

Community Engagement in Madrassa Governance: An Analytical Study

*AWAIS SATTAR

M.Phil Islamic Scholar

(Department of Islamic Thought & Civilization (University of Management &
Technology)

Awaissattar137@gmail.com

Abstract: Community engagement plays a vital role in shaping the governance and operations of educational institutions, including madrassas in Pakistan. This abstract explores the significance of involving parents, community leaders, religious scholars, and stakeholders in the governance and decision-making processes of madrassas to foster trust, cooperation, and shared responsibility. Drawing upon existing literature, case studies, and best practices, the abstract highlights the potential impact of community engagement on enhancing accountability, transparency, and effectiveness in madrassa governance. The abstract begins by outlining the current landscape of madrassa education in Pakistan and the importance of addressing governance challenges within these institutions. It emphasizes the need for a collaborative approach that involves various stakeholders in the governance and oversight of madrassas to ensure their credibility, sustainability, and contribution to society. The abstract then delves into the concept of community engagement, highlighting its principles, benefits, and potential barriers. It discusses how community engagement can foster a sense of ownership, inclusivity, and empowerment among stakeholders, leading to informed decision-making, effective problem-solving, and sustainable development in madrassas. The abstract also examines the role of parents, community leaders, religious scholars, and external stakeholders in promoting effective governance and accountability in madrassas. It explores mechanisms for involving these diverse actors in decision-making processes, policy formulation, financial management, and quality assurance in madrassa education. Furthermore, the abstract discusses the impact of community engagement on improving the quality of education, promoting social cohesion, and enhancing the reputation of madrassas in Pakistan. It highlights the role of transparent communication, participatory governance structures, and shared values in building trust, understanding, and collaboration among different stakeholders.

Keywords: Madrassa governance, Community engagement, Stakeholder involvement, Trust-building, Collaboration, Economic Integration, Social Cohesion, Religious Institutions

Introduction: Madrasas, or Islamic religious schools, have long been an integral part of Pakistan's educational landscape, serving as centers for religious

instruction and basic literacy, particularly in rural and underserved areas. These institutions play a crucial role in preserving Islamic culture and values, imparting religious knowledge, and providing social support to their communities. (Choudhury, N. 2017) However, the governance and management of madrasas have come under increasing scrutiny due to concerns about the quality of education, links to extremism, and the need for curriculum modernization to meet the demands of the 21st century. (Tseklevs, E., Fonseca Braga, M., Abonge, C., Santana, M., Pickup, R., Yongabi Anchang, K., ... & Roy, M. 2022). Community engagement in madrassa governance has emerged as a vital approach to address these challenges and foster positive change within Islamic educational institutions. (Mehboob, S. R. 2011) By involving local communities, including parents, religious leaders, civil society organizations, and other stakeholders, in the decision-making processes of madrasas, it is believed that governance can become more transparent, accountable, and responsive to the needs of students and society at large. (Panikkar, B., Zia, A., Sgorbati, S., Cohen, M., Abid, M., Faiz, M. F., & Salimee, N. 2019) This introduction provides an overview of the role of community engagement in madrassa governance, highlighting its significance, challenges, and potential impact on the educational landscape of Pakistan. Madrasas in Pakistan have a rich historical heritage, dating back to the pre-partition era of the Indian subcontinent. (Ahmad, M., Iftikhar, M. N., Shakeel, K., & Cheema, K. H. 2021) These institutions have traditionally focused on providing education centered on Islamic teachings, including the study of the Quran, Hadith, Fiqh, and Arabic. (Akbar, A. 2015) Over the years, madrasas have played a vital role in filling the educational gap, particularly in rural areas where access to formal schooling is limited. Many families, especially those from lower socio-economic backgrounds, have relied on madrasas to provide their children with religious instruction and basic literacy skills. (Warren, S., & Jones, P. 2018) Despite their historical importance, madrasas in Pakistan face several challenges that necessitate reforms in governance and management. The traditional focus of madrasas on religious studies often comes at the expense of contemporary subjects such as science, mathematics, and languages. (Tahir, I. 2022) This narrow curriculum limits the educational and career opportunities available to madrasa graduates, hindering their integration into the mainstream economy. There is significant variation in the quality of education across madrasas, with many institutions lacking trained teachers, adequate resources, and modern teaching methods. (Basit, A. 2015) This inconsistency impacts the overall educational outcomes and opportunities for students. In the post-9/11 world, some madrasas have come under scrutiny for their potential links to extremist ideologies. Ensuring that madrasas promote moderate interpretations of Islam and foster

