



Career Prospects for Madrasa Graduates: A Case Study of Al-Jamia-tulAshrafia Mubarakpur

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ABSTRACT: Initially starting as a small Madrasa called Misbahul Uloom in 1899, Al-Jamia-tulAshrafia Mubarakpur has gradually developed into one of the most prestigious educational institutions of the Indian sub-continent with national and international repute. The founding fathers of this institution were well-aware of the limited career opportunities available to Madrasa graduates. Thus, upon its establishment as a Jamia in 1972, they laid its foundation with the objective to prepare religious scholars, who upon completion of their prescribed course of Dars-i-Nizami are competent enough to participate in the intellectual as well as socio-political spheres of the nation. Thus, keeping in view the said objective, the curriculum of this institution was prepared in such a way so as to cater to the needs of the contemporary world. This paper aims to analyze the long-term impact of this objective and its effectiveness in opening the doors of various career opportunities as well as higher education for its graduates. It will also study the steps taken by this institution to promote modern education among its pupils and the engagement of its various graduates in contemporary modern educational institutions.

KEYWORDS: Madrasa, Al-Jamia-tulAshrafia Mubarakpur, Career Opportunities

I. INTRODUCTION

Al-JamiatulAshrafia Mubarakpur is situated in the town of Mubarakpur, Azamgarh District, Uttar Pradesh, India. It is counted among the most prestigious educational institutions of India which impart religious knowledge. In the beginning, a small religious school was established in 1899 CE which was named Madrasa Misbahul Uloom. This small madrasa imparted Quranic knowledge along with some basic Islamic knowledge. However, due to some circumstances, this madrasa was soon shut down. In 1911 CE,

theabove-mentioned madrasa was reopened and renamed Madrasa LateefiaAshrafia Misbah al-Uloom. This madrasa operated in a limited manner as a religious seminary inside a small two-storey building. It was relocated to Purani Basti in 1922 CE[1].

As time went by, the word Lateefia became obsolete and now this madrasa came to be known as Madrasa Ashrafia Misbah al-Uloom [2].

After the demise of its head Moulana Muhammad Siddiq Ghososwi, many scholars came and went by but there seemed to be little or no development in this institution[3]. Moulana Hafiz Abd al-Aziz Muradabadi (popularly known as Hafiz e Millat) came to Mubarakpur upon the command of his teacher Allama Moulana Muhammad Amjad Ali Azmi (popularly known as Sadr-ush Shariah) in 1932 CE [4].

However, when appointed as the head of the institution, he brought about a complete revolution in the educational environment of this institution and is credited for being the harbinger of new enthusiasm [3]. Consequently, its name became famous far and wide. As a result, many students began enrolling in this institution. The number of students was so high that it was felt that the building was unable to accommodate them all [2]. Accordingly, Hafiz e Millat and his companions acquired a large piece of land for Dar al-Uloom Ashrafia and its foundation was laid in 1935 CE. This event came to be known as Bagh e Firdous 1353 AH[1]. The suggested name for this institution was Dar al-Uloom Ahl-e-Sunnat Ashrafia Misbah al-Uloom. However, it gained popularity by the name of Dar al-Uloom Ashrafia. Its building took ten years to complete and then after some time the old structure was demolished and a five-storey building was erected in its place which was completed in 2000 CE [2]. It is located in a well-populated area of Gola Bazar. Its



graduates are called Misbahi due to the association of the old name Misbah al-Uloom [5].

As the area of Darul Uloom was not sufficient to hold the inflow of students [2], Hafiz e Millat anticipated this and foresightedly made a plan to purchase a vast piece of land and establish Al-Jamia-tulAshrafia Mubarakpur there [6].

At the site where this institute is now located two historic conferences were held. During the first three-day conference in 1972 CE, Al-Jamia-tulAshrafia Mubarakpur was established on 6 May.

However, it was the second conference held on 16-17 November 1973 CE in which matters about construction, curriculum, and other rules and regulation of the institute were discussed deliberately [3].

In this paper, we shall study analyze the long-term impact of the objectives of this Jamia and its effectiveness in opening the doors of various career opportunities as well as higher education for its graduates. We shall also study the steps taken by this institution to promote modern education among its pupils and the engagement of its various graduates in contemporary modern educational institutions.

II. Methodology

For this paper, available resources on the history of Al-Jamia-tulAshrafia Mubarakpur have been consulted. Moreover, to get a clearer picture of the current scenario, the authorities of Al-Jamia-tulAshrafia Mubarakpur were also consulted. Furthermore, detailed telephonic interviews with many graduates of Al-Jamia-tulAshrafia Mubarakpur were conducted.

