

# The Role Of Muslim Women In The Establishment Of Madrasahs

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## Abstract

The study explores the historical evolution of religious institutions (Madrasahs) and the contribution of Muslim women in the establishment of these educational institutions. Muslim women have contributed to the legacy of Islam as scholars, legal experts, rulers, jurists, businesswomen, etc. This paper details the role of Muslim women in the field of Islamic education. Being qualitative descriptive in nature, the study collected data from books, journals, and web sources. The results discern the Muslim women's significant contribution in the establishment of Madrasahs across the Islamic history

**Keywords:** Madrasahs, Muslim, Women, Islamic.

## Introduction

**Madrasah:** Madrasah (singular madrasah and plural madrasahs) is a setting of religious

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If Madrasah is taken for a place with its permanent building, teachers and students with teaching syllabus of science and arts, such a Madrasah did not exist in the early periods of Islam.

After receiving Prophethood, Muhammad ﷺ made a special arrangement for the teaching of the Holy Qur'an to enlighten folks about Islam. In that period, places where Muslims got familiar with the religion of Islam, we can call them religious seminary. At the places where Prophet Muhammad ﷺ started teaching, were the early schools/madrasahs of Islam. First of all, in the era

education with conventional and religious teaching methods which only dispenses Islamic education. According to the Urdu dictionary, Madrasah means reading, education, teaching

of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, the place we call madrasah was the hut of Hazrat Abu Bakr Siddique, which was in front of his house. At this place Hazrat Abu Bakr Siddique prayed and read the Holy Qur'an<sup>2</sup>. The children and women of the non-Muslims would gather around and would listen to the recitation of the Holy Quran. People used to visit him. He, may God be pleased with him, was active in the preaching and advocacy of Islam<sup>3</sup>.

The house of Hazrat Arqam (may Allah be pleased with him) was in the valley of Safa. It was hidden from the eyes of the common people. He

used it as the first school of Islam. Anyone who converted to the faith of Islam would go to this house and learn the basic beliefs. Muhammad ﷺ and his companions were staying in Dar Arqam. He ﷺ was engaged in teaching. Hazrat Ali (RA) continued his education with Jalil-ul-Qadr companions like Hazrat Hamza (RA) and Hazrat Abu Bakr Siddique<sup>4</sup>. (RA). In Makkah, before the migration, he continued to preach, and preach in Madrasa Bayt Fatima bint Al-Khattab and Madrasa Sha'ab Abi Talib. Hazrat Khabab bin Arath (RA) used to come and teach them the Holy Qur'an. Hazrat Muhammad ﷺ continued to teach in all the places in Makkah, which gave birth to a community of nobles and scholars who successfully spread education to the other parts<sup>5</sup>.

### Religious schools after migration

The Jews of Madinah used to discuss about the last Prophet ﷺ. That is why the other tribes of Madinah i.e. (Aws and Khazraj) took the initiative to convert to Islam and Musab bin Umayr (RA) was sent as a teacher for them. So, from the very beginning, Medina became the center of sciences and arts, and its teaching took the form of permanent madrasahs, which illuminated the entire Arabian Peninsula.

### First School in Madinah:

The mosque of Banuzreq was the first mosque to have the holy Quran taught in Madinah. His first teacher was Hazrat Rafi bin Malik from Bani Zariq branch of Khazraj. Hazrat Rafi (R.A.) was the leader of his tribe and came to Madinah after the pledge of allegiance to the Prophet ﷺ. And he taught and encouraged his tribe to read the Qur'an and set aside a place on his land for teaching and learning. The first Surat taught in Madinah by Rafi (RA) was Surat Yusuf, and he was also honored as a teacher and muqri in Madinah<sup>6</sup>.

### The second seminary:

This seminary was located in the south of Madinah at the location of Quba. After the Pledge of Allegiance of Uqba, many Companions, many of whom were weak and elderly, migrated from Mecca to Medina, so their initial stay was in Quba. When their number increased, Salim Mawla Abi Huzaifa, who was a great scholar among them, used to teach the emigrants and at the same time perform the duties of Imam as Abdullah(RA) son of Umar (RA) mentioned.