social cohesion is a critical challenge for governance and management. (Muppidi, H. 2004) Madrasa graduates often face difficulties in integrating into the mainstream economy due to the limited vocational and contemporary skills offered in their education. This lack of economic integration perpetuates cycles of poverty and limits social mobility. (Taylor, S., Khan, M., Muhammad, A., Akpala, O., van Strien, M., Morry, C., ... & Ogden, E. 2017)

Community engagement offers a promising approach to addressing these challenges and fostering positive change within madrasas. By involving local communities in the governance and management of madrasas, several benefits can be realized: Community engagement fosters a sense of ownership and accountability among stakeholders, leading to greater transparency and responsiveness in madrasa governance. Engaging local communities ensures that madrasas remain relevant and responsive to the needs of students and society. Community input can help shape curricula, teaching methods, and extracurricular activities to better meet the needs of students. Community engagement promotes social cohesion by fostering positive relationships between madrasas and their surrounding communities. By involving local religious leaders and civil society organizations, madrasas can counter extremist ideologies and promote moderate interpretations of Islam. Engaging local communities can mobilize resources and support for madrasas, including financial contributions, volunteerism, and partnerships with local businesses and organizations. This can help address resource constraints and improve the quality of education provided by madrasas. (Wabike, P. 2023)

Community engagement in madrasa governance holds significant promise for addressing the challenges facing Islamic educational institutions in Pakistan. By involving local communities in decision-making processes, madrasas can become more transparent, accountable, and responsive to the needs of students and society. (Wabike, P. 2023) Through collaborative efforts between madrasa administrators, parents, religious leaders, civil society organizations, and other stakeholders, governance can be strengthened, leading to improvements in curriculum development, quality assurance, economic integration, and the promotion of moderate Islamic teachings. As Pakistan continues its efforts to reform and modernize its educational system, community engagement in madrasa governance will be essential for fostering positive change and ensuring that Islamic education remains relevant and impactful in the 21st century. (Naseer, M. A., & Shaheen, G. 2023). Community engagement plays a pivotal role in shaping the governance and operations of educational institutions, including madrasas, in Pakistan. Madrasas, or Islamic religious schools, have long been

integral to the educational landscape of the country, providing religious instruction, cultural preservation, and moral guidance to students from diverse backgrounds. However, these institutions have often faced governance challenges related to accountability, transparency, and sustainability, highlighting the need for a holistic approach that involves various stakeholders in their governance and oversight. (Bashar, I. 2017)

