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Kerala: An Exploratory Study

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The quality of a nation depends upon the quality of its citizens; which depends upon the quality of education. Madrasa education is one of the largest networks of NGOs (Non Governmental Organizations) in the country, which originated several centuries ago in a different political and social context, continues to address though in part, the educational needs of a large section of Muslim population. Although the Madrasa system of Kerala has seen many developments over the decades, the academia has not paid much attention to study scientifically its working, strengths and contributions. Yet, no scientific study was so far conducted to find out the true bases of strength and progress of Madrasa education system in Kerala and its continued development over the centuries. It is with these consideration in view and to address these needs that the present study was taken up.

The objectives of the study were: 1) To identify the different dimensions of quality in Madrasa Education.2)To critically examine the existing Madrasa education system in Kerala State in terms of different quality dimensions.3) To find out the contributions of Madrasas in promoting education among Muslims in Kerala.4) To identify the problems of the existing system of Madrasa Education in Kerala.5)To find out the modalities for further quality improvement in Madrasa Education system in Kerala.

The investigator used survey method of research to explore the quality improvement in Madrasa education system. The sample for the present study represented various stakeholders of Madrasa including 450 students, 120 teachers, 30 Heads, 150 Parents , 30 Madrasa Management Committees and 3 Boards of Madrasa Education. 5 class room observations were done for curriculum

transaction and 10 experts were interviewed regarding the quality improvement in Madrasa education. Various records and documents were analyzed. The data was analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively using appropriate statistical techniques. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages and cross tables were computed using SPSS, wherever required.

The major findings were as follows. Various stakeholders comprising Madrasa students, teachers, Heads of Madrasas, parents, Management Committees, Madrasa Boards and educationists differed in their views about quality dimensions in Madrasa education. Critical examination of the existing Madrasa Education system revealed that the strengths of the Madrasa system were found that periodical revision of curriculum and text books, high standard of Management system, Self sufficiency in Infrastructure and emphasized women education while the weakness found were classroom transaction/ Lesson Planning is not satisfactory, book centered transaction, chalk and talk method of teaching, Minimal usage of Teaching Learning Materials, evaluation system not up to the level, teachers training not as per requirement, lack of language proficiency among students and minimal utilization of ICT. Cent percentage literacy among Muslims in Kerala, practical religious values in life, enhanced access to education, facilitated higher education and improved mobility of pass outs, bridging social gap in educational attainment, bridging gender gap in access and achievement, new experiments in Madrasa education, improved youth employability and promoting the existing communal harmony are the major contributions of Madrasas in promoting education. The problems faced by Madrasas were: lack interest/awareness of parents, the untrained teachers working Madrasas, growing number of Unaided English Medium Schools, orders of Govt. of Kerala regarding timing of school is not effective, meager salary of teachers, lack of training facility for teachers and less attention on affective domain development. Modalities for quality improvement were suggested in three different categories of within the system, by the community and by State.