

Footprints of silence . . .



A Needs Assessment Study on Madarsa Education in UP

A FEW WORDS OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This need assessment study facilitated by Nalanda forms a crucial base in its future plan of expansion and intensification of the Madarsa program. It will be an important tool to Nalanda to spearhead a ‘need based’ and ‘demand driven’ model of intervention.

In this context Nalanda acknowledges the active role part taken by study team who played a key role by conducting the study and developing the report based on the findings of the study. Nalanda also acknowledges the commendable cooperation of the ten Madarsas in the districts of Behraich and Barabanki, without whose support this study would not have been possible.

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Background

1. Nalanda in course of its expansion of madarsa education programme sought to bench mark key project performance areas for (a) those where it has been operational in few years and (b) the ones it is aiming to take up as model madarsas. The purpose of the study was : (i) to identify the gray areas in the selected Maktab/ Madarsa and thus provide input to coining intervention strategies to cover the identified gaps. Various areas that may be probed include teaching skill and primary level subject proficiency of Madarsa teachers, current achievement level of the children, classroom practices of Madarsa, etc. This will thus result in implementation of a 'need based' and 'demand driven' model in contrast to a supply driven one. And (ii) to identify the intervention areas in the model madarsas for quality improvement.
2. Nalanda's perspective behind the study has been two : First – to seek a feedback on Nalanda's own model madarsa programme, its effectiveness and strategic advances made so far; and Second : on aligned parameters, enumerate a baseline for a set of new madarsas being taken up for the programme. While study team indicated that the study must go focus on individual performance areas, Nalanda added that a comparative assessment would be unavoidable.

NALANDA's perspectives in Madarsa programme –

3. Back in 2003-04, Nalanda commenced its Madarsa education programme to connect its institutional commitment to improve quality of primary education across all sections of children. Nalanda's perspective on Madarsa education has been documented in many of its documents; what would be important to record in this report is more of the strategic position that Nalanda perceives to take while making project interventions. Here the study was appraised the uniqueness in positioning itself with a non-confronting, tacit and soft approach to project progression that helps imbibe confidence of the muslim community. Nalanda's despite its discomfort with the way quality of education being dealt in madarsas and rather irrational premise on which the dini taleen is being practiced upon, preferred to focus on strengthening components of basic primary education in madarsas. It did not attempt to argue the best practices in managing public institutions nor did it question the parallel streams underway in madarsas, not exactly academic but religious in nature and tried not hurt larger sentiments attached to madarsa as an institution.

Initiatives made so far – results manifested -

4. Given significance of the madarsa education, Nalanda's role so far has been extraordinary. In a state like UP, where madaras are not seen alone as educational institutions; rather, are perceived as those operating as ones to protect and prosper a cohesive religious culture and strengthen minority causes in India. In such a scenario, taking up Madarsa education would never be easy. Nalanda has neither been too ambitious about the process ahead nor too complex in its approach. It stuck to tasks that any public discourse as per the Constitution of India is expected to perform. It confined its vision to making the madaras improved centers to impart primary education of decent standard. Therefore, focus more has been on very tangible mechanics of standard development discourse - training teachers, develop and helping them to use wide variety of teaching aids and other such including, of late, publishing and supplying useful books for the children. Development of books, however, has been a critical area as it called for intricate customization with the sentiments of the community.
5. Reviewing educational advancement in madaras to measure Nalanda's performance so far would not be right. The way Nalanda's endeavour has succeeded needs to be seen from the perspective of madaras starting to accept an 'external influence' in its course and having the realization that the Nalanda intervention is for larger good and for benefit of children under reference in long run. What is heartening to see, as the study observes in all occasions, preaching about and introduction of contents of basic & primary education in madaras do not raise eyebrows and have become increasingly acceptable within an arguably rigid maktab madarsa educational paradigm. Nalanda so far has created a sound bench to move ahead, impact intricacies in madarsa education and set a fast track process of improving the education quality at madaras. This is just commendable.

To start with - - - thoughts of study team

6. Study team was engaged in the assessment of Madarsa education has largely connected distinct urban and rural contexts, respectively in Barabanki-based madaras and those located in Fatehpur. Key interfaced were (a) teacher's skill and subject proficiency, (b) classroom practices and pedagogy, (c) Learning attainment of junior classes. Here it is easy to guess that these together form a package of assessment and conventionally go with general educational interventions to impact quality. Midway, however, while the assessment became intense, it was felt that the deliberation deeply connects few more issues - - without which, it was felt, Madarsa education may not be impacted. These issues are not yet in main

focus so far as interventions are concerned and can broadly be put as (a) Madarsa governance and management and (b) clientele perspectives in impacting madarsa education; and an explicit observation is, (c) lack of connect with local decentralized institutional processes. Interestingly, this is something that even Madarsas feel is quite important to pursue.

