Neither the authorities nor the teachers themselves feel it
necessary for undergo training. In a nutshell, we may say that the Qaumi Madrasa system runs on indigenous process.

c) **Medium of instruction:** Medium of instruction in these Qaumi Madrasas is an important factor behind the low quality of outcomes. The contents taught in Madrasas are in almost all cases Arabic, as we observe in the syllabi. However, the medium of instruction is Urdu in general. In special cases Arabic is used, but in the rare. Both the organs, i.e. the teachers and the students try to ignore it because of their negligence. Urdu is not the native language of the learners in Assam, so an extra burden is imposed. In initial stage, Urdu was used necessarily because the teachers were learning in North Indian Madrasas where Urdu is used as their mother tongue, and the relevant books were available in Urdu. So, also in Assam, this system was introduced. But time went on, many things changed, yet the outlook of a section of the Ulama has not changed. In almost all the classes' discussions are made in mother tongue. But in curriculum, it is ignored. Therefore, it is a very funny thing.

d) **Problem of non-recognition of degrees of Qaumi Madrasas:** Another problem is the non-recognition of the degrees of these Qaumi Madrasas by the universities and other institutions of higher learning. In Assam, it is found that there are Madrasas that reach the level of renowned Madrasas in Bihar and U.P., such as Darul Uloom, Banskandi; Assam Darul Hadith, Jaynagar; Jamia Islamia Jalalia, Hojai; Madinatul Uloom, Baghbari; Jamiul Uloom Furqania Madrasa, Mirabari etc. Every year, altogether, hundreds of students complete their studies in those Madrasas and pass the examinations
under the respective Tanzim Boards, then they are free with their degree to go, as they like. In the context of the 21st century, these Madrasa graduates are seemed to be good for nothing except with the task of ‘Imamat’, i.e. leading the conduction of ‘Salah’ in mosques in general. An invisible percentage of those graduates may have a berth in teaching in these Madrasas. Others are regarded as Moulana or Alim in the society and are respected as an Islamic scholar and not more. A considerable number of those Madrasa graduates or ‘Fadils’ have a zeal to continue higher studies in general system of education, but their degrees/ exams are not recognized at any level. On the contrary, it is found that the degrees of Darul Uloom, Deoband; Nadwatul Ulama, Lucknow; Madrasatul Islah, Banaras etc. are recognized by Aligarh Muslim University, Jamia Millia Islamia. The Fadils, there from, after passing their examinations, can pursue higher studies in those universities. Even it is found that a Darul Uloom Deoband graduate can appear the examination for only English subject of +2 standards of Jamia Millia Islamia and after passing that subject only he can get himself admitted in to any of three streams of undergraduate level of Jamia Millia Islamia. But in Assam, the learners of those Qaumi Madrasas are unable to switchover because of the non availability of the system here.

e) Problem out of inferiority complex: Inferiority complex is another important problem before the learners of those Qaumi Madrasas. Participation in literary completions is an important factor for raising the level of ‘knowhow’ in the minds of the learners. The students of Qaumi Madrasas are found not participating in any kind
of literary competitions because of many reasons. The most important reason is the communication gap. As the literary competitions are conducted by NGOs, social organizations, clubs, Govt, Agencies etc., the medium of questions and answers are provided to be either English or mother tongue (modern Indian Languages), e.g. Assamese, Bengali etc. So these learners are totally unable to participate and compete successfully. The other reason is technical. The organizers are always preparing the questions for the competitions according to the subjects and syllabus taught and followed in schools and colleges and the participants are grouped according to the level of studies. the various level of studies of Qaumi Madrasas are not matched with the levels of general educational institutions or system because of the fact that the study of subjects of mother tongue, English and mathematics, though studied in lower level of Qaumi Madrasas, are not aimed at acquiring proficiency for the promotion of further studies of those subjects. As such, the proficiency attained by the Qaumi Madrasa students in those general subjects is not the same as attained by the students of schools and colleges. Because of all the above reasons, the Qaumi Madrasa students are somehow exempted from almost all kinds of literary competitions conducted by the above kind organizations and as such the Qaumi Madrasa students feel aloof from the so called main stream learners.

f) **Employment problem:** Qaumi Madrasa system does not create, originally, any employment problem. But in Assam, because of the radical or traditional mentality of the custodians of the Madrasas, the learners face acute employment problems. In this 21st century, the
Qaumi Madrasa authorities might have introduced various professional courses like computer education, management studies, open school system, so that their learners, after completing pure Madrasa course, might get admitted and have done those courses and get self-employed.

