

Role of Masjid in Social Reformation in Contemporary Pashtun Society:

A Case Study of District Bannu and Lakki Marwat, Pakistan

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Abstract

Pulpit and Masjid play very pivotal and productive role in a Muslim society. It not only educates and guides Muslims in religious matters as well shapes the social attitude and role of Muslims. Moreover, it is evident by the history that Islamic State was run by the Head of the State from Masjid. Unfortunately, pulpit and Masjid have been losing sense of their actual responsibility as an agent of social cohesion, integration and reformation. The paper is an attempt of studying the current role of pulpit and Masjid regarding religious education and training, exploring the factors that have been hampering the way of realizing the dream of social reformation in contemporary Pashtun society by not allowing pulpit and Masjid to play its due role in this respect and suggesting feasible recommendation for coping with the issue. The study is based on primary data that was collected through questionnaire in District Bannu and Lakki Marwat.

Key Words: *Pulpit, Masjid, Reformation, Islam, Pashtun Society, Bannu, Lakki Marwat*

Introduction:

Masjid is a place for congregational prayers and assembly in Islam¹. It plays a very vital role in a Muslim society². A Muslim keeps his spirituality alive, strengthens the bond with his Creator, meets and communicates with his fellow Muslims and renews his sense of belonging through the *Masjid*. It is not only a place of worship but a center of social reformation as well³. When Messenger (peace be upon him) migrated to *Madinah*, first of all he established the first *Masjid* called *Quba Masjid* there⁴. There are three *Masajid* that are

considered highly sacred in Islam; *Bait Ullah in Makkah, Masjid Al Nabawi in Madinah* and *Masjid Al Aqsa* in Jerusalem⁵. The aim of establishing the *Masjid* was that it would not only be a center of worship and education but it was a hub for social and political activities as well. Messenger (peace be upon him) established *Masjid Al Nabawi* after that and established first residential university namely *Suffah* that not only provided religious education but special attention was paid to the grooming and training of all the students irrespective of gender.⁶⁷ Moreover, it was used as a secretariat of the Islamic State as delegations from various other countries used to meet the head of the state in the *Masjid*⁸. Besides the fact that *Masjid* proved to be a hub of religious knowledge, social integration, moral training and reformation during the Prophetic as well as Pious Caliphs era, but *Masjid* has not been playing such a role since the inception of *monarchy* in Muslim societies and have been turned into centers of worship rituals only⁹. It is evident from history that Messenger (peace be upon him) made *Masjid* as a hub of all activities provided that sanctity of *Masjid* is not violated.¹⁰ *Masjid* is not playing its due role as per the requirement, needs and challenges of the contemporary world. Consequently, the characteristics of tolerance, harmony and moderation are vanishing from the contemporary Pashtun society with every new dawn¹¹. While on the other hand; *Masajid* and Islamic centers are emerging as important social mechanisms in the adaptation of many new Muslim migrants and for the expression of Islamic interests in Western societies. Moreover, *Masajid* are providing an important link between Muslim and Western families¹².

There were nine *Masajid* in *Madinah* at the time of the Messenger (peace be upon him). The buildings of *Masajids* were simple but they had effective, marked and enduring impacts in terms of human personality development¹³¹⁴. Today, the *Masajid* have beautiful and magnificent buildings and trappings but contribute little in the social grooming of the community. Although people are engaged in imparting education with missionary zeal and zest but they are not equipped with modern teaching methodologies and techniques that can enhance the teaching capabilities of teachers and productive outcomes¹⁵.

Same is the situation in both District Bannu and Lakki Marwat. There is a need to revive the role of *Masjid* for the sake of establishing a peaceful, vibrant and prosperous society having God-fearing individuals with strong moral and conscientious personalities. . Furthermore, it should be used as a place of academics and training, irrespective of the man-made division of secular and religious education. Competent and educated persons, equipped with deep knowledge of Islam and understanding of the modern sciences, should be

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appointed as Imams of the *Masjid*. Because they not only lead prayers five times a day, people frequently consult them for various serious religious issues. Consequently, their opinions and explanations of Islam greatly and effectively shape the intellectual grooming and social conduct of the masses.