7. Study team realized, madarsa as an institution is quite stable and lot of issues around governance and management are steady in its functioning; also having quite common vulnerabilities. One Madarsa being assessed in Barabanki is nearly 200 years old; oldest documentation available in the Madarsa about its existence is of 1843! It is going robust. There is a need to enumerate these as key research issues for further probing. Study team realized, the leads that the assessment is going to offer are unique and grossly defy lot of mainstream perception. Perhaps, these bear some regional uniqueness too.
8. Barabanki being part of Awadh, give its cultural alignment, madarsas were found largely pursue to a strong sense of constitutional provisions and rights. How constitutional obligations lend empowering opportunity to muslims, may be realized through meaningful madarsa education, to be specific. The study compels on assumptions, if parts of Eastern UP madarsas are overwhelmed with a sense of insecurity and gap between the madarsa education and basic education is seemingly widening? Or whether or not, in parts of urban pockets/ western UP, madarsa education is imbibed more with a sense of quality consciousness and even elites preferring to opt for Madarsa education against mainstream basic education? Of course, there are other strong features that signify institutional legacy and strength of madarsas; study team strongly feels if they are properly communicated with larger discourse; certainly not articulated adequately.

Imposing challenges before the parent community - livelihoods, socio-religious image leading to societal and self-image

9. The Sachar committee report ably portrays the conditions of Indian muslim not alone developmentally as the most marginalized, but also having perpetuated a sense of second grade citizenship as minority in India. The madarsas under reference can solely be attributed as extremely weak in terms of its financial sourcing, infrastructure, governance and management of the day to day affairs. Indeed, such is a true representation of the community these are meant to serve. The communities that are sourcing children to these madarsas are destitute and under constant struggle for dignified living in a perceptibly harsh poverty and social polarized urban slum and rural condition.

10. While the Study team spoke with number associates of madarsas, it could observe the ironies with which the madarsa education is being persevered. The community and madarsa connect is not always comfortable as the latter does not significantly contribute to poor immediate, imposing demands, neither it offers any potent to such. However, a rather artificial religious link, more from the minority insecurities is something connects larger communities with the madarsas. The connecting joint, the committees that run the madarsas are unassumingly mixed within the community, often imparting a sense of remaining invisible and out of public sight. The management bodies are not essentially the individuals from the elite section of the society; however, undoubtedly are strong power-groups that control larger community discourses. These do not connect with political identities; neither is fully religious, so it is difficult to figure these from within the visible public domain.

11. The communities represented by parents of children enrolled in madarsas were interfaced frequently. In all cases, these were found to be in low morale, under socio-religious pressure and under a constant threat of decaying public image. The community is worried of their children, about the potently confronting image the children might need to interface owing to their being enrolled with madarsas. Here, it must be noted, the parents do not really see a better option than the madarsas for a 'secured education' for their wards wholly responsive to their religious, social and cultural needs. At a later stage, Nalanda may need to consider such deeper issues for research and facilitate relevant organic connect with its interventions.

Key findings : Teachers' skills & subject proficiencies

Basic profile

12. Largely, teachers in the madarasas under reference depicted similar trend. As indicated earlier, something that goes along the trends in contemporary education system, be it basic and government aided or public school education, teachers are not the best career examples. Madarsa teachers were found to generally have minimal level education that qualifies them to be a teacher, that too more from the stream of beyond the basic education. Highly dominated with male presence, female teachers in madarasas tend to be setting a rather improved teaching precedence - more caring to the children, more open to approaches that pertains classroom practices, teaching aids and teaching at core.
13. The teachers under reference were found not from the best of socio-economic background. Sociologically, the teachers are not from amongst the apex elite; surely, such families not promoting their wards, youths to adopt the career. And economically, essentially all teachers represent some degree of compulsion to take up the job in the initial part of their careers or even of late; female teachers included. Against the study- assumption, only in seldom cases teachers were found to be inheriting the profession from their prior generation.

Education, training and exposure; associated institutions

14. As indicated in the earlier paragraphs, educational levels of the teachers can not be compared anything with excellence. More significantly, the present study could not witness in madarsa teachers anything that the enrolled children can be modeled at or the respective parent community might charter their children's career at. Therefore, as regards educational background is concerned, signified with modest qualification, teachers were found largely ineligible to take up contents of basic primary education. On the other hand female teachers, seemingly taking up the profession out of passion, affection for children's education and compounded with lack of choices for peer-preferred career, proved to be more qualified - - in teaching skills, mobilizing children's confidence and without doubt, on educational parameters. The study feels, madarasas to cater to the demands of basic primary education, have to wake up to limited educational demands for the teachers as qualification.
15. The study feels profound organic disjoint between the children and the male teachers. While the women teachers rather effortlessly penetrate and deepen educational motive of the children, generate cognitive inquisitiveness and indulge interest, male teachers seem to undergo a more hierarchical mind-set, something that does not govern learnings paradigms.

[FOOTPRINTS OF SILENCE ...]

