

An Analysis on History of Madrasah Tradition in Sri Lanka and Its Basic Characteristics

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Abstract

The Muslims have long history of presence in Sri Lanka. They established their own institutions for the socio cultural and educational development. This paper aimed to explore a historical setting of madrasah tradition in Sri Lanka and then to provide a description of basic characteristics of this educational institution. The historical overview of the madrasah covers from early times to the present day. Thus, this study used the review of the collected evidences, documents and the textual records. Moreover, it based on analysis of quantitative data collected through survey to identify the basic characteristics of the madrasah in Sri Lanka and qualitative approaches to interpret the results. The findings reveal that madrasah establishment in Sri Lanka has been influenced by the long-lasting Islamic tradition from its early period. It was quite natural that Indian madrasah which was flourished in medieval period had also deep impact on this tradition in Sri Lanka. Madrasahs are found in place where Muslims are living as a foremost community. The madrasah is most likely affiliated with Islamic movements and seems to accomplish Muslim educational aspirations especially during the colonial period.

Keywords: Madrasah Tradition, Muslim Education, Muslims in Sri Lanka

1. Introduction

Knowledge (*ilm*) occupies a substantial position within Islam. Therefore, it has, from the inception, placed a high premium on education and has enjoyed a long and rich intellectual tradition. The primary textual source of Islam makes more than 800 references to the education. The importance of education is repeatedly highlighted in the Quran with frequent injunctions (Quran, Verse 58:11; Verse 20:114; Verse 2:269; verse 2:282; Verse 58:11). These verses accord significance on the acquisition of knowledge and provide a strong motivation for Muslims to strive for education and

learning. The first qur'anic word "*Iqra*" (means 'read') intends to make Muslims, interacted with by means of reading and reciting qur'anic words. Similarly, hadith provided an idea of universal and compulsory education. The Prophet himself has decreed knowledge to be obligatory upon every Muslim male and female and considers no suffering or sacrifice too great in its fulfillment. He has declared good education and training of children, sons as well as daughters, as the best gift a father can give to them.

In Sri Lanka, Muslims inhabited for over a millennium year. Thus, it can be assumed that every early Muslim settlement had its maktab or madrasah. The indigenous madrasah system was flourished due to direct influence of Indian rich tradition and trends of madrasah education during the Middle Ages and after. More specially, Muslim community found the madrasah as source of education during the colonial period from 1505 to 1948. For the Muslims, that the aim of these schools established by colonial powers was proselytism. The madrasah education in Sri Lanka most likely connected with the establishment of mosques (Jazeel, 2017). Today, there are more than 200 Madrasah Island wide with characteristics that vary from madrasah to madrasah. The common aim of offering this education is mainly religious and moral training.

2. Method

The specific aim of the study is to explore the historical development of Madrasah tradition in Sri Lanka and then identify the basic characteristics of the madrasah in Sri Lanka. This study employed mainly the analysis of the qualitative approach. However, it used the analysis of data collected through survey administered among the selected madrasahs. The review of literatures and records through library survey was firstly conducted to explore the historical development of the madrasah tradition particularly in Sri Lanka.

3. Results and Discussion

The establishment of the madrasah education in Sri Lanka is most likely influenced by the long lasting tradition exist from early Islamic period even before. The records illustrate that a kind system of educational method was in existence during the pre-Islamic period known *Jabliyyab*. It is known from old references that there was an educational institution near Macca in which a x-zoman Zulma of Hazil tribe got education in her childhood. The Jews of Madeenah had also established a Baitul Madaris which was partly a court and partly an educational institution. With advent of Islam which promote knowledge and considered the education as the corner stone of its mission, Prophet himself played a role of educating every one of his companions of Islamic way of life. The Prophet started teaching of revelation, informally, to the