Bannu:

It is one of the main districts of Southern *Khyber Pakhtunkhwa*, adjacent to tribal area of North *Waziristan*, district *Karak* and district *Lakki Marwat* respectively. According to the available historical records, *Bannu* had an important strategic position in the tribal areas as it was used as a military base during British rule for subjugating the tribal areas. The inhabitants of the said district are known as *Banochis* and they speak a unique and specific dialect of Pashto. Main ethnic classes are *Banochis*, *Wazir*, *Niazi* and *Marwats*. Moreover, the ratio of Muslims is 99.5%, *Ahmadis* 0.3%, Christian 0.19% and Hindus 0.03%. 98.3% inhabitants of *Bannu* speak *Banochi* dialect of Pashto while the rest 1.03% speak Urdu and Punjabi respectively. It has total population of 1.073 million consisting 52% male and 48% female population. 95% population belongs to rural area while 5% are residing in urban area. The total geographical area of the district is 1,227 square kilometers. It has 49 Union Councils and 2 Tehsils, Tehsil *Bannu* and *Domel*. Furthermore, it is famous for the drain basin of *Kurram* and *Tochi/Gambila*¹⁶.

Lakki Marwat:

Lakki Marwat is connected with districts *Karak* in the North and *Bannu* in the North-West, districts *Dera Ismail Khan* in the South and *Tank* in the South-West. In the West of *Lakki Marwat* is *South Waziristan Agency*. The main ethnic classes are *Marwat*, *Banochi*, *Khattak*, *Wazir*, *Bhattani*, *Niazi* and *Gandapur*. Its population is 815000 with the ratio of 51% male and 49% female. 86% population belongs to rural area while 14% are residing in urban area. It has 33 Union Councils and 2 Tehsils, Tehsil *Lakki Marwat* and *Serai Naurang* respectively. It was created as a district on July 1, 1992. Before creation as a district, it was a Tehsil of district *Bannu*¹⁷.

Research Methodology:

Nature of Research:

This Research Work is basically empirical in nature as it is mainly based on field work. This research is qualitative as well as quantitative in nature. Primarily, inductive method is adopted in the study and conclusion. The

research is based on historical, comparative and analytical approach using both explanatory and analytical methods.

Data Collection:

The total population of the targeted region was estimated as Bannu 1.073 million whereas Lakki Marwat has a population of 815000. Data was collected through questionnaire. Moreover, observation and interviews with the experts of local cultures and history were also conducted.

Sampling:

Sample size for both districts was estimated as 384, in which 219 questionnaires were allocated to District Bannu and 165 to Lakki Marwat on the basis of their share in population i-e 57% and 43% respectively. 12 union councils from each district were randomly selected for field data collection. Furthermore, samples were distributed on the basis of population, both rural and urban, main ethnic groups, social classes, gender and age. Only married people were included in the study because the study is totally based on the domestic affairs and experiences and a married person can observe and experience all such matters better than an unmarried person. Moreover, the research is a product of the combination of published materials, books, research journals, research papers, survey reports, newspapers, magazines articles and field work. Special attention has been paid while making the questionnaire to ensure neutrality, objectivity and suitability.

Data Analysis:

Descriptive statistics such as frequency tables has been used to analyze the data. The main contents of the table were, it contains numerical data of both districts based on the responses of both male and female shown with the exact numbers, percentages of their separate responses as well as aggregate percentages.

Translation of the text of the holy Qur'ān is taken from the English translation of holy Qur'ān compiled by *Maulana Wahiduddin Khan*.

Table 1. Qur'ān Circles for Adults

Q. Is there any circle of Qur'ānic study for adults in your street/village's Masjid?						
District	Variable	Male	%	Female	%	Aggregate
Bannu	Yes	31	27.19	12	11.42	43 (19.63%)
	No	83	72.80	93	88.57	176 (80.36%)
Lakki Marwat	Yes	24	27.90	13	16.45	37 (22.42%)
	No	62	72.09	66	83.54	128 (77.57%)

As the figures mentioned in Table 1 shows that only 19.63% people in Bannu and 22.42% people in Lakki Marwat have the opportunity of attending classes of Quran in their respective Masjids mostly after *Esha* prayer while the rest of 80.36% people in Bannu and 77.57% people in Lakki Marwat do not have

access to such sessions of Qur'ān classes because no circle of studying Qur'ān exists at all.

