



Economic Factors Influencing Enrollment at Alia Madrasa Education

Md. Seher Ali

MPhil Researcher

Bangladesh University of Professionals
Dhaka, Bangladesh

ABSTRACT

Alia Madrasah education is considered as an integral part of Bangladesh's education system providing both Islamic and Secular education. Unlike the more autonomous Qawmi Madrasahs, Alia Madrasahs are governed by the state. Despite their significance, enrollment rates at Alia Madrasahs fluctuate due to various socioeconomic, cultural, and policy-related factors. The study focuses on the factors that contribute to the sustainability of Alia Madrasah in Bangladesh over the last fifty years, concentrating on the historical dynamics and social and economic contexts. It highlights the historical trends in enrollment, the socio-economic factors, challenges of madrasah, and government policies and examines the quality of education, which influences the sustainability of the madrasah education system. Employing qualitative methods, the research conducts a case study on Alia Madrasahs, focusing on strategies to enhance enrollment and address associated challenges. Data collection involves fieldwork at select Alia Madrasahs, historical research, and in-depth interviews with instructors, students, parents, and Islamic scholars, aiming to improve the quality of madrasah education and ensure a promising future for this system in Bangladesh.

Keyword: *Madrasah Education, Alia Madrasah, Enrollment Factors, Sustainability, Challenges, Socio-economic Factors, Historical Dynamics, Educational Policy.*

INTRODUCTION

Alia Madrasa education is one of the pivotal components of the educational system in Bangladesh, blending religious teachings with modern academic disciplines. Originating during the colonial period, the Alia Madrasa system was established to create a harmonized curriculum that caters to both Islamic studies and contemporary subjects. Unlike Qawmi Madrasahs, which primarily focus on traditional Islamic education, Alia madrasahs are state-regulated and follow a structured syllabus under the Bangladesh Madrasa Education Board.

This system plays a vital role in the country's socio-educational landscape, producing graduates proficient in theology as well as general studies, including science, humanities, and commerce. The integration of modern subjects has enabled Alia Madrasahs to contribute to the national workforce and enhance the socio-economic development of Bangladesh. Despite its significant contributions, the system faces challenges such as resource limitations, quality disparities, and societal perceptions, which require strategic reforms to maximize its potential.

Economic factors influence enrollment in Alia Madrasa: The number of populations in Bangladesh are huge and a large portion of people are living under poverty that's the reason economy is one of the remarkable parts of choosing educational institution for their child because the expenditure is not same in all the educational institution. There are a little economical difference exists among the different categories of educational institution that's the reason people generally select the institution

based on their economical capabilities. There are numerous economic factors behind choosing Alia Madrasah as a competent for their child, some of the prominent factors are highlighted below:

Comparatively less expensive: All of the Alia Madrasah located in different corners of the Bangladesh except three are non-government religious educational institution. A vast amount of Alia Madrasah are consider as semi-government because government provide various necessary materials to the Madrasah, as well as cooperate to pay a major percent of salary of the certified teachers of the Madrasah. Though almost Alia Madrasah are not full government but its considered that the expense of students is comparatively little bit low then the other non-government and government general educational institution. Even, Alia Madrasah provide several exemption in case of numerous economic issues of the Madrasa, that's the reason Alia Madrasah become a massive shelter for poor and middle class background students. In addition, a survey highlighted that only 5.2% students are perpetuating education from affluent family in Alia Madrasa. Rest of the students are from poor, middle and upper middle class family background. In addition of government support, Alia Madrasa has their own economical fund, through which they cooperate to pay different expense of the students who are from economically disadvantaged background family enroll in Alia Madrasa. As a result, it's become easier for many students to continue without any obstacles. Because of this opportunity, a big portion of poor and middle class family get scope to continue their child's education, as this facilities are not available in non-government and government general educational institution. That's the reason many guardians select Alia Madrasa instead of school and college for their child. Some of the remarkable economical opportunity that Alia Madrasa provide to their students are in case of tuition fees, residential expense, dress, foods and other necessary requirements of a student which are not sufficiently available in general educational institution. As a result, massive amount of poor and middle class family decide to enroll their child to Alia Madrasa. Besides, students generally don't need to partake in private tuition for their Islamic courses, as well as in case of general courses those who stay in Madrasa residence they don't need to private tutor, even those who continue their study from home, very few cases they take help from private tutor which also save the money of the many guardian.