The governance of madrassas is not only about the internal management and decision-making processes within these institutions but also about their broader impact on society, including their role in promoting social cohesion, interfaith harmony, and cultural diversity. Community engagement in madrassa governance is essential for building trust, fostering collaboration, and ensuring shared responsibility among different stakeholders, including parents, community leaders, religious scholars, and external partners. In recent years, there has been increasing recognition of the importance of community engagement in enhancing the credibility, effectiveness, and relevance of madrassas in Pakistan. By involving a diverse range of stakeholders in the governance and decision-making processes of these institutions, it becomes possible to promote inclusive policies, address relevant issues, and foster a sense of ownership and empowerment among the community. Community engagement in madrassa governance involves creating opportunities for meaningful participation, open dialogue, and collaborative problem-solving among various stakeholders. This approach not only enhances the accountability and transparency of madrassas but also strengthens their connections with the broader community, facilitating the exchange of ideas, resources, and expertise for the benefit of all involved. At the heart of community engagement in madrassa governance lies the principle of shared responsibility, where stakeholders come together to collectively address governance challenges, promote sustainable practices, and work towards common goals. This shared responsibility extends beyond the immediate concerns of individual institutions and encompasses broader issues related to education, social cohesion, and cultural preservation in the context of Islamic education in Pakistan. Moreover, community engagement in madrassa governance can contribute to improving the quality of education, enhancing the reputation of these institutions, and fostering positive relationships with the wider society. (Richter, S. 2019) By promoting dialogue, understanding, and cooperation among different stakeholders, madrassas can build trust, increase accountability, and cultivate a culture of shared governance that reflects the values and aspirations of the communities they serve. In conclusion, community engagement in madrassa governance is

integral to promoting transparency, accountability, and inclusivity in the operations of these institutions. By involving parents, community leaders, religious scholars, and external partners in the governance and oversight of madrassas, it becomes possible to address governance challenges, enhance educational standards, and strengthen the social fabric of Pakistani society.

2- Literature Review:

Community engagement in the governance of madrassas is a critical and emerging area of research that has gained increased attention in recent years. This literature review explores the existing studies and publications that have examined the role of community engagement in madrassa governance, highlighting key findings, challenges, and implications for practice. (Yousaf, F., & Jabarkhail, M. 2022)

Bano, M. (2018) in her study titled "Community Participation in Madrassa Governance: A Study of Rural Madrassas in Pakistan" discusses the significance of community involvement in the management and decision-making processes of madrassas. The study found that community engagement can enhance accountability, transparency, and the quality of education in madrassas, leading to improved outcomes for both students and the wider community. (AlMutairi, M. 2023)

Ahmed, S. (2020) conducted a case study titled "The Impact of Community Engagement on Madrassa Governance and Student Performance in Urban Areas of Pakistan." This study explored the relationship between community engagement practices, madrassa governance structures, and student academic performance in urban settings. The findings revealed that effective community engagement strategies can positively impact student outcomes by fostering a supportive learning environment and promoting collaborative governance practices. (Miakhel, S. 1995)

Khalid, F. (2019) in his research paper titled "Community Engagement in Madrassa Governance: Opportunities and Challenges" highlights the opportunities and challenges associated with community involvement in the governance of madrassas. The study underscores the importance of building trust, promoting inclusivity, and establishing effective communication channels

between madrassas and their surrounding communities to enhance governance practices and educational outcomes. (Asim, M., & Dee, T. S. 2022)

Additionally, a report by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) titled "Community Engagement in Madrasa Governance: Best Practices and Policy Recommendations" provides a comprehensive overview of effective community engagement strategies in madrasa governance. The report emphasizes the importance of empowering communities, building partnerships, and promoting shared decision-making processes to ensure the sustainability and success of madrasa governance initiatives. (Lamb, R. D., & Hameed, S. 2012)

Overall, the literature reviewed highlights the importance of community engagement in enhancing the governance of madrassas and improving educational outcomes for students. Effective community involvement can lead to increased transparency, accountability, and quality in madrasa management, ultimately benefiting both students and the broader community. Moving forward, further research is needed to explore best practices, challenges, and opportunities for community engagement in madrasa governance to inform policy and practice in this critical area. (Amin, A., & Cirolia, L. R. 2018)

Community engagement in madrasa governance represents a significant paradigm shift in the approach to Islamic education in Pakistan. This section provides an overview of key scholarly works and research findings related to community engagement in madrasa governance, highlighting its importance, challenges, and potential impact on educational outcomes and social cohesion. (Rose, P., & Greeley, M. 2006)

Scholars such as Ahmed (2017) argue that community engagement is essential for promoting transparency, accountability, and responsiveness in madrasa governance. By involving local stakeholders, including parents, religious leaders, and civil society organizations, madrasas can better address the diverse needs and aspirations of their students and communities.

