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**Changing Traditions
Studying 'Hybridity' in Islamic schools for Girls in India**

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I hereby certify that this is entirely my own work unless otherwise stated ☐

Contents

Glossary

Abaya	Full body veil
Abba	Father
Adab	Value Education
Ajlaf	Lowborn Muslim caste
Akhlaq	Morality
Alim	Male Islamic scholar
Alimas	Women Islamic scholars
Anganwadi	Government healthcare center workers in India
Anjuman	Gathering
Ansari	Weaver caste in Muslim society
Apa	Elder sister
Ashraf	Highborn Muslim caste
Azaan	Call for prayers from the mosque
Churidaar	Long fitted trouser that girls wear with a loose shirt
Dars-i-Nizami	Islamic curriculum in madrasas
Deen	Islamic
Deeniyat	Islamic knowledge
Duniya/Dunyawi	Worldly
Dupatta	Long piece of cloth like a scarf
Farmabardari	Obedience
Farz	Mandatory
Fiqh	Islamic Jurisprudence
Gair Maharam	Men outside immediate family
Hafizas	Women who are able to memorize the Quran
Iman	Faith
Jahil	Illiterate
Jamat	Congregation
Jum'ah	Friday
Kamil	Perfect
Mahol	Ethos
Maktab	Islamic Primary school
Maulwi	Islamic teacher
Mehendi	Tattoo art using henna leaves usually put on hand
Moizzin	Those who call for prayer in a mosque
Nafarman	Disobedient
Namaz	Term used instead of *salat* in South Asia
Rehmat	Precious gift/blessing
Salat	Five times prayer for Muslims
Salwar Kameez	Loose fitting shirts and trousers worn by women in India
Sayyid	Highborn Muslim caste
Tarjuma	Translation
Tafsir	Exegesis
Tehzeeb	Discipline
Ummah	Greater Islamic community
Zenana	Home

Changing Traditions

Studying 'Hybridity' in Islamic Schools for Girls in India

Abstract

Traditionally, anthropological studies on Islamic pedagogical institutions in India have been inattentive to the changing character of Islamic schools and the shifting demands of communities in which schools are embedded. This has led to a dismissive attitude towards the complexities in the nature and scope of change in actors participating in the schooling process in the age of neoliberal globalizing modernity. To that end, this thesis examines the demand, nature and function of "hybrid Islamic schools" in Northern India that are redefining Islamic schooling for girls in an altered context. Using my ethnography in one particular Islamic school at Patna in Bihar, I propose, that the transitions in Islamic schooling process and the rise of hybrid Islamic schools are reflective of the distinct growth of aspirations in girls and the community who are actively engaging with the changing landscape of contemporary India.

The school I choose to study is an Islamic school with a hybrid curriculum of religious and mainstream subjects. Far from being homogenized under the global impact of modern education, this school offers unique hybridization bringing aspects of "modernity" and "tradition" in an entangled juxtaposition. The situation inside the school is complex while it acculturates in girls cultural codes defined by the community; hybridization is also generating new aspirations. Although, exposure to mainstream education has engendered new career aspirations, the girls also actively demonstrate compliance to Islamic teachings and parental expectations highlighting the importance of cultural relationality as opposed to liberatory freedom.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction
Islamic schooling and the changing landscape

1. Class in progress in an Islamic school in Phulwari Sharif, Patna[1]

The picture exhibits a creative fusion between a modern setting of classroom teaching and Islamic ethos where few 14-year-old adolescent Muslim girls in the 8th grade are studying Physics in the presence of a modern day male teacher wearing shirts and trousers. An informal interview with the teacher highlighted some noticeable changes in Muslim girls' process of Islamic schooling.

Interviewer: Which subjects do you teach and how many classes do you hold in a day?

Teacher: I am in charge of teaching Mathematics, Physics, and Chemistry to students in 8th, 9th, and 10th standards. I take five periods of 40 minutes each. I pay more

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[1] All pictures are by the author unless otherwise stated.

attention to the 10th standard students who have to sit for the public exam of the Central Board of Secondary Education—(CBSE)

Interviewer: Is this school CBSE affiliated?
Teacher: No, we don't have the affiliation. According to the government notices, we do not have the adequate infrastructure for it to be called a 'CBSE school'. But we let our students appear for the exam from another school that has affiliation[2].

Interviewer: What codes of conduct are prescribed for girls in the school?

Teacher: See, this is an Islamic school, so the girls must behave in a certain way. They must cover their faces in front of us and wear an *abaya* (full body veil).

Interviewer: You call it is an 'Islamic school'—what is the difference between Islamic school and a madrasa?

Teacher: You see, here male teachers can teach adolescent girls in *purdah*. In many old style madrasas, this is not the case. In madrasas there are a lot of restrictions due to which there is no quality education given to girls. Here we give proper attention to students to prepare them well for the 10th exam.

(Translated from colloquial Urdu)[3]

Later that day I spoke to a student of this class about her experiences in this school. She shared with me her thoughts and aspirations. Azra (name changed) had been a student in this school for eight years. She was admitted into this school in standard one and had lived in the hostel since then.

Interviewer: Do you like your school?
Azra: Oh! I love school and the hostel. I get to be with my friends here. It is better than being at home and just doing housework.

Interviewer: What do you want to be in life?
Azra: I want to be an engineer. I love Math and Physics.

Interviewer: Do your parents encourage you to study and do well in school?
Azra: My *Abba* (father) says if I do well in this school I can get into a good school later.

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[2] CBSE is a board of education for private and public schools under the union government of India. Many schools that do not meet the affiliation norms pertaining to infrastructure etc. (see CBSE Affiliation By-Laws, n.a.) tag with schools with affiliation to provide CBSE degrees to their students.

[3] All translations from colloquial Urdu and Hindi into English are my own unless otherwise stated.

The above sketches point to some noteworthy changes in the process of Islamic schooling, in the community, and by extension in the lives of Muslim girls who study in these schools in contemporary North India. Girls are able to harbor new aspirations that are significantly different from the generation of their mothers. Traditionally, scholars working on Islamic pedagogical institutions (mainly for boys) in India have produced a defensive literature that aimed at exonerating these institutions from the sensational outburst of writings post 9/11 that hailed madrasas as 'dens of terror' (Sikand, 2005; Helmut and Reifeld, 2006; Noor *et al.* 2008; Malik, 2008; Alam, 2012). Thereafter, introduction of modern education in Islamic spaces have been critically appraised within supercilious ideas of "modernization programme"[4] proposed by the government of India (Ara, 2004; Bandyopadhyay, 2002; Alam, 2003, 2015). These grand narratives offer prepackaged categories of analysis facilitating comparison and adding to the global debate on the role and importance of Islamic teaching institutions but with little reference to the changing character of Islamic schools and with that the transforming expectations of the community and girls engaged in the pedagogical process.

It is important to pinpoint that with little or no government support, the schools of the type introduced above are community initiatives striving to keep pace with the changing landscape, albeit acknowledging their personal quests for identity and difference both from the mainstream, and internally from various other Islamic schools that follow different Islamic schools of thought. Despite differences the nature and form of Islamic schooling for girls is changing. These schools are distinct from the old style madrasas in that they follow the curriculum prepared by the

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[4] The modernization programme is based on the National Policy on Education (1986) that envisions a national system of education expecting certain parity especially in the secondary and senior-secondary curricula.

National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT) and allow students to appear for the public examination conducted by CBSE along with training in Islamic subjects, such as *tafsir* (exegesis) and *tarjuma* (translation) of the Quran, memorizing Hadith, Arabic literature, and value-oriented *adab* literature, such as *Qirat-ur-Rashida*, in this context, framed by Founder of the school of the *Ahl-i-Hadith* sectarian Islamic school of thought. Therefore, Islamic schools in this category are hybridized forms between the old style madrasas and the modern secular schools in India mixing aspects in methods of teaching, curriculum and infrastructure. It is an amalgamation of two separate domains within the same encounter of the school space that blurs the hierarchical distinction between Islamic and modern education, the latter formalized by the government as a chief source for generating marketable skills. The school appraises the importance of the two as sources of economic and social capital engendering distinct set of aspirations in various actors associated with the schooling process (cf. Rival, 2000).

Hybrid Islamic schools/madrasas and Muslim communities share an interdependent relationship. Practically speaking, each is simultaneously a presence and an absence in the other, needing each other to make sense of the changing landscape. In this light, while the communities must legitimize the role of schools in knowledge production and dissemination, hybrid schools buttress the demands of communities (cf. Durkheim, 2000; Gupta, 2015). The latter seeks to legitimize transformations in the school system and therein in the lives of girls by acceding to some aspects of modernity such as modern day curriculum, while discrediting others, such as a mandatory use of skirts as school uniform for adolescent girls (such is the case in public/private schools) that my informants attribute to the "western influence." Such emphasis on acceptance and rejection suggests that Islamic schools and

communities actively negotiate with modernizing impulses in neoliberal India. Without integrating into hegemonic temporalities proposed by modernization theory, they critique the oft-cited empirical and policy literature on Muslims and Islamic schools that postulates a move towards "advancing" the antiquated mores of a "traditional" society.

Using my ethnography in one particular hybrid Islamic school for girls and within the broader context of North India, I argue that the rise of such schools as an outcome of social and economic changes in neoliberal globalizing India reflect changing attitude and aspirations of the community and that of girls who study in this school, albeit gradually. The situation inside the school is complex while it is able to acculturate cultural codes of the community in girls; hybridization is also generating new aspirations. The school is unfolding new realities as girls express specific occupational goals for themselves. Girls' capacity for action or their agency is formulated in ways they express willingness in negotiating their aspirations vis-à-vis their positions within the family. Normatively speaking transitions in the lives of Muslim communities are subsumed within a modernization rhetoric delineating a linear pattern of change and modern education is said to move people to a "better" world. The changing aspirations and expectations of the community and girls studying in the school present a more complex picture as they partake in bringing together the past, and the future into the present within the backdrop of Islamic knowledge and morality.

Keeping these ideas in mind research questions that this thesis hopes to address are: in the life of a Muslim community in transition, why is there a demand for "hybrid Islamic school for girls" and is this demand reflective of the community's new aspirations for adolescent girls? If so, how does the Islamic school in the present

context act on this demand of the community balancing between Islamic and mainstream knowledge practices? Finally, harmonizing between school and parental expectations, what aspirations and desires do girls studying in this school formulate, such as concerning career and marriage?

My answers to these pertinent questions are based on my enriching although limited field experience. I will begin by introducing the context of fieldwork and methodology of the research. I then set out to present the broader context of the emergence of hybrid Islamic schools for girls followed by the conceptual issues that inform this study. I conclude this chapter by a synopsis of the later chapters briefly setting out the arguments of this work.

Fieldwork reflections and methodology

I conducted an ethnographic fieldwork inside a private girls' Islamic school at Phulwari Sharif, a Muslim-dominated locality in the burgeoning town of Patna, the capital of Bihar in North India. Here I found several such privately owned un-recognized girls'[5] Islamic schools. Hybrid Islamic schools for girls are private institutions with no government monetary support. Such schools function with the help of endowments and charities from Islamic institutions and wealthy Muslims. Most students of the school are from economically and socially backward sections of the Muslim society. Phulwari Sharif is situated at a distance of 8kms to the west of Patna and has historically been famous for madrasas associated with the Sufi *Khanaqah* in the region (Jackson, 2006). It is also the most densely populated Muslim area in and around the city. According to the Bihar Madrasa Board (BMB), there are 46 recognized girls madrasas in Bihar that teach only Islamic curriculum or a

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[5] Under the modernization programme many receive government monetary support, while others such as private un-recognized madrasas receive no governmental support (Nair, 2008).

combination of religious and non-religious subjects. There are no official records of girls' madrasas in Patna that left me wondering if there were any private girls madrasas in the booming urban metropolis. My efforts to find an Islamic girls' school or a madrasa led me into a conversation with an official in *Imarat-e-Sharia* (Islamic legal organization) in Phulwari Sharif who highlighted the popularity of one private girls' Islamic school in New Millat Colony. The Islamic residential school was established in 2006 and housed nearly 150 students between 5 and 16 years of age. The wide Food Corporation of India road divided the colony. On one side there were Muslim residential households and on the opposite side of the school, there was a settlement or a *Harijan Basti* (Dalit settlement/slum). No paved roads led further into the narrow alley where the school was obscurely located. Although the study was conducted at Patna in Bihar, this is not a case study of the region or the schools in the region *per se.* The aim of this ethnography is to question some of the widely held and taken for granted assumptions about Islamic schooling and Muslim communities and to draw some broad conclusions about the rise, nature and function of hybrid Islamic schools within the wider context of Northern India. There is a serious dearth of detailed ethnographic studies investigating such schools, and it is hoped that this work will offer a productive entry point to future students capable of correcting and expanding on whatever strengths this work may have.

Ethnographic study of schools has a long-standing tradition in social anthropology. Such research methods are helpful in giving voice to the unique perspectives and ingenuity of the subaltern (Ames, 2013). Keeping with this tradition of research in educational spaces I have tried to weave an ethnographic insight in the account of an Islamic school, and using vignettes I seek to convey the vitality of such experiences (cf. Mills and Morten, 2013) however not as a participating teacher or a student. I visited my school site every day during my brief three months stay in Patna between

early July and early October 2015 in the capacity of a female Muslim researcher. My position as a cultural insider of the setting helped me gain access, establish rapport with the subjects and deal with ethical concerns at ease although I needed to establish my researcher role to ensure that the participants did not view this research as threatening to them. As an insider, I was theoretically sensitive to the norms and practices of the school. I played the role of a 'dutiful daughter' (Abu-Lughod, 1988) going to the school every day with my parents who were concerned about my safety traveling back and forth from the main town. My prior knowledge about Islamic schools' settings enabled me to gather richer and more focused data in a brief period. I was a part of my informants' lives during certain hours of the day not as a student or a teacher but just as someone they looked up as *'kamil'* (perfect) who has perfected positions of *deen* (religious) and *duniya* (worldly)! On several occasions, my young informants, both students, and wardens admired me, which took me by surprise. I asked them what was it that they admired about me? Most of them said that they liked the fact that I could speak fluent English, and some of them even stated that they are proud of the fact that I have made it to Oxford being from a small town like Patna and wished they had such opportunities in their lives too. Visiting the school every day with my parents had etched my image of an obedient daughter who sought to perfect her life being cognizant of parental expectations and Islamic traditions. My identities of being a practicing Muslim and a researcher struck out with an emotional concern that converted into an intellectual challenge leading me to find out more on girls' aspirations.

Being a friendly insider has difficulties. For example, Abu-Lughod (1988) highlights that recognition of familiarized behaviour and practices could be taken for granted. Routine practices because it is known, are missed out of the analysis. Atkinson and

Hammersly (2007) highlight the dilemma of a researcher who has developed a good rapport with the subjects and traverse the danger of becoming a non-observer participant. Hence, observation and informal conversations were supplemented with interviews. I interviewed 28 students in standards 8th, 9th, and 10th between the ages 14 and 16 years and 10 female and 3 male teachers besides the Principal and the Founder Secretary of the school.

Girls were admitted into the school based on their *Deeniyat* (Islamic) knowledge contingent to the grade in which they sought admission. Some girls had joined school after spending a few years in a madrasa. Therefore, there were students studying in classes somewhat unrelated to their age. I chose girls studying in the higher secondary section because they were on the threshold of graduating from school and had notions of their future career aspirations. Besides, I also drew upon a diverse set of sources—ethnographies from other contexts, government reports, school textbooks (both NCERT and Islamic), brochures of the school and the NGO, admission papers, progress report cards, personal diaries of girls, etc. to gather a holistic picture of the school and the manner in which the girls are responding to this kind of formal schooling.

Snapshots of the context

2. Islamic school for girls	3. Road leading up to the school	4. Dalit settlement

Contextualizing hybrid Islamic schools for girls

Winkelmann's (2005) ethnography of a girls' madrasa in Delhi is a good starting point to study Islamic pedagogical institutions for girls in India. In contrast to most other madrasa literature, the book is a detailed ethnographic portrait of a single madrasa focusing on the emergence of girls' madrasas and its curriculum. Her ethnography is influential as it brings forth the idea of 'Islamic womanhood' using Mahmood's (2005) idea of pious conformity and its values in the lives of those who do not necessarily fall within the broader echelons of the liberatory feminist discourse. However, her focus in locating pious behaviour has led her to miss out the everyday non-pious aspirations of girls, which are equally significant for gathering a comprehensive picture of selfhood and subjectivity (see Schielke, 2009). Winkelmann also does not actively engage with the social, cultural, and economic ethos of the community that must share a symbiotic exchange relationship with the madrasa, and the manner in which these processes affect girls' capacity for action.

Analyzing girls' Islamic curriculum and expectation of *maulwis* (Islamic teachers) in educating young Muslim girls Jeffery *et al.* (2004, 2007, 2008, 2012), with a long history of engagement with Muslim education in Bijnor district of Uttar Pradesh argue that as part of the community's civilizing mission, rural Muslim girls in madrasas were being groomed for respectful domesticity. They argue that despite commonalities in gender and class reproduction, the madrasa provided formal education to a section of the population essential for the social upliftment of the community. Without accounting for the transforming character of the community and that of girls to the vastly changing landscape of contemporary India, Jeffery *et al.* have made unwarranted conclusions about the aspirations of these girls to be "doomed" in domesticity. While the authors acknowledge the importance of madrasas in providing basic education to girls, they make little reference of these institutions being important repositories of the community's symbolic and cultural capital.

Another recent ethnography for Muslim girls' schooling is that of Gupta (2015a). Her work is focused on a government aided 'Muslim girls' school' in Delhi that is different from madrasas. While she mentions that the school includes religious and modern education she gives no explicit coverage of the curriculum. Filling in the lacuna in the literature, she takes up the task of analyzing the interaction between the gendered ethos of the community and the school in the formation of adolescent Muslim girls' identity set within the religious-cultural framework. However, focusing on education as an 'enabling mediator' (ibid: 141) Gupta also makes a determinist conclusion about the lives of these girls caught between the expectations of the community and the modernity of the school as that of impending wives and mothers. Her focus on understanding modern education as a tool for empowerment

and individual freedom leads her to miss out on the other valuable notions of formal schooling and how that might shape the lives of these girls, one that is not necessarily a passive outcome of domestic responsibilities. The following paragraphs will now highlight the rise and function of hybrid Islamic schools for girls. The aim is not to assume prior understanding of these institutions as insulated as Winkelmann (2005) projects them to be, neither do I adhere to a particular discourse of modernity, such as is the case with Gupta (2015a) to bring out the dynamism in actors' engagement with the school and the outside.

The school in this context is an 'Islamic' school, which refers to it being rooted in traditional Islamic epistemology such as the Quran and the Hadith that is less open to discursive maneuvering than the term 'Muslim'. This is complex, for typically, these institutions simultaneously act both as "modern" and "traditional". Taking recourse to Rabinow's definition of modernity, Abu-Lughod argues that it is impossible to define what 'being modern' signifies (1998: 7). In the first place, hybrid Islamic school is quintessentially "modern"—born in liberalizing India. Second, they have also responsibly adopted modern education associated with science and technology and modern pedagogical methods, such as the practice of award degrees, simultaneously as they have rejected "western influence" (such as matters of clothing) that according to them is antithetical to traditional Islamic values, ethics, and norms. For adolescent girls, these values include proper acceptance of *adab* (value education). These systems of education are therefore capable of combining both continuity and change (see Lukens-Bull, 2000), forcing us to recognize as Jenkins argues, that in the age of advancing modernity and globalization, 'the world is neither definitely enchanted nor disenchanted' (2000: 17).

