is perceived that a good number of students are enrolled in madrassas due to the unaffordability of modern education and for religious reasons. Madrassas are known to offer free education, food and lodging.

The madrassas are also related to some religious-political parties and their leadership in one form or the other. A survey study by Pak Institute for Peace Studies, a private think-tank, conducted in 2008, indicated that most madrassas in Pakistan have some form of political affiliation. The study showed that the Deobandi and Jamat-e-Islami (JI) madrassas were more inclined towards politics than others. Though most madrassa boards discourage madrassas' association with politics, some madrassas defy this rule and openly affiliate themselves with religious-political parties.[6]

On the issue of funding, a report of the Special Branch of Police notes that the government's funding for madrassas is negligible in contrast to private funds. According to Pakistan's Interior Ministry, 147 madrassas in Punjab received funds from Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Iran, UAE, Kuwait, and Iraq. Most of these madrassas belong to Deobandi and the Ahl-e-Hadith schools of thought. Iran in turn financed the Shi'ites madrassas in Pakistan.[7] In return for foreign funding, these madrassas promote the ideology of the financing country along sectarian lines.

Stan Crock, the Business Week commentator criticized the foreign interventions in Pakistan in these words:

> "Politics played a major role in financing these schools. And nowhere has the growth of madrassas been more of an issue than in Pakistan. Saudi Arabia and Gulf States with majority Sunni populations wanted Pakistan to serve as a buffer against the *Shiites* who had come to power in Iran in the late 1970s. So, they bankrolled madrassas in Pakistan. The Saudis exported Wahhabism, a particularly rigid expression of the Islamic faith that relies on strict interpretation of the Koran. But while religion plays an important role in the schools, jihadism by and large doesn't"[8].

Pakistan's Madrassa Education

The number of madrassas has increased sharply since Pakistan's creation in 1947. The number has risen from 245 madrassas to 13,405 as at 2013-2014. According to Pakistan educational statistics, 393 (3%) madrassas were in the public sector while 13,012 (97%) were in the private sector. The total enrolment in madrassas was 1.83 million – 0.05 million (3%) in the public sector and 1.78 million (97%) in the private sector. 1.14 million (62%) of the students were males and 0.69 million (38%) females. The number of teachers were 58,600, of which 1,800 (3%) were in the public sector and 56,800 (97%) in the private sector. Around 45,000 (77%) of the teachers were male while 13,000 (23%) were female.

Not all madrassas in Pakistan are government-registered. Most of them are affiliated with their respective Islamic madrassa boards (Wafaq) in accordance with the different school of thoughts viz. Deobandi, Deobandi (Jamat-I-Islami), Ahl-e-Sunnat (Barelvi), Ahl-e-Hadith and Shiites.[9]

Madrassa Curriculum

The duration of the religious course called the *'Dars e Nizami"* taught in the madrassas spans over seven years, where students are taught Islamic foundational subjects and advanced courses as well as Arabic language courses. Madrassa education has attracted criticism for adopting outdated educational techniques (rote memorization), and having a distinct curriculum that produces individuals

[6] Mohammad Amir Rana, "Mapping The Madrassa Mindset: Political Attitudes Of Pakistani Madaris," *Conflict and Peace Studies* 2, no.1 (2009): 1–13

[7] Raoof Kalasra (15-12-2015), *Khaber se khaber tak. News program.* Punjab, Pakistan: ARY

[8] Stan Crock, "Korans, Not Kalashnikovs at Madrassas," *Bloomberg*, October 27, 2004, https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2004-10-26/korans-not-kalashnikovs-at-madrassas

[9] "EFA Global Monitoring Report. Reaching The Marginalized." *UNESCO*, 2010. http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001866/186606e.pdf (accessed on July 27, 2013.)

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