Low tuition fees and cooperation from the Madrasa fund: As a religious educational institution Alia Madrasa get huge funding from different sources which enormously support to convey several expenditures of the Madrasa. Though government provide a specific amount of money to Madrasah but which doesn't cover all the expense, deficiency filled up by the donation of people. As Alia Madrasa has their own fund, they endeavor to give lots of opportunities to the students from their fund, among the facilities that Alia Madrasa provide notable one is low tuition fees, authorizes endeavor to take low fees as much as they can because they know that majority students are from poor and middle class family background. In addition, they cooperate those students who are not able to pay the full tuition from their fund, a lots of students get this opportunity through the approbation of the Principal or Vice-Principal of the Madrasa, if their guardian request to the authority or if any teacher give positive statement to the authorities about their economic condition. In this case, authority reduce tuition fees from 25% to 75%, even in some cases, some students get full exemption from the tuition fees. As a result, people can easily continue their child's education in Madrasa with low expense, these opportunities are not sufficiently available in other general educational institution. That's the reason, in the village majority poor and middle-class people decide to send their child to Alia Madrasa.

Stipend opportunity: Alia Madrasa not only cooperate the poor and middle class economically disadvantage family background students but also galvanize meritorious students many ways to continue their good results, one of their strategies is to provide stipend to the top scorer students of different classes from their fund based on the performance in the annual examination. Those who got the stipended, they also enjoy the opportunity of studying without tuition fees. Besides, Madrasa students get the different stipend from the government based on the board examination. In addition of monthly or yearly stipend they also get the scope to continue study without tuition fees for specific years. If any students get government stipend based on the 'junior dakhil certificate' exam, he/she will enjoy three years of stipend opportunity, if someone get stipend based on 'Dakhil' board exam, he/she will enjoy two years of stipend opportunity. In this case if any students changing Madrasa wouldn't impact

in his/her stipend. Besides, Madrasa students also get several stipends from different organization based on their board exams result. even, students of bachelor level in Alia Madrasa receive yearly stipend from the prime minister's education assistant trust. As Madrasa students get several stipend opportunities from various sources, many poor and middle-class family background guardians become more interested in Alia Madrasa education.

Shelter for orphan: Alia Madrasa take the responsibility of orphan children for their education and if needs also provide residential opportunity. There are an abundance of orphan students continuing their study staying in resident in different Alia Madrasa throughout the Bangladesh. Madrasa provide numerous opportunities to the orphan students who stay in residence including health treatment, dress, food and other necessary opportunities. They can enjoy all of these opportunities until graduating from the dakhil level of Madrasah education. The opportunities that provide Alia Madrasa to the orphan students which are not available in the general educational institution. As a result almost orphan of the country enroll in Alia Madrasa for continuing their education.

Residential opportunity: There are an abundance of Alia Madrasa throughout the country where residential system is available for students. Alia Madrasa's residential expense is comparatively less than the general educational institution in Bangladesh, though there are very few general educational institutions has residential facility. Because of residential opportunity in alia Madrasa many guardian enroll their child in Alia Madrasa and enjoy residential opportunity with low expenditure. Through admitting residence of Madrasa guardian can save transport costs, private tuition's extra expense as Madrasa teachers teaches students in their residence, besides, many guardian can continues their employment without any tension. On top of that, any students can continue their education in any Alia Madrasa located in anywhere in Bangladesh staying at Madrasa residence with low expense. That's the reason some of the prominent Alia Madrasa has numerous students from different corners of the country. Remarkable Madrasah are Tamirul Millat Kamil Madrasa, Tongi, Dhaka, Darunnajar Siddikia Kamil Madrasa located in Demra, Dhaka, Jamea Quasemia Kamil Madrasah located in Narsingdi etc. Alia Madrasa spends money for the residence from their fund that's the reason they take comparatively low fees from the students for staying at Madrasah residence. Besides, like as tuition fees opportunity, they also provide several economical supports to the students who are struggling with economic issues that's the reason many guardian enroll their child in Alia Madrasa.

Low earning of the guardian: A big portion of people in Bangladesh are from poor and middle-class family who have limited earning through which they struggle to lead a satisfactory life. That's the reason many guardians want to continue their child's education with few expenses. In this case they select Alia Madrasa instead of general educational institution for continuing their child's education in Bangladesh as they cooperate in several economic issues of the students. That's the reason there are plenty of student enroll in Alia Madrasa from poor and middle-class family.