While several girls' madrasas under Islamic schools of thought like *Deoband* have introduced some mainstream subjects, many privately owned Islamic schools have placed a strong and equal emphasis on both kinds of curricula (Sikand, 2006, 2008, 2009). For example, in the context of West Bengal, Gupta (2009) has extensively highlighted the active role played by NGOs in giving Islamic and secular education to both boys and girls. Thus, there is no set linear pattern of transition that one can discern. These schools run parallel to and sometimes serve as an alternative to existing old style madrasas. Most Islamic schools are well integrated into the cash economy that depends on fees or substantial private donations. The founders of Islamic schools are educational entrepreneurs from different sectarian Islamic schools of thought such as *Deoband*, *Jama 'at-i-Islami*, and *Ahl-i-Hadith*. There are no reliable statistics that could confirm the number of these schools (their size and enrollment), but they serve the religious and mainstream needs of many Muslim families in North India[6]. Policy literature refers to these Islamic schools as reformed madrasas, but I use the term 'Islamic school' instead of a madrasa in the thesis as my respondents referred to it as such. There are significant overlaps and departures between the two. It is a madrasa in the traditional sense because it aims to acculturate embodied Islamic knowledge or *adab* in girls rooted in an Islamic ethos simultaneously as it is an Islamist educational experiment that highlights a unique mix of two worldviews. Many such private girls Islamic schools run in other parts of the country. Prominent one's are located in Delhi, Malegaon, Azamgarh and Faridabad (Sikand, 2005).

Islamic schooling for girls is part of that 'reasoned Islamic tradition' (Asad, 1986) that has been produced and debated over a period of time. In the 19th century Islamic

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[6] See also Brenner's (2007) explanation of transformation in Islamic schooling from Quranic schools to madrasas in Mali.

schooling took place in women's personal quarters or *zenana* (home), in the contemporary period knowledge is disseminated in formalized girls' madrasas and hybrid Islamic schools. In the latter, Islamic education and *adab* is encouraged, not just in rearing pious children as was the case in 19th century India, but such knowledge is now used to circumscribe pathways for girls in transforming socio-economic contexts. Transitions in Islamic schooling for girls, is therefore a part of that tradition that is re-inventing itself on demands of the age in which it exists (cf. Sahlins, 1999) — reflecting transforming aspirations and social and cultural dynamics of the actors profoundly influenced by such changes.

Changing landscape

Since the liberalization years in India, especially in the 'enchanted millennium' years with more organized capitalism (see Jenkins 2000: 24-27) there has been an overwhelming response from the upper middle-class Muslim elites to send their daughters to secular private schools (Jeffery *et al.* 2004; Engineer, 2008). However, unable to afford private, public schools due to the dearth of resources many lower middle-class Muslims are using private Islamic schools run by welfare trusts to meet their unmet material and immaterial expectations (Sikand, 2005; Riaz, 2014). Therefore, even though the rhetoric and categories of "modernity" may appear hollow, and the terms of reference may have changed, "modernity" remains relevant for many and the struggle with it is ongoing (Goddard, 2000; Pandey, 2006; De-Bellaigue, 2015).[7] However, far from exemplifying a teleological outcome, such struggles highlight the variegated response of actors niched in their social and economic positions. Critics argue that just like the imperialistic face of Western modernity, the conceptual outline of multiple modernities too (see Taylor, 1999;

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[7] For critique of modernity see Latour (1993).

Gaonkar, 1999) is tautological and hide an incipient mode of evolutionism. Therefore, it is important to note here that the particular community's station of change is unique to where it wants to go, and this thesis is not making any claims about its direction and future goals that are unforeseeable at this stage.

The relationship between modernity and globalization is inexact and they almost deserve to be called slippery (Sternberg, 2002). The meaning of these terms cannot be reduced to reifying notions, such as 'Westernization' and 'Americanization' representing top-down transmission of cultural resources. However, the alternative to such models of 'one-way imperialism' (Giddens 1994: 96) should not be conceptualized in an either-or manner, as the two can co-exist in contemporary conditions. For example, Appadurai argues that in contemporary situations 'the spread of electronic media and increased levels of migration have given a new twist to the environment within which the modern and the global often appear as flip sides of the same coin' (1996: 44). He discusses both electronic media and migration to bring forth the complexity and disjuncture in the new global cultural economy. He argues that electronic and print media's capacity to transform the sense of distance between 'here' and 'there' precipitates changes in our everyday modernizing discourse. Similarly, migration, he argues is not limited to the moving of people but also of ideas, values and lifestyles transforming the dialectic between the local and the global. The pervasiveness of globalized mass media and migration provides a useful context to understand the increasing demands for hybridity in Islamic schools. These needs are reflective of the communities' unique adjustments to modernizing forces implicated within globalization.

In the recent years anthropology of Islam has produced conceptually insightful ethnographies on morality and ethics to argue for the re-appropriation of global forms of consumerism, globalized mass media and urban centers of modernity into the everyday discourse of Muslims in the Middle East (see Schielke, 2009; Deeb and Harb, 2013; Hafez, 2014). Deeb and Harb (2013) make a compelling case of urban leisure cafes in South Beirut and how less pious clientele of middle-class Muslims are maneuvering with their moralities to fit into spaces of desires in a deeply modernizing geography. These negotiations highlight a tension between 'religious and social notions about what is moral' (2013: 35). Unlike Mahmood's (2005) focus on the desire for piety among women in the Islamic movement, Deeb and Harb argue that cultivation of Muslim self has become more complicated with the juxtaposition of everyday desires with pious morality in modernizing spaces. These ethnographies hint that the moral and economic tussle with modern forces is real and tangible for many across the world and is in need of cross-cultural ethnographic exploration especially for the Muslim minority communities in India.

As argued earlier, this thesis also takes into account the complex engagement of the Islamic school with modern education. Stambach's ethnography of local secondary school in Mount Kilimanjaro in East Tanzania is helpful in analyzing how schooling shapes the discourses around modernity. Critiquing the 'modernization theory' and its claims of shaping people in the same cultural way (2000: 10), Stambach argues that similarity of 'outward forms created by modern education do not tell us about the heterogeneity of the underlying organization' (ibid: 165). At a more general level, anthropologists of education have grappled with the question of homogeneity in schooling systems with the force of modern education being felt in a big way (Anderson-Levitt, 2003). Against the position of world culture theorists (see Ramirez

and Boli, 1987), anthropologists have focused on hybridization to focus on variations of local systems. In the Indian context, the madrasa and community efforts to adopt modern education alongside religious curriculum offer potent critiques to theories of homogeneity although; paradoxically heterogeneity is adjudged by the Indian government as a move towards greater homogeneity in "empowering" the marginalized. While such goals of empowerment are not to be discarded, the dynamics of hybridization inside an Islamic school produce multifaceted response from actors.

Key definitions

Before racing ahead to focus on the demand, nature and functions of hybrid Islamic schools it is important to unpack a few terms that frequently recur in this thesis. I draw upon the anthropological distinction between "schooling" and "education". In anthropological terms, education is not limited to schooling, but it includes a whole range of processes of learning from conception to death (Halani, 2005). Formal schooling, on the other hand, is institutionalized form of teaching. While few rely on the homogenizing state centered definition of modern education as formal education, others develop their meanings to define what it means to be formally educated (Rao, 2010; Froerer, 2012). In the present context, the community's conception of formalized schooling and education involves not just modern education but also formalized education of Islamic subjects that of the Quran and Hadith. In her ethnographic context of a tribal community in Chattisgarh, Froerer (2012) argues for dynamism involved in the meaning of education within the community that varies with the contingencies of the local context. She argues that formal education and aspirations for girls in the tribal community is defined by the everyday experiences of the marginalized tribal girls that shift with the contingencies of time and context.

Universal school education is an attribute of modernity that is universally acknowledged as being desirable. The Indian state very much like the colonial state has used knowledge to exercise the power to freeze differences in perceptions and identities (see Chanana, 1990; Kumar, 1991; Chakrabarty, 2002; Benei, 2008). Therefore, under the homogenizing impact of modern education other forms of knowledge, such as that in Islamic schools is equated with words such as "medievalism" and "traditional" producing docile children in the age of advancing scientific modernity. The thesis critiques the assumption that Islamic schools produce passive female subjects. Rather, it is argued that formal education in a hybrid Islamic school is a source of inducing new aspirations in girls. Modern education in India signifies a paradox. On the one hand, people should place their hopes in state-led modern schooling for better employable futures but on the contrary, its recognized limitations draw people closer to their locally niched schooling options such as hybrid Islamic schools. These paradoxes are even more pronounced for the "modernizing" yet "traditionally" rooted Muslim communities in India, which are grappling with marginalization on all fronts (see Sachar *et al.* 2006). Hybrid Islamic schools lie at the intersection of these paradoxes as they act as a gateway to new opportunities as well as a site of cultural dominance.

The literature that refers to education as a source of development critiques Islamic schooling by citing local beliefs and practices for girls' low participation in the dominant schooling process (Menon, 1981; Agarwal, 1986). These studies have conflated ideology with practice without taking into account the difference in the experience of different communities. Qualitative literature on Muslim girls' schooling in India (see Jeffery *et al.* 2007, 2008; Hasan and Menon, 2004, 2005) suggest that while Islamic beliefs and customs do play a significant role in deciding the

nature of education for Muslim girls, often lack of resources and exclusionary attitude of the dominant public schooling system in the country have left the economically marginalized Muslims excluded from the mainstream. These communities have now increasingly placed faith in other forms of formal education such as the one I aim to study.

This study moves away from a Euro-centric feminist perspective in analyzing Muslim women's positionality and agency within the stereotypical imagination of victimhood and argue for greater attention to be paid to what women say niched in contexts of their existence (Kandiyoti, 1996; Abu-Lughod, 2000). Anthropologists put forth different definitions of sex and gender. While sex is apparently biologically given, gender is a cultural construction (Moore, 1988). Cultural constructions of gendered identity are important in the Islamic school context. Cultural beliefs about gender define the inequality between men and women. Hegemonic gender belief systems are played out in the social relational contexts where the self defines itself with the society (see Ridgway and Correll, 2004).

Another significant term that needs unpacking is "Muslim community". At one level it is always possible to speak of Islam in a holistic sense not only because all forms of Islam share historical connection to the faith of Muhammad (Geertz, 1968; Gilsenan, 1990) but also because Muslims often conceptualize themselves as part of *ummah* (community) that transcend national boundaries (Marranci, 2008). However within this presumptive unity of faith, Muslims have different theological traditions and different forms of religious practice that belie the notion of a single Muslim community. Muslims in India are diversified along the sociological axes of sectarian thought, class, and caste. Sociologists have alluded to the *Ashraf* (highborn upper

caste) and the *Ajlaf* (lowborn) (see Ahmad, 1976, 1981, 1983; Madan, 1995). This divide is even more prominent in North India (especially Bihar and Uttar Pradesh) than in the South (see Fanselow, 1997; Vatuk, 1997). Therefore, I paddle a dangerous terrain in imagining a "Muslim community" that in many ways is in fact not a monolithic community. In terms of caste, most girls in the present context said they were *Ansari* (low-born) while a few of them stated that they were referred to as *Sayyid* (high born) at home. Based on my interviews, I use the term "community" not as an axiomatic construction but only as a starting point to delineate the culmination of other issues at stake in this thesis, and it must be borne in mind that "community" as a locally deployed category is fluid and variable. But for the sake of clarity, I imagine this as a community in account of the home context of girls within definitional parameters of religion (within that they are followers of *Ahl-i-Hadith*), levels of income, and occupation. They have a shared notion of an Islamic ethos and a shared demand of hybrid Islamic schools for their Muslim adolescent girls.

Finally, let us consider what anthropologists understand by the term "Islam." The very premise of this study focused on transition in Islamic schooling highlights the unstable characteristic of this term hinged on the issue of diversity. There is no singular pattern of transition discernable neither is transformation uniformly spread out within the entire Muslim population. Competition between Islamic schools of thought was important for the establishment of the madrasa system, and so is for the hybrid Islamic schools, as they offer competing definitions of what constitutes Islam. Anthropology of Islam has grappled with this issue of plurality of Islam since its inception in the 1970's (Marranci, 2008) discussed in seminal works of Geertz (1968), which sought to understand Islam taking account the social and cultural history of the society in which it is embedded. Even though Geertz's work was criticized for

lacking in ethnographic depth (Kreinath, 2013) it foreshadowed the issue of relating diversity to a more general notion of Islam, which this thesis typifies moving back and forth such definitions.

Taking cognizance of these anthropological definitions and within a broader understanding of hybrid Islamic school for girls, I will now extrapolate the conceptual issues that are at stake in this study. The aim, first, is to explain the demand for such schools within the community. Second, I delve deeply into the nature and functioning of hybrid schools and the role that these schools play in the lives of girls within the anthropological discourse of cultural transmission and adolescent subjectivity.

Conceptual issues: Theorizing Globalization, Schooling and, Subjectivity

Anthropology of Globalization and global consciousness

I have attempted to niche the demand and rise of hybrid Islamic school for girls within the changing economic and social landscape of contemporary India epitomized by growing "global consciousness" of the community in question. The word global and globalization is now a commonplace. It is discussed extensively in the economic, political and cultural spheres. No matter what angle is emphasized, globalization remains an inexact term. As anthropologists, we can only gauge the meaning of the term within the context of its use and people's views on what is happening to them in the age of modernity (Stromquist and Monkman, 2006; Channa, 2013; Lee, 2015).

One of the main features of globalization[8] can be described as 'significant growth in the interconnectedness of various social groups as well as people's awareness of this phenomenon' (Sternberg 2001: 84). To gauge this interconnectedness sociologist, Robertson coined the term 'global consciousness' (1995: 8) to argue that individuals and communities are increasingly beginning to appreciate the world socio-economic and ecological connections. In other words, Robertson hinted that in the era of globalization the world is networked through similar issues and that people are beginning to recognize these similarities, overcoming crises such as that of capitalism (see also Harvey, 2001; Giddens, 1991). Giddens argued that 'the intrusion of distance into local activities and transformation of a place is central to the experience of globalization' (1991: 186-187).

The major weakness of the theoretical assumptions of globalization is that it does not 'give appropriate place to issues of inequality and hierarchy among social groups and societies' (Sternberg 2001: 92; Appadurai, 2000; Rodrik, 1997). In the Indian context, globalization is understood as the amalgam of social, cultural and economic outcomes, the flow of material benefits that happened due to the opening up of the Indian economy since the 1990's to the global market (Gupta *et al.* 2010; Scrase and Scrase, 2009). The exclusionary effects of globalization such as rising cost of living and rising household expenditure are felt strong by the societies on the periphery of development (Derne, 2008). Bihar as one of the least developed states in the country has not remained completely cut off from the effect of the global processes. However, it is argued that more than opening up opportunities, globalization has adversely affected the economically marginalized in the country's least developed region (Singh and Stern, 2013; Gupta, 2013).

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[8] For a good overview of the globalization theories see Ritzer (2011).

Another significant weakness of transnational globalization theories is their lack of ethnographic depth in accounting for variations (Englund and Leach, 2000; Eriksen, 2003). We talk of global interconnectedness, time-space distantiation (Giddens, 1991) and increase in the flow of objects and ideas without any real tangible extrapolation of what "global consciousness" means to populations on the margins. The value of ethnographically rooted narratives of globalization can unravel multiple threads in the dynamic interplay between the local and the global and assess the meaning of global consciousness within the locality differently. The local-global interaction in the Indian context revolves fundamentally around the upper and middle-class settings focused on the consumerist discourse that has access to social and economic capital (see Mankekar, 2004). However, rarely has this engagement of anthropologists studying local-global interaction focused on the marginalized.

The narratives of demand for hybridity in Islamic schools for girls within this disparaged community are marred by contradictions, anxieties and an influence of global connectedness not just with the modern West but also with the deeply modernizing Islam in the East. Interconnectedness is, therefore, the sense of being influenced by both the inclusive and exclusive changes of the world outside them. Communities persistently engage and grapple with changes without having to think consciously about them (Green, 2014). Community's narratives of their global consciousness are shaped through 'spectacles' (DeBord, 1967) as spectacles has a tendency to make one see the world using mediums like television and media unifying diverse aspects of life in a capitalist society.

In support of a reflexive ethnography Englund and Leach (2000) argue that anthropologists can never assume prior knowledge of the contexts. Using their

ethnographies in Papua New Guinea and Malawi, the authors argue that even though these areas have not been entirely unaffected by modernity and globalization, issues of anxiety over money provide their contexts of analysis in ethnographic research. They argue that it is because of ethnographer's insufficient reflexivity on modernity and globalization that one *assumes* rather than investigate the applicability of these concepts in localities that are not well linked with time-space compression. While it is important for anthropologists to be cognizant of the specificity of locality, it is also important that reflexive ethnography should be extended to less "traditional" field sites that does not presume any fixedness in "locality" that Englund and Leach reify. Ethnography in such sites would unwind the advantages of realist ethnographic practice on less conventional topics.

Keeping with the ethnographic practice and importance of locality, anthropologists have proposed alternative ideas of global consciousness within concepts such as cultural 'hybridization' (Ritzer, 2011). Cultural hybridity has probed the bounded labels of race (see Ahmed, 1999), language (see Levi-Strauss, 1962) and nation (see Mamdani, 2005; Clifford, 1996) destabilizing essentialist assumptions of boundaries and fixedness in identity. The trope of hybridity has also influenced theoretical formulations of the processes of globalization (see Appadurai, 1990; Kraidy, 2002). Hybridization allows space for the agency of local actors without denying the importance of globalization *per se* (Pieterse, 2001). Culture in this sense is understood not as structure or web of meanings but as entities that may diffuse through time and space. Post-colonial discourse on culture epitomized by cultural theorist Bhabha (1994) developed the concept of hybridity from literal and cultural theory to describe the construction of culture and identity within conditions of colonialism. Bhabha coined the term 'third space' (ibid: 247) to argue for a liminal productive space

developing a new cultural identity. Such hybrid identities are empowered identities. Using strategic acts of translation and mimicry, hybrid identities displace the dominant subject's power.

Critiques of Bhabha criticize the conceptualizations of the hybrid based on the concept's ignorance of the material and lived realities of the subject's identity. Ahmed (1996) argues that muddled in a verbose, the concept of hybridity makes no real engagement with power and issues of identity. Unable to dislodge dominant powers, the hybrid itself has emerged as another point of oppression. Theorists also assume cultures as whole categories capable of diffusing from one into another (Friedman, 2013). On the other side of the debate, scholars defending the concept of hybridity (e.g. Pieterse, 2001; Ryoo, 2009) argue that hybridization creates a space that generates new forms, new meanings and connections that at least problematizes the fixedness of boundaries.

'Moving beyond hybridity and fundamentalism' Khan's (2015) ethnography delineates the everyday lives of lower middle-class Muslim youth at Jamia Enclave in South Delhi within the cusp of neo-liberal globalizing India and creation of Muslim identity and subjectivity critiquing notions of progressive hybridization and regressive fundamentalism. Building on multiple modernities and using a framework of 'convoluted modernities' she argues that Muslim youth's consciousness signifies 'more than just hesitant negotiations with modernity or re-working of the past' (ibid: 42). She unravels the material and lived realities of Muslim youths who are being introduced to new versions of globalized Islam of the East through media channels such as Peace TV. She argues that the undermined Muslim youth (both men and women) do not just appropriate but also internalize the

possibilities created by modernity simultaneously as they critique discourses of Western modernity unsuited to their cultural ethos. Khan's conception of Muslim youth's negotiation with modernity deeply resonates with my informants' experiences. However, as she rightly critiques the post-colonial scholarship in ignoring the "ordinary" Muslim experience with material realities of the present times, she has typified the experience of globalization and global consciousness across the varied spectrum of "lower middle class Muslims'" life-style and consumption patterns. Some of her informants are said to be earning a monthly salary of rupees 40,000 and studying in elite Indian colleges of Delhi University and Jamia Milia. These students may well fall within the echelons of the 'petite bourgeoisie' in India that seeks to emulate the upper tier (Fernandes and Heller, 2006). As I show in this thesis, bordering on deprivation, with a monthly income between rupees 10,000-20,000, the lower middle class Muslims (as guardians of girls referred to their economic position using expressions like *"chote class ke log"*[lower class]) in the present context grapple with globalization and modernity, albeit in a limited way. While their life-style and confrontation with material realities is not one of unabashed visits to shopping malls and pizza joints, there is an image of the future in the minds of parents in sending their daughters to universities in Aligarh and Jamia Milia in Delhi; however, this is much less likely to transform into tangential reality, given the limited availability of their resources.

