Chapter First
Introduction
Islam is the final form of religion, revealed from Almighty Allah for the welfare of mankind. It is complete, comprehensive and perfect code of human life, taking into consideration every aspect, every sphere and every field of human life viz., social, political, economic, cultural, Intellectual, Physical, spiritual, Moral (ethical) etc. i.e., it guides man in totality. It also represents a comprehensive code of civilization encompassing all the dimensions of human thought and life. Holy Quran stresses to achieve knowledge and there is in no room for illiteracy. Prophet (S.A.W.) not only encouraged education but also made elaborate arrangements for religious education. Prophet (S.A.W) was an ardent advocate of the pursuit of knowledge and education.

The tradition of women’s education among the Muslims is as old as their religion Islam because of religious necessity with the followers of Islam. Islam gives utmost importance to the acquisition of knowledge. The first revelation of the Holy Quran (96:1-5) begins with the word ‘Read’. There are many verses in the Quran with usual frequency. Islam considers “Ilm” as a value and an act of Ibadah only if it is pursued for benefit of the as a value and an act of Ibadah only if it is pursued for benefit of the individual or the community and ultimately for gaining the pleasure of
Allah. Knowledge offers a basis for discriminating between what is relevant and irrelevant, significant & insignificant virtuous and vicious, good and bad, right and wrong and above all between Haqq and Batil.

Not only the holy Quran Provides guidelines for the acquisition of knowledge but also the ahadith of Prophet (SAW) emphasized to acquire knowledge and according to a tradition “even if it is in China”. There are many sayings of Prophet (SAW) stressing the acquisition of knowledge both by men and women, e’g.

- “Acquisition of Knowledge is incumbent upon all the faithful men and women.
- “The Ink of a learned man is purer than the blood of a martyr.” and He also declared, “Seek knowledge from the cradle to the grave”.
- Prophet (SAW) himself used to teach women from Zohr (afternoon) to Asr (before sunset) allowing them to ask questions freely, put forward their views and demands vehemently. By the time of Prophet’s (SAW) demise there were many women scholars, like, Hazrat Khadijah (R.A), Hazrat Ayesha (R.A), Hazrat Fatima (R.A), Hazrat Zainab (R.A), Hamzah, Safia and Maria etc. All of
these were having authority on religious matters and men of learning used to take advice from them. The entire history of Islam is dotted with the shining stars among women who had left their works on the sand of time.

During the period of Khulfa-i-Rashidin Prophet’s instruction were followed and developed. Besides already established Madrasa’s, they developed system of education and its curriculum. It was patronized, encouraged and developed by all Caliphs of Umayyads, Abbassids, Fatimids, Ottomans, Delhi Sultans, Mughal Emperors, Bureaucrats, Nobles, Ministers and others including women folk also.

Thus quest for knowledge has always been an ideal in the history of Islam. All the Caliphs, emperors, Sultans and also many nobles, ministers, princes & Princesses and others patronized education, established Madrasas, Schools, Colleges, and higher educational institutions for both boys and girls.

As the culture and civilization of a nation (people) depends upon the system of education, so it was also in the minds of Indian Muslims
particularly sultans, emperors, nobles, scholars, etc. who patronized and developed system of education.

During the entire period of Muslim rules in India a large number of Muslim women got educated themselves and became good scholars. They also provided assistance to other scholars, established seminaries and schools. Some of these are: Mah Malik daughter of Alauddin, Salima Sultan Niece of Humayun, Gulbadan Bano daughter of Babar, the first literacy figure rather gem of Mughal period (she had her own library & is author of 'Humayun Nama’h). Maham Anga, remarkable promoter of education and founder of an educational institute; Noor Jahan wife of Jahangir and Mumtaz Mahal wife of Shahjahan, had command on Persian language, Jahan Ara Begum and Zubaida Begum daughter of Shahjahan were poetesses, Zebun Nisa, daughter of Aurangzeb, a very learned and scholarly women, writer of 'Diwan-e-Makhfi' and 'Zeb-ul-Maushat'.

After the fall of Mughal empire, Muslims lost their political power in India and during the British Imperialism Muslims receded into the background both politically and educationally. There were many Muslims reformers and leaders who devoted their whole life for the reform of
Muslim society particularly for boys and girls with equal appreciation. Many Madrasas were established by Muslim luminaries the 17th, 18th and 19th Centuries, mention may be made of Masrāsa-e-Rahimiya etc.

During a full century (1847-1947) no such progress was made in the field of education and after Independence in 1947, remarkable and historical steps were taken by the Muslim Scholars and reformers for the advancement, improvement and development of education for the Muslim women in India. After 1947, Muslims have given great stress again for women education and a large number of Madarsas were established all over India for the upliftment of Muslim women education.

In the second half of the 20th Century especially after 1970, besides religious education, Muslim Women acquired knowledge of other modern sciences as well. They went shoulder to shoulder with men in all modern sciences and in the religious sciences and have made a remarkable contribution. After Independence some important Madrasas were established are as follows: Jamiatus Salihat Rampur, U.P.; Jamiatul-Falah (Niswan), Bilaryaganj, Azamgarh; Jamiatul Taiyabat, Kanpur, U.P.; Jamiatul-Banat, Jiyapur, Azamgarh; Mahhadcuzzohra Al-Thanvi,
Tulsipur district Balrampur U.P.; Jamiatul-Banat Shamsul Uloom (Niswan) Ghosi U.P. India.; Majmaut-Talim-e-Islami liibanat, Kerala.; Jamiatul-Banat Hyderabad; Madrasa Taleem-un-Nisa, Malegoan Maharashtra; Jamiatus-Salehat, Malegaon, Maharashtra; Kullia Ayesha, Malegaon, Maharashtra, India. Since 1947, Muslim women of India also took interest in research work in various academic fields besides Islamic discipline. Indian Muslim women particularly made a remarkable contribution to the discipline of Islamic studies and its various branches like Quranic Studies, Quranic exegesis, Hadith Literature, Islamic law, Islamic Science, institution and Muslim Civilization. There are various universities in India where women had pursued research and many of them have been pursuing research and have contributed a lot to the discipline of Islamic studies. Mention may be made such as; Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh, Kashmir University, Kashmir; Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi, Jamia Hamdard, New Delhi, Lucknow University Lucknow, Usmania University Hyderabad, Kerala University, Kerala, Visva Bharati University, Shantiniketan, West Bengal.

Keeping in view of the above facts, a humble attempt has been made to throw light on the system of 'Madrasa education of women, their
contribution to Islamic studies by writings, book, research articles and many other academic activities related to Islam. We have observed that a number of Indian Muslim women also engaged in research work in Islamic studies in various Universities of India and many of them have completed their research work in this field. Our research work confined to “Indian Muslim Women’s Contribution to Islamic Studies since 1947”.