

ICAN SAMA-O-BASR TARBIYYAH SERIES

# Women Workers of Islamic Movement

**A STRATEGIC LINE OF ACTION**



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**SAMA-O-BASR PRESS**

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لَا نُرِيدُ مِنْكُمْ جَزَاءً وَلَا شُكُورًا

FOR THE SAKE OF ALLAH ALONE! WE SEEK  
FROM YOU NEITHER REWARD NOR THANKS

QURAN 76:9



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IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE MOST MERCIFUL, THE ALWAYS MERCIFUL



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## FOREWORD



iCAN SAMA-O-BASR is very glad to publish this book that can be a useful resource for the women workers of the Islamic movement across the globe. Based on an article, originally published in the Urdu language in the monthly *Tarjuman Al-Quran* (February 2017), this book articulates some of the important points regarding the *tarbiyyah* of the women members of the Islamic movements and the fields of education that they need to focus on in order to be successful against challenges of the coming times. In order to further elaborate on the points mentioned in the original article, we have provided some additional explanatory comments and footnotes. One of the significant additions in this regard is the inclusion of a brief biography of the first leader of the Women Wing of JI, Hameeda Begum. Her biography and life achievements are a real motivation for any worker of the movement. If we can create leaders like her among our sisters, *inshaAllah* the depth and breadth of our dawah will increase manifold and we will be able to share this message of the *Deen* to the communities and masses

that we are currently unable to connect with. We hope that the women workers of the Islamic movement across the globe will find it to be a beneficial resource.

To begin with, we would like to present a quote from the founder of the movement, Maulana Syed Abul Aala Maududi highlighting the important role that the women have to play in the cause of the *Iqamat Ad-Deen*:



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*“In the court of Allah swt, one cannot acquire anything for which one has not strived for. That is the reason why both men and women have to work to achieve their own salvation. Everyone should wholeheartedly work on the tasks that would make them successful and prevent them from punishment and shame on the day of judgment. At this moment, the real task that the women are required to perform is that they should make an effort to clean and protect their families, their relatives, their neighbors, and their acquaintances from shirk, ignorance, and misguidedness. They should strive to create an Islamic culture in their homes. Their objective should be to spread the light of the knowledge of the Deen among the*



*uneducated or less educated women. They should exert themselves in fixing the ideologies and thought-process of the educated women. They should fight the disease of being oblivious to God and being unmindful of the Islamic way of life that is prevalent in much of the upper class. They should try to stop the spread of this disease. They should raise their children upon Islam. If their husbands are entrapped in a sinful way of life and wrong-doings and are deviated away from the path, they should strive to bring them back on to the straight path. If their husbands are already working for the Deen of Allah swt and offering their services to the cause, then as wives they should aid them in their cause through their assistance and support. Understand this point well; No one has more right, or even an equal right, on you as do Allah swt and His Messenger ﷺ - be it your parents, your brothers or sisters, your husband, or your children. No one deserves that to keep him happy and pleased, you disobey Allah swt and His Messenger ﷺ. No one should be dearer to you than Allah swt, His Messenger ﷺ and His Deen. No one should have that much fear in your heart that in his fear, you become oblivious to Allah swt. If your condition becomes like this, then the path*

*of the Deen would become very easy for you. No force will be able to stop you and deviate you away from this path.”*

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With this, let's start the booklet and pray to Allah swt to accept this effort from everyone involved and make it a source of forgiveness for the author, the translator, and the iCAN SAMA-O-BASR team.

Editorial Staff,

iCAN SAMA-O-BASR

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# Women Workers of Islamic Movements: A Strategic Line of Action

(Written by Saima Esma; Translated by Hassaan Siddiqui)

## 1

### **HISTORY OF THE WOMEN WING OF JAMAAT-E-ISLAMI PAKISTAN**



Soon after the foundation of *Jamaat-e-Islami* (on 26 August 1941), Maulana Maududi paid attention towards *Dawah* among the women and structuring an organized approach to accomplish this objective.

After the formation of the *Jamaat* with a handful of people who could even fill up a room, Maulana guided the founding members to introduce the women in their houses to the *dawah* of the Islamic movement and encourage them to join hands in



furthering this mission. Many women were already reading the literature of Maulana Maududi and were already inclined to join the causes. Lamps kept glowing up one after the other till 15 Feb 1947 when 150 women gathered in Inchraa, Lahore, and the women wing of JI was officially founded. Mohtarma Hameeda Begum, a truly inspirational woman, was made the first *Qayimmah* (Incharge) of the JI Women Wing. In Maulana's speech to women in 1947, he said: "Every collective movement is obliged to give importance to the participation and support of women... One of the reasons for this is that Islam aims to transform the lives of human beings exactly according to how Allah swt has guided it to be. For this, it is as important for women to be on the right path as it is for men." He directed the women: "If you profess that you accept the *Deen*, then follow it wholeheartedly. Bring Islam into your laps and your houses so that the true Muslim generation of tomorrow can get raised there."