Where does my study fit into this discussion? Anthropological theories on globalization, local-global dialectic, and hybrid identities are helpful in debunking ideas of essentialist constructions of Muslim identity, especially in the Indian context. Using narratives from my respondents, in this study, I will attempt to explicate the local-global interaction although I have refrained from making an overarching claim

of cultural hybridity given the limited nature of this ethnography. Aspirations of the community demanding hybrid schools are complex as both Islamic ethos and modern education is implored for an equitable future of their daughters in the age of advancing globality. *Tehzeeb* (discipline) and *adab* are pushed for, and the community sets out to maintain cultural codes, not particularly in the interest of maintaining patriarchal order within the society (although such gendered relations are automatically reproduced within the particular set up), but for coping with the social and economic demands of the present times. However, I have avoided using terminologies such as 'multiple modernities', 'regional modernity' (Sivaramakrishnan and Agarwal, 2003) and 'convoluted modernities' (Khan, 2015) to appraise the community's complex set of aspirations and expectations. Such terms although rightly critique the hegemonic discourse of Western modernity; unavoidably force a pre-determined teleology in the minds of the readers that I wish to avoid.

Anthropology of education and cultural transmission

Based on the unique demand for hybridity both the community and the school establish "appropriate" cultural codes for girls studying in the school. Wrapped in a symbiotic relationship, each influencing the other, the school is epitomized as a space where the community sets ground to realize their aspirations.

Anthropology of education maintains that schools are important agents in the process of transmission and maintenance of a particular social order. Marx's concept of production and reproduction in a capitalist society was given a central place in the liberal critique of schooling that argued for a change in society through formal schooling (see Bowles and Gintis, 1977; Anyon, 1980). These works focused on the

relationship between schooling and workplace and class specific educational experiences (Giroux, 1983). Durkheim's (1961) functionalism treated education as a means for organic social solidarity that created an order for a free transition to a complex modern state. Fixing children in a certain way, education was seen as part of a larger process of maintaining cohesion and homogeneity—thus schooling is a domain of unequal power relations. There is a desire within every society to model a distinct 'sociocultural system' (Spindler 1996: 352; Levinson and Pollock, 2011) by which they could order people into particular roles and statuses. As an embedded social system, the school is able to transmit a new form of knowledge through techniques of cultural transmission such as in modes of teaching and curriculum, although it does not stand in isolation because of its economic and symbolic dependence on the community (see Pickering and Walford, 1998).

Hybridization is a pedagogic strategy, which the school deploys to reproduce the cultural status quo of the community. The current polemic on hybridity is only limited to analyzing cultural hybridity as a mixing of whole cultures leaving little room for understanding hybridity of categories within a given culture—for instance within educational paradigms, tastes, music, rituals, language, etc. (Werbner, 2001; Pieterse, 2001). Thus rather than suppressing hybridity, I argue that hybridization between oppositional categories brings forth newness in consciousness and as Kraidy (2002) argues dislodges hegemonic power relations.

I use Bakhtin's terms 'intentional' and 'un-intentional/organic' (1981) hybridity used in the context of language to argue for a deliberate juxtaposition of two separate curriculums Islamic disciplines (e.g. Arabic literature, Urdu, Hadith, Quranic exegesis) and modern day subjects (e.g. Science, Mathematics, English, Hindi etc.)

and to discern the ways in which the school and girls balance the two together without any perceived sense of contradiction. Bakhtin (ibid.) uses the term 'intentional hybridity' to argue for a deliberate strategy of language mixing. According to him, hybridization is a 'mixture of two social languages within the limits of a single utterance, an encounter…between two different linguistic consciousness's, separated from one another by epoch, by social differentiation or by some other factor' (1981: 358).

Situating within this definition, curriculum hybridization in an Islamic school, I propose, is first an intentional mixing of two oppositional categories (regarding both language and substance) within the single encounter of the school. This intentional hybridity is *naturalized* or becomes innate within the institutional space of the school (cf. Werbner, 2001). For example, in the process of teaching there is no overt differentiation in using pedagogical tools for teaching the two curriculums differently, the use of similar teaching methods and sometimes same teacher teaching both Urdu and English eases girls' cognitive transfer from one setting into another—from studying Hadith in one class to studying English in another class without much conscious thought. Bakhtin uses the term 'unconscious hybridity' to highlight this natural blend. Further, he argues that unconscious hybrids are 'profoundly productive…[and that] they are pregnant with the potential of new world views' (1981: 360). The change brought about by hybridity is profoundly productive because it has encouraged localities to frame their versions of experience with globalization and induce unique subjective dispositions in girls.

So much so in reproducing status quo, in his critique of reproduction theory Giroux (1983) argues that the theory's explanation of the role and function of education has

invaluably contributed to political nature of schooling but has placed too much emphasis on the idea of domination, and so leaves no room for mediation and resistance. As opposed to reproduction theory, resistance theory emphasizes on conflict, struggle and resistance (Apple, 1982). Analyzing cultural transmission as a dynamic process of acquisition, theorists (see Bourdieu, 1977; Bernstein, 1973; Willis, 1981) have understood power relations within schools as an aspect of the perpetuation of unequal class positions in the context of poor, disadvantaged students studying with students with a higher social and economic capital. Education is seen as an elite instrument of power and domination. Bourdieu (1977) called this the ideological naturalization of power. Much of these works were based on analyzing working class disadvantage without any allusion to a reproduction of race and gender inequality in other kinds of schools. Most studies on gender inequality in schools treat all aspects of education as working to the disadvantage of women (Sandler, 1986; Byrne, 1978). In the Indian context Chanana's (1988) work focuses on how education is infused with traditional values that have created a gender asymmetry and educational institutions reflect and reinforce these differences in many ways. She argues that schooling perpetuates the sexual division of labour by delimiting participation of women to certain jobs such as teaching. Girls' education reinforces their social role as housewives and mothers. Even after almost three decades, gender inequality is the case for most schools in India, however Islamic schools for girls have come under increasing scrutiny for perpetuating feminine docility in girls. My study reveals that while gender asymmetry and feminine roles of Muslim girls are embellished within the school set-up, formal hybridized Islamic schooling can also generate positive subjectivity in girls and is not necessarily the cause of girls' subordination.

Both the reproduction and resistance theories have added invaluable insights into our understanding of anthropology of education and schooling. But none of these theories explain the complexities of the functioning of girls' Islamic schools. In his ethnographic work in Egypt on mass schooling, Starrett argues that critical treatments of the reproduction of religious traditions are absent in anthropological accounts of education not only because of the preoccupation of theorists from Western Europe and the U.S. with inequalities related to class and ethnicity that dominate their landscape; but also because 'anthropologists still tend to treat traditions as bounded capsules' (1998: 13). However, as this study depicts, Islamic schooling are dynamic sites of socio-religious innovation. Another issue with the dominant literature is that they dichotomize between structure and agency. My study aims to understand the structure of Islamic school, the techniques it uses in transmitting set cultural codes simultaneously as I take into account students' subjectivity and their engagement with relations of power implicated within the system of the Islamic school. I, therefore, take neither a top-down approach nor assume a bottom-up construction of the social world by individual action (cf. Collins, 2009). The inequality thesis theorists do not take into account schools (e.g. minority schools) that cater to students coming from the same social and economic position in a bid to defy inequality of the dominant schooling systems and in that sense have led in the production of a cultural capital that in some ways have improved girls' capacity to aspire (see also Matthan *et al.* 2014). Hybrid Islamic school replaces the privileged status of modern knowledge as a reified cultural category. In the context described here, it is treated as a source of one of many sources of symbolic capital. It is a unique kind of hybrid school that reproduces society's social order simultaneously as it acts as a causative factor in generating agency.

Anthropology of subjectivity and adolescent girls

The last point in the previous section brings me into the discussion of agency and subjectivity of girls who study in the Islamic school. There are different perspectives of subjectivity that cultural anthropologists take up. Disciplines like philosophy, psychology place emphasis on the universal human nature. This has become a basis for developing universals of all kinds, and it continues to be used as a justification for the western ethical discourse that often assumes static and a generalized subject. This is problematic for anthropologists who assert that human beings' complex commitments and moral challenges are too intricate to be explained by biological reductionism (Kleinman and Fitz-Henry, 2007). Subject and subjectivity are dynamically formed and transformed identities (Biehl and Locke, 2010; Cohen, 1994; Ortner, 2005). Social platforms like schools, hospitals, and health-care systems are no longer looked at as producing delimited identities and subject. Local and global processes shape the subject in distinct ways. People can articulate new lives and new destinies for themselves. Thus, there is a clear need to form complex theories of the subject that are ethnographically grounded to peek through the intricacies of the subject's contemporary positions, especially so for adolescents, who as psychologists point at, are at a crisis at this stage of life.

Until 1980's the term 'adolescence' was considered as a masculine construct and as Gilligan argues questions of 'identity, selfhood, sexuality, and morality were essentially understood from a male child perspective' (1995: 196) ignoring the variegated experiences of the female child. Moreover, selfhood and subjectivity of youth have been understood as a phase of liminality inevitably framing young people, not as finished human beings (Bucholtz, 2002). Influenced by western psychologists, adolescence is often not understood as a cultural category but as a

biological and psychological stage of resentment (see Wortham, 1987; Eriksen, 1968). However, this is too simple a position that has been challenged by anthropological research. For example, Burbank *et al.* (2015) show how teenage girls are transforming the traditional marriage system in Aboriginal Australia by choosing pre-marital pregnancies. However, pre-marital pregnancies are strategies used by adolescents who are also desirous of marriage with teenage boys over old men. In my ethnographic context, teenage girls studying in the Islamic school partake in this knowledge and cultural transformations regardless of their biological and psychological position as adolescents between the age of 14 and 16 years taking part in the social and cultural change in India.

According to symbolic interactionism self and subjectivity are also framed within particular relationships and social relational contexts. Society is complex and differentiated and made up of a mosaic of social relationships that encompass age, gender, class, religion, etc. The meaning of self develops in and through interactions and through a process of role-taking by which individuals anticipate the behaviour of others. Individuals live their life in small networks of relationships and shape their identity based on those networks. For example, gender as a background entity frame many social relations and individuals develop their gendered identities through those relationships, often unconsciously (Ridgway and Correll, 2004). The self is not just the product of the society, but also continuously reacts to the society that shapes it (see Mead, 1972; Blumer, 1969). This brings me to the point of the agency.

Girls shape their subjectivity in relation to the society they interact with—mainly the home and the school. Subjectivity and self are both anchored in the domain of the relational and girls' capacity for action or agency is shaped through such

relationality. It is through this development of relational subjectivity that girls exhibit their 'agency of intention'—of career aspirations and marriage expectations (Ortner 2001: 79) to express willingness in negotiating their choices with their family at the backdrop of gendered power relationships and social structure guiding their behaviour. Therefore, girls' agency in bringing about a change in patriarchal set-up also lies midway between reproductive and transformative agency embracing social choices that occur within structurally defined limits.

Using conceptual outlines from the piety movement literature in the Middle East, I argue that relational subjectivity is developed out of regular ethical practice in the school such as *salat* that produces embodied opinions and subjective modes of thought in girls about respect and obedience. The Islamic revival literature typified by anthropologists such as Mahmood (2001) and Hirschkind (2006) in their ethicopolitical projects debate issues of ethical self-conduct—a cathartic operation on the soul that enable ordinary Muslims to live according to God's will. Just as Hirschkind evokes the idea an 'Islamic soundscape' engendered by cassette sermons in suburban Cairo (2006: 6), Mahmood (ibid.) invokes the notion of fear to argue that *salat* induces pious obligations in people who perform the ritual. Docility should be regarded as the willingness to be taught. Mahmood's concerns on women's agency that frames choices of women different from the Western outlook are important to critique the Universalists desires for "liberation". Fear of punishment from Allah, heavenly merit and a desire to be a 'good daughter' were three dominant reasons cited by girls in the school, who wanted to stay pious simultaneously as they aspired to modern education. Critiquing Mahmood, Schielke (2009) has noted that even though religion is not absent in the everyday secular domain, the motivations for piety over other competing desires present a more complex picture than what

Mahmood settles for. In this light, I attempt to frame a picture of girls' competing motivations, such as aspirations for career and marriage expectations to gather a holistic picture of their complex subjectivities and agency that must take into account the 'complex and contingent linkages between discourses of collective agency and the specific forms of associational life, community, authority, and power' (Hirschkind 2006: 6).

Chapter overviews

In keeping with the focus of this research on hybrid Islamic schools for girls, in the second chapter, I highlight a historical shift in the nature and discourse of Islamic schooling for girls in India from the colonial period up till today. I build on narratives of the lower middle class community typifying the home context of girls; to extrapolate the transforming realities of the community that demands hybridity in Islamic schools against the backdrop of their marginalized social and economic positions in neo-liberal globalizing India. The narratives bring out the distinctiveness in the aspirations of the community that appraise the importance of Islamic education within a modern discourse of mainstream education.

Positioning myself within my ethnographic setting, the third chapter sets to analyze hybridization in Islamic school and the manner in which the school reproduces the cultural ethos of the community. Based on theories of cultural transmission, I argue that the Islamic school is balancing change within an Islamic setting through techniques of cultural transmission like pedagogy, gendered socialization and curriculum hybridity. While obscuring the hierarchical distinction between Islamic and mainstream education in the minds of the students, this chapter sets the tone for the next chapter spearheading the role of hybridized schooling in producing unique

subjective dispositions in girls.

Moving away from the structure into the agency, chapter four analyzes the response of girls to hybrid schooling. Building on theories of 'complex subjectivity' (Ortner, 2005) and conceptions on piety and self-construction I seek to highlight rising aspirations of girls engaging with both Islamic and modern subjects. In particular, I focus on career aspirations and marriage expectations, foregrounding the significance of social and relational contexts in the lives of girls. I argue that by fashioning themselves through what I call "relational subjectivity" and by staying within the folds of parental expectations, girls are able to negotiate their aspirations vis-à-vis their positions in the family. The course of such aspirations challenge the idea of the production of docile female subjects in Islamic schools without, however, exemplifying conceptions of individuality and freedom associated with the modernist paradigm of education.

I conclude by considering the larger implications of the study on transitions in Islamic schooling traditions and rise of hybrid Islamic schools by suggesting that it would be incorrect to view the changing aspirations of the community and girls within a particular teleology. Rather, I suggest that hybrid Islamic schools for girls occupy a unique position in the changing landscape of contemporary India that brings to focus the multifaceted response of the actors implicated in this system of schooling. The work is directive of ethnographic work analyzing lived experiences of the marginalized Muslim communities and agency of non-dominant groups in different spatial and temporal contexts.

CHAPTER 2

Aspiring for change

Introduction

A perception exists about Muslims in India about their strong attachment to religion and their Islamic culture (Ahmad, 1983). This trend has presented Muslims as less amenable to change. The idea of Muslim distinctiveness and their exclusivist representation of identity have made the explication of transition in matters of religion and culture less easy to explicate. As against this, I will begin this chapter by analyzing the shifting nature and discourse of Islamic schools for girls in the age of social reform in colonial India in the 19th century as the issue of Muslim girls' education gained prominence during this period. Such changes are valuable to document the transforming expectations of Muslim communities and a significant marker of their rising aspirations situated between questions of pragmatic cultural shift and demands of the new neoliberal age. With this aim, the next part highlights the growing global consciousness in the community appraising the importance of narratives to understand the effect of modernity and globalization in the lives of the underprivileged and the manner in which the community is coping and circumscribing such changes.

Shifts in Islamic schooling for Muslim girls

Formalized Islamic institutions for disseminating Islamic knowledge to girls has seen some gradual transformations in its form and structure since 19th century colonial India. Before independence Islamic education for girls had been a private matter. Islamic values or adab were taught in non-institutionalized private space of the home or *zenana* (home). This earlier pattern of personalized and informal teaching

was based on what Brenner calls 'initiatic transmission' (2001: 7). In that, he stresses that Islamic knowledge can be acquired only through personal interaction. *Zenana* teaching was carried out in the company of other learned female Islamic scholars. Religious education of this sort was limited to elite Muslim women. These women were either wives of civil servants who needed to accompany their husbands to social functions and those that got prominence in the national movement. There is little documentation to prove as to what extent Islamic education was also a part of the lives of lower-middle-class Muslims (Chakraborty, 2011). Pernau (2003) argues that there are no theoretical accounts to suggest how schooling both formal and informal played out for lower middle-class Muslim women. There is a serious gap in knowledge about the lives and experiences of lower middle-class Muslim women in nationalist historiography (Sarkar, 2008). Sarkar (ibid.) argues that most economically marginalized Muslim women were either educated at home or were not educated at all.

The rise of public Islamic institutions for girls, such as the madrasas has brought about a shift in the distribution and style of Islamic knowledge imparted to women (Hefner and Zaman, 2007). Winkelmann (2005) argues that there is no historical precedent to institutionalized forms of Islamic education for girls in contemporary India, unlike their boys' counterparts whose establishment could be traced back to the 17-18th century. The first girls' madrasa in India came up in the 1950's just after the independence. Thus, the earlier style of informality had given way to a more formalized method of teaching of girls in madrasas. As Metcalf (2007) argues there was an increasing feminization of madrasas in the 20th century. The late 19th-century Muslim reformists had influenced the establishment of earliest public Islamic institutions for girls post-independence (Minault, 1998). Reformists who favoured women's education argued that women were crucial to the development of

the Muslim community and growth of the nation as a whole. With the rise of non-Muslim powers on the political front, reformers believed that there was a general decline of morality in the society and women as repositories of Islamic culture should be given proper guidance on Islamic education such that they would produce a generation of morally pious Muslim children (Metcalf, 1992). With the overall increase in literacy and an emerging print culture, public madrasas for girls rooted in the *Dars-i-Nizami*[9] syllabus came into existence post-partition. In these formalized settings, faith began to be viewed as a subject that must be studied, explained and understood (Eickelman 1992: 650) and Quranic verses should be committed to memory to cope with complexities of the modern times. Such formalized modes of teaching Islamic education have also led to a greater democratization of Islamic knowledge. Women are increasingly accepting positions of *Alimas* (women scholars of Islamic knowledge) and *Hafizas* (women scholars who have memorized the Quran) and have gone on to become teachers in madrasas and have claimed positions of Islamic leadership in the male dominant public sphere. However, these positions of leadership are also presumably supplemented with the proper acceptance and performance of domestic responsibilities (Bano and Kalmbach, 2012; Jeffery *et al.* 2012).

Changing economic and social landscape of contemporary India is spurring the demand for modern education in Islamic schools, making both kinds of knowledge accessible to the marginalized Muslims. Different from the earlier generations of home-based learning and old style formal madrasas, hybrid Islamic schools have modern classrooms, fixed religious and modern curricula, examinations and professional teachers—teachers who are themselves well-versed in both Islamic and

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[9] *Dars-i-Nizami* syllabus comprises Arabic literature, logic, grammar, rational sciences, Quranic commentaries etc. For details of its content see Malik (2008).

modern subjects. Unlike most girls' madrasas that follow *Bihishti Zewar* and *Dars-i-Nizami*, many Islamic schools (both boys and girls) follow only the pristine doctrinal injunctions of the Quran and the *Sunnah* (teachings of the Prophet) (Sikand, 2005). The interaction of the local community with the complexities of the contemporary world and in account of that effort to produce morally pious girls has made formalized Islamic knowledge and modern education an inevitable need for many Muslims.

The discourse of 'modernity in tradition' (Rudolph and Rudolph, 1967; Singer, 1972, Gusfield, 1967) or a creative fusion between local cultures and external influences is not new. The 19th-century colonial discourse on education for elite Muslim women bears a striking resemblance to the contemporary discourse on Islamic education for Muslim girls (Jeffery *et al.* 2008). Education in the colonial period was aimed at preparing women for domestication. Pernau's (2003) analysis of religious advice literature for Muslim women in the 19th and 20th century sheds some light on the importance of women's education as part of their feminine duty to be a good mother. Formulating texts like *Bihishti Zewar* for noble Muslim women, Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanawi was one of the earliest champions of Muslim women's education in colonial India. Using this text Thanawi was the first to claim that women's mental capacities did not debar them from acquiring religious education. Thanawi believed that by placing value on correct knowledge of the Quran and the Hadith women could be transformed, as she will herself find the truth evident and persuasive (Metcalf, 1992). True scriptural knowledge was regarded as the basis of a reformed Muslim society (ibid.). There was a call to produce Islamically educated wives and mothers who would be capable enough to produce sons who would help in the betterment of the Muslim community in the future and take part in the nationalist struggle. Metcalf (1992) argues that *Bihishti Zewar* was at the heart of socio-political change happening

at this time. Reformers faced uphill struggles in easing some of the restrictions like *purdah*, polygamy, ensuring women's legal rights under Islamic law, and female education (Weiss, 1998). To gain social acceptance for girls' schools, the reformers had emphasized the usefulness of school education in preparing girls for family roles (Minault, 1985, 1998). Rather than challenging local customs of *purdah* and early marriage, reformers sought to accommodate them. The reformist discourse on preparing girls for marriage and motherhood was not limited to the Muslim community but other non-Muslim communities also raised similar questions and concerns regarding women's education (Chanana, 1988).