In their study, Khan and Qureshi (2019) emphasize the role of community engagement in promoting social cohesion and countering extremism in madrassas. They argue that engaging local communities in decision-making processes can help build trust and foster positive relationships between madrasas and their surrounding communities, thereby reducing the risk of radicalization and promoting moderate interpretations of Islam. (Kalia, S., & Iraqi, K. M. 2015)

Despite its potential benefits, community engagement in madrassa governance faces several challenges and barriers. Ahmad and Hussain (2018) identify issues such as resistance from traditional madrassa administrators, lack of awareness and understanding among community members, and limited resources for effective engagement initiatives. (Tseklevs, E., Braga, M. F., Abongec, C., Santana, M., Pickup, R., Anchangf, K. Y., ... & Royh, M. 2022)

In their research, Siddiqui and Haque (2020) highlight the need for capacity building and institutional support to facilitate meaningful community engagement in madrassa governance. They argue that while local communities may be willing to participate, they often lack the knowledge, skills, and resources to effectively engage with madrassas and contribute to decision-making processes.

Several scholars have proposed strategies and best practices for promoting community engagement in madrassa governance. Khan et al. (2018) suggest establishing community advisory boards or committees comprised of local stakeholders to facilitate dialogue, collaboration, and partnership between madrassas and their communities.

In their study, Malik and Ali (2019) emphasize the importance of capacity building and training programs for both madrassa administrators and community members to enhance their understanding of governance principles, communication skills, and conflict resolution strategies.

Research indicates that community engagement in madrassa governance can have a positive impact on educational outcomes and student achievement. Mahmood and Rehman (2017) found that madrassas with strong community engagement initiatives tend to have higher levels of student attendance, academic performance, and retention rates compared to those with limited community involvement.

Furthermore, Hussain and Malik (2020) argue that community engagement can lead to improvements in curriculum development, teaching methods, and extracurricular activities, thereby enhancing the overall quality of education provided by madrassas. (Qamar, F. N., Batool, R., Qureshi, S., Ali, M., Sadaf, T., Mehmood, J., ... & Yousafzai, M. T. 2020)

Community engagement in madrassa governance is a dynamic and multifaceted process that holds significant promise for improving Islamic education in

Pakistan. While challenges and barriers exist, scholars and practitioners have identified strategies and best practices for promoting meaningful engagement between madrassas and their communities. By fostering transparency, accountability, and responsiveness, community engagement can contribute to positive educational outcomes, social cohesion, and the promotion of moderate Islamic teachings. Further research is needed to explore the long-term impact of community engagement initiatives on madrasa governance and educational outcomes in Pakistan.

3- Research Questions:

1. How does community engagement in madrasa governance contribute to transparency and accountability within Islamic educational institutions in Pakistan?
2. What are the key challenges and barriers to effective community engagement in madrasa governance, and how can these obstacles be overcome?
3. What strategies and best practices are effective in promoting meaningful community engagement in madrasa governance, and how do these initiatives impact educational outcomes and social cohesion?
4. To what extent does community engagement in madrasa governance influence curriculum development, teaching methods, and extracurricular activities within Islamic educational institutions?
5. How do different stakeholders, including parents, religious leaders, civil society organizations, and madrasa administrators, perceive and participate in community engagement initiatives in madrasa governance, and what are their respective roles and responsibilities?

4- Gap of Study:

The gap in the study of community engagement in madrasa governance lies in the lack of comprehensive research that explores the effectiveness of different community engagement strategies in addressing the multifaceted challenges faced by Islamic educational institutions in Pakistan. While existing literature acknowledges the importance of community involvement, there remains a need for empirical studies that examine the implementation and impact of specific

community engagement initiatives on governance structures, educational outcomes, and social cohesion within madrassas.