people. Later on, the teaching of Islam was started at 'Dharul Arquam' in Macca near the Safa Mountain, where, the Muslims were imparted the basic knowledge of Islam'. Immediately after the migration known as Hijrah, in spite of enormous preoccupations in connection with defensive and precautionary measures, he found time to supervise the work of eradicating illiteracy from Madeenah. He previously sent a teacher to Madeenah before his migration. With this object in mind, Sa'id ibn-al A'as who was reputed to write a good hand, was appointed to teach reading and writing to the people of Madeenah. Moreover, Suffa of Madeenan mosque under Ubadah bin Samit was functioning as the first Muslim boarding school, to teach the Quran and writing. This may be treated as the first residential educational institution in Islam. Similarly, there were about ten mosques function as educational institutions for the neighbourhood. He had also ordered that people should obtain education from their neighbourhood. Moreover, he started the practice of sending missionary teachers to different areas so that they could teach isolated and moving tribes. It is noteworthy that whenever a new area was conquered, the Prophet used to dispatch teachers to teach the people. From an educational point of view, this was the first break through in mass education (Mahmood, 1994; Zaman, 2001).

The period of the first four Caliphs of Islam is known as the period of the orthodox Caliphate. It had the same educational practices. Notable, in the Mosque of Bani Zuraique which was situated in the center of Madeenah during Abu Bakr people used to get education there. Raafe Bin Malik Zuraique, who was from Bani Zuraique, a branch of Khazraj tribe, was its teacher. When Umar made education compulsory in Arabia, it was made so both for boys and girls. Women were also free to attend lectures, sermons and other similar functions. It is significant to note here that he put teachers on the pay roll. He dispatched the companions to distinct places for teaching the Quran. He made great efforts for the publicity of the Hadith and encouraged the study of Fiqh (Zafar, 1991).

In this period Islam had spread outside Arabia such as Egypt, Palestine, Iraq, Iran and Syria. Where several nationalities of various religious beliefs, languages and cultures were living in this newly established towns. It required a system of educating them, so the companions of the prophet reached far and distant places. In Basra by Amran bin Hussain, in Palestine by Muad bin Jabal, in Medina by Abdullah bin Masood, in Damascus by Abu Darda, in Syria by Abdur Rahman bin Qasim, in Egypt by Jaban bin Jabla assigned to perform the task. Like the prophet's Period, the mosques occupied the position of Educational Centre and they enjoyed great importance in teaching and learning. The mosques were constructed in large numbers and the extensions were made in the old ones. The construction of new mosques and extension or old

ones provided more opportunities for attainment of knowledge and encouragement to education.

During the Umayyad period, the rulers were relatively much interested in expanding and consolidating their kingdom rather than patronizing the education. The education as well as the learned persons remained independent from the influence of the government. The Companions of the prophet and their followers continued their interest in education. In this period there were *Maktabs* for Primary education and Educational Circles for schools and, the first attempt was made towards formalizing the age old non-formal system of education. Elementary education established formally in this Umayyad period. Mosques, shops and houses were used as elementary schools. Elements of arithmetic other than important religious percepts were also taught. During the Umayyad period, learned men especially physicians, came to Damascus, the capital. The first thought of the Umayyads was to Arabicize the non-Arab conquered races and for this purpose they improved the Arabic script and adopted Arabic as the official language replacing Syrian, Coptic and Persian. This provided a sound basis for the educational development. During the Umayyad reign Basra and Kufa were the main centres of culture.

On the contrary, the rulers in Abbasid Period provided protection and patronage for educational activities. The time of Haroon Rashid during this period is the period of height and prime of education, civilization and culture. Besides elementary education, efforts were also made towards the development of higher education. The teachers of the Madrasas were of high status and were respected in the society'. The first institution for higher education was "Bayt al-Hikmah", established in 830 A.D. by Harun al Rasheed. He appointed several learned persons and translators and got several books of Greek, Persian and other languages translated into Arabic. Another ruler Ma'mun had love for education. He strengthened Bayt al-Hikmah. He brought the books of Plato, Aristotle, Hippocrates, Galen, Euclid and Ptolemy translated into Arabic and encouraged people for learning. The affluent and the rich also took interest in educational development due to interest of hapium. Later on, a number of other institutions came into existence (Khan, 1973).