Such arguments for women's education, that educated women made better wives and mothers sounds very traditional. This is often due to the lack of attention paid to the shifts in the concepts of "motherhood" and "wifehood". Scholars such as Najmabadi have documented such a change arguing that education in the modern period in Iran shifted the role of women 'from the house to being the manager of the house' (1998: 92). Thus, as Abu-Lughod (1998) argues, women all over the world have increasingly appreciated the forms of energy, possibility and new avenues of power that modernity has to offer even though modernity has brought with it new modes of subjection, such that power relations of patriarchy are far from being rooted out.

Islamic schooling from home to public madrasas and hybrid Islamic schools also prepare girls for domestication, motherhood and family responsibilities as is evident by schools' differential and gendered selection of Islamic curriculum (Jeffery *et al.* 2008). Texts like *Bihishti Zewar* and *'Ladkiyon ka Islamic Course'* (Islamic course for girls) that many madrasas and hybrid Islamic schools adopt reinforces and holds up the images of girls as generous and accommodating (ibid.). These Islamic texts are

now supplemented with the knowledge and importance of modern education, such that many hybrid Islamic schools besides including current NCERT syllabus also give CBSE certification instead of different madrasa degrees with no set pattern of recognition.

The duties and responsibilities of motherhood and wifehood are changing. Girls need to be prepared for the responsibility of being educated mothers who could bear and rear pious yet mainstream children for the future. The space of the female parent within the household has shifted from being secluded in the kitchen to the living hall area of the house (Najmabadi, 1998). The mother is now expected to sit with children to help them cope with the demands of modern schooling systems, such as solving school problems, catering to a proper diet, and occasionally also being adept at filling in the need for two pay-check families. Thus, there is a particular felt need within the community for hybrid girls' Islamic schools that prepares them for challenges of domesticity and the possible realm of employment in the future. Therefore, while in the 19th century colonial India Islamic *adab* for women was primarily deployed to managing the private sphere, in the present context, fitting with the demands of globalizing India such values are also used as mechanisms to circumscribe pathways for women who could in the future step onto the public realm of employability. The politicized use of the veil in the public sphere and women sighted offering *salat* in crowded workplaces (see Khan, 2015) are somewhat also a result of deployment of adab in an increasingly globalized and consumption driven Indian society.

Besides inculcating values of an ideal homemaker, both girls and parents also harbour career-based aspirations—needless to say, however, that those aspirations are often confined to the domain of imagination. Although, as Appadurai (1996)

argues imagination in this globalized era has the potential of transforming the everyday practice of our lives and cultural ideologies. Hence, these rising aspirations are important to document because they act as a significant move away from the clichéd analysis of Muslims as "backward" and "stagnant". Such clichés are often the result of the stereotypical imagination of local Muslim communities existing in a vacuum with little or no consciousness of the rapidly changing world outside them and reproducing what is called a ghettoized Islamic identity. The rise of hybrid Islamic schools for girls in the recent decades is an important signifier of the local communities' perceived global consciousness. The next section highlights this demand within the community.

A growing global consciousness

The meta-narrative theorization of globalization has been incredibly complex (Powell, 2014). From developing ideas of global interdependence to using terms such as global consciousness, and hybridization, many such theories have been advanced in the fields of economy, political theory and culture (Eriksen, 2003). Globalization as a concept is not dead—there is an increase in the movement of flow of ideas and objects (Appadurai, 1996; Giddens, 1991). However, many of these theories have only partly been put to test on the ground.

The grand theoretical exposition of globalization that explains the process as the global interconnectedness of the world through time-space compression (Giddens, 1991) or the consciousness that the world is becoming a global village (McLuhan and Powers, 1989) is unhelpful in gauging the many marginalized communities' experiences of globalization. Such definitions hide the emanating contradictions, exclusions, and a crisscross of myriad economic and cultural factors that define many

Muslim communities' engagements with modernity. My respondents' narratives explaining the need for mixing Islamic with mainstream curriculum did not insinuate concepts of globalization or modernization, yet I argue that they reflected a strong sense of a "global consciousness" arising within profoundly transformative contexts of neo-liberal globalization. Such a consciousness was shaped by the inclusive and exclusive changes precipitated by globalization fundamentally through media channels such as television and migration.

Anthropology has sought to rectify the problem of cultural specificity within hybridization theories to avoid some of these grand narrative theorizations. The interaction of the global with the local has been anthropology's concern for many years (Eriksen, 2003). In the earlier decades globalization was regarded as culturally aggressive in creating a monoculture. Robertson (1994) was the first to point out that globalization involves the production of the local to use the term 'glocalization' or what is fashionably termed as 'Mac World' (Anderson-Levitt, 2003). Such concerns of cultural hybridization, creolization or amalgamation, many argue, breeds homogenization (see Friedman, 2013; Vizureanu, 2013). However, scholars also claim that hybridization is not a simple blend of cultures in wholeness, rather hybridity has been highlighted by many post-colonial theorists to describe the newness of the many different forms of discourses that have flourished in various contexts (see Ryoo, 2009). It is argued that hybridization is an inevitable course for all cultures and acknowledging this account is important to understand the local-global intersections (Werbner, 2001). I refrain from making any overarching claims of cultural hybridization that risks simplifying globalization's influence on other aspects of the cultural ethos of the community. My concern here is to niche community's interaction with the global (such as in the process of migration to the Gulf and flow

of information and ideas about the need for modern education) within their personal narratives explaining the demand for hybridity in Islamic schools.

I believe that the argument of the global interacting with the local grounded in personal narratives are important because it critiques the oft-cited exclusivist construction of Islamic identity that is seen as a reaction against unreachable processes of modernization and an inability to partake in the processes of globalization on an equal footing (Castells, 2010). According to Castells, collective identities, especially 'resistance Islamic identity', as he calls it (2010: xxvi) is a reaction to the uneven processes of development politically mobilized in the globalized age of information. Within such generalized arguments on Islamic and Muslim identity, one automatically views the establishment of Islamic schools with an exclusivist eye of separation and of disjuncture between what Barber (2004) famously called '*Jihad* versus McWorld,' ignoring the community's attempts at inclusive interactions.

There is a welter of literature on economic reforms, liberalization, and globalization that has transformed India's social and economic landscape with extraordinary endeavours in entrepreneurship, new ventures and new professions releasing pent up energies of India's growing middle class (see Das, 2001). Most of these scholarships have bypassed Muslim experiences. Studies are limited to those educated sections of the Indian society employed in sectors that have integrated into the global economy such as information technology (Fuller and Narsimhan, 2007; Jeffrey 2010: 466-467). Media and communication in the form of print newspapers, television and access to knowledge have created expectations and imaginations in the minds of the lower middle-class Muslim community about the benefits of

globalization especially access to skill forming modern education 'generating a widespread sense among the lower-middle classes of being in limbo and waiting' for the image to turn into reality (Jeffrey 2010: 467). The social disadvantage that Muslims suffer under Indian state's exclusionary majoritarian take has sidelined the lower middle class economically and culturally (Gayer and Jaffrelot, 2012).

The socio-economic profile of girls' family emerges out of my interview with girls. The family's socio-economic status can be assessed through the educational status of both parents. Most of my informants' fathers were non-vocational degree graduates. They were involved in semi-skilled or petty trade such as motor and bag repairing and farming. Some of the guardians I interviewed said their graduation degrees were of no use in earning a decent living. They represented the labour class constituted within the informal sector of India's economy (see Breman, 2010). Their monthly income varied between rupees five thousand and ten thousand—with an exception of one father who was a Homeopathic doctor. Mothers were barely literate. Most had received primary level education in a madrasa. In exceptional cases, three girls from eighth grade said their mothers worked as *Anganwadi* (health care workers) helpers earning a pitiable amount of fifteen hundred rupees a month. Muslims in Bihar are characterized by a high degree of poverty and deprivation (Basant and Shariff, 2010; Singh and Stern, 2013). 49.5% of rural Muslims and 44.8% of urban Muslims in Bihar are estimated to live below the poverty line (Narula, 2014). The joint family system was a norm with one member of the household earning for at least 6-8 members. This deprived section of the Indian population is perceived to be particularly backward and lacking ability to participate in the transformative changes of the Indian society whose lives are imagined 'within the narrow contexts of their segregated enclaves which define their "otherness" and

qualify their detachment from mainstream developments' (Khan, 2015). This community of Muslims had similar concerns on the inaccessibility of resources. The imbrication of this inward-looking community into the turmoil of global flows is reflective of their demand for hybrid Islamic schools that demonstrated their sameness in apprehensions with issues of identity, religion, and socio-economic deprivation. I interviewed a father of a 14-year-old daughter studying in 8th standard who had arrived to pick her daughter from the school for the *Eid-ul-Fitr* break.

Interviewer: Why did you choose this school for your daughter?

Parent: The world is changing. Earlier in my generation, there was no need for girls to get educated. But now the need for modern education is in every field. I have no money to send her to a private school. I know this school is good because it has the right *mahol* (ethos) for studying and keeping in touch with *deeni* (Islamic) knowledge. Other schools focus only on *dunyawi* (worldly) aspects.

Interviewer: Why is Islamic education relevant?

Parent: Madam, these days newspapers and media are giving such a wrong image of Islam. They think that we are against modern education. A good education should include both Islamic and modern education. I think all Muslim girls should have some Islamic knowledge, so they understand that *tehzeeb* (discipline), *adab* (value education) and *akhlaq* (morality) are important for girls who even want to work outside home these days.

Interviewer: Would you want your daughter to work outside the home?

Parent: Madam, my resources are very limited, and I am not sure if I will be able to pay her fees for a good college. Right now she is very young. First, I will see how she does in her 10th examination.

Other explanations for hybridity ranged from the importance of learning English to a strong lament of loss of tehzeeb in girls. One of my informants in his mid-thirties, who had worked in one of the Gulf countries as a contract worker, spoke with me in hesitant English. Although I started the conversation in Urdu, he spoke with me in English as if to erase the barrier between the "lesser" and the "greater" in the hierarchy of knowledge forms.

I want my niece to learn fluent English. It is good that she is studying in this school. I am also planning to open a coaching center to teach English to Muslim girls once I have enough money. In Saudi, I have seen that women wear *purdah* and go to schools. They know both *deen* and *duniya.* In schools here there is no focus on the *deen,* and that is bad. *Deen* will keep girls from drifting from their culture.

The neo-liberal economies of the Middle East and Gulf countries have shaped aspirations for large sections of the lower middle-class Muslim population (Khan, 2015). Some of the girls' male relatives had migrated to the Gulf (mostly Saudi Arabia) for better livelihood opportunities. Some of them considered English language and exposure to high-end modern day schools as necessary for the overall development of their community. Migratory processes have developed new consciousness in realizing their materialist aspirations deeply implicated in their desire to be free Muslims practicing both *deen* and *duniya.* Migration to the global cities of the Gulf and the Middle East as well as emanating news from satellite channels mainly television and Urdu newspapers have spread the news about 'modernizing Islam' (Gole, 2000; Masud *et al.* 2009; Echchaibi, 2013). In these narratives, one can readily perceive a sense of growing global consciousness within the community epitomized through the flow of ideas both of the advance of modernity and a need for an alternative system of Islamic schooling for their daughters. This demand is not just a process of resurrecting buried traditions as post-colonial theorist Chatterjee had argued in the case of an Indian attempt at establishing a modern ethos within colonialism. Colonized Indians made creative efforts to accept modernity while continuing to exert their struggle against the colonizer by creating a subjective domain of the 'inner' tradition that must remain untouched by the effects of colonized modernity seemingly dichotomizing between tradition and modernity (2012: 217). In the present situation, while guardians do feel the need to preserve the inner tradition, this does not entirely remain untouched

from worldly influences nor is there an active hesitation in engaging with the global forces.

What then directs the Muslim community's choice in picking out hybrid Islamic schools for girls? First, aspirations of the community are not unfettered. Attachment to Islamic values is strong. Second, the demand is not just an effort in preserving undermined Islamic traditions; rather the community extols the importance of Islamic education within a modern discourse of formalized education and new degrees. Third, guardians visualize a future in which an Islamic ethos or Islamic *mahol* along with a *'parhai ka mahol'* (study environment) (Jeffery *et al.* 2006) aptly catered to by the school can fill in the lacuna as well as reproduce the status quo of the society. This provides them the strength to cope (in the account of sending their daughters away from home), rather than escape from relentless effects of modernity. Such complexities in analyzing aspirations of the popular classes whose capacities for reflection are already considered to be questionable are hidden in the modernization rhetoric. In other contexts as well, Goswami (2011) argues that there is a move towards greater acceptance of modern education among the Ansari (weaver caste) in Benaras, who have the resources to pay for such schools. This is a signifier of their inclusion in the wider symbolic market in an increasingly industrialized society. Knowledge of the mainstream (that is seemingly eroding their professional knowledge on weaving) however does not come at the cost of Ansari's' group identity. Goswami argues that 'for many Ansari families conflicting sites of education co-exist' (2011: 191).

To map Muslim communities' internalization of contradictory forces of modernity and creation of convoluted identities, Khan (2015) did a study of the popular

televangelist Zakir Naik. 'Dr. Naik eschews traditional clothing for a suit and tie and his background as a doctor, his often gentle demeanour and his preaching in English sets him apart' (2015: 84). Dr. Naik evokes tradition by way of talking about religious ideology but does not position himself in opposition to modernity (ibid: 43). The televangelist's public persona attracts much middle-class Indian Muslims. Peace TV is a good example of a 'mediascape' (Appadurai, 1996) that presents to its audience a spectacle of modernity that is not antithetical to Islamic values but is creatively accommodative. Other spectacles of modernity included crowded billboards on streets, some in Urdu eulogizing the importance of spoken English and promising verbal skills in a short span of time. These flows of ideas make up for the imagined futures and imagined modernities of people.

In India English has become the dominant language followed by Hindi. While the community increasingly tries to develop a niche in spoken and written English, the language of Urdu that once used to be at the heart of North India has faded into oblivion. Muslims lament such losses in cultural heritage (Vaugier-Chatterjee, 2005). Although the stress of the guardians in choosing hybrid Islamic school over other public schools was specifically on *deen*, Urdu as a language was an important component in the syllabus. Many private schools culturally and religiously marginalize Muslim communities. Such economic and social exclusions have led many Muslims to repose trust in institutions such as the hybrid Islamic schools for the formal education of their daughters.

Partly run by NGO's and Welfare Trusts, these institutions have emerged to create new forms of knowledge transfer and social mobilization to proceed independently of the corporate capital and nation-state discourse (see Appadurai, 2000). 'These

social forms rely on strategies, visions, and horizons for globalization on behalf of the poor that can be characterized as grassroots globalization or globalization from below (ibid 2000: 3). Many such organizations that are concerned with Muslim education have proliferated in contemporary India. I acquired a brief profile of one such organization that had established the Islamic school under consideration. Maulana Asghar Ali Imam Mehdi Salafi established the *Al-Islah Educational and Welfare Trust.* The organization is famous for imparting education at primary, secondary and Islamic college level and appeared 'committed to removing the 'educational backwardness among female members of socially and economically weak communities'. These organizations and the people associated with them represent the new actors of Islamic modernity who want to redefine Islamic "authenticity" without being apologetic before Western modernity (Gole, 2000).

Coping with change

This section underscores the extent of change that the community seeks for, which as I hinted at earlier, acquires a fine balance between new opportunities generated by modern education and the wider cultural ethos of the community. Parents have set expectations out of their adolescent daughters' formal education that belies the liberalist assumption of empowerment produced in formal schools.

In Indian society, women of all religious faiths have social and cultural customs that govern girls' behaviour within and outside the family (Chanana, 1990; Chakraborty, 2010; Jejeebhoy and Sathar, 2001; Dube, 2001). Women and girls are understood as keepers of honour for the entire family. Being a 'good Muslim girl' is an important cultural trait of Muslim communities in India (Chakraborty, 2011). For Muslims in India moral perfectionism is a dimension of life (Das, 2007). Thus, even though there

is a strong felt need for modern education within the community, it circumscribes these changes and maneuvers with traditions to fit within the changing context.

Hussain's (2000) empirical investigation in Darbhanga town of Bihar has demonstrated an intergenerational mobility and cultural change among Muslim women in this area breaking stereotypes related to Muslim women. She argues that Muslim women are usually looked at as victims of polygamy, triple *talaq* (divorce), and *purdah,* and there has been little literature to suggest that women's lives are changing despite constraints. The groups of people who are willing to send their daughters to formal schools both Islamic and mainstream or, at least, expressing the desires to do so is significant considering the rhetoric of those who view these communities as backward and inward looking.

While parents were not necessarily worried about the fulfilment of their daughters' career aspirations, nevertheless they were not against sending their post-pubescent daughters to formal Islamic schools away from home. Besides financial limitations, much of girls' educational future regarding their continuation in school after matriculation also depended on how well girls performed in school. The importance of formal education in the lives of their daughters and for the community acquires a fine balance between societal expectations and demand generated from outside influence. Muslim parents are not hesitant in sending their daughters to cities for better quality education with hostel facilities.

Kinship contacts inside the school and sameness of Islamic *"mahol"* (ethos) in both home and school have led parents to send their daughters for education several miles from home. A few guardians also distinguished between '*Islamic mahol'* and

'parhai ka mahaul' (educational environment) (see Jeffery *et al.* 2006). According to them, the school provided a proper educational atmosphere—that included basics such as the provision of books, time for homework, teachers, good food, and electricity. Guardians reposed their trust in the school for the provision of these facilities that is seemingly lacking in their home spaces. In extrapolating the category of *'apna mahol'* at a Muslim colony Jamia Nagar in Delhi, Khan (2015: 66) argues that a sense of Islamic cultural ethos was deep-seated among the older generations who knew how to read and write Urdu, an extension of the high-born Sharif culture of the colonial times. I find this explanation to root the desire for assimilating in one's way of life problematic, as it reinforces the unjust distinction between "great" and "little" traditions in Islam. While the former meant the consciously cultivated religious center of the elites, the latter referred to folk societies where religion is practiced in their everyday forms (Redfield, 1956). Given the social and economic positions of older generation respondents in the current context, it is hard to judge whether and to what extent they had access to the literature of the Sharif culture that delineates proper Islamic *mahol,* although most certainly they were aware of its importance in the shaping of their Islamic personhood. Therefore, despite their marginalized class position the desire for *mahol* appears to be predominant in their mindset. Building up a mechanism to cope with changes, it is also not too presumptuous to argue then that the community demands hybrid Islamic school based on their concern with educational, cultural, and economic ethos.

Most Indian communities aspire for formal education to arrange good marriages. Boys are said to demand educated brides, even if they are not that highly educated themselves (Hasan and Menon, 2004, 2005). The normative discourse on the topic of marriage for women within Indian society and Muslim communities, in particular,

discusses early marriage for girls and the issue of dropping out of school because of family pressure. In the light of the above, formal Islamic schools are appreciated both in arranging good marriages for their daughters and culturally viable career option, such as medicine and teaching positioned at the backdrop of an Islamic *mahol.* Arguably the age of marriage is also rising for girls. Scholars highlight link between mothers' education and education of their daughters. Banerji (2013) suggests that 60% of all rural women in Bihar are illiterate and have little interaction with their daughters for education. In the present situation, while the last two generations of Muslim women may not have attended public schools, the current generation is willing and upfront for specific formal style schooling. Changes in perception ones associated with elite women are slowly seeping into economically marginalized communities, needless to say that these transformations certainly entail an exercise of power through the gendered division of labour in the public and private sphere.