A fair judgment would be slightly inadequate as the study could witness majority of female teachers teaching girls and lower standards of mixed classes. Therefore, their proficiency in higher classes remains to be observed. As the study reveals, training for the teachers are limited at best to teaching in other madarasas. In exceptional cases, where select madarsa teachers are exposed to instructors' training under non-formal education programme, are visibly performing better than other teachers. The study finds gross inadequacy in teachers' professional training in dealing with basic primary education and any extent of classroom performance dealing with seemingly sensible, sober and bright children from the neighbourhood muslim communities.

16. The study reiterates, while most of the female teachers are better educated than their male counterparts, observed to follow improved teaching discourse even without exposed to elsewhere teaching practices or training. Interactions with female teachers suggest that their simple and logical application of basic human behavior with the children even without any (teaching) reference, makes teaching far more effective. Inexperience indeed, as the study observes, is doing better for the female teachers than the 'experienced male teachers exposed to conventions of madarsa education!
17. Here it is important to record, the limited extent of exposure of the teachers and indigenous training, apparently is not causing good as regards learning of the children. The conventional coercing classroom setting and extremely ill-informed subjects matters tend to confront pupils' out-of-school environment on day to day basis; thus, creating a sense of qualm in their tender minds and surely affecting their convincingly learning.

Teachers' skill mix/ teaching competency

18. The above paragraphs have set a profile for the madarsa teachers, especially those under reference. However, in a good note, most of the teachers are excellent orators; however, lacked in encouraging teaching gestures. Teachers seem to possess ironical attributes - - language proficiency and moderate teaching skills with unfortunately low levels of acceptable teaching attitude. Especially the male teachers were not found anywhere liking mixing up with children and rarely observed friendly with the pupil. As teacher's appraisals were underway, of late, all teachers tend to fall unguarded to questions like 'how do you assess children's preferences - - moods and likes dislikes and temperaments'.

19. Besides teachers' possibilities to be considered as role models, one thing that principles of all school disagreed given unlike-model behaviors of madarsa teachers, teachers' skill and competencies are observed to be low. Simple logical practices such as review of past learnings of the children, re-assessing learning premises and children's inclination to correlate subject understandings with their externalities and 'beyond-the-classroom experience' was just missing. Teachers were observed not in cognizance of needs like 'completing children's learning loop' and using children's 'existing knowledge base'.

Bushra Khatoon (F - 25)

The youngest and the only female teacher in the Madarsa (Barabanki).

A soft yet firm speaker, Bushra is immensely popular with all 35 of her young students. She is sensitive to her student's individual needs and aware of their family problems and other pressures.

Bushra has been invited to her student's house by the child's mother to discuss the child's progress as well as to appreciate the work being done by her. Children have begun to relate to their parents the creative nature of their teacher's new teaching style with the use of cards and charts etc. this has helped create interest amongst the community about the teacher herself.

20. Bringing real life precedence while teaching subjects to children, striking a higher quality level of information being dealt was observed to be a rarity. The teaching and learning discourse is hopelessly confined within the regimented efforts of the children memorizing lessons and teachers keeping the children under a seemingly uncompromised pressure. Diversity in pedagogy is largely not attempted, madarsa teaching looked standstill on age-old premises without adequate rationale; neither trying to explore reasons for new changes. In no single precedence, any teacher appraised requirement for changed pedagogy for the good of children, or at large, for madarsa education! Sensing from the quarters of children, range of teachers that are not happy with the existing paradigm (read female teachers) and most crucially from vast section of parents, the study opines for an earnest change in the existing teaching-learning practices.

Teachers' basic orientation towards information and quality of information

21. Some teachers, feeling the need for an information-based education with better quality information, realizes that the area they belong can not get all the facilities to make education with better quality-information based. In most cases, information served is restricted to books - - yet some Urdu and Arabic books the children study from; however, the teachers feel the children enjoy colored books such as the English book. In some cases, information served looked just vibrant, compared to others, but concerned teachers feel the madarsa needs to do

more and feel their hands are tied with the lack of funds and infrastructure. Making the expression rather explicit, the teachers feel sorry and helpless for the sake of his students yet try to teach the children all they know in an integrated sort of way, with examples from everyday life, though this is a fractured, inconsistent finding.

22. Select cases found, madarasas with new setting, inexperienced and over-enthusiast teachers' with strong religious rigour, where extremely poor quality information is served, somewhat illogical and unscientific. In such cases, the present assessment observes potentially severe and conflicting impact on children's mind about rather philosophical lessons being imparted (as part of dini taleem), such surely confronting with true realities around the children in real life! In exception, something different from every other case, certain madarasas demonstrate organising a class in a week is dedicated to value orientation. Friday is holiday and then Saturday is the day from which the new week starts. The most important aspect that needs to be taken into account is that every Thursday classes of values are taken up and the next day is followed by review. Besides the class course they are taught about Public hygiene, Dinayat, Post office, Zila, and village. Good practices, however, are truly exceptional (ref. box).