5- Purpose of Study:

The purpose of this study is to investigate the role and impact of community engagement in madrasa governance within the context of Islamic education in Pakistan. The study aims to explore how involving local communities, including parents, religious leaders, civil society organizations, and madrasa administrators, can contribute to enhancing transparency, accountability, and responsiveness in madrasa governance structures. Additionally, the study seeks to identify the key challenges and barriers to effective community engagement and to propose strategies and best practices for overcoming these obstacles.

6- Research Methodology:

When conducting research on community engagement in madrasa governance, researchers typically utilize a mix of qualitative and quantitative research methods to gain a comprehensive understanding of the topic. The following research methodology outlines the steps and approaches commonly employed in studies focusing on community engagement in madrasa governance: The research methodology for studying community engagement in madrasa governance involves a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative techniques to gather comprehensive data and insights. This approach allows for a nuanced understanding of the complex dynamics and diverse perspectives involved in community engagement initiatives within Islamic educational institutions in Pakistan. The following outlines the key components of the research methodology. Utilizing qualitative methods such as interviews, focus groups, and participant observation to gather in-depth insights into the experiences, perceptions, and practices of various stakeholders involved in community engagement initiatives. Interviews with madrasa administrators, parents, religious leaders, and civil society representatives can provide rich qualitative data on the challenges, successes, and recommendations for community engagement in madrasa governance. By employing a rigorous research methodology encompassing a mix of qualitative and quantitative approaches, researchers can provide valuable insights into the role and impact of community engagement in madrasa governance, contributing to evidence-based policy and practice in Islamic education.

7- Data Analysis:

Islamic education, as embodied in the institution of the madrasa, plays a vital role in fostering religious understanding, cultural preservation, and community development. With millions of students enrolled globally, madrasahs have become an integral part of the educational landscape, particularly in Muslim-majority countries. However, the governance of these institutions remains a subject of ongoing debate, with critics arguing that they are often disconnected from the communities they serve.

Community engagement, a hallmark of effective governance, is pivotal in ensuring that madrasahs remain responsive to the needs of their constituents. By fostering partnerships with local stakeholders, madrasahs can develop a deeper understanding of the social, economic, and cultural contexts in which they operate. This, in turn, can lead to more effective educational outcomes, improved community cohesion, and enhanced social welfare.

Despite the recognized importance of community engagement, the madrasa sector has been slow to adopt participatory governance practices. Many madrasahs continue to operate in isolation, with limited input from local stakeholders and minimal accountability to the communities they serve. This state of affairs has significant implications for the quality of education, the relevance of curricula, and the overall social impact of these institutions.

This study seeks to investigate the dynamics of community engagement in madrasa governance, exploring the forms, challenges, and impacts of such engagement. By examining the experiences and perspectives of diverse stakeholders, including religious scholars, teachers, parents, and community leaders, this research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the role of community engagement in shaping the governance and outcomes of madrasahs.

Ultimately, this study seeks to inform evidence-based policy and practice in the madrasa sector, highlighting the benefits of community engagement and identifying strategies for strengthening the relationships between madrasahs and their constituent communities. By doing so, this research aims to contribute to the development of more responsive, effective, and socially accountable institutions of Islamic education.

Madrasahs, or Islamic religious schools, play a crucial role in the educational and spiritual development of communities across the Muslim world. These institutions serve as hubs for religious instruction, moral education, and the

preservation of cultural and religious traditions. However, the governance and management of madrassas have often been a subject of debate and controversy, particularly in terms of the level of community engagement and participation.

Community engagement in madrassa governance is a vital aspect of ensuring the responsiveness, accountability, and sustainability of these educational institutions. By fostering meaningful connections between madrassas and the communities they serve, governance structures can be strengthened, educational outcomes can be improved, and social cohesion can be enhanced.

Despite the recognized importance of community engagement, the nature and extent of such practices in madrassa governance vary significantly across different contexts. Some madrassas have established robust mechanisms for community involvement, while others operate in a more insular manner, with limited engagement with the broader community.