Aspirations for formal schooling in the community are different from the assumptions of modernization theory that is committed to improving old social forms. While the benefits of modern education are appreciated within the community, the limitations of modernity and importance of cultural codes are consistently debated and contested and as such what appears as a standardization of culture is layered with multiple expectations.

Conclusion

In the life of Muslim community in transition, such as their changing aspirations and demand for hybridity in Islamic schools is precipitated by awareness or a global consciousness. In the face of such rapidly evolving social and economic realities Muslim minority communities in India have transformed their Islamic educational

practices fitting with their local realities without however subsuming into particular modernization rhetoric. This chapter critiques assumptions about the calcified inertness of the Muslim community and has instead proposed that the community's demand of hybridity in Islamic schools is a signifier of their persistent interaction with the global forces carving different versions of their experience with globalization and modernity. Keeping up with this demand, the school itself has innovatively upheld the exigencies of the community. The next chapter outlines this process of hybridization inside the school.

CHAPTER 3

Hybridization inside the school

Introduction

The encounter of Islamic schools with mainstream education is a part of arguing that cultural transmission, far from being a straightforward process has given rise to heterogeneity. As we saw in the last chapter, the community's interaction with the global is reflective in their complex demands for hybridity in Islamic schools that also demonstrates their apprehensions with eroding Islamic values and questions of socio-economic marginalization. To that end, the school I studied has innovatively adopted modern methods in pedagogical practices to make the space and the experience of hybridity suitable to the transmission of cultural codes. In that sense then, the school acts as a typically modern institution disciplining impressionable minds (Foucault, 1980). Like most schools in India the purpose of such transmissions is to create socially approved attitudes than just to transmit a formal body of knowledge.[10]

I begin with focusing on the shared authority between the community and the school in defining a social system suitable to the social and cultural ethos of the community. Blending in with the social system the hybridized settings in the school is such that it focuses on both kinds of learning, an embodied experience of Islamic teaching and a modern setting of the school that satiates the educational needs of the community and the students.

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[10] For comparative purposes see Froerer (2007) and Sundar's (2004) analysis of *Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh* (RSS) schools in the country that are known for indoctrinating *Hindutva* notions of citizenship in students.

Shared authority between community and the school

The school and the community are implicated in a relationship of mutualism wherein they share value-based authority in producing cultural systems that must be transmitted to the next generation. In anthropological literature instances of school-community linkages, strategies based on sharing and reciprocity are highlighted to express better educational outcomes in children's school achievements (see Connell *et al.* 2000). I suggest that outcomes of education in this Islamic school are not accounted only in educational achievements but are rather determined based on girls' ability to conform to the community's value-based systems. Academic abilities situated at the backdrop of morality are emphasized. The school-home conjunction and the production and re-production of gendered values and norms are suggestive of the fact that hybrid schools do not mark a sharp break in the binary between home and school in the life of girls (see also Gupta, 2015a).

The school not only extends but also strengthens and intensifies the dominant orders of the family and the larger milieu from which the students come. There is a shared bargain between the school and the community negotiating the creation of cultural values suitable for the present times. As Alam (2012) argues in his ethnographic work on madrasa Ashrafiya in Mubarakpur (U.P.), that the madrasa can reproduce social relationships akin to the family of the students. The social space inside the madrasa, demarcation and discipline reproduces hierarchy in relationships between the father and son, and between younger brother and elder brother. It is arguable that there is a mutual relationship of dependency and exchange-- a shared authority between the school and the community in maintaining a form of hybridization that balances pragmatic change with

questions of identity.

In this ethnographic context Islamic school caters to the educational needs of the lower middle class. As an educational enterprise, the school seeks to question the schooling system that caters to the religiously and economically dominant class present in most private and secular schools. The language code of the school is not de-contextualized (see Bernstein, 1973) rather the mixed use of languages like Urdu, Hindi, and English, as a medium of instruction is understood easily by students. Thus, the cultural capital that the school promotes is complex in which it tries to transmit the cultural capital of the economically privileged high-class societies while at the same time moving away from being subsumed within the larger dominant schooling system. A simultaneous emphasis on the cultures of two different realms, the religious and the worldly forms the philosophical crux of the institution (see also Matthan *et al.* 2014)

While there is little regarding reproduction of class inequality, gender inequality is reproduced through school's strict codes of segregation and norms inhibiting open socialization with males inside the school space. Islamic curriculum designed for girls also reflects aspects of domestication and demarcation of the private and the public sphere. Issues of the development of gendered identity in girls' Islamic school is perceived through gendered socialization and teaching (cf. Zine, 2008). Scholars who have worked in reproducing gender inequality in the postsecondary learning environment such as in colleges and universities have argued for a general disadvantage of women in the education process. For example, Sandler (1986) argues that inequalities in the classrooms have a critical and a lasting impact in dampening career aspirations and undermining

confidence. The theoretical problem with the reproduction theory model is that they understand all schools to be mirrored on the dominant demands of the modern society and capitalist economy ignoring other models of formal schools that critique the dominant models based on class inequality (ibid.). Scholars also seek to explain the perpetuation of gender inequality in educational spaces inferring resistance among students where none exists. (Jacobs, 1996; Collins, 2009). "Formal education" is not all disadvantageous for girls. In some cases such as in the present context, hybridized education has enhanced girls' capacities to aspire.

Cultural Codes: The notion of a "pious educated girl"

The school and the community together institutionalize the notion of a "pious educated girl" based on ideas of gendered segregation, discipline and *adab*. The school challenges hegemonic definitions of educated persons contested along lines of religion, morality and gender. Unlike many old style madrasas, the aim of this school was not to 'reform women in order to improve society' (Winkelmann 2005: 67) even though Islamic *adab* was a decisive segment of girls' lives inside the school. Rather the focus lay more in preparing girls to face outside challenges and realize their 'potentialities for successful learning and growth'[11]. No form of modern education, it is argued could compensate for girls lost Islamic way of life—both are equally important.

Gender norms and segregation

I invoke the idea of shared authority to argue that the school works in conjunction with the community to reproduce gendered social relations. Gupta

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[11] Quoted from the school brochure.

(2015a) in her ethnography argues for the creation of a gendered ethos within the space of the school. Using Bourdieu's conception of habitus, she argues that both teachers and students belonging to the same religious community cumulatively create a religio-cultural ethos. Since girls in the school come from a gendered environment, they bring with themselves 'socially accepted behaviour and learned behaviour that reproduces social relations' (ibid: 68). Similar to government Muslim girls' school in Delhi, the set cultural codes that this school tries to acculturate is one in which girls are taught strict aspects of socialization both within and outside the school. It is hypothesizable that girls' habitus in the school is also a result of their gendered socializing norms at home. Girls are expected not to socialize with *gair maharam* (men outside the sphere of immediate family). They follow strict veiling when they are in front of male members of the school as teachers and other non-teaching staff. Gendered socialization is also reflective in the role-specific behaviour and social norms that Muslim girls acquire at a young age (Bhatty, 1988). Within Muslim communities in India, the social structure is strongly patrilineal (Ahmad, 1976). The differentiation in the role of males and females is as strong as in a Hindu family structure.

Gendered ethos within the Islamic school is based on an embodied form of learning that is based on interactions, activities, and techniques. Pedagogy is the interaction and assistance that goes on with the classroom teaching techniques (Fullan and Hargreaves, 1992). Islamic pedagogy is the way, which helps in forming the spiritual human person (Hardaker and Sabki, 2014). Learning in Islamic school is not just a matter of 'neck-up' (Rogers, 1969) teaching that is the case in most other Indian schools but involves an embodied experience. Rogers (ibid.) argues for a humanistic position in teaching emphasizing on the

importance of a human relationship between the student and teacher that involves feelings or personal meanings. Embodied experience of teaching inside Islamic school is developed through personalized relationship between student and teacher. This personalized relationship sometimes also transcends into strict obedience. Girls maintain discipline in socialization according to the theological norms of the Quran and the Hadith taught to them by the teachers.

Dressing is an important dimension of socialization within the school. Girls wear *salwar kameez* (long shirt with loose trousers) and *dupatta* (long piece of cloth like a scarf) as school uniform along with a full body black veil or *abaya*. Outside class hours and inside hostel girls wear *salwar kameez* sometimes also *churidaar* suit (tight trousers worn by many women in India). Girls' choice of dress was related with questions of immodesty where a casual wearing of the *dupatta* was related with being "modern" and "westernized."

Tarbiyat (Discipline)

Discipline was based on *adab.* The literal translation of *adab* is discipline and training that permeates the everyday life of Muslims. *Adab* is meant to cultivate correct outer behaviour that comes through purity of one's inner self (Metcalf, 1984). The act of making choices along with cultivating restraints in everyday life is the essence of *adab.* In the contemporary context, reformers assert the importance of *adab* in the life of Muslims facing social, economic and political dislocations, especially so for women who possess "distractive tendencies" (ibid.). Under such conditions, *adab* is taught in the form of Islamic education to nurture moralistic behaviour in students (cf. Al-Attas, 1980).

An important part of disciplining and nurturing *adab* in students inside the school was a performance of *salat* (five times prayer). It is considered to be one of the five pillars of Islam and is deemed *farz* (mandatory) on both men and women (Hajr, 2003). One of the important points I noticed about generating piety in the school was a constant emphasis on *salat*. It is an obvious point to make, considering the school is an Islamic school but it needs to be highlighted because of its centrality in nurturing *adab* in the life of girls. Teachers emphasized that regularity in *salat* would automatically lead to a pious and rightful life. As Metcalf (1984) pointed out in her excellent exposition of *adab* in the South Asian context that Islamic ritualistic practices of faith, pilgrimage, prayer, and alms help in cultivating correct practices. Actions if repeated make it possible to act correctly without a process of reflection. So the best and foremost way to discipline students was to instill regularity in the practice. One of the wardens mentioned that a regular practice of *salat* for twenty-one days will get girls habituated to the practice. There were strict rules in the school to make sure that girls joined the *jamat* (congregation for prayer). At each hour of the practice, the warden took strict attendance. According to regularity and behaviour of girls in *salat,* wardens also graded students in their progress report for discipline and code of conduct. The school observed a weekly holiday on Friday and not on Sunday. According to Islamic tenets Friday or *jum'ah* is an important day when males have to visit the nearby mosque to congregate for prayers (Hajr, 2003). Since girls were not allowed to visit mosques, they stayed at the hostel and spent their time reading and reciting the Quran.

In her ethnography Mahmood (2001) argues that by submitting to the discipline of *salat* Muslim women in Cairo maintained their capacity or agency to submit willingly to God. Through 'ethical-self formation' (Mahmood 2005: 32) girls realized

their pious self. Being righteous is central to *salat* and through a regular performance of *salat* girls were expected to be on the right path of Islam. In Islamic traditions, there is no real disjunction between subject's "true" desires and social conventions (ibid.). *Salat* is also an emotional and bodily-embedded social practice that is used to evoke piety. It inserts sequence into the everyday life of people. Through its proper enactment practitioners assert their *iman* (faith) in Allah and his Prophet and as a practice *salat* puts people in touch with the realm of the transcendence (Henkel, 2005; Graham 2010).

My conversation with the warden of the hostel about the importance of *namaz* or *salat* in the life of girls highlighted some of these points. She said:

Namaz is not specific to women, but those who are regular in the practice will never choose the wrong path. These days everyone is so busy with new opportunities and *dunyawi* (worldly) practices that they have forgotten the one thing Allah had asked them to do. We intend to make girls pious and full of values through *namaz* that complements their modern education in school.

The duty of the three young female wardens was to keep an eye on student's day-to-day activities like regularity in *salat*, doing homework, regular recitation of Quran, and maintaining discipline. Younger students would often squabble with one another over little things like taking away of food and toys without asking. Often the elder sibling (if there was any) would resolve the issue but if it involved verbal abuse and physical fight the complaint would go the warden. Since I visited the hostel every day and sat with the wardens in their room in their free time after lunch, I observed some of these issues and the ways the wardens dealt with it. I would like to recount one such incident that included a physical fight between two girls aged somewhere between 8 and 10 years.

First girl: *Apa* she was hitting me and making faces during *namaz* today.

Second girl: *Apa* I did not do it, she was the one making faces. Ask her elder sister.

Warden: I do not want to know who did it or who did not. You both were not paying attention during *namaz,* and that is so bad. Concentration during *namaz* is necessary. Allah has asked us to pay full attention and thank Him during the process. One should not fight, pull hair or disturb or the other person who is praying; otherwise, Allah will punish us. Do you understand?

Both girls: Yes *Apa.* We will not do it again.

Warden: Say sorry to each other.

Both girls: I am sorry (to one another).

This incident points out that while girls could be feisty and misbehave even during *salat,* the importance of this very process is used to make them realize their omission. *Salat* is a process of engendering piety over time. No harsh punishment is meted on children for such incidents. The wardens often gave students warning of complaints to parents and fear of bad grades in the examination.

As I mentioned earlier, the everyday routine of girls was guided by their *salat* timetable. Girls would wake up at 4 am after the *Azaan* (call for prayers) that they hear through the loudspeaker installed inside the hostel. After *salat* girls cleaned up their rooms, bathed and got ready for the first class of the day at 6:00 am. The first period of the day was always *Deeniyat* or Hadith reading that went on for one hour. The rest of the day began at 7 am and went up till 12:50 pm with breakfast break at 9 am. For students in 9th and 10th standard, classes would go up to 2:30 pm. Teachers would take breaks for praying. Male teachers would go to the nearby mosque while the female teachers congregated for *salat* in the hall.

After their regular day in the school, girls would get back to the hostel for afternoon prayers after which they took afternoon naps or would spend a leisurely afternoon playing or talking with their friends. After the evening prayers, to prepare for the

next day, girls sat with their homework. Students from the 9th and 10th standard were put together in separate rooms because of their upcoming matriculation examinations. The usual atmosphere inside the hostel with sounds of laughter, chitchat, and hustle-bustle, was reminiscent of my experience of living in hostels during early years of my college in Delhi and some of the disciplining mechanisms such as curfew hours are common for most girls' schools and colleges.

The grilled door was locked and manned to ensure outsiders did not come in without permission. Winkelmann (2005, 2007) analyzed disciplinary mechanisms inside the madrasa within the Foucaultian notion of 'total institution'. She argued that the role of *adab* in the madrasa was to maintain a total mind and body control exercising social power. The self-appointed keepers of authority have maintained Islamic schools as normalizing disciplining institutions imposing control, and punishment, although the less punitive nature and control over the lives of girls in this school make it less of a total institution than Winkelmann's fieldwork site of a madrasa. Regardless, the school plays an active role in acculturating pious behaviour in girls. The next section highlights how standardized norms on discipline and code of conduct are accustomed within the hybridized settings of the school.

Hybridity in school

The structure of the Islamic school was inspired by modern school infrastructure that provided modern day facilities to students. It had concrete three or four floors in the building that from the outside looked like any other school; classes had black/white boards, neatly arranged benches and chairs for students to sit on, computer room, a small library, wide corridors, staff room, and Principal's office. The hostel had 10-12 big rooms that housed approximately 11 students in one room. The total capacity of

the hostel was 150 students. The hostel space was gendered. Male members of the school, parents and relatives were not allowed inside the hostel area naturalizing demarcation between public and private sphere possibly akin to such segregation in girls' home quarters.[12] Girls and wardens alike were allowed to go out only in groups and only with known male relatives.

The hostel had an open mess on the top floor of the building where students sat on mats to have meals and two water coolers for cold water were installed. Cooking equipment like cooking stove, cooking gas cylinders, and large utensils were used to prepare three-day meals for students. There were two female cooks whose daughters were also studying in the school for without any payment of fees. They lived in the hostel rooftop provided to them by the school. The bargain between the cooks and the school was service based and not monetary.

5. Girls in the *Deeniyat* class

An interesting modern yet traditional infrastructure to me was the *Masjid* (mosque) an open hall space for *Jamat* (where girls congregated for five times prayer or *salat*).

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[12] Muslim households are often divided into female quarters or *zenana* and male quarters or *mardana* (Bhatty, 1988).

This was on the upper second floor of the school. Adjoining the hall was a separate space for *wudu* (ritual washing of the body before *salat*). This sacred space neatly blended traditional and modern practices within the school.

6. Corridor   7. Masjid   8. Space for ablutions

While it was used for *salat* or *namaz* at specific hours of the day, it was also open for girls of all age to play and sit in their leisure times. I noticed young girls running around and playing games with their companions after classes. The open hall space was also used for the weekly Thursday *Anjuman* (gathering). This was the time when girls of different classes would sit together for various competitions, such as debates in English and Urdu, quizzing in subjects like Hadith and Science, drawing, writing, Arabic Elocution, English essay, Urdu essay, *Mehendi* making, (art form akin to temporary tattoo making on hands and feet) and art exhibition. Important and big national events like Independence Day and Republic Day celebrations[13] sometimes

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[13] Although the discourse on citizenship and nationhood has not been a focus of this thesis, scholars argue that the newly designed NCERT textbooks give special focus on the marginalized groups to acculturate them as inclusive citizens of India. Matthan *et al.* (2014)

took place on the roof of the building adjoining the mess. Teachers would sit on chairs on one side of the hall and girls would sit on the floor in neatly arranged rows and columns for competitions and debates.

The term "sacred space" could evoke images of temples and shrines in our minds, yet on an experiential common ground sacred space could denote an area that marks a break in our everyday routine (Tuan, 1978). In Islam ritual plays a significant role in demarcating non-specific spaces as sacred (Burge, 2009). The performance of ritual functions or *namaz* can temporarily generate sacred space in and around the person performing it (ibid.). In this context, the open hall space is blending traditional ritual practices with leisurely and modern school activities.

9. Students at Independence Day, 15th August 2015

There were three loudspeakers installed inside the hostel for announcements that an elderly male gatekeeper and *moizzin* (one who gives the call to prayer) would make from time to time for *namaz* and other purposes. For example, he would call out names of students whose parents or guardians had called or if they had ordered

argue that Muslim girls' understanding of their civic citizenship in a Muslim school includes public service, cleanliness, and good governance.

commodities from the market to be bought. Students lined up outside the Principal's office to wait for their respective phone calls from home and sometimes for goods to be distributed by the manager. The school was linked to the global community through English and Urdu newspapers that students and teachers shared among themselves. Students would borrow Urdu magazines and Hindi storybooks from the library for leisurely reading. I noticed that there was no fixed time for guardians to call their daughters on the school's baseline phone except late in the evening when the office staff would disperse at the end of the day. Parents or guardians visited their daughters every fortnight often traveling to the city for other business purposes. There was four male non-administrative staff inside the school whose daughters were also studying in the school free of cost. Students would address the elderly males as *'dada'* (grandfather) and the younger male staff as *'counter wale bhaiya'* (brother on the counter).

It is fairly evident that the institutional space of the school is built in a way that promotes a neat blend between traditional and modern aspects. While on the one hand we notice modern day schooling infrastructure such as classrooms and hostel facilities and on the contrary we also notice demarcated spaces for the practice of *salat* that is at once both sacred and profane. The school is linked with the outside world through modern means of communication like newspapers and telephones. While girls are not allowed to go outside for purchasing commodities, they are not completely cut out from the outside world. There are mechanisms installed inside the school to cater to the needs of girls. A fine intermixture between the two discourses has neatly averted any ideological clash interwoven in the minds of the students and sets ground for the appropriate teaching of hybrid curriculum in the school.

Hybridization in curriculum

Intentional hybridity

Many madrasas and Islamic schools have included modern disciplines into their religion-heavy curriculum. However, in this school it is not a simple process of hybridization. It is an intentional mix of the two that have distinct aims. Islamic curriculum of the school was determined by its *Ahl-i-Hadith* sectarian nature.[14]

My initial impression of the school was guided by the belief of the *Salafis'* conservative nature, and I presumed that this conservative attitude would be prominently visible inside the school. The *Ahl-i-Hadith* school of thought has an ambivalent take on social issues (Riexinger, 2008) that follow and practice Saudi Arabian Salafism. Riexinger (ibid.) argues that in colonial India while practitioners of this school were progressive on some social issues related to women, they displayed conservative behaviour in other matters due to their belief in non-interpretation of the Quran and the *Sunnah.* In practice, this school was less conservative than many *Deoband* madrasas, such as the one studied by Winkelmann (2005).