Bushra Khatoon –

The case continued - - Quality of information served *

Her exposure is not limited to the madarsa as she has taught in other schools and houses as a private tutor as well. Bushra reads newspapers whenever she can and has many exchanges regarding education with her sisters who are in Lucknow and Barabanki. An ambitious student and a quick learner as per the Principal, she is serving the same information creatively and with added examples and stories which has made the students enjoy her classes more and learn faster.

Brining in teaching quality dimensions –

Humanity, nationhood & national integration, citizenship, environment, community & gender values etc.

23. In general the teachers insist that the students maintain a good level of personal hygiene and often call for parents or sends back children if they do not adhere. Teachers appraised about the upcoming change in approach of the Madarsa authorities to have in recent times celebrated Republic Day on the 26th of January with élan. Often, in lower standards the class groups are mixed and teachers in select do not in discourage boys and girls sitting together or interacting. In a certain case, a female teacher Usma indicated that Independence Day and Republic Day are celebrated in the tiny madarsa courtyard that the girls play in and mothers are invited at the occasion. She feels that she does not know much about empowerment and gender values, she has aspirations for her daughters yet she feels they do not have the substance for further achievement.

24. The study observes that this is a gray area in madarsa education with rather murkier shades.

The madarsas education is distantly not in practice of a range of quality dimension that The Constitution of India expects its citizens to oblige and public institutions to promote and propagate. In exception cases, concerned teachers felt proud with civic activities on board, children learning and practicing community level cleanliness drives. In some madarsas basic level attempts of gardening and beautification was observed. Overall, starting from introducing the national map of India, that of socio-political mainstream symbols, a range of larger issues needs to shape into madarsa education.

Bushra Khatoon –

The case continued - - Facilitating learning loops for children – review, retrospect, using children’s existing knowledge/ levels of skills ”

She does not take children outside the class for learning purposes; instead she uses her class window as a canvas to point out to children examples from the outside. Her teaching is coloured with local examples of popular melas, etc. She feels her skills have vastly improved because of Nalanda’s training and intervention she has learnt to teach children differently ” as has her emphasis on reviewing children’s existing knowledge. Her class reviews their A-Z daily as well as counting.

25. As regards integration of technological issues, subjects and facilities are concerned, the madarsas not only looked unequipped; rather, appeared reluctant to such introduction. However, all madarsas and most of the teachers are aware of benefits of computer application in madarsas and are in cognizance of some madarsa where computer education exists.

Teachers promoting motivation and leadership among children

26. As regards teachers ability to innovate tasks that assign children to perform in groups and promote team work, through discussing the outside world, promoting competition amongst the children, encouraging creative and fast learners while spending extra time with the slow learners, select teachers trained by NALANDA are well aware of its class as individuals and as a unit. Such teacher go that extra mile to bring more to their class by reaching out to students and understanding their problems at home and acting as a support system.

27. At large, in other madarsas where NALANDA training has taken place or those recently taken up and are at nascent stage of engagement, are not the similar cases. Promoting diversity, responding to children’s curiosity etc. are nomenclatures unheard in general madarsas including in many where Nalanda has made intervention. Here the study feels, with

its institutional credentials and robust, well articulated experience in its back, Nalanda must make bolder steps to promote teachers frontline roles such as motivator, innovator and as mentor to growing children.

Madarsa teachers' interface with mainstream processes

28. There is clear divide between the basic education and madarsa education confirmed with every madarsa under reference. Instances of madarsa teachers' participation at the gram panchayat level, coordination with the gram pradhans or participation at the village education committee level were not reported. No case was cited where teachers interacted with local primary schools and relevant authorities for any good reason.

29. More crucially, the study observes that access of the parents to madarsas with reference to their children's upbringing is not a regular case. Parents already suffering with low levels of confidence owing to their wretched socio-economic conditions in most cases, hesitate to approach the madarsa uninvited. The madarsas on the other hand are bound to respective convention of teachers self-made comfort zones and not access parents preferences on and feedback about their respective children.

The picture emerging

30. The conclusive scenario that the study seem to narrow down at is a grim profile of madarsa teachers, desperately seeking professional interventions in form of deeper institutional engagement, support management and institutional operation and through wide range of training and capacity building. Coincidentally, Nalanda-led madarsas too seemed equally weak in its performances or in bringing about changes being aimed through project-based interventions.