Observation & Analysis:

The most problematic thing in those classes is that none of the participants can dare to ask questions from the Imam during and after the Quran class as it is not considered suitable. An individual is supposed to silently hear the opinion and explanation of the Imam without raising any question. That's why most of the educated youngsters reported that they were labeled with strange titles for daring to ask questions from Imam regarding the most burning issues of contemporary world in those classes. Due to lack of knowledge, understanding and limited exposure of modern-day world and its rapidly changing needs, the Imams do not encourage asking and raising questions on the political conduct and policies of religious political leadership, reeking of dual standards and inconsistency between their words and deeds¹⁸. Consequently, most of the youngsters and educated people do not take interest in those Qur'ān classes. Because they believe that instead of losing one's self-respect it is better not to attend such classes. In fact, the role of *Masjid* is more important when the religious scholars explore a new religious fact and truth and play their due role of removing doubts regarding certain religious issues in contemporary society¹⁹.

While on the other hand Qur'ān tells about the conduct of Prophet of Peace (peace be upon him) that he is blessing for all humanity. Moreover, it has been explained that good and evil deeds are not equal, so ward off evil with what is better and then you will see that one who was once your enemy has become your dearest friend.

وَلَا تَسْتَوِی الْحَسَنَةُ وَلَا السَّیِّئَةُ ادْفَعْ بِالَّتِی هِیَ اَحْسَنُ فَاِذَا الَّذِی بَیْنَكَ وَبَیْنَهُ عَدَاوَةٌ کَانَهُ وِلِیٌّ
حَمِیْمٌ

Good and evil deeds are not equal. Repel evil with what is better; then you will see that one who was once your enemy has become your dearest friend²⁰.

The reasons of such conduct have been mentioned in the same verse that such goodness is granted to only those people who exercise patience and self-restraint and who are truly fortunate.

وَمَا یُلَاقَاهَا اِلَّا الَّذِیْنَ صَبَرُوا وَمَا یُلَاقَاهَا اِلَّا ذُو حَظٍّ عَظِیْمٍ

But no one will be granted such goodness except those who exercise patience and self-restraint – no one is granted it save those who are truly fortunate²¹.

It has been recommended by Allah the Almighty in the holy Qur'an that people should be called to the way of Allah with great wisdom and fair exhortation, and healthy academic dialogue and reasoning should be done with them in a way that is best;

أَدْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحُكْمِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ وَجَادِلْهُمْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ
أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ
ضَلَّ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ

Call to the way of your Lord with wisdom and fair exhortation and reason with them in a way that is best. Your Lord knows best those who have strayed away from His path, and He knows best those who are rightly guided²².

Teacher has a high and prestigious status in Islamic perspective of education. He is not only custodian of the cultural and moral values of Islam and Muslim society but, at the same time he preserves the unique cultural traditions of Islam by transmitting it to upcoming generation for the growth of the society²³. Consequently, he has a two-fold responsibility of preserving existing cultural discourses and traditions and creating mobility about it as well as bringing it into closer contact with the spirit and needs of modern times while keeping its originality²⁴.

There is a dire need of educating and informing the Imams about the gravity of their responsibilities in terms of communicating with the people in terms of being a representative of Islam, because their attitude and behavior are keenly and critically observed on various occasions. Moreover, inconsistency between their words and deeds can create further misconceptions and misperceptions in the minds of people. And most of the time the youngsters go astray just because of the irresponsible and unfriendly behavior of the Imams. Most of them have very limited knowledge of Islam. Consequently, when they observe and face the poorly and non-academic approach of the Imams, they waste no time to turn toward heresy by questioning the obligations and teachings of Islam either openly or secretly.