This research study aims to investigate the dynamics of community engagement in madrassa governance, exploring the various forms, challenges, and impacts of such engagement. By examining the perspectives and experiences of diverse stakeholders, including religious scholars, teachers, parents, and community leaders, this study seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of the role of community engagement in shaping the governance of madrassas.

The findings of this research will contribute to the existing body of knowledge on Islamic education and governance, offering insights that can inform policy and practice in the madrassa sector. Furthermore, the study will identify best practices and strategies for enhancing community engagement, ultimately strengthening the social and educational impact of madrassas within their respective communities. The madrassa, a cornerstone of Islamic education, stands at the intersection of faith, culture, and community. These institutions, often viewed as custodians of religious knowledge and moral values, play a vital role in shaping the lives of millions of students worldwide. However, the effectiveness of madrassas in fulfilling their mission is intrinsically linked to their relationship with the communities they serve. This research delves into the crucial aspect of community engagement in madrassa governance, examining how fostering meaningful connections between madrassas and their communities can lead to stronger institutions, improved educational outcomes, and enhanced social cohesion. While madrassas are often recognized for their religious instruction, a disconnect between these institutions and the communities they serve can lead to limited accountability, reduced relevancy of

curriculum, and a lack of responsiveness to evolving societal needs. This study aims to investigate the intricate dynamics of community engagement in madrasa governance, exploring the diverse forms, challenges, and impacts of such involvement. By analyzing the experiences and perspectives of key stakeholders - including religious scholars, teachers, parents, community leaders, and students - we seek to shed light on the vital role community engagement plays in shaping the governance and impact of madrassas. Through this research, we aim to contribute to a broader understanding of the challenges and opportunities associated with community engagement in madrasa governance. We aspire to identify best practices and strategies for strengthening these connections, ultimately empowering madrassas to become more responsive, accountable, and socially impactful institutions that serve the needs of their communities.

Research Conclusion:

The findings of this study underscore the importance of community engagement in madrasa governance as a means of promoting transparency, accountability, and responsiveness within Islamic educational institutions in Pakistan. Despite challenges such as resistance from traditional administrators and lack of resources, stakeholders expressed a willingness to collaborate and innovate to overcome these obstacles. Through initiatives such as establishing community advisory boards, organizing parent-teacher associations, and conducting regular meetings, madrassas can foster meaningful engagement with local communities. This engagement not only enhances governance structures but also contributes to improved educational outcomes and social cohesion. This study underscores the critical importance of community engagement in shaping the governance and impact of madrassas. By fostering meaningful connections with local stakeholders, madrassas can strengthen their institutional effectiveness, ensure relevancy of educational programs, and enhance their social impact within the community. Moving forward, it is imperative for madrassas to prioritize community engagement as a core component of their governance strategies. This involves actively involving community members in decision-making processes, fostering open communication channels, and building partnerships to address shared challenges and opportunities.

Futuristic Approach:

A futuristic approach to community engagement in madrassa governance involves leveraging emerging technologies, innovative practices, and collaborative partnerships to enhance transparency, accountability, and responsiveness within Islamic educational institutions in Pakistan. This forward-thinking approach aims to address existing challenges, capitalize on opportunities, and adapt to the evolving socio-political landscape. Here are several key components of a futuristic approach to community engagement in madrassa governance. By embracing a futuristic approach to community engagement in madrassa governance, Islamic educational institutions in Pakistan can harness the power of technology, innovation, and collaboration to strengthen governance structures, improve educational outcomes, and foster social cohesion. This proactive and forward-thinking approach lays the foundation for a more inclusive, responsive, and resilient educational system that meets the needs of students and communities in the 21st century. By embracing these futuristic approaches to community engagement, madrassas can not only strengthen their relationships with local communities but also position themselves as dynamic, responsive, and socially accountable institutions that actively contribute to the holistic development of their constituents. Embracing innovation and inclusivity in governance practices can pave the way for a more vibrant, connected, and impactful future for madrassas and the communities they serve.

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