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Special reference to gender perspective

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### **Findings**

Islam as a religion has emphasized on the importance of education. This has been mentioned in various Islamic literatures including the Quran and the Hadith. As a result, various institutes called madrasas have been established to fulfill the command of the almighty and provide education to the Muslims. However, in India, the institute has evolved and its objectives altered with the changing times and socio – political context.

Muslims have lagged behind the educational domain and this study focus on understanding the role of madrasas to empower Muslim girls and boys. The current study used descriptive research design and had the following objectives: 1) To develop an in–depth understanding of the curriculum within the girls’ madrasas; 2) To draw a comparative analysis between the curriculum of girls’ madrasa with that of the boys’ madrasa; 3) To understand the abilities provided by the madrasa curriculum that equips the students to deal with the operative structures of modern life; 4) To examine the madrasa’s role as a change agent within the matrix of social systems; 5) To examine the scope of madrasas in integrating secular education with vocationalisation as its main focus; 6) To provide ways and means for better functioning of the girls’ madrasa. In order to fulfill the objectives, 8 madrasas each (4 girls’ and 4 boys’ madrasas) in Uttar Pradesh and Kerala were identified from where data was collected from 4 sets of respondents. These included Key informants (management personnel,

principals) of the madrasas, teachers of the madrasas, students of the madrasas and parents of the students of the madrasas.

The findings suggested that these institutes are based in rural and urban areas and provide education from primary to post graduate level. As far as the infrastructure is concerned, the madrasas have modest infrastructure in Uttar Pradesh but in Kerala, it is much better as it is equipped with modern technologies. In regards to the curriculum, the madrasas of Uttar Pradesh (UP) focus on imparting religious education to boys and girls with an objective of making them pious Muslims. However, in Kerala, the curriculum has a blend of religious and secular subjects which help students become pious Muslims aware of their Islamic culture and ethos but at the same time providing them with skills and means to deal better with modern operative structures and hence enabling them to make better decisions which is an important component of empowered individuals.

Having said this, there is scope of improvement in the madrasas educational system. This can be achieved through collaboration i.e., government working with these institutes through providing financial resources and trust building. Additionally, it needs to be ensured that the curriculum is gender inclusive and sees a blend of secular and religious subjects along with having co – curricular activities. This needs to be backed by trained teachers and improved infrastructure which can be achieved through in – service training as well as pre – service training to prospective madrasas teachers along with having pedagogy that is ICT enabled. All of the above combined will address gender disparity in madrasas which eventually will result in elimination of gender inequalities and empowering both boys and well as girls.