Table 2. Ratio of Study of Qur'ān in Adults

Q. Have you ever studied Qur'ān?						
District	Variable	Male	%	Female	%	Aggregate
Bannu	Yes - With Translation	17	14.91	9	8.57	26 (11.87%)
	Yes - Without translation	79	69.29	67	63.80	146 (66.66%)
	No	18	15.78	29	27.61	47 (21.46%)
Lakki Marwat	Yes - With translation	19	22.09	13	16.45	32 (19.39%)
	Yes - Without translation	58	67.44	47	59.49	105 (63.63%)
	No	9	10.46	19	24.05	28 (16.69%)

As the above-mentioned figures show that only 11.87% people in Bannu and 19.39% in Lakki Marwat have studied Qur'ān with translation that enabled them to understand and get the divine inspiration and knowledge of important teachings mentioned in the holy Qur'ān. While 66.66% in Bannu and 63.63% in Lakki Marwat could just recite the holy Qur'ān without knowing the meaning of the text and understating the message and teachings of the holy Qur'ān. The main reason is that the entire focus is on getting rewards (*Sawab*) instead of attaining the spirituality and wisdom that are essential outcomes of the study of The Qur'ān. 21.46% people in Bannu and 16.69% people in Lakki Marwat are unable to read and recite the Qur'ān. The ratio of female illiterates of the Qur'ān is higher as compared to male in both districts.

Observation & Analysis:

The above-mentioned figures paint a very alarming situation that exists in both the areas even though majority of the population is Muslim. But unfortunately, a large number of the population either does not know the meaning of the verses of the Qur'ān and unable to understand or does not have the ability to read at least few words of the holy Qur'ān. In such a situation it cannot be expected that people should follow the divine commandments when majority does not have direct access to the meaning and understanding of the divine message.

One of the main factors responsible for this dilemma is the opinion and approach of majority of the religious leaders in the said region. They discourage every such Muslim who sincerely wishes to read the holy Qur'ān with translation in order to get direct access to the message of Allah, the Almighty. The religious leaders warn the masses of going astray if they attempt self-study

of the Quran by quoting such *Qur'ānic* verse like that Allah lets many go astray through the *Qur'ān*, and guides many by it as well. But he let only disobedient to go astray.

يُضِلُّ بِهِ كَثِيرًا وَيَهْدِي بِهِ كَثِيرًا وَمَا يُضِلُّ بِهِ إِلَّا الْفَاسِقِينَ

He lets many go astray through it, and guides many by it. But He makes only the disobedient go astray²⁵.

The above-mentioned verse clearly concludes that Allah Almighty misleads only disobedient (*Fasiq*) through the *Qur'ān*. And the reason is that a disobedient does not read the *Qur'ān* for guidance but for validating and legalizing his vested interests and whims. While on the other hand, Allah says that the Quran is guidance for mankind.

There are a lot of verses that prove that the *Qur'ān* is guidance for all mankind and especially for those who seek guidance, truth and divine inspiration. Some of the verses are mentioned as under:

شَهْرُ رَمَضَانَ الَّذِي أُنزِلَ فِيهِ الْقُرْآنُ هُدًى لِّلنَّاسِ وَبَيِّنَاتٍ مِّنَ الْهُدَىٰ وَالْفُرْقَانِ

The month of Ramadan is the month when the Quran was sent down as guidance for mankind with clear proofs of guidance and the criterion by which to distinguish right from wrong²⁶.

كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ آيَاتِهِ لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَّقُونَ

Thus He makes clear His commandments to mankind, so that they may guard themselves [against evil]²⁷.

نَزَّلَ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ مُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَأَنزَلَ التَّوْرَةَ وَالْإِنْجِيلَ. مِن قَبْلُ هُدًى لِّلنَّاسِ

وَأَنزَلَ الْفُرْقَانَ

He has sent down the Book to you with truth, which fulfills [the predictions] in the Scriptures that preceded it: He sent down the Torah and the Gospel in the past as guidance for mankind; He has [also] sent down the Standard by which to discern the true from the false²⁸.

