

Proposal 2: Post College Children Dilemma (Tarbiyyat)

Lajna is noticing a trend that is concerning and alarming. College students and post college girls and boys are gradually drifting away from the Jamaat and marrying outside the Jamaat at an alarming rate. Some of it due to cultural clashes and the perceived burdens associated with organized religion resulting in a loss of a sense of belonging. When they complete their education and return to the Jamaat, there is no place for them. They are lost amongst the Lajna who are older than they or where everyone has moved to a different role. National is requested to provide resources and different ways to bring these youth back to the Jamaat, but not just to attend random meetings or special programs, or to “talk” but as active members that are involved and making contributions. Only then will the sense of belonging really take place. (Submitted by Detroit MI, Central VA)

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Goals:

1. Get the youth back
2. Nurture a sense of belonging
3. Getting them to feel there is benefit in being an Ahmadi (strong Ahmadi Muslim identity)

Challenges:

1. **Alienation:** They feel judged or policed
2. **Hypocrisy**— Youth drift away because they see that we don't act on what we preach.
 - a. Example: Humanity- we talk about compassion but don't model it in our interactions.
 - b. Environment- caring for the earth is an Islamic value but recycling or using eco- friendly products cited as expensive; short-term vs long term cost
3. **Gap:** Student goes away for 4 years and returns with a changed mind set and changed expectations. Example: Academia's assault on organized religion and religious values may lead to conflicting ideas about the relevance of religious values.
4. **Tajneed issue:** When students move away for higher education, they maintain their previous Jamaat Tajneed and don't feel connected to temporary host Jamaat where they are studying.

5. **Friendship:** They have found friendships outside Jamaat circle, even possible spouses, and feel they no longer have a viable future spouse or friends in the Jamaat.
6. **Values:** Worldly priorities are before faith (Parents can adversely contribute)

Implementation Recommendations

Preventative Measures: Developing a strong Ahmadi Identity

1. Recognize talents of our youth
2. Give them tasks without initial prejudice, trust them to act on their good impulses once they feel connected
3. Add them to teams: Public Affairs, Media Watch, Khidmate Khalq, others
4. Encourage tabligh: "Ask an Ahmadi" session on campus
5. Connect with them using technology and social media; share Huzoor (aba) kutbas on subject
6. Provide Online meetings by region; cover Lajna syllabus together when away from home
7. Hold more youth camps
8. Hold regular "Coffee and Conversation" gatherings at college campuses for Ahmadi students to have casual contact/connection with local Lajna representative/s.
9. Education on chanda: How it adds blessings on career, professional development and future

Post College Student lead projects and service responsibilities

1. Welcome back the college students & give opportunities for them to talk & share experiences
2. Organize quarterly bonding and service projects run by youth; appeal to social justice and environment issues
3. Use youth that are connected to Jamaat to draw in others who are feeling disconnected
4. Events on current hot topics modeled on MTA Face to Face
5. Recruit women Ahmadi scholars to answer questions with modern relevance to young Ahmadi women

Coordination with other Shobas to address marriage issues, cultural clashes and maintaining connection with jamaat:

1. Umoore e Talibaat; anonymous survey on baseline engagement with Jamaat before & after college, including issues and interests to help design future events
2. Rishta Nata; Engagement with Youth Advisory
3. Tarbiyyat: Mother to mother sessions for post college students understanding of changed roles and relationships
4. Waqfe Nau: Peer-pairing
5. Nasirat Reunions: organized by youth and college alumni where they can reconnect and "wax" (increase) nostalgia about childhood memories to bring college age Lajna to the nasirat reunions.

Example Resources to maintain connection and help avoid cultural clashes:

1. Create accessible list of Umoore Talibaat Secretaries and Local Sadraats for parents of college student or college student can easily connect with host Jamaat when students are away.
2. Update Umoore e Talibaat Database; in order to connect students with college students prior to leaving for college
3. *Conditions of Bait; Review of Religions; Al Hakam; MTA footage (show in meetings); Faith Affirmed; Absolute Justice, Kindness & Kinship; Huzoor's answers in different setting; Use App called Ask Islam (Review shura proposal 2018 recommendations for "No Lajna Left Behind")*