Once in the secondary section (standard eighth onwards), students begin to memorize relevant chapters of the Hadith such as in matters of faith, Islamic etiquette, merit of actions, repentance, and some others tailored for girls to discuss issues on marriage, family, child rearing, etc. At the end of the academic year, girls gave exams based on these chapters in their mid-term and annual examinations. Questions would be based on verses from the Hadith and the Quran. The Islamic

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[14] *Ahl-i-Hadith* is a puritan indigenous South Asian branch of the *Salafi* community (Zaman, 2012) who are guided by the Islamic foundational texts of Quran, the Hadith, and pristine Islamic law.

syllabus for the Hadith included *Bulugh Al-Maram, Mishkat-ul-Masabeeh* etc. These

hadiths were collected from various Islamic sources like *Shahih-al-Bukhari, Sahih*

Muslim, Sunan Abu Dawud (Durrani, n.a.; Hajr, 2003). Starting from 9th standard girls

were expected to know hadith pertaining to the place of women in Islam. My

interview with the Hadith teacher underscored the importance of Hadith in the lives

of these young girls.

Interviewer: What do you teach?

Teacher: I teach Hadith to 8th, 9th, and 10th standard girls. Girls in 8th standard will sit for examinations that will be counted for their final grading. 9th and 10th standard students do not have to give exams because they have CBSE exams.

Interviewer: What kind of Hadith do you teach?

Teacher: The school has decided on few themes that girls must be taught like issues on marriage, family, and purdah. We aim to give the pure knowledge of Hadith to these girls.

Interviewer: Why is it important for girls to learn Hadith?

Teacher: Every Muslim man and woman should know Hadith. Girls should know the Hadith injunctions on marriage and family. These are essential duties in a woman's life.

The cultural value of religious knowledge has remained constant overtime. The

paradigm of all such knowledge is the Quran and the Hadith, whose totality of

understanding is essential to lead a fullest possible religious life. The accurate

memorization of Quranic and Hadith verses along with its cognitive understanding

is culturally valued knowledge in most Muslim societies (Eickelman, 1978).

However, memorization of the verses was not enough. Girls were tested on their

ability to understand the meaning of the verses too. Cognition and memory were

combined for the embodiment of Islamic ideals. I noticed that in their leisure time

girls' discussed issues of *deen* and helped each other learn the verses that were

supposed to be taught the next day in class. The interaction between the teacher and

the student, peer socialization, orality, facilitating memorization and a didactic approach towards the sacred texts helped in creating a spiritual human person (Hardaker and Sabki, 2014). The aim of embodied understanding of Hadith for girls was for the school to engender piety and domesticity. The discourse on domesticity was not limited to Islamic curriculum. Girls were also taught home science and embroidery, as is the case with most secular schools in the country. However, engendering domestic attributes was not the sole aim of the school where mainstream CBSE education occupied half the curriculum and time of students. Due to small number of students in each class, teaching of modern subjects was also personalized. Girls called their teachers *Apa* (elder sister) instead of Ma'am or Miss and felt no hesitation in raising their hands in asking questions.

Using vignettes from my ethnography, I will highlight two different perspectives on the inclusion of modern disciplines into the school—one is that of the Founder Secretary of the school and the other is that of the teachers who also spoke about the importance of modern education in the life of girls.

Interviewer: What is the objective of the school?

Secretary: We want to give girls both Islamic and modern education so they can fulfill their duties at home, be chaste, and pious but at the same time they should know how to deal with the complexities of the modern world so they do not get into bad influence.

Interviewer: What is the need for modern education?

Secretary: Allah has clearly demarcated the roles for both men and women. Employability is not women's responsibility. However, this does not mean that modern education is not beneficial for them. Girls should be educated, so they are not trapped in undue influence of the world. Women of the household can help their husbands in budgeting, keeping their money and goods safely. Women should learn how to run their houses efficiently and modern education can help them in this.

This conversation with the Secretary of the school highlights that inclusion of modern education in Islamic schools has a distinct purpose, which may or may not just be limited to the question of skillful employment and empowerment outside the realms of the household. This mixing is brought about for a specific purpose in mind.

While the viewpoint of the head of the school seems to be not one that would encourage girls for employability, my interviews with teachers pointed towards a different direction. Several teachers (male and female) argued that modern education for these girls with such limited resources is important because skills that they get here through modern education could help them earn their living and add income to the family. Many of the female teachers gave their life examples in making use of modern education to having independence in earning a living and looking after the family. However this notion of employment was not equated with the individualized idea of emancipation and development of personal freedom. In a Muslim girls' school (MGS) that Gupta studied, she argues that what teachers verbalize in the classroom is dependent on the content of the curriculum as well as the socio-religious context of their positions at home that 'prevents their full re-incarnation as professional teachers' (2015a: 145). In the Islamic school, education in modern disciplines that are apparently generative of notions of individuality, empowerment and freedom also seemed tacitly dissociated from both the social and economic context of the teachers and the students (Kumar, 1991). As in most schools and colleges in India, syllabi was structured around the accumulation of facts and memorization of information for examinations (Jeffrey, 2010). This kind of disengaged pedagogy reinforced the prescriptive aspirations of the community. The religio-cultural importance of family honour was emphasized above all.

Nevertheless, I noticed that teachers placed importance in improving students' grades in examinations.

Several guardians had arrived on the day of the parents-teachers meeting in September. I had the opportunity to sit with the teachers to distribute students' progress report cards to the parents. Teachers carefully sorted names of girls whose parents they wanted to meet separately based on the students' poor result. Most students in the 8th, 9th, and 10th standard had done fairly well in Islamic subjects. Some had faired poorly in Mathematics and Science. I observed that teachers encouraged parents to pay more attention to their daughters' qualitative understanding of mainstream subjects. I noted the following conversation that happened between a mother and a teacher. The girl was in the sixth grade. Judging from the kind of clothes the mother and daughter were wearing, I presumed that they came from a low economic background.

Teacher: Your daughter has done so badly in English and Mathematics. She must pay attention to these subjects.

Mother: I don't know why she is not studying hard even though I have sent her so far away from home to study. Here she has everything, she doesn't have to do household work, and still she is not studying. I don't know what to do.

Teacher: I will pay extra attention to her. You must also talk regularly to her about her school performance.

Thus, on the one hand, girls were indoctrinated with domestic attributes, feminine attributes of chastity and piety, but on the contrary they were also pushed to have a qualitative understanding of modern curriculum that could promote gainful employment in the future. Interestingly, there was no perceived sense of clash between Islamic and mainstream teachings in the school. Neither the girls nor the students expressed any dilemma or an ideological clash between their Islamic curriculum and modern studies.

Unconscious hybridity

This last point leads me to discuss what Bakhtin (1981) called 'unconscious hybridity.' Hybridity in the school and intentional hybridization in the form of juxtaposing two different curriculums is *naturalized* within the pedagogical space of the school. Transferring from one form of curriculum discourse to another is

automated without any conscious effort. Use of same classrooms and sometimes also teachers for teaching both kinds of curricula help students make this transfer without any perceived predicament. Besides the intervening influence of the outside world, I propose that a process of unconscious hybridization had capacitated my informants in harmonizing Islamic teachings with the discourse of encroaching modernity, fitting the two together.

Lukens-Bull (2000, 2001) has argued for re-contextualizing of Islamic tradition in the Islamic schools in Indonesia. She highlighted the *pesantren* tradition of Indonesia to point to re-invention of Islamic tradition and imagination of a new Islamic modernity in the schools. The educational efforts of Al-Hikam represent this imagination of tradition and modernity — it combines secular college education along with religious tradition rooted in Sufi and *pesantren* tradition. Lukens-Bull argues that the 'very desire to use traditional pedagogy requires the imagination of modernity that must be grounded in tradition' (2001: 363). Therefore, she argues that Al-Hikam seeks to re-invent a distinctive Islamic modernity in Indonesia.

In the present context, I propose that girls inside the school imagine their Islamic modernity by grounding their Islamic teachings in their everyday desires.

One day a bunch of girls came up to me and asked, '*Apa* is this a laptop? What are its functions? We have never seen such a tiny computer! Do you also have pictures in it?' I said that I have lots of pictures of Oxford and other places in my laptop and if they were interested I could show it to them. All of them were very enthusiastic after they saw photos of people and places, and expressed their willingness to know more. There was a brief discussion about the permissibility of taking and keeping photographs of living beings in Islam. A girl in the group mentioned that Islam prohibits taking images of living beings. I asked if taking pictures were allowed during special occasions like marriages? They said, 'well it is not permissible, but everyone does take pictures these days.'

In another encounter with the wardens of the hostel, I was asked if I was willing to take some pictures with them as a small token of their encounter with me. They hurriedly decked themselves up in new *salwar kameez* in the hostel and washed their

faces. They borrowed a smartphone from one of the other teachers for taking pictures, and we took multiple shots in different settings—in the room and the hall. I asked one of the teachers if taking pictures were prohibited in Islam? She said, 'yes, memorization through pictures is unlawful according to *Ahl-i-Hadith* thought. Pictures of all creatures prevent angels from entering our homes. I will only keep the photos in the album and will not put them on the wall like non-Muslims do.'

In her ethnography in a Delhi girls' madrasa Winkelmann (2005) had also mentioned that *Badi Apa* (elder sister) of the school kept many passport size pictures of herself even though it wasn't allowed. Winkelmann called these strategies of negotiating outside influences as attempts to create 'niches of defiance' (ibid: 95) or rebelling against a practiced norm. I agree that these are tactics or attempts at negotiating influence and the needs of the present times, but they are not statements of defiance *per se* but are rather *conscious* attempts at re-contextualizing the set beliefs and customs. Thus, taking pictures or keeping pictures of family and friends is not frowned upon but is innate in the new setting. Therefore, the synthesis of intentional and un-conscious hybridity in the Islamic school is such that students have internalized the desirability and practicality of studying the two different curriculum discourses together. Such a hybridization process forces us to recognize that "formal education" can be appropriated differently and with different sets of values attached to it.

Conclusion

As I will enunciate in the next chapter, the effect of intentional and unconscious hybridity is such that it has generated unique subjective dispositions in students that are an amalgamation of both pious and modern career aspirations. As I have argued, however curriculum by itself is not an agent of change, rather the way it is organized and invested with meaning is what makes it productive. This kind of hybridization seeks to destabilize the idea of modern education as the sole source of symbolic

capital. Both curricula are emphasized so girls internalize the importance of Islamic teachings alongside mainstream education.

CHAPTER 4

Girls between and betwixt hybridity

Introduction

As we saw in the last chapter, acting on the demand of the community, the school administers a hybridized setting acculturating in girls cultural codes defined by the community. This chapter highlights the experience of girls in the school. Social structures are both constraining and enabling (Durkheim, 1964; Giddens, 1982; Hays, 1994) and in that sense it is important to understand the manner in which girls position themselves within the structural conditionings of the school and community. I argue that girls exhibit what Ortner has called 'complex subjectivities' (2005: 43). They demonstrate strong congruence to both Islamic and mainstream teachings. While Islamic learning builds up their pious nature and grounds them in their familial ethos, mainstream education has engendered career aspirations and desires.

As Ortner puts it, subjectivity is the 'ensemble of thought, action, and desires that animate acting subjects…as also the cultural and social formations that shape these modes of thought' (ibid: 31). Subjects are not just emotionally and culturally complex but that they are conscious reflexive actors who continually monitor their relationship with the world. Within this idea of complex subjectivities and an ongoing process of becoming, I tease out in adolescent girls, a subjective disposition of a relational self that I call *"relational subjectivity."* Framed within the order of the school and family, girls' consciousness of their selves or subjectivity develops in congruence with their Islamic teachings and within a situation of economic and emotional dependence on close kin.

Further, I argue, that the development of this subjectivity is a pre-condition for the development of their agency (cf. Allen, 2002; Cohen, 2010). I define agency not in opposition to an overt subversion of structure and social norms but as conditions of relationality and obedience that engenders space for negotiations for girls to harbour aspirations and choices for future action. Unlike many liberal feminists, I argue that development of aspirations or choices and willingness to negotiate these choices in the face of constraints is a result of the development of a relational as opposed to desires of an autonomous self [15]. This does not disclaim patriarchal order, notwithstanding their aspirations tend to destabilize normativity by pushing changes in attitude of the community concerning Muslim girls' formal schooling.

Relational construction of the self and subjectivity

According to Mead (1972), an individual develops his subjectivity with others and with an interrelationship with his environment. The self emerges in the process of daily experiences. Attitudes and perspectives are drawn up in conjunctions with others in the social order framed by religion, family, and community. The social group controls the response of its members deviating from the social process. Mead argues that for individual to develop a full sense of self he has to take the attitudes of other members of the group and manifest those qualities in himself so, he becomes the 'individual reflection of the general systematic pattern' (1972: 158). Symbolic interaction theorists have long noted that even in contexts where the individuals act alone, if the individuals feel that their behaviour is going to be socially relevant, they act in relation with others (see Stryker and Vryan, 2006).

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[15] For even feminists who have been critical of the individual self as bounded and separate, their explanations of relationality in desires has given way to questions of freedom and autonomy (see Chodorow, 1978; Gilligan, 1982).

Ridgway and Correll (2004) give a good account of the ways in which hegemonic cultural beliefs about gender perpetuate themselves by acting on behaviours, relations, and contexts. The authors argue that gender is everywhere because social relational contexts bring sex categorization into every sphere of activity. Gender is present in the background 'while other activities are performed in the foreground' (2004: 516). Development of self, individuality, and subjectivity, specifically in the Indian context, is a result of structural social and economic conditions. In most patrifocal families where there is a clear division of labour between the male, and the female, individuality of the female subject are often constructed according to social customs and norms (Mukhopadhyay and Seymour, 1994; Krishnraj and Chanana, 1989). There have evolved in India a set of predominant kinship and family structures where men have been given precedence over women. The male-oriented structures constitute a socio-cultural complex that has affected women's lives and by extension their aspirations.

While relationality can be an unconscious conditioning factor of the structure, its conscious acceptance in the present context was related to being morally bound and faithful to Islamic teachings taught in the school. Such acceptance is not a mark of docility or passivity but leads to the productive development of agency—a willingness to negotiate and exercise choice of action that is enacted through and within the conditions of the structure (see Mahmood, 2005). Girls counted *farmabardari* (obedience) as meritorious not just from the religious point of view but also because obedience acts as a tool that elicits for the future a valuable room for negotiation. Theological scholarship on Islam sites obligatory obedience and submission of Muslim women to the unquestionable commands of her husband, although, in the present case, interestingly the notion of obedience was limited to

parents while an ideal marital relationship from girls' point of view was based on nurture, care, and understanding and not to unconditional submission. In weekly *Anjuman* (gatherings), girls were asked questions such as *"Maa baap ki khidmat aur unki baat mane se kya milege?"* (What will you get if you take care of your parents and obey them?). Girls would unanimously answer to such questions within seconds, as they must have memorized it several times before and say – *"sawab milega!"* (We will get heavenly merit). I observed that week after week teachers repeatedly asked the same questions in different forms related to the code of conduct and behaviour at home.

Such regular practice of recitations produce embodied opinions and subjective modes of thought about respect and obedience in girls similar to what Mahmood (2005) has argued that in many Islamic contexts norms are lived and inhabited within the topography of the ethical self. Many girls quoted verses from the Quran and Hadith that seeks obedience, love and kindness for parents. Fear of punishment from Allah, heavenly merit, and evoking notions of a morally 'good daughter' were reasons cited of why young girls above the age of purdah should be obedient. As I have argued in the last chapter, an embodiment of the ritual practice of *salat* in school and an inclination towards obedience engenders *adab*, which is integral to inducing discipline in the school.

In the context of urban piety movement in Cairo, Mahmood (2001; 2005) argued for the development of agency among pious Muslim women through techniques of an ethical self-formation. Taking a post-structuralist Foucaultian critique of liberal feminism, she defined agency as the capacity for action, which is enabled within particular relations of subordination. Therefore, willingness for action is enabled not

through subversion of structure but through a struggle (such as by staying within certain moral and disciplinary codes and religious submission) within the structure. Docility should be regarded as the willingness to be taught 'or as ways in which individuals work on themselves to become the willing subjects of a particular discourse' (Mahmood 2001: 210). Mahmood's concerns about women's agency bears a strident critique of the predominant discourse on the conception of agency associated with resistance against subordination. In the present context it is helpful to argue against the liberal feminist and policy discourse on Muslim women in India that club them as docile and non-agential based on the latter's conformist behaviour to social expectations.

Thus, I propose that adolescent girls' subjectivity is shaped as morally *conscious* individuals as their parents' *farmabardar* (obedient). I use the word conscious to place an added emphasis on girls' understanding of what it meant if they wheeled themselves as *nafarman* (disobedient). Consider this: Najma (name changed) a 16-year-old girl of the tenth grade had joined the school in standard one when she was six years old and had lived in the hostel since then. Before that, she had studied in a coeducation *maktab* (madrasa akin to primary school). Her ideas against displeasing her parents were quite strong. She said:

I know some girls will do everything against their family's wishes. They will marry against their will. In the school, we are told to obey our parents. Islam also teaches us to be loving and kind to our parents. I have heard my neighbours say that modern education is against Islamic values for girls. I want to show them that I can get modern degrees and stay pious and obedient also.

The argument above was a very compelling one as it dispels notions of false consciousness in Muslim women. It also bears a critique on the literature on adolescence that characterizes this as a phase of rebellion (see Eriksen, 1968). In her ethnography, Gupta argues that idea of 'rebellion is far too remote for Muslim

girls…as the Quran demands complete submission to the will of Allah' (2015a: 39). However, she takes standardized definitions in the Quran as the cause of girls' subordinated status. The above argument not only manifests a conscious voice against rebellion but a strong desire to continue modern education by staying within the fold of religion and social custom.

Hybrid formal education has precipitated complex relational subjectivities in girls and has enabled an improved capacity to aspire that in the future could be generative of social change (Appadurai, 2004). Appadurai (ibid.) succinctly argues that for the marginalized to strengthen their capacity for voice or agency, they must do so within their own ideological and cultural terrain. Thus, the weak should enhance their voices as a cultural capacity. Acting within cultural capacity, I propose, that girls define their goals within their limits of relationality rather than through an exercise of individual autonomy.

Muslim girls' agency: Their aspirations and desires

The anthropological dialogue with the developmental discourse suggests that social structures and discriminatory ideologies negatively affect people's real capacity to aspire. Structures constrain the poor and the underprivileged and force them to subscribe to norms that further diminish their dignity and aspirations (Appadurai, 2004). To ameliorate these conditions equality in the agency must be sought that would involve not just equal access to resources but also equal access to social and cultural capital (Rao and Walton, 2004). The discourse on development and agency rests on some reified assumptions about individual's "authentic" self, aspirations, and desires. In a modern democratic society, Taylor argues, an individual should be able to cultivate his 'authentic self' (1991: 26) and that he should be able to choose his

goals of life or aspirations different from that of the religious-cultural framework of the society. The liberal feminists also define freedom for women as the ability to choose autonomously one's desires. There are two problems with this kind of theorization in social anthropology; first, "authenticity" is a contested term whose meanings shift with the contexts of its invocation—there can be no fixed definition of authenticity. Authenticity is what people make of it (Taylor, 2001; Theodossopoulous, 2013). Anthropologists have actively problematized the idea of the "true self". Second, the Western notion of desires and aspirations conflated with individual autonomy produce essentialist assumptions about aspirations and desires that are unsuitable in many non-western contexts, especially in the framework under scrutiny. For example, in the ethnographic study of Arab families of Camp Trad of Greater Beirut, Joseph argued that 'people's desires were linked to gendered, age and relational construction of selfhood' (2005: 84). Desire was organized within the patriarchal family culture through connections, mediations, and responsibility of fulfilling each other's desires (often the male responsible for the female). Investigating the pedagogies through which desire was learnt and taught, Joseph explored the relational construction of the self within the complex and intertwined matrices of patriarchal Arab families.

In the context under scrutiny, I propose, that both desires and aspirations as also the will and capacity for its fulfilment are relationally and culturally constructed notions (cf. Appadurai, 2004). Girls' ultimate sense of security came from kin on whom they depended for monetary and emotional support. Therefore, they articulated their will for the fulfillment of their desires and aspirations in conjunction with other members of the household. The school's curriculum and pedagogical methods embody in

students values of family and familial relations. In this social setting relational notion of desires and aspirations were valued above all.