هَذَا بَيَانٌ لِّلنَّاسِ وَهُدًى وَمَوْعِظَةٌ لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ

This Quran is an exposition for the people and a guidance and admonition for those who fear God²⁹.

هَذَا بَلَاغٌ لِّلنَّاسِ وَلِيُنذِرُوا بِهِ وَيَلْعَلُّهُمْ أَنَّمَا هُوَ إِلَهٌ وَاحِدٌ وَلِيَذَّكَّرَ أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ

This is a message for mankind. Let them take warning from it and know that He is but one God. Let those possessed of understanding may take heed³⁰.

بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَالزُّبُرِ وَأَنزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الذِّكْرَ لِتُبَيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ مَا نُزِّلَ إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ

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[We sent them] with clear signs and scriptures. We have sent down the Reminder to you, to enable you to make clear to mankind what has been sent down to them, so that they may reflect upon it³¹.

وَلَقَدْ ضَرَبْنَا لِلنَّاسِ فِي هَذَا الْقُرْآنِ مِنْ كُلِّ مَثَلٍ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُونَ

We have set forth to men all kinds of parables in this Quran so that they may take heed³².

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ لِلنَّاسِ بِالْحَقِّ

We have sent down to you the Book for mankind with the truth³³.

هَذَا بَصَائِرُ لِلنَّاسِ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةٌ لِقَوْمٍ يُوقِنُونَ

This [Book] brings enlightenment and guidance to mankind, and is a blessing for those who have steady belief³⁴.

Unfortunately, *Masajid* are being turned into political arena where the religious leadership settles scores with their political opponents by delivering fiery speeches without knowing or ignoring the fact that such irresponsible actions ignite hatred and bias in the hearts of fellow Muslims, causing irreparable rifts in the society. These rabble-rousers imperil social cohesion and harmony. Instead of exploiting religious sentiments of people for political motives and power, *Masajid* should be turned into the institutions of training and educations as they had been in the past.

In fact, Islam connects a believer with his Creator on one hand and with other believers and society on the other hand. Two fundamental worship rituals play very pivotal role in attaining the objective i-e *Salat* and *Zakat*. The one reason for emphasis on congregational prayers in Islam is due to the above-mentioned fact. *Masjid* is a center of worship, remembering Allah, the Almighty, getting religious education and training and social integration³⁵. Visiting *Masjid* for attending congregational prayer is source of growth of Islamic civilization and development. It is the most sacred way of integration and exchange of opinions³⁶.

Another unfortunate observation is that there is a competition between various schools of thoughts for occupying as many *Masajid* as possible. And the main objective of this act is just to enhance number of followers of their respective schools of thought, instead of using the noble and effective platform of pulpit and *Masjid* for religious guidance, education, training and social reformation. Such *Masajid* are no more houses of Allah but bastions of different schools of thought used for defending their respective school of thought and rejecting other schools of thought.

If there is a majority of *Deobandis* and *Barelvi* then a *Barelvi* or *Deobandi* even cannot dare to go there. Same is the case with other schools of thought.

Such an unfortunate conduct of religious leadership, resulting in sharp polarization of society, is one of those factors responsible for social disorder and anarchy. *Barelvis* do not allow the activists of *Tablighi Jamaat* even to enter their *Masajid*. Same is the case of *Dawat-e-Islami* that is attached with *Barelvi* school of thought and engaged in *Dawah* work. It seems very absurd as well as it is against the spirit of Islamic *Dawah* to preach Islam in a certain area demarcated by a certain school of thought. As it has been proved earlier that the Divine Guidance, the holy Qur'ān, is for entire mankind, irrespective of their caste, creed, race, region, colour etc. but the dilemma is that none of the existing schools of thought allow each other to enter their *Masajid*, preach the teachings and message of Islam and play their role for religious harmony, religious training and social reformation.

The foundation of relationship and cooperation among Arabs in *Jahilliyah* period was tribal and family attachments and bias. Qur'ān provided new foundations for uniting the Islamic society and established a relationship between *Ansaar* and *Muhajireen* that was based on faith, Islam, migration and *Jihad*³⁷.