Begum Mehmooda Maududi, Hameeda Begum, Umm-e-Zubair, and Nayyar Bano were among the first women who responded to the call to work for the establishment of Allah's *Deen* (*Iqamat Ad-Deen*). They consciously decided to become a part of an organized

collective effort in order to spread the message of the *Deen*. Others who were also among the first few to become part of the organization included Begum Nasrullah Khan Aziz, Begum Bakhtawar Ghulam Ali, Muhterma Khurshid Begum, and Bint-e-Mujtaba Meena.

Dr. Rukhasana Jabeen (Ex-*Qayyimah* Women Wing) remembers these remarkable women in the following words:

These lives are like glowing lamps for all workers of the movement. Reading about them brings a storm in one's emotions. It illuminates for us new directions and new facets of work that we can work on. Their biographies provide never-aging courage for tough times. Our these women leaders have not only made great accomplishments in the field of *Dawah* and *Tabligh* but also set exemplary standards in the *Akhlaq* and fulfillment of the rights of relations. Most of these distinguished women not only fulfilled their responsibilities as the best wives, loving mothers, and caring mothers-in-law, all at the same time; but also made profound impacts as community leaders, teachers, and exemplary workers of the Islamic movement alongside their other roles. Though they only had 24 hours in their days just like

us, they made the best use of them and became role models for us. They faced severe tests and trials in their lives – some fought with cancer, some with paralysis, and some had to bear the pain of losing their children. Their mission, however, remained unstoppable. No hardship was big enough to become a hurdle in their way or to stop them from marching forward. In the lives of all of them, we can see some common elements; they all had an unshaken attachment to the cause, their lives were a tremendous display of an unstoppable struggle, the concern for the hereafter was always on top of their minds, reliance on Allah swt alone was their hallmark, patience and steadfastness were their key traits, and a connection with the books was the ladder that they all climbed on to achieve greatness.

## 2

### **THE FOUNDING QAYYIMAH OF JI WOMEN WING<sup>1</sup>**



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<sup>1</sup> This biographical overview is derived from the book Roshan Aabginay, authored by Rubina Fareed, published in 2015 by Tadween-e-Tareekh Committee, Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan Halqa Khwateen.



A brief introduction of the founding *Qayyimah* of the JI women wing is presented below. It is a great source of motivation and strength for any woman working for the cause of the *Deen* anywhere on the globe.

### **Hameeda Begum (1915-1973):**

It was the house of the bride. A lot of women were coming over to congratulate the bride. Suddenly, the bride made a strange request. "Can you please bring me a copy of the Quran?", she said. The bride saw so many women gathered together as a good opportunity to connect them to the Quran. She started delivering a *Dars* of Quran during her own wedding ceremony. When her voice reached the gents' section, her husband understood who it could be and smiled. This was the first *Qayimmah* of the women wing for whom her mission was never separated from her being.

### **Early life:**

She was born in 1915 in Gujranwala. In her childhood, her father saw a dream about which a scholar interpreted to mean that his daughter would do a great service of the *Deen* and a lot of people will benefit from her.

### **A thorough engagement with the literature:**

After she received the degree of B.A.B.T, she started her teaching career. She was not just an ordinary teacher. She was a teacher with a mission. In parallel to her teaching career, she was always engaged with the literature and studied under various scholars. She regularly read the *Tarjuman Al-Quran* and other literature of JI. There was also a time when she dedicated herself solely to the in-depth study of the literature and did a comprehensive study of it. She used to explain about that phase of her life that in those days, she used to remain awake at night and think about what would JI benefit from if she becomes its member. The voice inside her said that irrespective of whether the *Jamaat* would benefit from her being its member or not, she will definitely be a beneficiary because of this association. When the application of her membership reached Maulana Maududi, he immediately saw the potential in her. Till this time, the women affiliates of the organization also used to report the *nazm* of men. However, as soon as such a highly capable women member became available, Maulana handed over the reins of the matters related to women

to her and formally announced the formation of the women wing soon afterward.

### **Organizational activities in the early days of the organization:**

When Pakistan and JI women wing came into being in 1947, there were very few women workers of the organization. Even these few were so widespread that many of them had never met each other. The first thing that Aapa Hameeda Begum did was an effort to organize them. For that, she used the medium of **writing letters**. She adopted a three-tier approach to the work of *deen*:

- 1) *Dars e Quran wa hadith*,
- 2) Distribution of literature to rekindle the attachment with the ideological foundations of Islam,
- 3) Community services and social work.