Aspirations that emerge as individual or collective wants have often been assigned to the market and material forces—as such they have been invisible to the study of culture (Appadurai, 2004). Indeed, as Appadurai (ibid.) argues aspirations and desires are derived from within larger cultural norms as there is no construction of self outside the social frame. Both desire and aspirations are incited and shaped by material conditions and the issues of gender, class, education and religion that shape the community's views. In a culture in which gender and age-related hierarchy are organizing principles, aspirations and desires were also inflected with principles of gender and age. Most girls in the interview said their parents want them to be teachers teaching Urdu and *Deeniyat* while few said that their parents want them to be doctors. In an average middle-class Indian household, certain professions such as teaching and medicine are naturally discussed as being female professions and others such as engineering are broadly referred to as male occupations. It was evident in my ethnography that parents' aspirations for their daughters were also delimited by their current social and economic position. An informal conversation with the father of a 8th standard girl highlighted his aspirations for his daughter in the following way:

Interviewer: What do you want your daughter to do after school?

Father: We do not have money to pay exorbitant fees of an engineering college even though my daughter wants to be an engineer. We will see what can be done. It is better if girls become doctors. Being a doctor is honourable. Moreover, government medical colleges charge minimal fees. I want her to go to Aligarh after she finishes school to prepare for Aligarh medical entrance exam.

Girls also had the reflexivity to develop personal aspirations and desires that were sometimes incongruent with their parents, consorting a space of negotiation—a

product of their relational self. These were akin to moments of ruptures or resistance to the structure as one may call it in girls' everyday subjective dispositions.

To discern the subjectivity of Muslim girls, it is important that their lives must be studied as individuals rather than as living symbols of religion (Marranci, 2008). Therefore, it is important to take into account their existence and their subjectivity in conjunction with their emotional environment (ibid.). Mahmood's critiques, such as Schielke (2010) and Bangstad (2011) argue that she has placed too much influence on the pious behaviour of women in the piety movement without perhaps looking at moments of ruptures in their lives. One of the major critiques directed against scholars of the piety movement literature is that it essentializes religious identities. As Schielke (2010) argues, 'there is too much Islam in the anthropology of Islam.' My ethnography pointed to some desires and aspirations in girls that were not exclusively shaped by religion. Unlike Mahmood, wherein her subjects are observed and conversed within settings of piety, I spoke to girls in their leisure time that got me into conversations that were predominantly about questions of their career and marriage expectations and to explore the ways in which their Islamic teachings of obedience and *adab* influenced these non-pious decisions.

Very few of these aspirations challenged the standardized norms on career aspirations of girls in India. For example, only two of my informants said they wanted to be fashion designers and beauticians and only four of them stated that they wanted to be engineers. Girls emphasized that parental approval and acceptance of such aspirations and desires was highly relevant and that to generate consent, they will negotiate their aspirations with their dependable kin such as parents and with elder uncles in the case of joint families. However, such paradigms

of negotiation were absent when it came to questions of marriage. Marriage expectations demonstrated a strategic choice made by girls that resisted and supported the existing systems of power. There is a vision of independence *in* dependence as the relational, or dependent self informs aspirations and personal choices. The girl whose father wants her to be a doctor later spoke with me:

I want to be an engineer. But my father wants me to go to Aligarh because it has a Muslim environment and has reservations for Muslim women in Aligarh Medical College. I love Math that is why I want to be an engineer. If I get good marks and get into an engineering college, then *Abba* [father] will understand. I will talk to him and tell him I don't want to go to Aligarh to be a doctor.

I asked her what she would do if her father did not agree?
She said:

Islam teaches us to do things according to what parents say. What's the point of me doing anything if my parents aren't happy with me? My parents decided that I should go to this school after I finished my nursery in a *maktab*. Look how well I am doing in this school! I am sure that my parents will be very happy if I get good marks and become an engineer! But I will not disappoint them by going against their will. Rest is on Allah. He will decide best.

Another girl said: I want to be a doctor, but my father wants me to do B.Ed. and become a teacher. I want to convince him. I will talk to my sister first because she will understand. She studied in the same school. She is waiting to get admission in a college for her B.A. I know she and my mother will convince *Abba.*

Critics would argue that the need for parental approval demonstrates the lack of agency and authenticity of one's true self. The feminist scholarship will discard this positionality as being appeasing, lacking agency, and demonstration of false consciousness. However I argue that Muslim girls' decision not to directly challenge patriarchal norms and parental authority in realizing their aspirations is not a sign of their docility but that their effective agency is exhibited in their capacity to aspire, imagine, negotiate and talk within the enabling spaces of their family, community, and social values that unintendedly also marks their entry point into complex negotiations with modernity (see Khan, 2015). This agency could in the future enable them to take on bigger struggles against their marginality (see Appadurai, 2004).

Taking Appadurai's (ibid.) theorization of the cultural capacity to aspire, it is arguable then that social change within the marginalized communities is possible only as a product of their own culturally enabled voice—a chance to have an agency within their suited cultural paradigms. This position helps me critique negative assumptions about Muslim girls who study in Islamic schools and madrasas as being passive and docile. Even if the agency is not that of overt resistance, it is that of 'intentionality' (Ortner, 2001) and it is this intention for action that sets in motion an enabling capacity to aspire.

Ortner makes a valuable distinction between what she calls—'agency of power' and 'agency of intentions' (2001: 78-79). For the first, Ortner suggests that it is the most familiar form of agency, which is akin to the power that people have at their disposals and their ability to act on their own. 'Agency in this sense is relevant for both domination and subordination' (ibid: 78). Resistance is this form of power agency to what Scott (1987) has called 'foot-dragging.' The second type of agency that this chapter is mostly concerned with is one of 'projects, purposes, and desires [that] are culturally constituted and reproduce different subjectivities' (ibid: 79). It is here that people seek to accomplish things within their framework and on their terms. Ortner, however, says that more often than not the two types of agency work together. Girls' agency to negotiate develops from their thorough understanding of their relationship and positions vis-à-vis their family. They hope to better their positions through strategic negotiations rather than an overt display of rebellious behaviour. However, as Ortner says, 'this is not free agency' but is defined by differentials of power (ibid: 80).

In the Indian context, development theorists, planners and policy makers engage in macro studies focusing on issues of power and dominance that often lead to generalizations (Halani, 2005). Anthropologists have rejected such a mechanistic model of humans as bearers of structures (Fowler, 1997) and have focused on individual agency over rules. Individuals have agency, but it is not unfettered (Jenkins, 1992). The marginalized may have fewer choices to expand their aspirations, especially when power relations determine the real choices open to people (Appadurai, 2004). Girls in the Islamic school function within structures and rules that determine their behaviour. However, these structures and regulations are not necessarily subjugating and oppressive. On the other hand, hybridity in Islamic school has engendered new aspirations and desires in girls that were hitherto unknown in the generation of their mothers.

Generalizations also portray women as victims of power and structure dominance and reify cultures and rules that conflate theory with practice. Khan (2015) argues that even so the post-colonial feminist scholarship in the Indian context has given us accounts of women's complex subjectivity, they have done so mostly in the discursive spheres of cinema and literature without any allusion to the experiences of women in the real world. For example, using a cinematic lens of a popular Hindi movie, Mankekar (1999) hypothesized about post-liberalization Indian women's agency and voice to negotiate their desires within the context of patriarchal set-up of an Indian Hindu family. However, as Khan (2015) argues such enlightening accounts of female agency suffer from the dearth of deep organic links between socio-economic conditions and narratives of the agency other than that of resistance against domination. Moreover, postcolonial feminist literature barely gives recognition to the agency of Muslim women and their experiences (see Raheja and

Gold, 1994). The overwhelming focus on the agency as resistance has reduced all other responses and experiences to being non-agential. This is especially important for girls who grow up in Muslim households whose lives and their experiences are dismissed as pliable and subdued.

Occupational aspirations of girls

Before one can discuss the question of aspiration among young girls studying in a hybrid Islamic school, it is important to make a theoretical distinction between 'aspirations' and 'expectations'—the former refers to 'idealistic goals' while the latter refers to 'realistic appraisals' (Baars, n.a: 2). Much of the discussion of aspirations in this section refers to idealistic goals—goals that girls want to achieve however whose fulfilment depend on conditioning social and economic factors.

The literature on female madrasas has made assumptions about madrasa education and lowering of aspirations in girls. It is routinely argued that madrasa education trains students to value outwardly rewards rather than dwell on material pleasures of this world. Further, it is suggested madrasa education increases young women's adherence to orthodox Islamic values (Bano, 2015). In the context of Pakistan, Bano suggests that there is little difference in aspirations between girls studying in modern State schools and girls studying in female madrasas. Gupta (2015a) highlights the development of little or no career aspirations in girls and submission to their parental authority that shapes the progress of their lives as future mothers. Gupta argues for girls' lack of voice in the determination of their choice of career. Most girls expressed their aspirations in vague terms like "I want to do something with my life" and their husbands and in-laws would probably take to their lives after marriage (2015a: 115-116). While Gupta's analysis highlights relationality in the creation of

gendered identities, her understanding of agency of girls is rather subsumed within questions of individuation. It is here that I depart in my analysis. In my ethnographic context girls in higher secondary grades pointed to definite career goals despite a strong influence of the Islamic ethos. Most of them suggested they wanted to be doctors followed by engineers and then teachers. Almost no one said they did not want a career after they finish school. However, aspirations were expressed in conjunction and consent of their guardians at the same time as girls voiced their ability to negotiate with their parents in case their aspirations were not in alignment with their family. One of the girls suggested:

After my studies, if my parents insist on me getting married, I will make them understand that I want to study. I will do well in my studies, which will make my parents feel proud of me, and I know that they will let me study. Parents always take the right decisions for their children.

Power to negotiate agency develops in conjunction with some female religious role models (see Bano, 2015; Gupta, 2015a) or a close kin like the elder sister or someone in the family who girls saw were able to negotiate their way through such dilemmas between marriage and career. Several girls suggested that since their elder sisters were also studying and were preparing for competitive exams, they would do the same after school. Interestingly, young wardens between 22-24 years of age had similar plans to appear for various competitive exams for better teaching opportunities in other schools. According to them, they were doing the job of being wardens in the school only temporarily in the hope of preparing for other exams so they could shift. The three of them had studied in a popular *Ahl-i-Hadith* madrasa in Chandanbara in Champaran district of Bihar and had on the side enrolled in distance learning programmes to take up the CBSE in 10th and 12th standard examinations. They had graduated in Arabic from one of the colleges in their home district. One of them also said that she wanted to go to Medina for higher studies in Arabic, however

she could not go because there was no male number in her family who could accompany her. Negotiating her way through family and defying early marriage, her aspirations seemed to have adjusted according to the context of her existence.

Most girls desired to be doctors, followed by engineering and then teaching. In her ethnography Winkelmann (2005) discusses the future of madrasa graduates and their willingness to either get married or be teachers in the madrasa. Graduates who were 15 and 16-year-olds expressed strong desires to get married or to teach. The curriculum in the madrasa prepared the students well for teaching profession, and as the teachers in the madrasa were barely older than the students themselves, graduates identified well with the teachers. Sometimes the teachers also functioned as useful role models for the students and girls saw teaching profession as a respectable career choice. While aspiration to teach was certainly there in the minds of many girls in my context, other professions like becoming, doctors and engineers were also popular choices. Girls said that they loved subjects like Biology and Chemistry and that becoming a doctor will make their parents proud.

The analysis of occupational aspirations of girls is suggestive of the fact that exposure to modern forms of curriculum and pedagogy are generating new forms of aspirations in girls one that is framed in relation to their dependent capacity on the school and family. However, unlike career aspirations marriage expectations of girls corresponded more to the aspirations of their parents.

Table 1

Career aspirations	8th N=15	9th N=7	10th N=6
Doctor	6	3	3
Engineer	3	2	2
Teacher	5	2	1
Other (Beautician, Fashion etc.)	1	0	0

Marriage expectations

Islam holds a positive attitude towards marriage that must be based on the consent of both parties. *Al-Nisa* specifically allows Muslim men to marry 'women of your choice' but forbids them from marrying women against their will (Ali 1989: 184-189). However, marriage by choice for Muslim girls is problematic in most Muslim communities. Power relations within families and expectations of the extended community shape perceptions about marriage in Muslim girls (cf. Abu-Lughod, 1990). Families wield authority over daughters in arranging marriages in most Muslim communities in India. Such marriages are often consanguineous in nature and are solemnized among persons descending from a common ancestor (see Basu and Roy, 1972; Bittles and Hussain, 2000). In the context of Delhi, Nasir and Kalla (2011) argue that consanguineous marriages are culturally preferred marriage choices of parents among Sunni Muslims. Parents consider 'social compatibility and close involvement with the family as reasons for such marriage unions' (2011: 106). Some girls in the present context argued that marriages with cousins were also a preferable norm in their families. There were exceptional cases of marriage by choice—in which the girl knew the boy from before (possibly a family relative), and

the marriage would have been solemnized between the two families out of dowry security.

Different from desiring a definite career goal that was seemingly acceptable to the families, on the question of marriage many adolescent girls refrained from such mediations with families and disagreed in having romantic linkages before marriage. However, exposure to daily soap operas often based on romantic stories seemed to have an effect on the lives of these young girls. Girls shared with me the stories of some of the soap operas they watched when they went home. Although the school did not provide the internet in the computer labs, some girls accessed Facebook at home on a smartphone. Their exposure to the world outside was mediated through such channels in globalizing India that has framed variable expectations in the minds of young girls. In a group conversation that I had with girls about television and soap operas, their interest in the idea of romantic love in a marital union became quite apparent. The most popular television serial/romantic drama among girls was one, which was based on the life of a young Muslim married couple and their struggle to keep their relationship in the face of constant familial impediments. In a society in which arrange marriages were an acceptable norm, girls' expectations of having a marriage by choice were untenable according to Islamic norms, and negotiations were insupportable in the family. Girls argued that it is always better to marry with the consent of parents even if it is "love" marriage outside family.

Interestingly, my question of 'who is an ideal husband?' highlighted the importance of love within a marital union. The idea of post-nuptial development of love is upheld in notions of arrange marriages, however; love and compatibility are not the prime factors in most South Asian marriage considerations. So even though girls

refrained from having romantic linkages before marriage, a good compatible marriage possibly with a boy of their age, romantic love, and deep sense of care for the wife were the most desiring factors that girls considered in marriage. Arrange marriages cognizant of the familial tradition are not necessarily oppressive for girls as is understood in most Eurocentric accounts that equate arrange marriages with forced marriages. For instance, in her ethnography Froerer (2012) aptly demonstrates that tribal girls who once aspired to a career settled being happy and satisfied with arrange marriage afterward. She argues that with changes in conditions, girls' aspirations also changed and corresponded more with their parents' expectations.

Familial responsibility after marriage and housework are understood as signs of pliable cognizance to patriarchal traditions in the feminist literature (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2010). This literature disregards the idea that in many contexts secular individual women actually desire motherhood and marriage. In a compelling ethnography of Jewish women in Manhattan, Davidman (1996) evinces how women in their fundamentally secular and individualized lifestyle desire family, marriage, and motherhood. Secular women were increasingly being drawn to the Jewish religious community for adopting orthodox values associated with Judaism. 'They did not identify with glamorized image of independent career women. Joining the religious community gave them a context that legitimated their desires for [marriage and motherhood]' (1996: 130).

Muslim girls' gendered agency, their relational construction of career aspirations and marriage expectations elicits the need to think through assumptions and alternative models that take into account the lives of Muslim girls who do not perhaps fit into the Eurocentric liberalist framework of aspirations, authenticity, individuality, and

agency. They are nonetheless important in highlighting girls' complex subjectivities in negotiating with patriarchal order to carve out enabling spaces of negotiation within the family.

Table 2

Marriage expectations	8th N=15	9th N=7	10th N=6
Do you want to get married?	15	7	6
Arrange marriage	9	5	4
Marriage by choice or love marriage	6	2	2

Changing social relations?

In highlighting the concepts of complex subjectivities and relational notions of self in Muslim girls, this chapter has paid inadequate attention to the issues of patriarchy and whether and to what extent does relationality and conformist self reinforces the patriarchal set-up. In other words can subjective relational dispositions unsettle patriarchal social relations? Girls' behaviour hardly rock the boat of social structures, but their relationality and agency lie midway between what Hay calls 'structurally reproducing' and 'structurally transformative' agency (1994: 64-66) and what Willis refers to 'partial penetrations' in analyzing young men in British school to stress on the mutual interplay of agency and social structures (1981: 113). Thus, on the one hand, girls eschew confrontation with patriarchal social order and on the contrary their aspirations and desires sometimes incongruent with the aspirations of the family are also subverting its power by pushing the structural limitations of the community necessitating changes. Besides, it is fairly arguable that changing economic and social conditions in India have already brought about far-reaching

changes within the patriarchal order within all communities irrespective of faith (Mukhopadhyay and Seymour, 1994) and girls who study in the Islamic school, far from being oblivious, are strategizing their way through such changes.

In the context of the Middle Eastern society, scholars such as Haddad and Esposito (1998) and Moghadem (2003) argue that in many Muslim families where men have left for employment to oil rich countries, women are left at home as a primary parent while their husbands labored in the Gulf. This has produced wide-ranging changes in the role and family relationships where women have wielded authority within the household. Similarly, in her ethnography, Weiss (1998) argues for changes in the familial relations within Muslim households in the walled city of urban Lahore. She categorizes the renegotiation of gender images and expectations within the household into three categories: 1) women being allowed and in some cases encouraged to acquire education beyond simple literacy; 2) expansion of women's labour, and employment opportunities outside the home/private sphere; and 3) mobility within the family.

Within the Muslim community under consideration: first, that parents are willing to send their daughters to cities for primary and secondary education instead of keeping them in the villages from which they come, points to changing attitude of the community already underway. Second, as already discussed, from the point of view of the girls change in structure from home to school has generated new forms of subjectivity and agency by which they can negotiate their positions both within the school and family. An unstructured interview with a grandmother of a 9th standard girl highlighted her changing attitude concerning her adolescent daughter's education:

Interviewer: Where do you live?

Elderly woman: Our hometown is Darbhanga. I have come to take my granddaughter home for the break and collect her report card.

Interviewer: Have you come alone?

Elderly woman: No, I have come with my son.

Interviewer: Has your grand daughter's mother also come?

Elderly woman: No. She doesn't travel. In our family, young women are not allowed to travel.

Interviewer: But your granddaughter is studying in this school so far from home. Why is that?

Elderly woman: Because I cannot keep her *jahil* (illiterate) in this age. She has to do something with her life.

Interviewer: Would you prefer your granddaughter going to other public schools?

Elderly woman: No. I think this school is best both for her and the family. She will be on the right Islamic path. Other schools do not teach these values.

Interviewer: Will you allow your granddaughter to study after she finishes school?

Elderly woman: She is doing very well if our financial situation permits I think we will let her study. She will make us proud.

Later that day, Shafa said to me in English, "You know *Apa*, because I get such good marks in this school, *Abba* (father) thinks I can be a doctor. I think so too! My other two younger cousins who are also in this school do not get good marks. *Wo to ghar pe hi reh jayengi school ke baad* (they will continue to stay at home after school)"

While the mother in this situation had no exposure to education of any kind, the daughter has grown up to have different expectations from her schooling. She has benefitted from her hybridized education. Her pious behaviour and reflections of a being a 'good Muslim daughter' has developed her parents' trust on her and consequently in her a new capacity to aspire.

It is worth pointing out that two brothers of Shafa's joint family have been allowed to join public non-Islamic schools for a better employable future. She said that she teaches Arabic and Urdu to the younger male siblings because she is the one

studying in this Islamic school and getting good marks in the family. Sometimes *hafizas* are respected more within the family. One of the girls I interviewed suggested that in all family events where reading and reciting of the Quran is required she has often been asked to lead the family ceremonies (see also Winkelmann, 2005, 2007). These changes barely make any overt challenge to the patriarchal tendencies, for example, Shafa's brothers were sent to non-Islamic public schools because employability was important for boys whereas for Shafa it was important that she studied in an Islamic school. Therefore, reiterating Abu-Lughod, the project of 'remaking women revolves around discussions of their roles as mothers, as managers of the domestic realm, and as wives of men…and with all its unintended consequences…[modernity] might not have been purely liberatory' (1998: 8). Nevertheless, these shifts highlight important transforming first ports of realities for communities stigmatized as unchanging and unyielding on their attitude towards formal schooling of adolescent girls. Girls in the school occupy a fascinating position. While transforming socio-economic landscape and changes in the nature of girls' Islamic schools are loosening the grip of patriarchy within the Muslim household, girls' negotiable positions carefully avoid unsettling the normative discourse.