There is a need that *Masajid* should be turned into the same places of religious education and training as per the example of *Madinan* period in which *Masjid* played role as a center for spreading and teaching comprehensive and complete religious education, science and divine laws³⁸. Common people always seek guidance and advice regarding various religious issues they are confronted with. So, instead of questioning their intentions and motives, they should be guided and advised the way they can be satisfied while keeping the spirit and world view of Islam in mind. In the present-day world of technological advancement and knowledge explosion, people sincerely and honestly want to study and understand the message of the Allah, the holy Qur'ān, for getting reasonable and satisfying answers of those questions raised by the modern-day science, philosophy and other sciences.

People should be educated with all the essential knowledge of the Islam which they are supposed to acquire for playing a better and ideal role in the society so that they are included among the Chosen People on the Day of Judgment.

Table 3. Role of Masjid in Child Education & Training

Q. Do you think Masjid has any effective role in child education and training these days?						
District	Variable	Male	%	Female	%	Aggregate
Bannu	Yes	96	84.21	94	89.52	190 (86.75%)
	No	18	15.78	11	10.47	29 (13.24%)

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Lakki	Yes	80	93.02	65	82.27	145 (87.87%)
Marwat	No	6	6.97	14	17.72	20 (12.12%)

As the figures in (Table:3) indicate that 86.75% parents in Bannu and 87.87% parents in Lakki Marwat believe that *Masjid* has been playing important and vital role in child education and training regarding religion, while 13.24% parents in Bannu and 12.12% parents in Lakki Marwat believed that *Masjid* has been losing its line of duty due to unnecessary engagement of religious leadership in other activities like politics.

Observation & Analysis:

Although pulpit and *Masjid* are still considered as decisive and dynamic elements regarding moral training and religious education of children, but at the same time it was learnt that the process of education and training in *Masajid* are not as per the requirements and needs of rapidly changing times. As the next Table: 4 shows that only 13.24% Imams in Bannu and 12.12% Imams in Lakki Marwat teach The Qur'ān with translation. Consequently, the learning of the *Qur'ānic* knowledge and wisdom becomes hopelessly unproductive. Because, as it is believed that Qur'ān is the ideal and best way for individual as well as collective reformation and it brings incredible changes in character and conduct of an individual, his social conduct and way of thinking as a believer.

Those parents who are not convinced about the present role of *Masjid* regarding religious training and education of children have hired private religious teachers for their children for tutoring the Qur'ān with translation. Moreover, the parents also complained about the violent and aggressive behavior of most of the Imams that discourages children to visit *Masajid* for getting religious education. Most of the Imams are not well-trained and competent for the position of teaching the Qur'ān; because they have still adopted outdated teaching methodology of rote-learning the pervasive use of corporal punishment also discourage parents to send their wards to *Masajid*. . Consequently, the trend of hiring religious teachers for children at home is growing very rapidly. There is nothing bad in this trend but it will pave way for alienation among children regarding the most important and dynamic element of a Muslim society i-e *Masjid*. Moreover, it will hamper the way of getting spiritual inspiration from the environment of *Masjid*.

A good teacher must be God-fearing believer, complying with the teachings of Islam, having sound character and personality, kind-hearted, gentle, lenient, having missionary zeal and zest and good motives, competent intellectually³⁹.

Table 4. Method of Teaching Qur'ān

Q. Does the Imam teach Quran with translation?						
District	Variable	Male	%	Female	%	Aggregate
Bannu	Yes	18	15.78	11	10.47	29 (13.24%)
	No	96	84.21	94	89.52	190 (86.75%)
Lakki Marwat	Yes	6	6.97	14	17.72	20 (12.12%)
	No	80	93.02	65	82.27	145 (87.87%)

The figures showed in Table 4 show that 13.24% Imams in Bannu and 12.12% in Lakki Marwat teach The Qur'ān with translation while the rest 86.75% in Bannu and 87.87% in Lakki Marwat teach the Qur'ān without translation.