**Problems of Government run Madrasas:** In Govt. run Senior Madrasas and Title Madrasas, we find as many problems as in Qaumi Madrasas. The problems may be discussed under the following heads:

a) Improper control of the government agency.

b) Non-employment of teaching staff in time as a problem.

c) Problem related to syllabus.

a) **Improper control of the govt. agency:** The academic affairs of the Senior and Title Madrasas are controlled by the State Madrasa Education Board under the directorate of Madrasa Education, govt. of Assam. This board, some times, formulates the syllabus violating the very basic ideology of the Madrasa education. Under the British government, the Senior Madrasas produced learned people while in the 21st century the Senior Madrasas have reached such a position that these Madrasas have become mere educational institutions like govt. schools. The teachers have started to estimate them as govt. employee forgetting their social status as Ulama. The administrative system of Madrasa education developed. A separate directorate has been created for controlling the whole affairs. But the old spirit of
Madrasa education has been absent in Senior Madrasas except in some cases.

b) **Non-employment of teaching staff in time as a problem:** In every Senior Madrasa there is a vast teaching staff comprising various categories of teachers. Every year some teachers are retired from service. But the vacant posts are not filled up immediately. On the contrary, years after years continue, the posts of teachers remain vacant, and side-by-side, the number of students increases. So, proper education is exhausted.

c) **Problem related to syllabus:** The syllabus of the Senior Madrasas is a composition of many trades. The Senior Madrasas are now a days a kind of jacks of many trades. Here the students have to study Arabic prose, poetry, grammar, rhetoric, Fiqh, Aqaid, Usul, Mantiq, Hadith, Tafsir, History of Arabic Literature, English, Mathematics, Social Science, General Science, Functional Arabic, Urdu etc. After studying these entire subjects ad passing the ‘Fadil’ examination, a learner virtually becomes tired and looses the mentality of research and gets admitted in colleges or H/S Schools for further studies. At last, in most cases the learners become master of none. After successfully passing the Title examination and obtaining, a degree of M.M as Madrasa graduate is, in many cases, found to be unable to speak in Arabic or in English. So we get some degree holders but scholars are not found. These are the things to be deeply thought by the Muslim masses and suggest the government machinery to do the right things.
Problems of Arabic Studies in Schools: If we analyze the syllabi of Arabic incorporated in schools, colleges and universities of Assam, we find so many defects in almost all cases. In school level, there are two kinds of institutions: (1) Maktabs, M.E Madrasas and High Madrasas (2) L.P Schools, M.E Schools and High Schools. In the former system, Arabic is compulsory except in Maktab at present, though earlier it was compulsory, while in the latter, Arabic is optional. But in primary level, no scope of Arabic studies is provided even not as an optional subject. In Middle English or Middle Vernacular Schools, there is little scope of studying Arabic. In High schools, Arabic virtually starts, in High Madrasa system; there is six-years duration for studying Arabic. In school level, in High School system, there is only two-years duration for studying Arabic. This is a clear discrimination between the learners of both the systems.

Again, the same Board of Secondary Education Assam controls both the above mentioned systems of school curriculum. In both the cases the successful candidates in HSLC and in Assam High Madrasa Examinations, proceed for further studies to one single system, i.e. +2 levels in H.S. Schools or Junior Colleges under Assam Higher Secondary Education Council. Here, we find Arabic is optional in Arts stream. So whatever the contents of Arabic in classes XI and XII, there are sufficient number of stories, poems, grammar, comprehension, translation etc., these are very difficult for a learner to understand. It is very difficult to understand the govt’s policy in providing the scope of studying Arabic in HS level in a large scale, but in providing less scope of studying the subject in secondary level. Middle and Secondary levels are the foundation periods of a subject. Here we find a little attention is
made by the govt. to provide facilities in respect of teaching and learning of Arabic in secondary schools. The syllabus in HS level is a vast one, while the scope of acquiring sufficient knowledge in High schools for digesting that +2 level course is very little. So, there will be no mistake to say that the little scope of studying Arabic in secondary school level, available, is not for linguistic and cultural development, but for taking political benefit by the ruling class for adjusting some employment seekers with the post of classical teachers in High Schools.