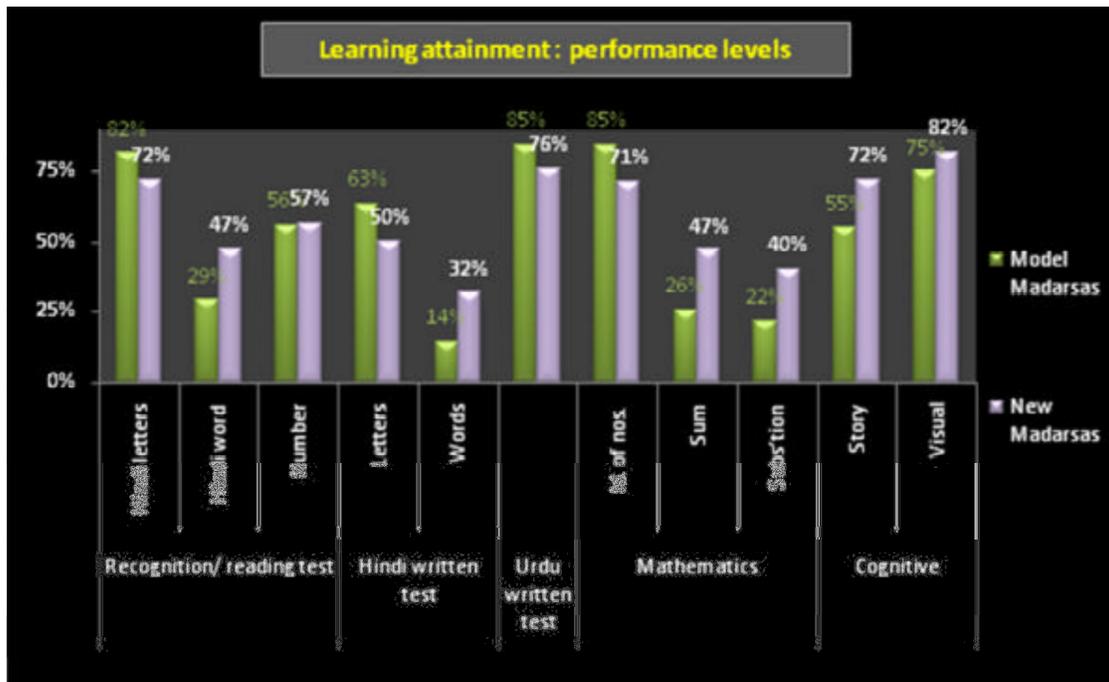
Bushra Khatoon –

The case continued - - Interface with mainstream processes - - interaction with parents

Through her exchanges with her sister who is a Shiksha Mitra, Bushra is aware of the teaching in primary schools and is concerned about the future of her students who pass out and progress to class 6 in government schools.

Interaction with parents is usually through messages sent by students regarding poor attendance or performance. Fathers or male guardians come to the madarsa for discussing such issues while women sometimes send for Bushra to ask her about their child's progress or to thank her for the same.

Key findings : Learning attainment



Learning attainment : Madarsa Education in UP

31. Key areas of assessment as well as approach adopted have been as under –

- ? The areas which assessed were Language ability (Hindi, Urdu), Math, Cognitive aspects through story narration and pictures, a general discussion with the students about them individually.
- ? The assessment is conducted for class one children.
- ? Mixed groups were taken comprising both girls and boys, at certain places exclusive girls group are taken.
- ? The hesitancy of children towards a new thing and the level of promptness are also assessed.

32. Methodology and sequence of tests - relevant rationale are enumerated as under -

- ? The children are sampled with the help of teachers as only bright and articulate students were picked up.
- ? All these children were separated from rest of the class and taken out on a separate block for undergoing to learning attainment tests.
- ? The evaluator was a female to maintain the proximity of the children with the test.
- ? Child-friendly methods were adopted like the test started with visual cognitive test showing them the pictures. So, they could be comfortable with the evaluation process.
- ? The sequence that was followed first the visual cognitive test then the story telling and question answer, after this a general talk with every individual child and it incorporated the verbal test of words, letters, and numbers.
- ? In this sequence the last is written test of Hindi words, letters, math, and Urdu is conducted.
- ? At last we had the feedback session with children in order to know their likeness about the tests and do they want to have it again.

33. Key findings of the learning attainment tests have been shown in the matrix below. This is an area that study team remains to exchange with Nalanda to justify scoring criteria. A detail analysis, as observations are compounded with the scores secured by the children would be elaborated subsequently.

Sl.	Name of Madarsa	Recognition/ reading test			Hindi written test		Urdu written test	Mathematics			Cognitive	
		Hindi letters	Hindi word	Number	Letters	Words		Id. Of numeric	Sum	Subs ⁿ tion	Story	Visual
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1	Madarsa Shabulum	97%	23%	61%	84%	09%	-	94%	36%	38%	50%	70%
2	Madarsa Amin Ul Kuran Chini Masjid	97%	30%	83%	69%	13%	82%	96%	58%	40%	50%	70%
3	Madarsa Daru Uloom	49%	19%	29%	42%	6%	86%	82%	0%	0%	40%	80%
4	Madarsa Ansaru Uloom	83%	44%	50%	58%	29%	86%	66%	8%	8%	80%	80%
5	Madarsa Saudiya Salfiya	99%	56%	63%	75%	44%	98%	100%	63%	33%	70%	60%
6	Madarsa Sayyadana Khalid Bin Valid	69%	56%	69%	49%	50%	98%	68%	58%	62%	80%	80%
7	Madarsa Asfaru Uloom	92%	72%	77%	60%	35%	32%	80%	12%	60%	60%	90%
8	Madarsa Varisul Uloom	42%	28%	46%	32%	18%	-	50%	80%	40%	70%	80%
9	Madarsa	57%	25%	28%	34%	12%	-	58%	22%	6%	80%	100%

34. Broad observation about children – an interpretation of the salient trends in learning attainment -

- ? The observation about the children is that they lack the ability to question.
- ? 'First line' grasping activity is low; the children needed specifications and clarifications at every stage.
- ? They took substantial time in responding; as some failed at the first attempt, they stopped answering.
- ? They need substantial boosting while they are answering; as the options remains just to ask what they know exactly.
- ? They must be taught through visuals as they grasp it faster; this will not only increase their interest but their confidence levels too.
- ? They are more confident in identifying the numbers and the Hindi words.