The relevance of the above three aspects for any Islamic movement does not decrease with time and other Islamic movements can organize their work around the same lines too.

### **Her influence:**

Her most influential ability was her genuine love and affection for the women she used to meet and talk to. Receiving such



affection and love, their hearts used to open up for her message. This is an essential characteristic of all successful people leaders. No *dawah* can be successful without being infused with genuine love and concern for the person who the *Dawah* is given to.

She often used to gather at her house the women who joined hands with her; the objective used to be to ponder the best of the ways to serve the *Deen* of Allah swt. In this manner, she collected the gems that were distributed in the society and formed them into a cohesive whole whose sole objective was to serve the *Deen* of Al-Islam.

### **Visiting the members and other women for dawah:**

She also used to visit women in her city as well as in other towns and cities. When she used to go to meet the workers, she used to help them in cutting the vegetables, cleaning their houses, washing the dishes, preparing their children, and so on. Whichever house she used to visit, she used to meet all women in the house. She even visited the non-Muslim women and helped them in whatever way she could. She regularly used to help the sons of one of her Hindu neighbors with their work from school. In these journeys for meeting women living in various

areas, she always used to have a *Mahram* with her. She always ensured that she would come back before the sunset.

She always used to have certain books with her. After the meeting, she used to encourage women towards reading and give them a book to read. With her hard work, in only seven years, she was able to organize the work of the Women wing in 53 branches.

***Tarbiyyah* of the women members and her sublime conduct:**

She always used to advise the women workers that they should not only be aware of their neighboring women in ten houses on each side of their house but also join them in the matters of happiness and sadness.

Her effort was that the women should transform their houses into such educational institutions where the generations of the future could get fed with the right knowledge and the correct Islamic ideology.

She organized a system of weekly gatherings and also established a *Zakat* fund through which help could be provided to the poor women.

She never missed going to the places identified for the Quran circle irrespective of how severe the weather might be and how sick she would be. She was never too bothered about the number of attendees. Even if it were one or two women, she would still give them the *Dars*. When even they were not available, she would gather the people of her house and give them the *Dars*.

### **Her superb time management skills:**

It once happened that she was very sick and according to her own measures, she couldn't do much in that month. Even in her that month's member report, she had things like

- teaching the Quran to the women in the neighborhood,
- teaching the English language to one of their children,
- sending *Deeni* books for the men in their houses,
- teaching sons of a non-Muslim neighbor,
- reading *Tafheemul Quran* to her mother,
- sending books to the *Masjid* and requesting the *Imam* to give *Khutbah* from them,
- making one of her friends read a book,
- writing the meaning of some of the difficult words in the book '*Purdah*' and sending it to a woman.

- and so on

Such was the *barakah* that Allah swt had given in her time. Mian Tufail Muhammad, the ex-*Ameer* of JI, presented her report in the Annual *Ijtima* (Congregation of the members) as an exemplary report that all members should take inspiration from.

### **Her eye for talent:**

In addition, she had an eye for talent. Whoever she used to meet, she was able to immediately identify the talents in her. For the ones who were more interested in writing, she used to give them the tasks matching their talent. The ones who were good at teaching and communicating were given the tasks that they could excel in. Begum Maudoodi once mentioned that her way of encouragement was so good that no one could ever say no to her. She mentioned about herself that when she started to talk, she wasn't able to speak well. But even on that Aapa Hameedah encouraged her so much that she gradually gained confidence and started to speak in gatherings very fluently.

### **Emphasis on reading:**

She always used to give emphasize the importance of reading to women members. According to her, connection with the literature was the first step to any successful organized effort. She used to mention about her immersion in the literature before her membership that she studied the literature with such dedication and immersion as if she had to appear in some major examination for that. Once some women workers complained to her that they did not find any heart-felt inclination and interest in working for the *Deen*. She told them that they had to study the *Deen* holistically; unless they would realize its beauty, they would never be able to develop a genuine interest and inclination to work for it. Reading is like a fuel for our work. In the absence of fuel, the car cannot move at all. Her advice to workers was that they should read the literature as regularly as they take lunch and dinner, if not more, without forgetting about it any day.

***Tawakul:***

She had so much tawakul on Allah swt that whenever some planning used to be done for the expansion of the work of *Dawah* and people would be afraid and worried about the means and resources, she would tell them that giving resources and making



the matters easy is in the hands of Allah swt; what is in our hands is to plan and take the right steps. This is the work of Allah and He will make arrangements for His work to be completed.