The mosques occupied the position of centers of leaning like previous periods. Besides the mosque, there were maktabs, which served as elementary schools. The mosques of Baghdad were famous centers of learning. They provided education for young as well as adults. The libraries were attached with mosques where students spent their time in studies and educational debates and discussion held there. It can be said that the foundation of knowledge and sciences which was laid in the period of Abbasid. Several rulers of this period took great interest in educational activities and patronized

them. Several educational institutions and madrasas were established in this period, remarkable, in Nishapur, at least four madrasas, namely, Madrasa-e-Baihaqiyyah, Madrasa Khulafa-e-Rashidin, Madrasa Abu Hafs, Madrasa Shawafa etc. were there. Nizam al-Mulk was the minister of Alp Arslan and Malik Shah, the two rulers in this period. He was a learned man. He made great attempts for educational development. He established madrasas in Nishapur, Serat, Isfahan, Basra, Cairo, Mosul, etc. The greatest madrasa of Niza al-Mulk was Madrasa Nizamia. It was installed in IO72 AD. A hostel was also attached to this Madrasa. The students were granted scholarships. Great learned teachers served in this madrasa. Some of the important teachers were Imam Abu Ishak Shirazi, Abu Nasar Sabash, Ibnul Aatib, Abi JI Hasan Fasihi, Qutbuddin Shaafai, Inaara Ibn al-Ghazali. In 1202 AD when other educational institution "Almustansariya" was established, Madrasa Nizamia was merged with it. This new institution was constructed in seven years. It was inaugurated in 1209 AD. Hadith, grammar, medicine, inheritance were the four main departments which were headed by Shaikh al-Hadith, Shaikh al-Nahw, and Shaikh al-Tib abd Shaikh al-Faraid respectively. This institution had also Hostel.

The Caliphs started to spread the teaching of Islam in different parts of Asia, Europe and Africa. They made Iran the centre of learning and research. Gradually, from Iran the educational flow transferred to India. The Muslims became conscious of learning and spreading the teachings of Islam. With the gradual dismemberment of 'Abbasid Khilafat new dynasties rose to power in different parts of the Islamic world which continued almost unabated the traditions of scientific inquiry and literary output established at Baghdad in its golden prime. Some of the new dynasties rose such as the Tahirids (820-872 A.D.), Saffarids (862-903 A.D.) the Samanids (874-999 A.D.), the Buwayhids (945-1055 A.D.) and the Ghaznavids (962-1186 A.D.).

It is evidenced that the origin of madrasah education in Sri Lanka is directly connected to rich tradition of Muslim India, where the Muslim rule started from the 12th century and continued up to 19th century. During this period, several madrasas were established in various parts of India. During the Muslim rule, the art, culture and tradition of education of the Abbasids was imported to India, and Delhi could start from the point Baghdad left. Administrative requirements of trained personnel, desire to increase cultural prestige among rulers, demands of Muslim religious life, patronage of religious classes, personal interest in education and learning, led the them to establish madrasahs and maktabs in their territory.

Delhi Sultans who evinced keen interest in the promotion of education and learning are reported to have established several madrasahs there. Maktabs and Madrasahs were founded in Delhi and other cities and towns in large number. In India the first

Madrasah of real importance was Firoz Shah Madrasah about which Alberuni was vociferous in praise and which was unique in the whole of mediaeval India. The Mughal rulers were also interested in the advancement of education. They took the pains of reforming the traditional education in India. He introduced secular subjects like logic and philosophy, Mathematics, Astronomy, Agriculture and Accountancy. A major development in Madrasa Education was the introduction of “Dars-e-Nizamia” during this period. This system was initiated by Mulla Nizamuddin (1089-1161 A.H.) of Sihali, (near Lucknow) in the later part of the 17th century AD. Till today, the courses of studies in the madrasas are based on Dars-e-Nizamia. Dars-e-Nizamia syllabi was formulated with the major objective of developing comprehensive ability of other sciences and arts among the students along with the religious education.