III. Objectives of Al-Jamia-tulAshrafia Mubarakpur

The objectives of this institute were decided to be the following;

To establish a curriculum in such a way that it is comprehensive as well as acceptable which makes the student competent enough to understand the religion properly and also apply its rulings according to modern times.

To establish a spirit of research and specialization in several fields of Islamic sciences so that our educational institutes may get teachers who are well-versed in research work. Also, to build a community of scholars who are not only eloquent in Arabic but also know other languages like English and local languages so that the message of Islam may be spread far and wide.

To prepare religious scholars, who upon completion of their prescribed course of *Dars-i-Nizami* are competent enough to participate in the intellectual as well as socio-political spheres of the nation.

To prepare preachers who are masters of oratory and writing, well-versed in Islamic principles and have the ability to address Muslims, so that they are able to protect Islamic principles and Muslim civilisation and can promote harmonious society both at the national and international level.

To disseminate far and wide the true message of Islam and to defend it in the light of the Quran and Sunnah and to find solutions to the complex socio-cultural and economic contemporary issues [7].

IV. The Curriculum

Working upon its objective to enable students to preach the true version of Islam as well as be an active participant in the service of the country, the curriculum of this institute has been prepared in such a way as to fulfil the requirements of religious studies as well as to cater to the needs of the contemporary world.

At present, the whole prescribed syllabus is for 15 years which include:

- Nursery (One year)
- Primary (Five years)
- Secondary (Five years)
- Alimiyat (Two years)
- Fazilat (Two years)
- Optional Specialization course (Two years)

The syllabus has been prepared with such diligence that it covers all the subjects required for an Islamic scholar to excel in the field of religious sciences. In the meantime, it also doesn't fail to enrich its students with necessary subjects which can help the student to prosper in the contemporary world also. Apart from the languages like Arabic, Persian and Urdu which are necessary to understand religious scriptures, English and Hindi are also taught. Various other subjects like Mathematics, Science, Computer Science, Political Science, Sociology, Geography, History, General Knowledge etc. are also taught in the institute [8].

V. Amenities

Al-Jamia-tulAshrafia Mubarakpur provides its students with many amenities to help them make the most of their time in the Jamia. Apart from separate its monthly magazine,



mosques and several spacious hostels, the following are some of the amenities provided to the students of Al-Jamia-tulAshrafia Mubarakpur:

Hafiz e Millat Institute of Information Technology- Al-Jamia-tulAshrafia Mubarakpur also provides its student with a computer centre in a separate building. Apart from teaching computer science as a subject, there are qualified and experienced teachers imparting knowledge on composing, designing and programming. This computer centre is accredited by the National Council for Promotion of Urdu Language (NCPUL), New Delhi and the National Institute of Electronics & Information Technology (NIELIT) centre, Chandigarh. Those who pass out from this centre are provided with a one-year diploma by the Government of India.

Imam Ahmad Raza Library – Established in 1975, this is the central library of Al-Jamia-tulAshrafia Mubarakpur which has a rich collection of prescribed and non-prescribed books. The texts books are issued to the students for studying and there are required to return them after their annual examination.

Ashrafia Girls High School – Recognised by the U.P. Board, this school imparts education to girls for high school examinations in Hindi medium.

Ashrafia Inter College – Recognised by the U.P. Board, this school imparts education to boys for high school and intermediate examinations in Hindi medium.

Ashrafia Hospital – As there was no hospital near the Jamia to cater for the medical needs of the students, the need for a hospital was felt by the students and staff members as well as the residents of the nearby town. Therefore, Ashrafia Hospital was established in 2010 CE to serve the students and staff of Al-Jamia-tulAshrafia Mubarakpur as well as the people of the town.

Teachers Training Course – Although the art of teaching is taught as a separate subject both in Alimiyat and Fazilat courses of Al-Jamia-tulAshrafia Mubarakpur, it provides a separate course for the training of teachers in which only laborious and able graduates of this Jamia are given admissions and are required to perform various teaching responsibilities under the supervision of experts. For this, they are also awarded a stipend.

Specialization Courses – Apart from these, students can also enrol in the Hifz ul Quran course and Qirat Course and Fatawa-writing course or opt for specialization in Fiqh, Arabic literature, Hadith, logic, philosophy etc. which can further open the

doors of many career opportunities for them in the religious sphere [9].