”لَمَّا قَدِمَ الْمُهَاجِرُونَ الْأَوْلُونَ الْعُصْبَةَ مَوْضِعَ بُقْبَاءِ قَبْلَ مَقْدَمِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ كَانَ يَوْمُهُمْ سَالِمٌ مَوْلَى أَبِي حُدَيْفَةَ وَكَانَ أَكْثَرَهُمْ فِرْأَنَا“  
” 7 “

"Before the arrival of the Messenger of Allah, when the first group of emigrants came to Usba at a place in Quba, they were led by Salim Mawla Abi Huzaifa(RA). He was a great scholar of the Qur'an among them". This continued until the arrival of Muhammad ﷺ.<sup>8</sup>

### The third seminary:

This seminary was in the house of Hazrat Asad bin Zarara, about a mile to the south-west of Madinah. This teaching school was Naqi al-Khuzmat, which was different and distinguished from the above mentioned two schools of thought in comprehensiveness and effectiveness<sup>9</sup>.

After the pledge of allegiance to Uqba, the two tribes of Ansar, Aws and Khazraj, requested the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ to provide a teacher for education in Madinah, so the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ sent Musab bin Umayr (RA) for this service<sup>10</sup>.

Educator of Humanity and Leader Prophet Muhammad ﷺ highlighted the importance of knowledge for people of every stage of life. In which children, old people, youth and women were all included. Ample opportunities were provided for them to acquire knowledge.

### Women's education in the Prophet's era:

In the era of Jahiliyyah, where men were deprived of the blessing of knowledge, the concept of women's knowledge was impossible. Before Islam, Shifa bint Abdullah<sup>11</sup> was mentioned to be educated throughout Arabia. But Islam enriched women with the wealth of education, because of Islam, women gained a high position in the field of education. Umm al-Momineen Sayyida Ayesha Siddiqa (RA) and Hazrat Sayyida Umm Salama (RA) were so skilled in the secrets of Hadiths that there was no match for them. Many followers acquired knowledge from them.

The services of Hazrat Shifa bint Abdullah were obtained for the education of Umm al-Momineen Hazrat Syed Hafsa (RA). The Holy Prophet ﷺ said to Hazrat Shifa bint Abdullah that just as you taught Hafsa how to blow, teach her to read and write<sup>12</sup>.

Hazrat Abo Saeed Razi narrated regarding the education and training of women in the era of the Prophet ﷺ.

قَالَتْ النِّسَاءُ لِلنَّبِيِّ ﷺ غَلَبْنَا عَلَيْكَ الرَّجَالَ فَاجْعَلْ لَنَا يَوْمًا مِنْ نَفْسِكَ  
"فَوَعَدَهُنَّ يَوْمًا لَقِيَهُنَّ فِيهِ فَوَعظَهُنَّ وَأَمَرَهُنَّ"<sup>13</sup>

"The women came to the Holy Prophet (PBUH) and said that men have surpassed them in learning the religion, so please fix a day for them too, on which the Prophet ﷺ set a day for them and admonishment and admonition". However, there were some problems of women which they could not inquire directly from Hazrat Muhammad (peace be upon him), so in that case they learned from the Ummah of the believers. And in this way, she used to get acquainted with specific religious issues through the Holy wives<sup>14</sup>. Umm Waraqah bint Abdullah was made Imam of women by Muhammad ﷺ and also appointed a muezzin, so the muezzin would give the call to prayer and she would lead the women<sup>15</sup>.

### Origin of Madrasah Banat

The attributes that Islam has preferred for men are also preferred for women. And the standard of worldly and hereafter welfare that is set for men is exactly the same standard set for women. The reason for this is that according to Islam, both are indivisible parts of society and indispensable wheels of the vehicle of civilization. The Holy Qur'an addresses both men and women by saying " يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ ، يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا ". It makes both of them equally responsible for prayer, fasting, Hajj, Zakat, good manners, payment rights. Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said. " طَلَبُ الْعِلْمِ فَرِيضَةٌ عَلَى كُلِّ مُسْلِمٍ " acquiring-knowledge is obligatory on every Muslim."<sup>16</sup>

Women play a fundamental role in the reform and development of any nation. Child rearing has more to do with women than with men in shaping society. This is the reason why many commandments in the Holy Qur'an have been specifically described regarding women.