This may further be justified by observing the employment process of Arabic teachers in High schools and the scope of in-service training of the teachers. Only one in-service training system is provided for the teachers of secondary schools in Assam, i.e. B.Ed course in some Teachers Training Colleges for which a teacher must be a graduate from a recognised university. Here lies the problem. The qualification for recruitment of teachers is either an F.M or a graduate from a university. The F.M. of Madrasa Education Board has been the qualification for the teacher recruitment from the pre-independence period. After 60 years of independence, the over all scenario in every aspect of life has a drastic change, but the qualification for recruitment of Arabic teachers in secondary schools remained the same. Only the alternative arrangement of graduate with Arabic is provisioned. But a rare number of such teachers are visible in the state. So, these teachers having passed the F.M examination teach without undergoing any kind of training. Again there is no alternative system of short term training period or workshop to be held in the state of teaching affairs of Arabic in secondary schools in Assam. This is why the teaching and learning of Arabic deteriorate day by day. The government should take a right
decision in respect of recruitment of teachers for Arabic in secondary schools. The qualification should be M.M. with +2 level passed as an additional qualification. The candidates having higher degree should be preferred. As it is a non-native language, the teachers and the learners of Arabic subject should have adequate scope of training and interactions respectively. There are so many employment scopes, especially self-employment prospects for the learners of a foreign language. These should be exhibited before the learners by way of holding symposium, seminars and through other mediums being arranged by NGOs and Private Companies in collaboration with govt agencies. It will help minimising the unemployment problems.

In higher studies, right from the +2 level up to P.G level of both Assam University and Gauhati University, there are so many problems faced by the learners. The problems lay on the method and system of teaching and learning of the Arabic language and literature. Learning of a language is a natural process. This is evident from the way young children tend to utter words for the first time in life. As per learning of a language by non-native speakers, some kind of deliberate efforts need to be made. It is in this context that teaching and learning of a language is a matter of great importance. The study of any subject should have a definite target. Here in Assam, the target of studying Arabic language and literature in higher level seems to be unclear to the learners. The learners or the students take the subject Arabic in UG as well as PG level, while most of them like to study it because their friends take it. This is not a definite target. These states of affaires in most cases create problems. The students do not learn the subject intensively and hence can not explore new fields of employment.
The important problem before the learners is medium of instruction. In both UG and PG levels, the medium of instruction and interactions remain mother tongue or even Hindi, Urdu or English. However, officially it is partially English and partially Arabic. Only in compulsory portion, the students use Arabic; otherwise, they are unwilling and unable to use Arabic as means of communication. Without proficiency in the source language, the learners try to secure maximum performance in the examination by collecting explanations, other model answers from senior students or even from the teachers. In addition to the above, the learners do not read more books, magazines, journals in Arabic because of the less proficiency in the language and shamefulness in using it in public. These are the basic problems to the learners and teachers of a foreign language, especially Arabic which has unique peculiarities.

The most important problem before the teachers and learners of Arabic in higher education institutions is infrastructural problem. There is a little scope for the learners to stay inside campus at college level in Assam where they avail library facilities in extra hours; they meet the teachers for solution of any study problem. They have no such scope. Majority of the students studying at college come from distance places. They waste more times in journey than in studies. This infrastructural problem embraces other natural and artificial problems. Natural problems include Summer Vacation; Autumn Break etc. while artificial problem is created by examination, the result declaration related matters. Summer Vacation covers 40-45 days stating from mid-May up to the end of June, actually when the effect of real summer is not felt.
From July, the academic session virtually starts, when the weather becomes hot. After two and a half months, the Autumn Break is held which virtually breaks the complete academic affairs for about one month. After the break is over, only November month passed which sees internal exams etc. and then in December the submission of application for final examination etc. that entertain other co-curricular activities up to the month of January. Than the students remain dramatically invisible from the scene. In this circumstances the HS final examination start at mid February. The college is a real sense becomes an examination centre for about more than three months. The artificial problem is the lengthy routine of examination formulated for the candidates appearing in various back papers. Other wise it could be minimized. Then comes the lengthy process of result compilation and its declaration. The examination ends within May. The result declaration problems up to August. Though the students are frequently directed to attend their next higher classes without looking for result, yet they come after the result is declared. So, the teachers go on teaching only a small number of over-sincere students, otherwise the course will remain incomplete. So these are the natural and artificial problems faced by the teachers and learners years after years. In such a situation, a foreign or non-native language like Arabic has so many problems before its learners and teachers in the state of Assam.