During this period, maktabas and madrasas made remarkable progress. The system of education was modified and improved in accordance with the needs of the period. The rulers provided all facilities including funds to run the madrasas. The colonial period is marked with establishment of the famous Calcutta Alia Madrasa Madrasa Mohsinia. Following the model from these two madrasas, a number of madrasas were established in other parts of India. India, the most advanced country in which Muslims had thrived for a long time also had many important madrasas in Gujrat, Deccan, Delhi, Bihar, Punjab, Sindh and other places (Zakaria, 2004; Sen, 2002; Jaffar, 1972).

The history of the maktab or madrasah education in Sri Lanka is assumed as old as the presence of the Muslims. Because they no doubt, established the mosques where at all their settlement sites to practice religious functions and use also them for the purpose of educating their children. MMM. Mahroof (1987) argues that “The Muslim settlements in Sri Lanka had, from the earliest period, a most articulated and integrated form. While the trade and navigational sectors were paramount, the religious organization had a very important place. Every settlement had its mosques and the madrasas, the religious functionaries most often functioning as preceptors. Such organization gave to the Muslim community a thoroughly Islamic upbringing and way of life’. Sri Lanka had a long history of contacts with Middle East, thus it seems clear that Arab communities gathered and form settlements on the coasts and elsewhere. It is assumed that in due course they had become Muslims. By 8th and 9th centuries Muslims traders had accelerated the commercial intercourse with south and south East Asia including Sri Lanka. The notes of modern historians’ (Vamadevan, 1999), and the Arabic (Cufix) inscriptions on the tomb-stones dated to the 10th century (one of them was erected over the burial of a Muslim religious teacher, Khalid Ibn Abu Bakaya) suggests that Muslims have ensured religious guidance and various means for the performance of their religious practices. Therefore, it is obvious that there

were mosques along with maktab constructed by the Muslims of the period at those places which are the pivotal point in a Muslim society. The celebrated Ibn Batuta, who visited Sri Lanka in AH 746 (1345), saw in a town in the middle of Sri Lanka, the mosque of Shaikh Usman of Shiraz, known as "Shaush." who was involving in educating the Muslims.

The 16th Century is marked the commencement of western colonial powers, first the Portuguese in 1505, then the Dutch from 1658 to 1796 and finally the British from 1796 to 1948 and their subsequent over-lording of Sri Lanka. In the beginning of the 16th century, substantial Muslims community settlements existed on Sri Lankan port-towns, particularly at the western coast. A Portuguese fleet was driven off-course by a storm to Galle, in Sri Lanka. Having victual led there, the ships, hugging the coast, came to Colombo. It was said that as the fleet sailed into Colombo, the Portuguese on board saw first of all the white walls of two mosques. A recent historian also noted that "the population of the town (Colombo) was largely Muslim and there was a mosque together with a Muslim cemetery and a court of justice to settle disputes according to Muslim law" (Mahroof, 1987). This was, of course, during the pre-Portuguese occupation period Muslims possess all kind of religious institutions in order to practice Islam and nourish the idea that the Muslims of Sri Lanka during the Middle Ages and earlier had an indigenous madrasah or maktab system.

Dutch established a certain number of schools in Sri Lanka with the objective of propagating the Christian doctrine among the inhabitants. This Dutch school system was thoroughly evangelist. The Muslims found themselves necessarily exempt. The discriminatory impositions of the Dutch made the Muslim community in Sri Lanka fall back on its own resources. In such circumstances, madrasah education could be alternative. In 1709 the king of Java, Susanahan Mangkurat Maas came as an exile with his retinue, to be followed in 1723 by forty-four members of Javanese princely families. They helped to keep Islamic learning alive through the efforts in the circumstances were sporadic. More important was the establishment by the Javanese elite of 'pesantiren,' which were elementary Qur'an schools where children were taught by a katib or other qualified person the elements of Qur'anic recitation and rudiments of Arabic. As the Javanese exiles were themselves Shafeites as the Muslims of Sri Lanka, the 'pesantiren' fitted neatly into the system of religious education in this country. It was true that these 'pesantiren' gave only a limited religious education but this was foundation enough for those who ventured to complete their madrasah education in India or elsewhere.