In relation to the education and training of women, the Qur'an clearly says:

” يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا قُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَأَهْلِيكُمْ نَارًا “

"O believers, save yourselves and your families from the fire."<sup>17</sup>

Muhammad ﷺ had appointed one day a week for the education and training of women. Where women would gather and Muhammad ﷺ would teach them. Even after the Eid prayer, he used to address them separately. The Mothers of the Believers (may Allah be pleased with them) were also ordered by the Holy Prophet ﷺ to inform the women about religious issues.<sup>18</sup>

After the Muhammad ﷺ, the Caliphs also paid full attention to the education of women. Umar (RA) had issued this decree in all parts of the kingdom "Educate women Surah Al Noor"<sup>19</sup> teach your women Surah Noor, it has many issues related to family and social life. Aisha (RA) was the most jurist and the most knowledgeable. The great Companions gained favor from her. Aisha and Umm Salama (may Allah be pleased with

them) are the most narrators of Hadith among the pure wives.<sup>20</sup>

Hazrat Amrah bint Abdul Rahman Ansari (102 AH) has a great position in the category of tab'iaat. She was the Hafiza of Aisha's knowledge and her Narrations. When Hazrat Umar bin Abd al-Aziz (99.101) conducted a special campaign for the editing of hadith, he specifically wrote to the governor of Medina who was Umrah's nephew to collect all the narrations of Amrah bint Abd al-Rahman.

After the first period, there was an expansion in the Islamic state, circles of knowledge and teaching. Wherever the Muslims reached, the taste and passion for education also increased among the Muslim women. Muslim women did not remain behind in the establishment of Madrasahs.<sup>21</sup>

#### **Beginning of separate buildings for Madrasahs:**

In the early stages of the Islamic education system, education continued in the courtyards of mosques, in the shadows of minarets, in the rooms of khanqahs and in the houses of scholars. At that time, if there was a need for a building for the school, a new mosque would have been built instead of a school-shaped building. At the end of the 4th century, the construction of a permanent building for schools began. And gained so much popularity that within a century it became a common practice in the entire Islamic world<sup>22</sup>.

For a period of time, the mosque had the basic status in Islamic countries and the entire system revolved around the mosque. Mosques continued to play their role equally, but permanent madrasahs were established, which did their work separately<sup>23</sup>.

The first Madrasa in Islam was established by the people of Nishapur, where the scholars of Nishapur had founded "Madrasa Behiqa".. Sultan

Mahmud Ghaznavi and his brother Nasr bin Sabkatgin founded Madrasa Saadia. When he was the governor there, the fourth Madrasa of Imam Ibn Furak came into being. It was the beginning of the fifth century Hijri, eleventh century AD. In this period, in one hand, libraries began to appear in an organized form. On the other hand, madrasahs came into existence with organizational and educational structures. It was as if a network of schools had spread.<sup>24</sup>

#### **The first Madrasa established by Banat:**

The first madrasa of Banat among the contemporary, religious, spiritual and educational centers was established in the city of Fez Morocco in 857–859 AD. This seminary was built by Fatima bint Muhammad al-Fihriyya, the daughter of a wealthy businessman. This madrasa still stands under the name of The University of al-Qarawiyyin<sup>25</sup>.

#### **Madrasa Khatuniya:**

Sultan Salahuddin Ayyubi's younger sister Rabia Khatun was a great scholar. Rabi'a Khatun participated in the construction of Madrasa Hanbaliya in Jabal Salehiya and also dedicated a property for its expenses. This seminary is still established today though Rabi'a Khatun died in Damascus in 1245 AD.<sup>26</sup>

#### **Princess Turkan Khatun:**

She was the daughter of Sultan Murad Sani of Turkey. She also built a seminary in Damascus.<sup>27</sup>