Observation & Analysis:

There is a need to convince them to at least teach some part of the holy Qur'ān or those verses which are directly related with daily life with translation as per the mental capacity and understanding of those children who can read The Qur'ān with correct pronunciation. Observation shows that the *Qur'ānic* stories of previous Prophets (peace be upon them) play very vital, positive, effective and productive role in religious training and education of children. These stories are full of inspiration, motivation and moral lessons that are very closely related with the present-day life. Moreover, the process of teaching and learning can be made more productive if these stories are related with the present-day life. The finest example of the Messenger (peace be upon him) shows that he always delivered sermons on those matter that Muslims were confronted with and that were need of the time⁴⁰.

Imams should adopt the modern techniques and tools of teaching. They should have access to the modern technological advancement for knowing the emerging trends and approaches regarding teaching and learning. More importantly, they must be taught child psychology before allowing them to teach religious studies to the children because, due to lack of knowledge, understanding of different human traits and individual difference in terms of learning cannot bring fruitful result. Instead of wasting own time and energy as well as of children it is better to train the Imams first so that they can perform their duties in an ideal and productive manner. Being staunch believers in Islam, people of the region expect a lot from the Imams. Furthermore, people ask for the desired role of Masjid to be played for the sake of social order, fraternity and peace that will help establish a stable society⁴¹. If these initiatives, attaining competence in religious knowledge and understanding needs of the time, are taken, Imam would be the most effective reformer of the society⁴².

Conclusion:

Pulpit and *Masjid* are the most effective and productive forums of a Muslim society having decisive and everlasting effects in terms of social reformation, cohesion and integration. It not only educates the masses in religious matters as well as creates awareness in masses regarding challenges and issues of the modern day world. The prestige and position of pulpit and *Masjid* should be reestablished so that a prosperous, vibrant and productive welfare society is formed with spiritually awakened, morally strong and socially integrated members.

Findings:

1. People are not satisfied with the present role of pulpit and *Masjid* as well as religious leaders in terms of dispensation of their duties as a guide in religious matters.
2. Most of the Imams are untrained and incompetent in terms of sound religious knowledge, exposure and knowledge of modern tools and techniques of teachings and learning as well as child psychology.
3. Most of the people do not have access to circles of *Qur'ānic* study due to incompetence of Imams, lack of interest on the part of masses, discouragement of studying *Qur'ān* with translation by Imams and emphasis on religious and sectarian differences taught and raised in these circles.
4. Trend of private tuition of *Qur'ān* is gaining popularity with the passage of time due to poor performance and unfriendly behavior of the Imams.

Recommendations:

1. Religious leaders should retain their real and required position.
2. Well-trained and competent persons should be prepared and appointed as an Imam who has sound religious knowledge, exposure and knowledge of modern tools and techniques of teaching and learning and child psychology.

3. Circle of *Qur'ānic* study should be established by well-trained and competent Imams so that people take interest in studying *Qur'ān* and individuals should be encouraged to study *Qur'ān* with translation in case one does not have access to circles of *Qur'ānic* study.
4. Circles of *Qur'ānic* study should be free from teaching religious and sectarian differences so that the dream of social cohesion and integration is realized.
5. Teaching and learning method should be student-friendly, based on sincerity and cooperation.
6. Leadership of all the concerned schools of thought should be contacted, consulted and engaged for reviving the lost position of pulpit and *Masjid*.
7. State should play its due role of taking care of *Masajid* as it is practiced in other Muslim countries.
8. Strict recruitment policies and criteria, in terms of strong academic background, sect-free approach and religious tolerance, should be introduced and implemented for the selection of Imams for *Masajid*.
9. Print and electronic media should be engaged in this respect for advocacy and promotion of the idea of reviving the lost status of *Masjid* and people should be educated regarding the decisive and effective role of *Masjid*.



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²⁵Al Qur'an 2:26

²⁶Al Qur'an 2:185

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²⁸Al Qur'an 3:03-04

²⁹Al Qur'an 3:138

³⁰Al Qur'an 14:52

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