British occupation in 1796 and their one hundred- and fifty-two-years rule in Sri Lanka was the removal of the imposition particularly religious intolerance. The Muslims

underwent a development in their political, social, economic and cultural spheres. The British government helped to break down all the economic barriers and encouraged the free economic enterprises in which Muslims were engaged down the age. However, the British continued the Dutch policy in education for a long time. Integral to the Dutch system, as has been indicated, was the supervision of the schools by Dutch clergymen, a state of affairs reproduced under Lord Frederick North, the first British Governor of Ceylon. However, the economic and social conditions of Sri Lanka were changing fast. By the middle of the 19th century, Sri Lanka had become an export-import economy and by the end of that century, mono-culture (firs in the form of coffee and later tea) and a Western-capitalist-oriented monetary economy were rapidly gaining ground. For instance, between 1885 and 1900, the average monthly circulation of currency increased from Rs 3.8 million to Rs 13.1 million. The Muslims, whose decision-makers were largely the well-established traders, began to acclimatize themselves to the changes. This involved, partly, a rethinking of general and madrassah education.

A steady trickle of Muslims began to enter Islamic religious academies in India. The rapidly growing Muslim middle-class in Sri Lanka, in the form of land-owners, wholesale merchants and successful 'oilman stores' men, were able to send their intellectually-inclined kinsmen for extended religious education abroad. During those times the Muslims of the Indian subcontinent were rethinking their social and economic position and attitudes. The practice and works of such Islamic scholars and thinkers of great repute as Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi, Abdul Haq Muhaddis Dehlavi, Shah Waliullah, Syed Ahmad Shaheed, began to assume a new momentum and immediacy. In the circumstances, the institutionalization of religious education became a paramount necessity. The vivification of madrasahs seemed a satisfactory answer.

Madrasahs preserved existing religious knowledge; they were a bulwark against proliferating secular values; they represented the 'percolation theory' of education; above all, they rigorously preserved Islamic identity. The Western-type economy brought into Sri Lanka in the last century carried with it severe erosion of the traditional economic systems. For instance, since the Government was British, a knowledge of English language became necessary. However, a substantial sections of Muslims resented any compromise with Western principles of education. A vivification of madrasahs seemed to offer a viable alternative, particularly to the groups of Muslims who did not desire official or mercantile employment. By the second half of the nineteenth century, madrasah education had become a non-institutionalized phenomenon in Sri Lanka. On the one hand, ulema who had been educated in madrasahs abroad taught their kinsmen what they had learnt. By this means, at some remove, a sort of madrasah education was retained in Sri Lanka. On the other hand,

tariqs established in Sri Lanka gave a form of theological education in some of their establishments.²² Both were ad hoc devices, lacking the permanency of a well-founded madrasah.

Another thrust towards mosque and madrasah-building was missionary-derivative. By the last part of the 19th century, due to increased trade contacts between Sri Lanka and southern seaboard of India, some Muslim scholars of them visited Sri Lanka and they thereby introduced Sufi Tariqa orders. They had prevailed upon their audience to build mosques and madrasah where Muslims lived in numerical strength.