### **Individual *Ibadah*:**

Despite being extremely busy with running a national-level organization whose work required extensive time and dedication, she was never unmindful of the individual *Ibadah*. She regularly used to offer *tahajjud*. After offering the *Fajr* prayer, she used to recite the Quran. After the sun-rise, she used to offer four *nawafil* – two as thankfulness for the previous day and two as a prayer for the present day to be beneficial. After breakfast, she used to start with her writing work. This included writing for the magazine ‘*Batool*’ as well as writing the letters and responding to them. She used to get free from this by 10 AM; it was then when her Quran translation class used to start. The class used to finish by 12. After that, she used to meet and greet the women that used to come to attend the program. After that, she used to offer *Dhuhr* salah and take a little afternoon nap as per the sunnah of our beloved Master ﷺ. At 3 PM, either she used to

deliver the second class or used to go to the *Ijtima* (gathering of workers).

### **Her simplicity:**

Though she was the leader of an organization spread across the country and her role demanded her to meet women from all walks of life, her living was very simple. Her possessions comprised of three or four pieces of simple clothes, two or three shawls, and a few towels. Even those towels were given to the *Bayt Al-Maal* through her *wasiyyah*. Though she was living a life of material minimalism, she had a lot of wealth from the spiritual and intellectual perspective. She was extremely concerned about the *Taqwa* and piety. Despite being very sick and suffering from heart disease, she always used to wear very thick clothing even in summers.

### **Concern for the feelings of others:**

She was so much concerned about the feelings of others that even when she used to get angry with them for some legitimate reason, she used to be the first one to go back to them to cheer them up. If someone used to get upset with her, she used to seek help through prayer and make *dua* to Allah swt to reconnect the

hearts. Her love and affection were unprecedented. Once she was very sick and some of the workers brought oranges for her. She peeled them and started distributing them among women around her. They said that we are not in need of it; we have brought them “especially” for you. She responded back and said that the real pleasure is in distributing what is “special”.

She was never short of time for meeting the workers. She always used to say to them that all my time is for you. The questioners and the women who used to come to see her never felt hard-hearted in her presence. She used to say such things to them that they used to think that they were the most special people to her.

**Personal life:**

Her husband passed away two years after her marriage and the rest of her life she spent with her parents and brothers.

Starting with TB in her youth, she bravely fought ill health throughout her life. In her old age, she developed several diseases. But even those diseases did not deter her from the work. Even in severe illness, she always used to offer the *Tahajjud*. When someone used to mention about the severity of her diseases, she used to say that this is a discussion that does not

deserve time and importance. The time spent on such discussion should rather be spent in the recitation of the Quran.

In September 1973, she left this mortal world and her soul departed. After her death, she was seen in a dream sitting on a gold throne and was saying: "Allah fulfilled the promised that He did with His righteous servants. This place has more light than the light of a thousand lamps."

## 2

### **THE PIONEERS OF SISTERS QURAN CIRCLES**



After Pakistan came into being, this organization that was initially formed by a handful of dedicated and courageous women now started to spread through the establishment of small groups to disseminate the message of this mission to all levels of women within the society and among all social classes. It was the first of its kind organization of women in the subcontinent. Following their lead, other religious organizations also started to form their women-wings along the same lines.

However, they were no match to the JI's women wing due to the diversity of the portfolio of works and efforts of JI in the light of their ideology and structured and well-disciplined approach.

### 3

## **A REVOLUTIONARY APPROACH TO THE ATTACHMENT WITH THE QURAN**



The role of the Women wing's Quran study groups has been exemplary to convey the pure and holistic concept of the *Deen* in Pakistani society. These women, who once used to be like every other common woman, stepped out of their comfort zones and knocked at every door to let the womenfolk realize that the *Deen* is directly connected to their lives in all aspects. As this self-less group marched forward in their mission, more and more educated women with the knowledge of the contemporary issues, those who knew the true meaning of *Deen* and its relevance in modern society, started to emerge from them and joined the mission to disseminate the message of the Quran to those masses that were previously unmindful to it. The situation before these extra-ordinary women

came forward to serve the book of Allah was very different. All one could see before them were a few women reciting the *naats* together in some gatherings, or some women reciting the Quran in '*Quran Khwani*' without any understanding of the message that this glorious book had for them.

#### 4

### THE CURRENT SPREAD OF WORK



So, if we say that it was the *Jamaat-e-Islami's* women wing that initiated the campaign to raise awareness of the true meaning of the Qur'an among the educated lot in the society for the first time, it wouldn't be incorrect. This has been going on for years now and there would be hardly any urban area where the resident women don't have a regular *dars* circle in their vicinity.

The following is a brief overview of the annual activities conducted by the JI sisters wing.