#### **Barka Khond:**

This was Umm Wold and the mother of Sultan Ashraf, one of the Mamluks of Egypt. She was a very pure and virtuous woman. One of her accomplishments is a well-known Madrasah called Umm Sultan outside Bab Zuwaila. A mausoleum was built in it in 771 AH. A Shafi'i and Hanafi school was established in it. Baraka performed a pilgrimage and spent a lot of money

in it. She died in 774 AH, and is buried with her son, Sultan Ashraf in the same Madrasah.<sup>28</sup>

### **Khatun al-Mardaniyya:**

She was the daughter of Malik Qutb al-Din Sahib Mardin. She established the Madrasa Mardaniyya in 624 AH near the White Bridge on the banks of the Thor Canal in Damascus. Many endowments were established in it.<sup>29</sup>

### **Contribution of Indian Muslim women in establishing madrasas:**

During the reign of the rulers, along with the men's religious madrasahs, daughters of kings and their wives participated in establishing women's madrasahs. Shops were also built around it, the income of which was devoted to the Madrasah. Along with this, Princess Zeb Al-Nisa bint Aurangzeb Alamgir was the owner of a comprehensive art setting. Scholars were given stipends. Scholars were coming not only from India but also from Iran, Arabia, Turkestan etc. She also established grand library for studies.<sup>30</sup>

Nawab Sultan Jahan Begum bint Nawab Baki Muhammad Khan established a Madrasa for Huffaaz in Bhopal in which he developed the art of Tajweed and Qur'at.

Mughra Humayun, the famous lady of Hyderabad Deccan, established a magnificent madrasa for girls and a madrasa for boys in the Deccan. At the same time, the property was also dedicated to them. This lady also established Madrasah Aziziyah in Patna. Then, under the curriculum of Jamia Aziziyah, many madrasahs were opened in the entire province of Bihar.<sup>31</sup>

After the establishment of Pakistan, women and girls were taught recitation of the Holy Quran, translation and elementary sciences in homes with men. Later, Banat Madrasahs were established for women's education along with the Madrasahs of Banin. In 1990, the Federation of Madrasahs also started taking the exam for girls. Nowadays, the female madrasahs are increasing. So, in the annual examination of the curriculum of 1435 AH / 2014 of the Federation of Madrasahs, the number of female madrasahs is (3248) while the number of girls is (3248). The number of madrasahs was (3628). Thus, the number of male students participating in this examination was (7365) while the number of female students was (105656). Similarly, the number of female students (32005) is more than male students.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Muhammad Abdul Maboud, Education System in the Prophetic Era, Maktaba Rehmaniya Iqra Center, Lahore, Date 2001, p. 62

<sup>7</sup> Bukhari, Abu Abdullah Muhammad bin Ismail, Al-Jama'i al-Sahih, Dar Ibn Kathir al-Imamah, Beirut, 3rd edition 1407 AH 1987/A, Chapter Imamat al-Abd wal-Mawla, Hadith No. 660.

<sup>8</sup> Muhammad Abdul Maboud, The System of Education in the Age of the Prophet, p. 43

<sup>9</sup> Muhammad Abdul Maboud, Education System in the Age of the Prophet, p. 50

<sup>10</sup> Muhammad Selman Salman, Qazi Mansoor Puri Rahmatul Ulalamin, p. 72

<sup>11</sup> The family of Shafa bint Abdullah Quraish is from Adi. Mother's name is Fatima bint Wahib. Before migration Became Muslim. Married to Abu Huthma bin Huzaifah Adwi. Known for two things during Jahiliyyah were Sweeping and writing: (Maulana Saeed Ansari, Maulana Abdul Salam Nadvi, Sirat al-Sahabiyat with Uswah al-Sahabiyat, p. 146.)

<sup>12</sup> Saeed Ansari, Maulana, Abdul Salam Nadwi, Sirat al-Sahabiyat with Uswah al-Sahabiyat, p. 145

<sup>13</sup> Imam Bukhari, Al-Jama'i al-Sahih, Kitab al-Jamad Al-Wahi, Volume of Hadith 101.

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<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Al-Tunji, Muhammad, Mujam al-Ilam al-Nisa, p. 78

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