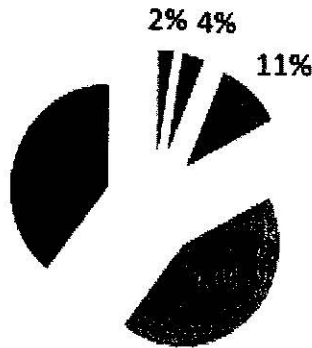
An important figure was the South Indian savant and theologian, Muhammad ibn Ahmad Lebbe from Kilakaria (South India) popularly known as Mapillai Lebba Alim. Entering Ceylon as an Islamic missionary, by 1894, he had established mosques in various parts of the island including Colombo. He had, also, with his band of helpers set up in 1884, the Madras-at-Bari at Weligama in the southern coastal bet of Sri Lanka. Madras at-ul-Bari was perhaps the earliest madrasah to be established in this country. As same as South Indian Sufi scholar Ibn Ahamad lebbai Alim was actively involved in construction of the many mosques and madrasas between 1881 to 1886 in Colombo and south of Sri Lanka. Further each Sufi order established its 'Zaviyas' and 'Takkiyas' as centre for religious education, spiritual training and prayers or exclusively for the voluntary devotional activities prescribed by each *Tariqa*. These centers arose particularly in south of Sri Lanka. Madrasah education in Sri Lanka towards the latter part of the 19th century, thus, went hand in had with the establishment or reestablishment of mosques. In this process ulama from India and Ceylon co-operated. Subsequently, in 1892, some philanthropists established at Galle, not far from Weligama, another madrasah, the Bahjat-ul-Ibrahimiyya. Seven years later, the Marasat-us-Sahidiyya came into existence at Periya Kinniyya, in the eastern sea-board.

M.M.M. Mahroof (1987) noted that during World War II, a major shift of people including Muslims from littoral of Sri Lanka to the inland due to afraid the country might become a theatre of the war. He said that "the surge of urban Muslims into the villages was, to a large extent, instrumental in the reconstruction of mosques and madrasas in some villages at least." A further spurt of mosque-building took place during the middle part of the 20th century when consequent to the influence of Islamic Dawah movements formed in Sri Lanka such as Thableeq Jamath, and Jamathe-Islami and Thowheed. These movements more particularly thowheed movement established their own and independent markaz Mosques and madrasas Island wide, functioning mainly as centres for their proscribed dawah programmes.

2nd half of the 20th century and at the begging of 21st century are marked with great movement the madrasah establishment and re-establishment. The rapid increase in

total number of madrasah is observed in most part of Sri Lanka. There were many reasons. The main reason interconnected with population growth and Da'wah activities of Islamic movements in Sri Lanka. The founding year of responding madrasah ranges from 1870 to 2015; however the vast majority of the madrasah (82.7%) established after 1975. Comparatively, the many madrasahs (39.5%) were founded in fifteen years from 2001 to 2015. The following pie graph shows the percentage breakdown of mosque foundlings for five time periods.

■ Before 1900 ■ 1991-1950 ■ 1951- 1975 ■ 1976- 2000 ■ 2000 -2015



3.1 Type and Affiliation of Madrasah

In Sri Lanka, Department of Muslim Religious and Cultural Affairs (DMRCA) categorizes the madrasah to into two main types: senior and junior madrasahs in terms of their function, size, long run and level of education they offer. Outside these categories, Quran madrasah, Ahadiyyah institutions and hifl madrasah are not include under this purview of this study. However, the respondent madrasah, 40% of madrasah considered themselves as a senior level of Arabic college. In the meantime, one third of them are exclusively for ladies. Even though, the majority of the Arabic colleges (73%) are functioning on the fulltime basis, to smaller extent (9%) there are part time colleges. In comparison, ladies Arabic colleges are more part-timer.

S. No	Type	%
1	Senior Arabic College	40
2	Junior Arabic College	6
3	Ladies Arabic College	30
4	Part-time Arabic College	9
5	Preliminary Arabic College	7
6	Others	2

The respondents were asked to indicate their affiliation with any Islamic movement or school of jurisprudence found in Sri Lanka. According the response, Majority of the madrasah are affiliated with at least one movement or madhab. The table below shows the percentage of madrasahs affiliated with each of several Islamic movements as well as of prominent schools of jurisprudences found in Sri Lanka.