METHODOLOGY

This study will employ a qualitative research methodology, incorporating both primary and secondary data. Key methods include key informant interviews (KII) and analysis of historical records and documents.

Key Informant Interviews (KII):

- **Sample Size:** The study will interview at least 15 individuals from various categories, including students, guardians, teachers, and Islamic scholars connected with madrasah education in Bangladesh.
- **Interview Structure:** Semi-structured interviews will be conducted to gather in-depth empirical insights. This approach allows participants to share their experiences, challenges, and perceptions regarding madrasah education, providing a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing enrollment and sustainability in Alia Madrasahs.

CONCLUSION

The enrollment trends in Alia Madrasas in Bangladesh are deeply intertwined with the country's socio-economic fabric. Factors such as poverty, regional disparities and the demand for affordable education make Alia Madrasas a vital educational choice for many families. These institutions offer an accessible pathway for students, particularly from underprivileged backgrounds, to gain both religious and secular knowledge, thus balancing societal and economic needs.

While the affordability and inclusivity of Alia Madrasas are significant strengths, the system must address underlying challenges to fully leverage its potential. Enhancing the quality of education, providing better infrastructure, and fostering stronger connections to the job market are crucial for ensuring that Alia Madrasas continue to serve as effective agents of social mobility and empowerment. By addressing these socioeconomic dynamics, policymakers can ensure that Alia Madrasas contribute more robustly to Bangladesh's national development goals.

REFERENCE

1. Abdulla, A., Raisuddin, A. N. M., & Hussein, S. (2004). Bangladesh educational assessment: Pre-primary and primary madrasah education in Bangladesh. *Basic Education and Policy...*, 4 (2), 1–81.
2. Adams, B. N., Herzog, L., & Marshall, K. (2015). Modernizing Islamic Education: The Cases of Bangladesh and Senegal. *Berkley Center for Religion, Peace & World Affairs*, 48(4), Pp 911-939.
3. Ahmad, M. (2006). Islamic education in bangladesh Tradition, Trends, and Trajectories. *The National Bureau of Asian Research*, 5(18), 1–56.
4. Ahmad, Mumtaz, j.nelson, M. (2009). *Islamic Education in Bangladesh and Pakistan: Trends in Tertiary Institutions* (Issue april). the national Bureau of Asian Research.
5. Al-hasani, S. M. A. (2020). Madrasah Education In Bangladesh: A Comparative Study Between Aliya And Qawmi. *Journal of Creative Writing*, 4(2), 111–132.
6. Asadullah, M. N., & Wahhaj, Z. (2012). Going to School in Purdah: Female Schooling, Mobility Norms and Madrasas in Bangladesh. *SSRN Electronic Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2189797>
7. BANBEIS. (2022). Bangladesh Education Statistics. *Bangladesh Education Statistics*, April, 248–285.
8. Dr-Masooda-Bano. (2008). *Religions and Development Research Programme Allowing for Diversity: State-Madrasa Relations in*.
9. Education, ministry of. (n.d.). “A Need Assessment of Modernizing Dakhil Madrasah Education Introducing Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)” Bangladesh Bureau of. *Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics*.
10. Hoque, M. R., Sarder, S., & Amin, F. (2023). Curriculum Development in Madrasah Education: A Comparative Study with Mainstream Education in Bangladesh. *Journal of Socio-Educational Dynamics (JSED)*, 1–13.
11. Mahbub, S., Al Hasani, A., & Mahbubul, S. (2023). Aliya Madrasa Education in Bangladesh: Problems and Prospects. *Journal of Islamic Studies and Humanities*, 8(1), 77–98.
12. Rahman, M. M. (2020). Re-Examining the Nexus between Madrasa Education and Politics in Bangladesh. *South Asia: Journal of South Asia Studies*, 43(4), 613–631. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00856401.2020.1765506>
13. Riaz, A. (2008). *Faithful education: Madrassahs in South Asia*. rutgers university press. <https://doi.org/10.36019/9780813545622>
14. Roy, S., Huq, S., & Rob, A. B. A. (2020). Faith and education in Bangladesh: A review of the contemporary landscape and challenges. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 79, 102290. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2020.102290>