Finally, it is found that in Madrasa education system, the post-intermediate level and in university system, the under graduate level are the crucial time for teaching and learning of language and literature. The ongoing changes in different fields of human life have their impact on academic curriculum and examination system. The ultimate result is
the change in the teaching and learning of a subject, particularly a language subject and more particularly a foreign language like Arabic. Apart from North East India, everywhere some definite changes have been made in the syllabi and question patterns at the undergraduate level in different universities as well as in pre-Dawrah level or post-intermediate level of Madrasa in case of Arabic language and literature subject in recent years. These have been done keeping in view the need for making the learners eligible for and competent in adjusting themselves in changed situations. These drastic changes have changed the whole scenario. It is observed that due to lack of scientific approach in teaching and the absence of enthusiastic mood of learners, teaching-learning scenario of Arabic language and literature in this region is not up to the level. The learners of this region are a bit in back foot while competing with the students of other universities and Madrasas in the respective fields.

**PROSPECTS:**

There are prospects for the effective learners of the Arabic language in this region and anywhere in the world if the concerned authorities pay attention to solve the above-discussed problems. The problems of teaching and learning of the Arabic language may be solved by the measures as follows:

1) Launching effective programme by the Arabic department of both Assam University and Gauhati University in collaboration with the Arabic departments of their affiliated colleges. Such as introduction of
communicative Arabic course in affiliated colleges and some Madrasas having well infrastructure facilities.

2) The *State Madrasa Education Board*, the *All Assam Tanzim Madaris-e-Qaumia* may take initiative to make Arabic compulsory as the medium of instruction as well as examination at least for the Arabic language and literature subjects in Madrasas except translation items.

3) A similar measure may be taken by *Assam Higher Secondary Education Council* for effective teaching-learning of Arabic in +2 level.

4) There should be an effective programme launched by the SEBA for drastic changes in course and syllabus for secondary schools. A training programme for teaching providing scientific approach and also the information's for future prospects of the learners available time to time. The Arabic departments of both Assam University and Gauhati University may propagate for such programme in appropriate place.

5) Socio-economic as well as socio-religious and non-govt. organizations should come forward holding various contests on contemporary topics in Arabic. Seminar and workshops should be organized where the participants will be the students of both post-intermediate levels of Madrasa and under graduate level of university system of education.

Moreover, in comparison with other parts of India, North East region may be termed as an isolated region from the rest of the country.
It has no sound international linkage through which people may explore the fields of commercializing the knowledge of Arabic language and literature. Therefore, teaching learning of Arabic language, though it has a vast and centuries old network in the region, lies in confined, to meet the religious obligations. The learners are found to have no curiosity for communicating through Arabic language.

Further, it may be noted that the Assam University and the Gauhati University may select some Qaumi Madrasas having good infrastructure, and introduce some short term technical and vocational courses for which the Madrasa authorities arrange the necessary steps so that the willing learners attain or acquire the requisite qualifications through proper channel.

The Qaumi Madrasa authorities may approach the Regional Study Centre of Moulana Azad National Urdu University, Hyderabad; which is established at Asimganj in the district of Karimganj. The Urdu University has launched and has been preparing to launch many vocational courses for the Urdu learners. The concerned authorities should keep in mind while recognizing the Qaumi Madrasas that the Madrasa graduates having proficiency in modern Arabic language may have an advantage to get employed as bilinguists as they have knowledge of Urdu together with Arabic in their whole Madrasa course. The Madrasa authorities should make such arrangements that their students acquire proficiency in modern Arabic as well as in chaste Urdu, so that the learners may be absorbed in tourism sector and hotel business in India and abroad.

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End Notes:

1. Desai, Ziyauddin A.; Centres of Islamic Learning in India. Pp, 19-60.

2. **Field Survey;** I met and interviewed more than one hundred such Madrasa graduates in different occasions who willingly requested to write something that open the eyes of the Qaumi Madrasa authorities.

3. **Field Survey;** The present course of Arabic in Secondary Schools is observed minutely while discussing about the problems with some Arabic teachers in a district level conference at Karimganj on 16th December, 2007.


6. **Field Survey;** I visited the Regional Centre at Asimganj and met its Administrative Officer Mr. Hafiz Husain Ahmad. He showed me his office profiles that exhibits the Facts related to the Urdu learners, especially those of the Madrasa students.