- ? Everything must be taught through a process of story telling and innovative activities that will surely make them capable to sustain their interest in the subject.
- ? The classes must focus on interaction and must ensure that every student must participate equally.
- ? Enrollment of the students must be conducted on the basis of the capability they have like if certain student is having the potential to understand things fast and could reproduce it fast then that group aligned. As other student must be kept with those who are of same caliber so that they could feel comfortable and perform the way in accordance with expectations.

Key observations : Classroom practices

35. A birds' eye-view has been provided about the classroom profiles and activities that were observed as part of the observation made as part of the study. The data, has been supported with findings of the specific tools used for the purpose (Ref. sample : Annex - 2). The reported observations are qualitative in nature and ably substantiated with visuals and select interviews with teachers.

Madarsa	Classroom observation
1. Sahabul Uloom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Combined classes in some cases. Teachers' voices overlap due to attempts to 'out shout' each other as most classes use and encourage <i>repeat after</i> technique in children. Students do not question teacher during class. Boys and girls sit separate, bags in front with notebooks. Scribbling during class discouraged. Primary class children's movement and assignments outside class restricted by the fact that teacher is lone female in the madarsa. Apparently, junior class colourful and cheerful. Senior pedantic, organized and severe (<i>chappals</i>). <i>Outdoor classes often intruded upon by people living in hostel/ visitors.</i> - Interval brief/ class break non-existent. Gatekeeper discourages children from leaving classes. Examinations twice a year, tests every now and then. - Electricity available, single fan in each classroom. Drinking water supply and toilets separate for girls, boys and teachers. Charts, blackboards used amply and children given space to draw and paint to display
2. Aminul Qurran Chini Masjid (Dariyabad)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Good infrastructure. 18 classrooms, primary classes lack benches and chairs for students (available to teachers). Large and colourfully decorated blackboards, junior classes use Urdu messages on boards while senior 4-5th have messages in English. No hostel in madarsa. No external influence/ effect on classes. Lighting available at all hours due to inverter, good water supply and toilet facilities. - Section wise division in junior classes only senior classes have no divisions. Seating arrangement group wise (girls boys separate). Charts in every classroom except primary classes. Primary classes are located upstairs; do not have bathrooms close by. Special arts and crafts class every weekend/ teacher also teaches English. Too much noise/disruption during classes due to close proximity and lack of <i>third wall</i> and doors - No recess, children allowed to eat food/drink water as they please. Gatekeeper is a girl who is poor and also attends the senior most class. All

Madarsa	Classroom observation
	female teaching staff, free movement of staff. Examinations twice a year and monthly tests.
3. Darul Uloom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Toilet and drinking water supply very close to primary class, children disturbed due to constant up and down of other children. Girls under pressure to clean classrooms and toilets. Central courtyard used for games and activities. Benches disproportionate to average girl's size and are uncomfortable. Benches and desks for all children - No charts as such - Shorter working/ studying hours as class timings are 12:30 to 16:00. No recess or breaks. Examination paper common for boys and girls, monthly tests
4. Ansarul Uloom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Unhygienic conditions for children, poor lighting inside classroom. Combined classrooms with no partition. Carpet/floor mats in tatters and bad condition - Teacher does not use blackboard (disabled?). No artwork as such on walls, children share space with hostellers there are beddings and trunks lying near the children and intruding upon class atmosphere and space. One single chart with Urdu letters and pictures. New teacher (Haji) has introduced concept of using photo-stated papers for question papers (Substantiate). - No recess and breaks. Exams twice a year, no tests as such.
5. Saudia Salfia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Toilet and drinking water supply common for students and teachers. Girls' hostel available right next to classroom, a little disturbance due to the same. Classes are not partitioned, single blackboard for five classes. Students sit on takhat - Few students, no classes taken as such, different tasks given to 'groups' of girls in each class. Senior girls assist in teaching. - Examinations taken twice a year, tests every month
6. Saidna Khalid Bin Walid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Very basic infrastructure with cement flooring and mats to sit on. Only two small classrooms. Blackboard well kept and children study sitting on the floor with small benches in front of them. No charts/art - One resident teacher. Teachers emphasize more on <i>deeniyad</i>. Linear seating

