

Shorter Notices

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Abdul Raouf and Niaz Ahmed (eds.). *Quality Assurance in Higher Education: A Global Perspective.* Islamabad: Higher Education Commission. 2008. 204 pages. Paperback. Price not given.

This book is an end product of an international conference that focussed on quality in higher education. Practitioners from around the world presented latest developments in this area. The book is divided in four parts. Part One includes five chapters. These chapters reflect on the quality of higher education in international perspective. For instance, chapter one based on the Chilean experience discusses the impact of quality assurance mechanism on higher education institutions. Chapter Two examines the role of quality assurance agencies in the 21st century. The author in Chapter Three talked about accreditation and quality assurance in university education based on his experience in Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Ghana, South Africa, Pakistan, Malawi, Bangladesh, Madagascar, Mauritius and the United States. Chapter Four discusses quality in contemporary higher education and the role of academic governance. In the fifth chapter quality assurance policy for higher education in developing countries is discussed. In particular, the author in this chapter has critically examined the quality assurance policy in India.

In the second part, five contributions have reflected on quality related factors. The first chapter in this part presents human resource management and quality assurance in a public sector university. The second chapter demonstrates integration of quality management systems for universities. The third chapter deals with professional development of academics and its needs assessment. Next two chapters deliberate on methods of grading performance and performance indicators for higher educational institutes.

In the third part quality assurance practices have been discussed. One of the contributors reflects on the use of EFQM, BNQA and ISO 9001 in higher education. Second contributor informed about the experience of quality assurance in higher education in Jordan. The third and final chapter in this part examines monitoring and managing quality in higher education.

Finally, two chapters in the fourth part assess quality in terms of teaching as well as learning in medical institutions. (*Afia Malik*)

C. Christine Fair. *The Madrassah Challenge: Militancy and Religious Education in Pakistan.* Lahore: Vanguard Books. 2009. 145 pages. Hardbound. Price not given.

Since 9/11 terrorist attacks madaris in Pakistan have become the focal point for policy makers around the Western World. Though none of the attackers had studied in Pakistani madaris but it is believed that these madaris provide support for militancy in the region.

This book based on primary information collected via interviews, survey data and opinion polls; as well as secondary literature has addressed questions regarding the number of madaris in Pakistan; their share in the education market; the socioeconomic background of madrassah students; the connection between madaris and militancy; and

the support from madrassah leadership, educators, and students for reforming these educational institutes.

The first chapter examines the religious education in Pakistan in the larger context of the country's educational system. The second chapter looks deeper into the religious educational institutions, both formal and informal, with particular focus on the formal institution, that is, madaris. In the third chapter the author argued that it is not fair to make unqualified claims that madaris produce militants in Pakistan. But at the same time it does not mean that madaris have no role in militancy as evidence indicates that some madaris in the border areas may have a limited role in terrorism. The author explains that madaris may help create an environment favourable to jihad in the region, even though its students are not well represented across the ranks of all militant organisations. The fourth chapter reflects on measures adopted by the government of Pakistan to reform these madaris. In the final chapter, the author draws important policy implications and suggested a number of initiatives that might help in reducing concerns arising from alleged link between religious education and security inside and outside Pakistan. This in depth and timely contribution is a useful reading from policy perspective. (*Afia Malik*)

Saleem H. Ali. *Islam and Education: Conflict and Conformity in Pakistan's Madrassahs*. Karachi: Oxford University Press. 2009. 214 pages. Hardbound. Pakistani Rs 495.

Islamic educational institutions have been deeply examined in recent years because of their apparent linkage to militancy. This book attempts to consider varieties of educational traditions within Islam and their adaptive strengths and weaknesses within a changing world.

Selecting Islamabad as the urban case and Ahmedpur East as the rural case for studying madrassahs, this empirical study documents the demographic characteristics of areas in rural and urban Pakistan where madrassahs are widespread using geographic information systems, thus providing some background to the rise of this phenomenon. Further, using the data collected from survey, interviews and focus group discussion, it reflects on the linkages between madrassahs and regional conflict on the basis of recruitment and career placement dynamics of madrassah graduates.

This book bring integrative and analytical clarity to the issue of Islamic education; moving away from both the propagandist negative accounts about madrassahs as well as the naively positive accounts that downplay the impact of traditional education on Islamic societies. Its main objective is to avert the rise of existing regional conflicts as well as the apparent conflict between Islam and the West, while providing guidance to policy makers regarding their attempts to reform educational institutions. (*Afia Malik*)