Table: Madrasah Affiliation with Islamic Movements and Madhab
 Percentage affiliated with each organization*

Section	all madrasahs
Not Associated with Any	8.9
Thableeq Jamath	31.1
Jamaethe-Islami	3.3
Thowheed Jamath	11.1
Tharikka orders	7.8
Madhab Ash-Shafie	43.3
Madhab Al-Hanafie	1.1
Ashariyya Doctrine	24.4
Salafi Thought	8.9

*Percentages total more than 100 because some mosques have multiple affiliations.

Slightly less than one third of the madrasahs (31.1%) of all madrasahs are associated with the Thableeq Jamath¹, a most popular movement among Muslims of Sri Lanka particularly, Muslim masses. Very few madrasahs are affiliated with Jamaethe Islami², an organization which participant are mostly from educational background including students, professional and practitioners. Thowheed movements with its sub- divisions work in separate entities posses considerable madrasahs (11.1%). It is said that many madrasahs were established by Tharikka Sufi orders in Sri Lanka during the 19th century. However, relatively some madrasahs (7.8%) are affiliated with these associations.

It is traced that most of Muslims in Sri Lanka are following shafie madhab, accordingly, the response of mosque indicates considerable number of mosques are affiliated with this school of jurisprudence. Very few mosques belong to Jamaethe Islami. Few (8.9%) of all madrasahs are not affiliated with any organization.

3.2 Location and Distribution

Sri Lanka is an island that has a total area of 65,610 square kilometers with three zones that are distinguishable by elevation: the Central Highlands, the plains, and the

coastal belt. Therefore it is not easy to give location analysis and building typology of the more than 200 madrasahs lie throughout the island and it thereby requires a separate study. However, it is appropriate to focus randomly on where the madrasahs were built and what was the main purpose of the locating madrasah constructed from early time to date. It seems that Muslims of Sri Lanka have considered principles to the site selection, design, construction and use of the madrasah. It can be assessed that the impact of the early practices, selecting location and also notes the influence of the spatial arrangements and pattern of the settlement on the madrasah allocation.

Relatively more number of the respondent madrasahs are situated in the mosque or its premises. Traditionally madrasahs are attached to mosque to historical reason. From the very beginning of Islamic history, origin and growth mosques were put to use for educational purposes. The use of mosques for the purpose of educating the Muslim masses had certain advantages. First, after a small extra construction in the mosque, the burden of separate building for a Maktab could easily be avoided. Second, the same staff which was engaged for prayer could perform the duties of teachers and thus educational expenditure on these institutions was reduced to the minimum. With the expansion of education, it was realized that mosques were inadequate to cope with the growing number of students. Moreover, the progress and diffusion of knowledge enlarged the circle of secular education and mosques became a limited place for this purpose of education. There was also the question of residential quarters for the growing bulge of students and it was evident that mosques were inadequate to meet this requirement. In addition, there was no provision in the mosques for higher education and In fact no such provision could have been made there, these Inadequacies were the sufficient reasons to move education from the mosques to other places and this naturally led to the establishment of Madrasahs with buildings of their own where residential arrangement could be made both for the teachers and the taught.

4. Conclusion

The formative history of the madrasah tradition can be traced to the mosque establishment that dated back to the Muslim presence in Sri Lanka before one thousand years. The madrasah education was alternative for the Muslim community from the 16th century due to the constraints faced the Muslims during western colonial rule of the Sri Lanka. The 20th century especially its second half was marked with great movement in the sense of madrasah establishment. The madrasahs are categorized into various types based on in terms of their function, size, long run and level of education offered etc. Furthermore, the majority of the madrasahs are affiliated to sectarians or Islamic movements found in Sri Lanka. The relatively larger number of madrasahs are situated in the mosque or its premises.

Footnotes

¹ Thableeq Jamath was introduced and established in Sri Lanka in 1938. This jamath works in Sri Lanka as grass root spiritual movement with aim of teaching the basics of Islam and encouraging Islamic religious practices. It has markaz in capital and in other regions.

² Jamaethe Islami that is organization established in Sri Lanka in 1952, works in the area of political, social and educational awakening.

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