Madarsa	Classroom observation
	<p>mixed girls and boys seating on opposite sides.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No recess or class breaks. Tests taken once in a while, exams twice a year
<p>7. Ashfarul Uloom</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Modest infrastructure built on common property land. Two rooms for classes, two classes held outdoors under the shade of a tree. Outdoor classes share a blackboard. Single urinal and hand pump - Charts inside classroom. Children are bright and ask questions from teachers. Corporal punishment avoided as guardians and parents live nearby. Children and teachers sit on floor on mats, teachers have small desks. - No recess and breaks. Exams taken twice a year and tests randomly taken
<p>8. Warisul Uloom</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Teachers’ frequently resort to disciplining children with corporal punishment. Most classes disrupted by coming and going on hostel boys. Linear seating, girls on one side and boys’ the other. No recess and breaks - Madarsa located on roadside near clinic, classes disturbed by traffic and patients. No lighting. Single hand pump. Classrooms exist yet some children sit outside a clinic and on ditches to study. Blackboards placed. - Examinations twice a year, tests taken every other month
<p>9. Samshul Uloom</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No infrastructure as such, children sit on broken brick flooring on tattered sack pieces and under a hot tin roof. No separate classrooms. Only one blackboard – uneven for writing. No drinking water arrangement – Children go to nearby houses to drink water and use toilet. Some classes held under the shade of a broken wall. No seating arrangement for teachers’ either - No recess or breaks as such. Corporal punishment avoided as guardians and parents live nearby. Examinations twice a year, tests not taken as such

Annexes

Annex – 1: Sample Teachers' Profile

Annex – 2: Sample Classroom Profile

Annex – 1: Sample Teachers' Profile

Bushra Khatoon, Class teacher –1st standard

Basic profile

? **Name, age, gender, social and family background;**

Bushra Khatoon, 25 year old, is the youngest and only female teacher in the Madarsa. She has been teaching since she was still a student in 11th grade and comes from an educated family where girls are encouraged to study. Her cousin sister is a Shiksha Mitra and they share experiences and knowledge with each other.

? **Education, training and exposure; associated institutions**

BA (pass) from Patel University in Barabanki, she has studied sociology, Hindi and English. Bushra aspires to complete her MA and a Bed, she is also keen to learn computers and work as a field staff with any NGO. She has been trained by NALANDA and has learnt how to tailor, embroider as well as other arts and crafts from a center near her house.



? **Key professional qualification, relevant experience; details of institutions worked with;**

No professional teaching qualification as such, she has been giving tuitions since 11th standard and was a teacher in a private Montessori school nearby.

? **Others, if any**

She gives tuition to a high school girl student, a daughter of one of the managers in the madarsa after classes.

Skill mix/ teaching competency

? **Comfort levels with basic teaching skills – oration, writing proficiency, language proficiency, inclination to mix-up with children, friendliness with children, temperament to bear with children's preferences etc.**

A soft yet firm speaker, Bushra is immensely popular with all 35 of her young students. She is sensitive to her students individual needs and aware of their family problems and other pressures.

Bushra has been invited to her student's house by the child's mother to discuss the child's progress as well as to appreciate the work being done by her. Children have begun to relate to their parents the creative nature of their teacher's new teaching style with the use of cards and charts etc. this has helped create interest amongst the community about the teacher herself.

- ? **Facilitating learning loops for children – review, retrospect, using children’s existing knowledge/ levels of skills, bringing relevance to sessions, out-of-class/ real-life illustrations etc.**

She does not take children outside the class for learning purposes, instead she uses her class window as a canvas to point out to children examples from the outside. Her teaching is coloured with local examples of popular *melas*, etc. She feels her skills have vastly improved because of Nalanda’s training and intervention she has learnt to teach children “differently” as has her emphasis on reviewing children’s existing knowledge. Her class reviews their A-Z daily as well as counting.

- ? **Diversity and innovativeness in pedagogy – observations on spectrum demonstrated/make queries from the teachers on such portfolio and occasions to utilize such skills etc. Bushra is keen on introducing more arts and crafts classes to the madarsa especially for the girl students as well as starting a small coaching for weak students after classes.**

She has fostered a healthy and competitive atmosphere in her class of 35 students who are fearless and thrill in answering questions without hesitation.

Ideological influence/ value orientation

- ? **Quality of information served;**

Her exposure is not limited to the madarsa as she has taught in other schools and houses as a private tutor as well. Bushra reads the newspaper when she can and has many exchanges with her sisters who are in Lucknow and Barabanki regarding education. An ambitious student and quick learner as per the Principal, she is serving the same information creatively and with added examples and stories which has made the students enjoy her classes more and learn faster.

- ? **Brining quality dimensions – humanity, nationhood & national integration, citizenship, environment, larger community/ gender values, self-help etc.;**

She insists her students maintain a good level of personal hygiene and often calls for parents or sends back children if they do not adhere. In her seven months at the madarsa, she has observed the change in approach of the authorities who have in recent times celebrated Republic Day on the 26th of January with elan.