- Approximately 1 million attendees in *Duroos* and Quran programs every year which are conducted at approximately 9500 places.
- *Fahm ul Quran* programs attended by approximately 162,000 participants annually who establish a deeper connection with the Quran through these programs
- Approximately 355,000 attendees in annual *Seerat* programs
- Over 200,000 children taught the *Nazirah* of the Quran every year
- Over 300,000 sisters participating in the *Daura-e-Quran* in Ramadan each year
- Over 195,000 sisters completing the short courses for Ramadan
- 1819 centers for providing basic education in the villages
- 7311 libraries established by sisters
- Thousands of sisters receiving marriage counseling through '*Falah-e-Khandan*' Project
- Thousands of shelter-less women receiving accommodation and shelter through the '*Gosha-e-Aafiyat*' project
- *Dawah* delivered to 4.1 million women annually

- Distribution of 11,500 interest-free loans to the deserving women
- Contact with 1.5 million children and their mothers regarding various initiatives including school activities, co-curricular initiatives, and so on
- Scholarships offered to 66,000 students annually
- Dozens of other projects successfully run including '*Muakhaat*', '*Mulazimat Paisha Khwateen*', '*Job Desk*', '*Madadgar Khwateen*', '*Asan Nikah*' and so on
- Representation in Pakistan's national assembly and raising of issues of women
- Representation of Muslim women at International forums including UN, ICCAP, UNIW
- And much more

This is truly a remarkable contribution from a sisters-only organization that manages all of their affairs by themselves.

Despite the great national-level progress, when it comes to the rural areas, it is identified that many of them are yet to establish such circles, *duroos*, and sisters groups.



## THE CURRENT IMPACT OF JI WOMEN'S WING



It is imperative for any successful organization to not just remain busy with the praise of their initial founders and leaders but to keep assessing their current state and situation and continue to evolve in order to achieve even better results. This is what the rest of this booklet focuses on. From here on, it presents an analysis of where there is further opportunity to work; what is restricting further growth, and what steps are required to overcome any hurdles. In this regard, firstly an overview of some of the systems of organization are mentioned. Then, the steps that lead to the strengthening of the organization in its early days have been mentioned so that we remain connected with them and never lose sight of them. It is then followed by some suggestions regarding the way forward.

Although there are no set parameters to gauge the impact of the work of *dawah*, however, if we take an overall look at the women wing, we would notice a significant increase and growth in the

workforce and the number of Quran circles over the years. However, there has not been any significant social impact as an outcome of this as opposed to what one would expect with such a spread. This is naturally a worrying aspect. There can be countless reasons for this. A careful analysis is therefore required.

## 6

### **OUR WAY OF WORKING**



The entire structure of our movement stands on the foundation comprising of the members of the party [who all go through a comprehensive level of *tarbiyyah* and development]. The leadership is elected or nominated from among the members. The leadership that comes forward through this process sets the best standards as it marches to its destination selflessly accompanied and supported by the well-acquainted partners in their efforts who all have one common objective in their minds.

Our women wing incorporates *sama-o-ataa'at* (listening and obeying), and prepares its leadership and the members to fulfil the

responsibilities of their role with sincerity and hard work.

The system of the organization makes the serving of the *Deen* and the fulfillment of their obligations in this regard a part of their conscious and subconscious selves. By the grace of Allah, the women wing is free from the selfish displays of disruption, divisions, and the tug of war for gaining power.

## 7

### **FORMATION OF THE INNER CORE OF THE ORGANIZATION**



[Founder of JI] Syed Maududi had a superlative intellectual standing and he could convince and impress the educated and intelligent lot of the society with his power of persuasion. He had surrounded himself with some of the very capable people in the society and made a dedicated effort to bring them into the fold of the organization that he had established to serve the cause of *Iqamat Ad-Deen*. He mentored them to raise their intellectual and moral standing so that he could nurture in them the leaders that could carry forward this mission and become its flag-bearers. The same

approach was carried out among the women by his wife Begum Mehmooda Maududi and other members, namely Muhterma Hameeda Begum, Muhterma Nayyer Bano, Muhterma Umm-e-Zubair, and several others.

## 8

### **EARLY LEADERS OF THE WOMEN WING**



At that time, only a small number of women could go beyond basic education. The founding member of JI Muhterma Hameeda Begum was way more qualified than other women in society. She earned the stature of *Fazil* in 1936, followed by FA, and BA and B.Ed in top grades from the University of Punjab in 1939. Afterward, she served as a teacher until 1944. Nayyer Bano, after earning her Matriculation degree, completed a three-year course in *Tib*.

She remained associated with the field of education for some time. Later, she became a member of the organization in 1944 and received guidance from Maulana Maududi through postal letters.

During the conversations, the main thing that Maulana would encourage her to do was to read, read, and read. Umm-e-Zubair had only studied until grade 5, but her association with JI groomed her in such a manner that she authored several books later on in her life.