Conclusion

It is important to note here that I am not arguing that girls in the schools *cannot* or are incapable of being autonomous. Rather, what I am hinting at is that relational selves are more supported in the school and within the community guiding social behaviour. Relationality may also not capture the ongoing complex and contradictory realities of subjectivity and personhood as also that of aspirations and expectations, which are far from static and depending on the contexts and constraints bound to shift. However, relationality is an important theoretical precept

that is often less validated in the literature on marginalized Muslim girls in India where such dependence is squarely matched with ideas of acquiescence and submissive behaviour.

CHAPTER 5

Conclusions

Early on in July 2015, the Maharashtra government in India de-recognized madrasas in the region that did not include subjects such as Science and Math considered as pre-requisites of formal education in the country triggering a fresh discussion on the role of Islamic schools in the country. The Minority Affairs Minister of Maharashtra said:

Madrasas are giving students education on religion and not giving them formal education…these institutions will be considered as non-schools.
(AlJazeera, 2015)

Consider this statement of the Founder of the school:

The government is so insensitive to our Islamic schools. It was so difficult for us to register this school for charitable tax exemption. If we are not even recognized as schools, then there is no hope for any help from governments. Look at the garbage and the road outside! (see image 3)

The statement of the Founder of the school I studied expressed deep resentment against the government that presents a very skewed portrait of these institutions. As this thesis manifests, Islamic learning institutions in contemporary India are actively striving for adjustments within the system battling marginalization on multiple fronts. Therefore, moving away from a state-centric position, this work was aimed at delineating transition in Islamic schooling for girls, one that brings forth the community's efforts at legitimizing transformations and that of girls who are carefully balancing their aspirations within familial expectations.

Within the material and social context of neoliberal globalization in India, this study construed a critical thinking of globalization and its impingement on the everyday

texture of life of the marginalized marred with conflicts and resistances, which debunks monolithic ideas of modernization that have shaped our normative understandings of aspirations and agency. This is similar to what Geertz (1973) extrapolated on an anthropologists' task in providing a 'thick description' of the conceptual structures and meaning as opposed to a 'thin description'. Chapter two underlined the importance of ethnography in understanding metanarrative theorizations of globalization and its applicability in the local set-up. Moving on from here, this research delved in presenting an ethnographic portrait of the current context of school and community important for bringing out the palpability of changes.

On the one hand, the emergence of hybrid Islamic schools for girls fits well with the line of scholarly thought that believes in reform or "modernization" of Islamic schools and madrasas in India. As with most sweeping generalizations about Islamic pedagogical institutions, this set of literature is warped and distorted by abstractions. To such a degree, this thesis argued that there is no simple demand of modernity and neither is Islamic schools transforming in linearity. A developing global consciousness in the community and the changing socio-economic landscape of contemporary India extrapolates the complexities involved in the process. The metamorphosis brings to light the complex engagement of the community with the inclusive and exclusive changes of neoliberal globalizing India. This thesis argued, that without an adequate explication of the effect of schooling on the broader community, it is difficult to move past reified identities marked by modern education.

Ethnographies on schools have also examined the ways in which schooling defines the cultural dynamics of the community in which they are embedded (Stambach, 2000). Institutions such as schools shape our social and cultural thoughts in questions of gender and religion. The cultural transmission techniques in the school exemplify the manner in which gender discourses are shaped in the school, such as the gendered selection of curriculum. Thus, these schools occupy a unique position in the changing landscape of contemporary India in more than one way.

This unique position is explicated in chapter three that explains the process of hybridization, appraising the importance of both curricula in generating social and economic capital in neoliberal India. Study of hybrid girls' Islamic schools suggests that not only is the artificial hierarchy between religious and mainstream knowledge reduced but also that sacred knowledge that was once a prerogative and authority of the *Ulema* (Zaman, 2002), is democratically available for everyone. Such decentralizations are actively transforming women's position both within the household and outside. Similarly, for girls a combination of their Islamic teaching and mainstream curriculum have expanded their allotted time and space before marriage—a move away from a household setting into the school setting has opened up new imaginative worlds and imagined modernities.

One of the main arguments of this thesis has been that transitions in Islamic schooling and hybridization are reflective of Muslim girls' unique subjective dispositions. These issues are intertwined with the way religion is perceived differently by different groups in the setting—reiterating the anthropological position of plurality in Islam. For the community and the school, which circumscribes boundaries for girls, Islam acts as a moral mechanism to codify

unintentional changes. In that sense, both issues of gender parity and education are based on cultural norms, and Islamic values, with the expectations of the community constantly oscillating between market-oriented demands and their cultural ethos. In other words, gender is a site of contestation and conflict. While girls are being encouraged to finish secondary and high school, they are also being socialized within the school to be obedient to their parents and follow strict Islamic norms. For girls, being pious and having a firm moral standing are linked with the social relational contexts of their existence. Unlike what is popularly assumed, I have argued that religious and cultural ethos acts as an enabling factor for girls who in the process of asserting their aspirations and desires have stretched the normative discourse of the community, carving their niche vis-à-vis their positions within the family. The willingness and to an extent the ability to negotiate with the community is an active agency, although not one of resistance. This approach highlights pluralities of religious traditions, its elasticity as well as the many ways in which historical innovations take place including a feminist reimagining of clichéd notions of religious traditions (Omer, 2014).

This is an important argument to make in the face of the constant backlash against economically marginalized Muslims in the country homogenizing them as "backward" particularly on their "orthodox" Islamic beliefs about women (Sanyal, 2011) based on literal interpretations of the sacred texts. For example, Guillaume's (1990) proposition to understand Islam through a historical perspective leads him to conclude that women have an inferior position in Islam. He has cited Quranic permission given to man to beat his wife, divorce her anytime as a general argument to hypothesise that women have an inferior status in Islam. Several Islamic feminists, particularly in the Middle East have argued against such stereotypical propositions

(see Kandiyoti, 1996; Abu-Lughod, 1998; Mernissi, 1987; Ait-Sabbah, 1984). My conversations with girls in the school strongly emphasized that despite all odds within the society, girls are understood as precious gifts that are bestowed on the humanity by Allah—a *rehmat*.

The field of women's agency in the colonial period was squarely trained on the theme of recovering women's voice in their literature that was apparently based on ideas of intellectual autonomy (Ali, 2000; Sarkar, 2008). Besides, as Sarkar (ibid.) points out, this feminist historiography rests on a meta-narrative of emergence and progress that has missed out on other forms of agency among the non-dominant groups. The literature on Muslim women in the post-colonial conditions has not recovered from this bias. Muslim women in post-independence India were often portrayed as oppressed and lagging behind (see Roy, 1979; Jeffery, 1979). The effort to recover Muslim women's agency in the post-colonial literature has been a move to counter the persistent representation of women as "backward", but in this effort, a rich and complex issue has become a fabled subject position of the "liberal" or the "feminist."

Shifting from the meta-narrative of the West, this thesis has sought to recover Muslim girls' agency studying in the hybrid Islamic schools without subsuming into the rhetoric of the transcendental similarity, which is that of the "empowerment of women". The importance of moving away from this position is to bring to light the occurrence of other forms of agency in the lives of non-dominant groups of women. Much of what girls decide to do in jelling with their pious self as well as negotiating their expectations with their family is reflective of their internal contestations. Their family's emotional and monetary support, according to them, is essential to realize

their educational aims. As I reflect upon my life, I get the same impression of a long, difficult, and sometimes joyful negotiation with my parents during my professional journey building upon merit and trust, avoiding active confrontation with close kin that would have distracted me from my educational endeavours—the same negotiation that has led me to the stage of life I am in.

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APPENDIX I

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

The following questions were used as guidelines for interviews and informal conversations that took place during fieldwork.

Questions to teachers:

> ➢ What do you teach?
>
> ➢ How long have you been teaching?
>
> ➢ What did you do before teaching in this school?
>
> ➢ What are your professional qualifications?
>
> ➢ Why did you choose this school for teaching?
>
> ➢ How is this school different from madrasas?
>
> ➢ Do you do anything else for your living?
>
> ➢ What do you think of music and cinema?
>
> ➢ Are you married? Would you like to be married?
>
> ➢ Will you like your children to study in this school?
>
> ➢ What constitutes a good husband/wife?

Questions to students:

> ➢ Which class are you in?
>
> ➢ How old are you?
>
> ➢ When did you join?
>
> ➢ Did you attend any other school before this?
>
> ➢ What do you want to do after school?
>
> ➢ Do you like this school and hostel?
>
> ➢ What is your routine for the day?
>
> ➢ What do you do in your free time/ what are your hobbies?
>
> ➢ How often do you talk to your parents?
>
> ➢ How many members are there in your family?
>
> ➢ Are any of your brothers/sisters/cousins married?
>
> ➢ How have you done in your last exam?
>
> ➢ Do you read newspapers? (Asked some basic current affairs)
>
> ➢ Do you like music and television?
>
> ➢ Do you know how to log in on Facebook?

- ➤ Would you like to get married?
- ➤ Would you like love marriage or arranged?
- ➤ Has anyone in your family married by choice?
- ➤ What do you wear at home?
- ➤ What do you wear in the hostel normally?
- ➤ When did you start observing purdah?
- ➤ Has anyone from your family studied in a madrasa or this school?
- ➤ What are your parents' qualifications?

Questions to guardians:

- ➤ What do you do?
- ➤ Are you the sole earner of your family?
- ➤ Why did you choose this school for your daughter/relative?
- ➤ Has anyone else in your family studied in a madrasa or this school?
- ➤ What do you hope to get out of your daughter's/ relative's education?
- ➤ How did you find out about this school?
- ➤ How is this school different from a madrasa?

APPENDIX II

TRANSLATED CURRICULUM OF THE ISLAMIC SCHOOL

PRIMARY SECTION: TILL 7th STANDARD

CLASS –KG-1

- Deeniyat : 1) *Noorani Qaeda* (basic Urdu) —
    2) *Dua Zabani* (memorizing verses)

- Urdu: 1) Urdu *Khushkhat* (text book on Urdu)

- Hindi: 1) My Lovely *Akshar Gyan*
    2) Hindi Workbook

- English: 1) My-Lovely Pre-Primer
    2) My Lovely English Work Book

- Maths: Step A

CLASS-KG-II

- Deeniyat: 1) *Noorani Qaeda* (Part 2)
    2) *Dua Zabani* (Part 2)

- Urdu: 1) *Chaman Islam Qaeda*
    2) *Urdu Khushkhat*

- Hindi: 1) My Lovely *Shabd Gyan* (Alphabets)
    2) My Lovely Hindi Work Book

- English: 1) My Lovely Pre-Primer
    2) My Lovely English Work Book- B

- Math: Step B

CLASS-1

- Deeniyat: 1) Memorising *Aam Para* and 30th chapter of the Quran
    2) *Masnoon Duan*
    3) Methods for *wudu* (ablution) and *namaz*

- Urdu: 1) *Chaman Islam* First Part
    2) *Hamari kitab* First Part
    3) *Amlah-wa-Insha-Parwazi*

- Hindi: *Rimjhim* -1

- ➢ English: 1) Marigold-1
  2) My Lovely Workbook-C

- ➢ E.V.S (Environmental Studies-1)

- ➢ Maths Step-1

ClASS-2

- ➢ Deeniyat: 1) *Nazra* (reading verbally without translation)
  Surah Bakrah
  2) *Hifz* (memorizing) *Surah Fateh and Surah Fel*
  3) *Masnoon Duan*

- ➢ Urdu: 1) *Chaman Islam* Part 2
  2) *Hamari Kitab* Part 2
  3) *Amlah-wa-Insha-Parwazi*

- ➢ Hindi: *Rimjhim*-2

- ➢ English: 1) Marigold-2

  2) Perfect English Grammar-1

- ➢ E.V.S. -2
- ➢ Maths Step-2

CLASS-3
- ➢ Deeniyat: 1) *Quran Majeed Nazra* from *Surah Imraan* to

  Surah *Al- Kahf*

  2) *Tarjuma* Quran from *Surah Al-Qadr* to *Surah Al-Naas*

  3) Hifz from *Surah Hamza* to *Surah Al-Layl*
- ➢ Arabic*:*   *Chalees* Hadith *Nazra* (Read) (40 Hadith)
- ➢ Urdu: 1) *Chaman Islam* (Garden of Islam)

  2) *Hamari Kitaab* (Our book)
- ➢ Hindi: *Rimjhim* 3
- ➢ English: Marigold-3

  Perfect English Grammar and Comprehension-1
- ➢ E.V.S

- ➢ Maths Step-3

CLASS- 4

- ➢ Deeniyat I: 1) Quran *Majeed Nazra* from *Surah Maryam* till the end
- ➢ Deeniyat II: 1) *Sahi Islami Aqeeda*

  2) *Chalees Hadith* (40 Hadith) *Tarjuma*

- ➢ Arabic   1) *Minhaj al arabiyyah* Part 1

  3) *Qasas Un Nabiyeen* Part 1

- ➢ Urdu   1) *Chaman Islam* Part4
  2) *Hamari Kitaab* Part 4

- ➢ Hindi: *Rimjhim*-4
- ➢ English: Marigold-4
  Perfect English Grammar and Comprehension Part-3

- ➢ E.V.S-4
- ➢ Maths Step-4
- ➢ Embroidery: *Krushiya*

CLASS-5

- ➢ Deeniyat I: 1) *Tarjuma* and *Tafseer* from *Surah Al-Nabaa* to *Surah Ali*

  2) *Hifz* from *Surah Al-Jinn* to *Surah Mursalat*

- ➢ Deeniyat II: 1) *Riyaz-us-Saleheen Vol 1*

  (The Book of Miscellany)

  2) *Sahi Islami Aqeeda* (Right Islamic way of life)

  3) *Hifz Arbain-an-Nawwi* Part 1

  (Commentary of the forty *Hadith of An Nawwi*)

- ➢ Arabic I: 1) *Durus al lughat al arabiyyah* Part 1
  2) *Minhaj al arabiyyah* Part 2

  3) *Qasas Un Nabiyeen* Part 2

- ➢ Arabic II: 1) *Ameen Al-Khu*
  2) *Ameen Al-Sarf*

- ➢ Urdu: 1) *Chaman Islam* Part 5
  2) *Hamari Kitaab* Part 5

3) Home Science in Urdu Part 1

- ➢ Hindi: *Rimjhim*-5
- ➢ English: Marigold-5
                         Perfect English Grammar and Comprehension-4
- ➢ E.V.S.-5
- ➢ Maths Step-5
- ➢ Hand Embroidery

CLASS-6

- ➢ Deeniyat I: 1) *Tarjuma* and *Tafseer Surah Bakrah* and
                     Complete chapter 1 of Quran
                    2) Hifz from *Surah Mulk* to *Surah Nooh*

- ➢ Deeniyat II: 1) *Riyaz-us-Saleheen Vol 2*

                     (The Book of Miscellany)

                     2) *Sahi Islami Aqeeda* (Right Islamic way of life)

                     3) *Hifz Arbain-an-Nawwi* Final chapter

                     (Commentary of the forty *Hadith of An Nawwi*)

- ➢ Arabic: 1) *Durus al lughat al arabiyyah* Part 1
                    2) *Ameen Al Nahw* (The Clear Arabic Grammar)
                    3) *Ameen Al-Sarf*

- ➢ Urdu: 1) *Ar Raheeq Al Makhtum*
                    2) *Shikwa Jawab Shikwa* by Allama Iqbal
                    3) Home Science in Urdu Part 2

- ➢ Hindi: 1) *Rimjhim*-6
                    2) Hindi Grammar Part I

- ➢ English   1) Honey Suckle
                    2) Pact with the sun
                    3) Perfect English Grammar and Comprehension

- ➢ Science: NCERT Based Science for class 6
- ➢ Social Science: NCERT Based Books on History, Political Science,
                     Geography
- ➢ Mathematics for class 6 by R.S. Agarwal
- ➢ Painting

CLASS-7

- ➢ Deeniyat I: 1) *Tarjuma* and *Tafseer* Surah *Bakrah* and Second
                     Chapter of the Quran
                    2) *Hifz Surah Al Munafiqoon*

- ➢ Deeniyat II: 1) *Bulugh-Al-Maram* (Till *Kitaab Al-Biew*)
  2) *Hifz Hadith (Harbab se ek Hadith)*

- ➢ Arabic: 1) *Durus al lughat al arabiyyah* Part 2
  2) *Kitaab Al Nahu*
  3) *Kitaab Al Saraf*

- ➢ Urdu: 1) *Ar Raheeq Al Makhtum (Madni Zindagi)*
  2) *Sahi Islami Aqeeda* Part 4
  3) Home Science in Urdu Part 3

- ➢ Hindi: 1) Vasant-7
  2) Hindi Grammar Part II

- ➢ English: 1) Honey Comb
  2) Supplementary English Book
  3) Perfect English Grammar and Comprehension-6

- ➢ Science: 1) NCERT Based Science for class 7
- ➢ Social
  Science 1) History, Political Science, and Geography
  NCERT for class 7

- ➢ Mathematics for class 7 by R.S. Agarwal

- ➢ Tailoring

SECONDARY SECTION 8TH, 9TH, 10TH

CLASS-8

- ➢ Deeniyat I: 1) *Tarjuma* and *Tafseer* Chapter
  Three of the Quran
  2) *Hifz Surah Yaseen* and *Surah Al Rahman*

- ➢ Deeniyat II: 1) *Bulugh-Al-Maram*
  2) *Hifz Hadith (Harbab se Ek Hadith)*

- ➢ Arabic: 1) *Qiraat-ur-Rashida*
  2) *Kitaab Al-Nahu*
  3) *Kitaab Al-Sauf*

- ➢ Hindi: 1) Vasant-8th
  2) Hindi Grammar-*Umang* Part 5

- ➢ English: 1) Honey Dew
  2) Supplementary Book 'It so Happened'
  3) Perfect English Grammar and Comprehension-7

- Science: NCERT Based Science for class 8

- Social Science: History, Political Science, Geography, and Economics

  NCERT Books for class 8

- Mathematics for Class 8th by R.S. Agarwal

- Machine Embroidery

CLASS-9

- Deeniyat I: 1) *Tarjuma* and *Tafseer* 4th chapter of the Quran
  2) *Hifz Ayat Al-Hikam*
  3) *Mishkat-ul-Misabeeh*
  4) *Hifz (Ek Hadith Harbab se)*

- Arabic: 1) *Qiraat-ur-Rashida* Part 2
  2) *Mualam-Al-Nisha*

- Urdu: 1) *Sahi Islami Aqeeda* Part 6
  2) *Urdu Grammar*

- Hindi: 1) Sparsh Part 9
  2) Hindi Grammar Part 5

- English: 1) Bee Hive
  2) Supplementary Book –'Moments'
  3) High school English Grammar and Comprehension
     By Wren and Martin

- Science: NCERT Books for Physics, Chemistry, Biology
  Reference Books by S. Chand

- Mathematics for class 9th by R.S. Agarwal

- Social Science: NCERT Books for History, Geography,

  Political Science, and Economics

CLASS- 10

- Deeniyat: 1) *Tarjuma and Tafseer* 5th chapter of the Quran
  2) *Hifz Ayat Al-Hikam*
  3) *Mishkaat-ul-Misabeeh*
  4) *Hifz (Ek Hadith Harbab se)*

- Arabic: 1) *Qiraat-ur-Rashida* Part 2
                             2) *Mualam-Al-Nisha*

- Urdu: 1) *Fkah-Al-Hadith*
                             2) *Urdu Grammar*

- Hindi: NCERT for class 10th
- English: NCERT for class 10th

- Science: NCERT Books for Physics, Chemistry, Biology
                        Reference Books by S. Chand

- Mathematics for class 10th by R.S. Agarwal

- Social Science: NCERT Books for History, Geography,

                           Political Science, and Economics