Her class groups are mixed and she does not in any way discourage boys and girls from sitting together or interacting.

- ? **Religious and sociological influences; quality of principles derived and frequency/ specific reference to such blending in classroom session;**

Coming from a family that is sensitive to girls’ education and with no family member previously educated/associated with a madarsa, Bushra is fresh in her approach to teaching yet conservative and acceptable in the madarsa and amongst the teaching staff.

Motivation and leadership

- ? **Ability to innovative tasks to be assigned to children/ children’s group, promote team-work/ group performance, promote diversity, response to children’s curiosity;**

Through discussing the outside world, promoting competition amongst the children, encouraging creative and fast learners while spending extra time with the slow learners, Bushra is well aware of her class as individuals and as a unit. She goes that extra mile to bring more to her class by reaching out to her students and understanding their problems at home and acting as a support system.

- ? **Free/ out-of-school assignment;**

No such assignments.

- ? **Illustrations and demonstration of motivational issues/ consolidate learnings etc.**

Through charts and games.

General Awareness

- ? **GP participation/VEC/basic education schools/primary schools**

Through her exchanges with her sister who is a Shiksha Mitra, Bushra is aware of the teaching in primary schools and is concerned about the future of her students who pass out and progress to class 6 in government schools.

- ? **Newspapers/ TV etc**

She reads the newspaper when she finds the time, does not have a TV in her house.

- ? **Aware of technological tools/computers etc (with specific reference to aided schools)**

Aware of courses and keen to learn.

- ? **Teaching activities beyond madarsa/tuition etc (reach to larger audience)**

Teaches tuition to high school student.

- ? **Interaction with parents**

Interaction with parents is usually through messages sent by students regarding poor attendance or performance. Fathers or male guardians come to the madarsa for discussing such issues while women sometimes send for Bushra to ask her about their child’s progress or to thank her for the same.

Recommendations

? **Which subject do children demand most**

Children demand English and enjoy Urdu and Arabic due to the subject's popularity in their households.

? **Which should be emphasized more? Why?**

Maths and English as children are weak in both.

? **Which subject do they need most help in**

English.

? **What are the areas of improvement**

Improved interaction with parents and accountability on their behalf regarding meeting the nutritional requirements of their children which are important for sustained concentration during classes. Regularizing the age of the students being admitted to class 1 is essential as some are very young.

Special meetings with parents of girls after class 5 to encourage them to continue their daughter's education as well as increasing classes upto standard 8 so that more children can benefit from the madarsa.

? **What kind of autonomy do teachers enjoy in deciding sequence/ topics/ curriculum**

As a primary class teacher, Bushra has full autonomy in deciding her class's curriculum and topics. The principal relies upon her for choosing what's best for the students.

Annex 2 – Sample Classroom Profile

Physical condition of classroom

1. Whitewashed, lighting, windows, roof - general appearance and hygiene

The classrooms are not whitewashed or plastered inside, however the madarsa is well maintained and clean. There is electric supply as there are two fans in each class, an inverter and generator.

2. Desks, chairs (for teacher and students) or mats

Desks and chairs are available for teachers and senior students only. Primary school children sit on mats. Mats are in good condition.

3. Blackboard, adequate chalk, supplies for teacher

Blackboards are in good condition and there is adequate supply of chalks for teachers. Junior classes usually have a message in Arabic written on blackboards while senior classes, especially 4th and 5th have messages in English.

4. Charts and pictures on walls

There is a dedicated arts and crafts teacher for the madarsa and an art period every week. Children draw decorative (not learning related) charts to decorate their classrooms. There were no learning aids, charts related to numbers and letters in any classroom.

Timing

5. Classes begin and terminate at

There are separate summer and winter timings. Classes in summer begin at 7:00 a.m. and end at 1:00 p.m. while in winter they begin at 8:00 a.m. and end at 1:00 p.m.

6. Length of class periods

Classes are generally 40 minutes long.

7. Breaks between classes

There are no breaks as such between classes as the management believes it interrupts the natural flow of the class as well as the fact that there is no space for children to play and it is not desirable for them to leave the campus.

8. Length of recess

There is no official recess due to the fact that children may leave the madarsa which is undesirable. Instead, children are allowed to eat from their tiffins and drink water whenever they so desire. It is a haphazard system.

Classroom activities

9. Method of taking attendance

Attendance is taken in registers in the mornings.

10. Seating arrangement

Group wise, linear, haphazard. Seating arrangement is group wise in senior classes where benches are separate for girls and boys. However junior classes sit in a mixed group in a haphazard way.

11. Examination/ test pattern

Examinations are conducted twice a year and questions are written on the blackboard.

Other observations

Parents often visit the management to request leave for their wards during the harvest season/for marriages etc. The management does not give leave easily for children.

Due to discipline problem and the lack of a playground, the children are deprived of a break between classes which reflects on them fidgeting too much during classes. The fact that teaching staff are young girls who are sometimes only intermediate pass affects the children's psyche as they do not take the teachers too seriously.