## 9

### **LAUNCH OF THE LITERARY AND EDUCATIONAL INITIATIVES**



Meanwhile, Hameeda Begum laid the foundation of the monthly *Batool* and the *Batool* institution along with Muhterma Rakhshanda Kaukab and Muhterma Bint-ul-Islam who at that time was the president of the Islamic Learning Disciplines in Lahore College. The purpose of the monthly *Batool* was to promote high moral values through engagement with literature.

These women confidently came forward with their literary contributions. They ran their monthly magazine with the best layout, putting it forth as an alternate learning resource for the masses replacing the fairytale-like aimless literature. Meanwhile,

Begum Maududi was efficiently pursuing *dawah* in her unique individual ways and *hikmah*.

10

## IMPORTANT ATTRIBUTES OF LEADERSHIP



The educational and social background of these women was reflective of Maulana Maududi's thoughts about leadership. A leader is ahead of the people of his times in terms of intelligence and intellect. The power of farsightedness and strategy play an important role in strengthening such capabilities. Such a person also knows the right time to utilize the resources of progressing towards the purpose and the destination. Likewise, a leader has a thorough understanding of his circumstances and the tendencies of the masses.

In present times also, we have to carefully assess the needs of the society and what forms of *dawah* can effectively work in the present circumstances. Our *Dawah* and approach should be

attuned to it. We should take out time from execution and reflect on our overall approach, our strengths, our weakness, the opportunities, and the needs of the coming times.

## 11

### KEY CHALLENGES



#### DUAL EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

One of the reasons for the intellectual challenges faced in today's era is the type of educational system that we have. This system has certain social aspects and factors that significantly influence society. There's a need to devise a strategy to advance toward our goal of a positive social change. The accomplishment of this goal is challenged due to the presence of a dual nature of the educational system in the country. The two different systems of education have given rise to two different social classes, and this rift has been continuously widening. The modern, private institutions of the country have created an "elite" which is inculcated with Western thought and Western ideals and ideologies. The extent to which the

intellectual and social balance has changed during the past 20 years is almost unimaginable. The influence of Islamic circles among the graduates of such institutions is clearly diminishing.

Maulana Maududi has provided a detailed discussion on the pitfalls of the present educational system in his book *Taleemat* which has also been translated into the English language. The points discussed in that are not just applicable to the Muslim-majority countries but also where Muslims live as a minority. In Muslim countries, we have the *madrasa* system on one side where the focus is solely on the perceived 'religious' matters and there is little, if any, focus on the broader system-level perspective (even though Islam provides complete guidance about that). On the other hand, we have secular or semi-secular institutions where religion is considered no more than a personal matter. Graduates from such institutions do not see Islam as a purpose of their life and consider pursuing their careers more worthy and preferable than pursuing success in the hereafter. When it comes to the Western countries, most of the Muslim students go to the public schools where they study exactly the same curriculum which the Hindus, the Christians, the Jews, and the Atheists



study. Then to patch that up and make them 'Good Muslims', some parents hire a *Qari* to teach them the recitation of the Quran. Some who wish to go a step ahead top up the load on students with an 'additional' subject on Islamic studies. It might be astonishing for some that this was the same approach that was followed by Aligarh University in its early days when its graduates were becoming oblivious to religion and God in their lives. What they were doing as a response to this was increasing the curriculum and number of books to teach Islamic studies. This patch-work approach never worked. Maulana Maududi suggested them to rather Islamize the whole curriculum and intellectually connect the dots so that the students do not find a mismatch in what the *Maulvi Saheb* tells them in one class and what the biology teacher says in the other. What Islam says and what is authentically proven by science (not just theorized) can never mismatch as they come from the same source. The apparent mismatch that the students come across is because of our way of education and the unpreparedness of our teachers to deal with such subjects. This idea of holistic education is an area on which Islamic organizations around the globe have to seriously work on and make a thoughtful effort.

## **DIMINISHING ROLE OF STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS:**

Another worrying fact is that the student organizations, that previously provided the fuel for the Islamic movement, are next to none in the private institutions. Even if they exist in any such institutions, they remain influenced by the working model of the same. This has given a setback to the possibilities of producing influential leadership in society.

In the context of Western countries, this task is even more difficult as, firstly, the Muslim students, males as well females, who come here to work get so busy with their jobs that finding any time for the work of the *Deen* gets to the bottom of their priority list. Secondly, even those who choose to do something practically do not go much beyond the organization of *Iftars* or running the *Mussallah* in the university. Even among those, the number of female students who get involved is marginal. Several factors contribute to this outcome. There is a need to carefully assess the factors that prevent the students from making any serious effort for the *Deen*. Solutions have to be devised to come out of this situation. It is a known fact that students play a critical role in the formation and success of any organized movement. If

we take the example of ICNA, it was the students who provided it the base from where it grew substantially. For other Islamic circles and movements to grow too, this is a critical area. In addition, work is also required to be done on the pipelines that lead to universities. This requires effort on the children to groom them Islamically and get them involved in the practical work of the *Deen* from an early age so that when they get to colleges and universities, they continue with their efforts and make an impact there.