VI. Career prospects for Misbahi graduates

There is a wide range of career opportunities available to Misbahi graduates. Al-Jamia-tulAshrafia Mubarakpur provides its students with all the above-mentioned amenities to fulfil the objectives laid by its founding fathers on the day of its establishment. Furthermore, this institute is recognized by many national and international universities, such as Al-Azhar University of Cairo (Egypt) [5] and Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) of Aligarh [10], Jamia Millia Islamia (JMI) [11] and Jamia Hamdard [12] of New Delhi and Maulana Azad National Urdu University (MANUU) [13] of Hyderabad. As a result, the doors for higher education and various career opportunities are open for Misbahi graduates. They can obtain a degree in the courses of their choice from these universities and then become at par with other job seekers in the job market.

The following are some fields in which Misbahi graduates have proven their mettle.

Academics – After obtaining a post-graduate degree, several Misbahi graduates have obtained a PhD in the subjects of their interest. Many have prospered in this field and are now employed at several teaching and non-teaching positions in many national and international universities. Professor Ghulam Yahya Anjum (currently employed in Jamia Hamdard, New Delhi) has been awarded Rashtrapati Award by the Government of India for his exemplary service in the field of academics. There are many other examples, like Dr Mohammad Afzal Hussain (currently employed in Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi), Dr Md. Sajjad Alam Rizvi (currently employed in Presidency University, Calcutta), Dr Md. Sanaullah (currently employed in Shri Radha Krishna Goenka College, Sitamarhi, Bihar), Md. Hisham Raza (Currently employed in Patna University, Bihar). Furthermore, there are a lot many more Misbahis who are currently enrolled in PhD programs in India and abroad.

Translation – As Misbahis are already well-versed in Arabic, Urdu and Persian and also have the knowledge of English and Hindi, they are capable of translating in these languages quite comfortably. This has been proven by Nisar Ahmad Misbahi who has successfully secured a government job in Bihar state as a translator. This field is rather an emerging one but their selection might provide the necessary impetus for other



Misbahis to follow their lead and choose translation as a career.

Journalism and Media – Misbahis are highly proficient in writing and oratory, therefore, it becomes quite easy for them to pursue journalism if they want. Niyaz Ahmad Misbahi and Rehmatullah Misbahi are among those who chose journalism as a career.

Law – Madrasa graduates are well-read in Islamic jurisprudence. Thus, they know how the Islamic law and jurisprudence works. Thus, if they wish so they can also choose to pursue a career in law, as proven by Sajjad Husain who overcame all the hurdles became an advocate and is currently employed in the High Court of Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh.

Administrative Services – If done with utmost perseverance, every goal is achievable. Shahid Raza Khan has proven this by breaking all the stereotypes against madrasa graduates and has cracked one of the toughest exams in the country. He has successfully cleared the coveted Civil Services Examinations conducted by the UPSC (Union Public Service Commission) in 2018. He is currently posted as Deputy Municipal Commissioner, Samastipur Nagar Nigam, Bihar.

Social Work- Several Misbahis are currently working in different NGOs, both governmental and non-governmental. For instance, Shaukat Misbahi has worked for a government-funded NGO, supported by the UNFPA (United Nations Population Fund). Also, there are names like Hasan Misbahi and Mudassir Misbahi who are actively working towards the betterment of society.

Dawah Work- Many graduates have made their lives' mission to spread the message of Islam far and wide. Some of them like Moulana Yaseen Akhtar Misbahi are working in India and others like Qamaruzzaman Azmi, Shafeequr Rehman Misbahi and Badrul Qadri Misbahi have worked towards this mission abroad.

VII. Findings

Since its establishment as a Jamia in 1972 CE, Al-Jamia-tulAshrafia Mubarakpur has left no stone unturned to fulfil the dreams of its founding fathers. It has developed many folds since then and has become one of the most prestigious educational institutions of the Indian sub-continent. However, it has potential for further improvement. The interview conducted with several Misbahis has highlighted the need for a career counselling program so that the students studying there can be guided in the right direction and understand the value of the degrees they hold. Also, there seems to

be a need for separate spoken English courses to make the students fluent in English.

VIII. Conclusion

Conventionally, madrasa graduates were thought to be capable of working in religious institutions only. However, several Misbahis have successfully managed to break this stereotype and excel in many fields other than religious works.

The graduates of Al-Jamia-tulAshrafia Mubarakpur are adept in religious sciences making them eligible for various religious posts like Imam in a mosque or a teacher in any religious institute, etc. In modern times, they also have the option to provide classes to students.

However, if they want, they can enter other occupations also as already discussed in the paper. The recognition of the degree provided by Al-Jamia-tulAshrafia Mubarakpur by universities of national and international repute have made it possible for Misbahi graduates to enter contemporary educational institutions and become at par with other graduates. The time they spent at the Jamia has a direct impact on their lives and gives them the confidence to soar high in all spheres of their lives.

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