### **PROS AND CONS OF WOMEN MEMBERS COMING FROM THE INSTITUTIONS ESTABLISHED BY US:**

It should be kept in consideration that a significant number of new women members are graduates from the institutions established by the women wing. They are equipping girls of the far-flung areas with education. These girls don't normally have the avenues for receiving any education, let alone any competitive advantage in terms of education. This is, without any doubt, a noble work. These girls are the precious asset of the *Ummah* in terms of divine piety, righteousness, and willingness.

### **Additional Information:**

The women wing of JI operates many educational institutions. A brief description of some of them is presented below. This model can also be adopted in other countries with necessary adjustments according to the contextual factors applicable there.

#### ***JAMIATUL MUHSINAT***

Under the title of *Jamiatul Muhsinat*, JI Women Wing operates 91 seminaries that equip the women with religious as well as contemporary skills. The curriculum of these institutions comprises of the *Aama*, *Khasa*, *Aalia*, and *Aalamiyyah* curriculum taught in the traditional *madaris*. However, in addition to this curriculum, several contemporary skills (including computer skills, civil deference, first aid, cooking, sewing, calligraphy, research skills, and so on) are also included in the curriculum. The students are also engaged in numerous co-curricular activities including running a magazine, literary circles, educational visits, picnics, and more.

#### **QURAN INSTITUTE PAKISTAN (FOR WOMEN)**

Not all women are able to register for the full-time study of the *Deen*. To bridge the gap in this regard and provide women from all walks of life with the essential knowledge of the Quran, *hadith*, *tajweed*, and *fiqh*, the JI women wing has established Quran Institutes across the country. At the moment, there are 83 Quran Institutes in Pakistan that are spreading the light of the knowledge of the Quran in the communities they operate in. These institutes organize courses on diverse topics (including religious as well as contemporary skills for women such as time management, public health, pre-marital guidance, and so on) through-out the year except *Ramadan*. In *Ramadan*, all other activities are suspended, and the institutes get busy with the *Daura-e-Quran* in which the Quran is completed from cover to cover in one month. This is truly a transformative experience of the journey with the Quran in the month of the Quran. The Quran Institutes also offer counseling services. These institutions also serve as charity hubs for the community and make a matchless overall contribution to the communities and neighborhoods they operate in.

### **Community Schools:**

Initiated in 1996, the community schools run by JI Women Wing are now operating from 140 locations across the country. The focus of these schools is to serve those areas where people are generally from a low socio-economic background and do not even have the basic facilities. Selfless in their mission and goal, the JI women wing is always there to support them irrespective of the hardships they have to face in providing such support. These schools are run by 1500 volunteers supported by 1100 parents. They educate 18000 students every year. Also, they train the mothers. 9000 women have been trained by these schools so far.

***Nafi:***

*Nafi* (translated as 'beneficial') is a sub-organization of the JI women wing that focuses on the development of teachers and administration of schools through various workshops and training with an aim to infuse Islamic values and culture in schools.

According to a careful estimate, at least half of the girls graduating from the institutions established by our organization get associated with the women wing in their respective areas. This is a good omen

and an effective outcome from the perspective of strength. However, it is equally important to increase the number of women with a strong background in contemporary education, to influence society from a broader perspective.

### **INTELLECTUAL STANDSTILL:**

An organization that lacks contacts in the social circles and has expansion in its ambit is like an engine that spends all of its energy to keep itself running. Syed Sa'adat Husaini explained this limitation of the intellectual aspect in the following words, "The practice of self-authoring and self-reading can be beneficial for a closed group, but not for a movement that is alive and has a global mission." [The scope of skills and intellectual abilities accordingly has to grow and literature from broader sources should be studied and critically assessed].

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### **NEED FOR INNOVATION**



Such societal limitation causes the expansion to remain restricted,

ultimately causing it to come to an intellectual standstill. To deal with this threat, it is imperative for every individual to go beyond the limited ambit and think, question, and put forth a new idea. This should go as far up as taking the top decisions for the organization to as down as deciding the agenda items for your next program. However, if we remain limited to the conventional topics and don't bring about our viewpoint on contemporary issues or subjects with logic and articulation, then the circle of *Dawah* will contract rather than expanding.

This factor requires pondering and reflection that even though we were the pioneers in terms of organizing the women Quran circle, especially among the educated masses, newer organizations introduced innovative approaches to achieve this goal and managed to influence a significantly large section of the society quite expeditiously. We have to think about what do our circles need in order to grow and influence the present generation.

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**ENDEAVOR FOR BECOMING GOOD TO GREAT**





Jim Collins, an expert in organizational psychology writes that the origin of stagnation in successful organizations lies in the fact that they consider them successful [and therefore think that they have already achieved what was there to be achieved and nothing is required to be done differently]. When they start to forsake the Creative spark that brought them to their success and value mere expansion, then they become a hurdle for any positive change.

This opportunity for further improvement is felt even more strongly when we compare ourselves with the women wings of Islamic organizations in other countries; they have a greater influence in their societies than us and they have achieved a certain level of success from the worldly standards too. The top ones among such organizations include *Ikhwan al-Muslimoon*, *Paas*, *AK Party*, and *al-Nahda*. They aligned themselves with the changing times and rapidly attuned to national and international situations.

## MEASURES TO NURTURE THE FUTURE LEADERSHIP



In my opinion, we need to take the following measures as part of a long-term strategy in order to prepare our future leaders.

### ENHANCEMENT OF THE TARBIYYAH DIVISION:

1. We need to carry out solid planning to enhance the intellectual and technical capabilities of the members of the organization. In order to achieve this, we should not only upgrade our *tarbiyah* (training) division, but the members should also be provided with targets and essential guidance to enable them to nurture their knowledge base and mental capacities.

### FIELDS OF STUDY THAT OUR SISTERS SHOULD FOCUS ON:

2. The intellectual capabilities of the members should be enhanced so that we can groom the experts in various fields who could cater to diverse situations, philosophies, theories,

systems, and ideologies that we come across because of our expansion [and dealing with different cohorts of women]. The practical steps in this regard could be as follows.

- i. There is a need to pay attention to the social sciences and humanities alongside subjects related to science and management. There is a wide scope of work in the disciplines of sociology, psychology, philosophy, gender studies, women studies, media studies, communications, cultural studies, politics, history, and *iqbaliyaat*.
- ii. If someone has an inclination towards linguistics and fine arts, then they can choose the path of *Urdu, Arabic*, and English linguistics and fine arts, liberal arts, and visual studies.
- iii. Comparative studies of religions have a high level of significance in today's era. The M.A. Islamic Studies degree is not enough to nurture a deep understanding of the *Deen* [and to take care of this aspect]. To facilitate a deeper level of study, it is imperative to make serious efforts in order to not only create the opportunities of education and training locally, but also to tap into the opportunities available from international universities in terms of specializations, advanced research, comparative studies, and dialogue.

Wherever there is a possibility to do, this opportunity should not be missed. One can acquire specialization in any of the above areas in any suitable language, or directly enroll in an M.Phil program, but it is far better to choose *Arabic* or English as the medium of study considering the additional benefits that this selection will bring along.

### **DEVELOPMENT OF OTHER CONTEMPORARY SKILLS:**

3. Additionally, it is imperative to learn the skills of contemporary time. This may include the awareness and training of MS Word (English and Urdu), Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook, and InPage. Also, expertise in conversational Urdu, English, and Arabic, the basics of Statistics (including graphing), and the comprehension and knowledge of the world's map and basic geography. Moreover, educated members should have the basic knowledge of the past 3,000 years of history and a good grasp over the current affairs.

If an individual intends to enhance his or her capabilities further, they can enroll for short-term courses in business & commerce, management, statistical analysis, documentary-making, English

content-writing, and web-designing. These courses are offered by many universities online, with better standards, value, and worth.

## **DEVELOPMENT OF COMPETENCIES AS TRAINERS AND**

### ***MUDARISAT:***

4. The following measures could be beneficial in broadening the intellectual horizon and catering to the diversity of mindsets in society.
  - i. The members should be encouraged to consult the *duroos-e-Qur'an* (lectures from Qur'an) delivered by the international-level, renowned *mudariseen* who are the proper adherents of the Quran and *Sunnah*.
  - ii. A brief should be presented in the organization's programs about the different groups operating among the Pakistani women to serve their various interests [for benchmarking and competitive purposes].
  - iii. The members should be trained in dialogue regarding contemporary issues.
  - iv. In order to enhance the effectiveness of communication, they should be imparted the training to deliver impactful sermons within a short duration. The members should

learn and train others to convey their point of view in a comprehensible way.

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## **PREPARE FOR FUTURE**



This era poses a significant challenge for those who are the flag-bearers of *Deen*, and its intensity is only increasing with time. This should reflect in our preparation and we should find avenues to fulfill our responsibility in these circumstances by fully investing the powers of our heart and brain.



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