

The aims of education in the islamic world religion essay



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In any society, education is a major vehicle for the transmission of ideas, attitudes, and beliefs. This means that control over educational content and access to classrooms can become valuable commodities in a conflict.

Education, and especially the teaching of history, can perpetuate negative judgments about the “ other,” engendering hostility and aggression among the young, and firing up the fever to go to war. But educational content and teaching approaches can also provide powerful means to change these attitudes, to promote tolerance and a willingness to settle conflicts without resort to violence.

In order to increase the capacity of the educational sector to promote conflict prevention, peacemaking and post-conflict reconciliation it has to enhance the ability of teachers and scholars to incorporate peace education and conflict management into curriculum and classes many institutes, both Islamic and others, mostly under the auspices of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, commonly known as UNESCO[1], all work together with the main objective to contribute to peace and security by promoting collaboration among the nations through education, science and culture in order to further universal respect for justice, for the rule of law and for the human rights and fundamental freedoms. Under its current “ Education for All” campaign, it conducts research and runs programs in countries in Africa, the Middle East, and South and Southeast Asia. The United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF) advocates and works for the protection of children’s rights to help the young meet their basic needs and to expand their opportunities to reach their full potential.

Among other programs, they have developed peace education programs in a number of countries, including Afghanistan and Indonesia.

The mission of the Association of Arab Universities is to enhance cooperation among universities in the Arab world. It is associated with central governments through their respective ministries of education. (www. aaru. edu. jo).

Islam has, from its inception, placed a high premium on education and has enjoyed a long and rich intellectual tradition. Knowledge (' ilm) occupies a significant position within Islam, as evidenced by the more than 800 references to it in Islam's most revered book, the Koran. The importance of education is repeatedly emphasized in the Koran with frequent injunctions, such as " God will exalt those of you who believe and those who have knowledge to high degrees", " O my Lord! Increase me in knowledge" and " As God has taught him, so let him write". Such verses provide a forceful stimulus for the Islamic community to strive for education and learning.

Islamic education is uniquely different from other types of educational theory and practice largely because of the all-encompassing influence of the Koran. The Koran serves as a comprehensive blueprint for both the individual and society and as the primary source of knowledge. The advent of the Koran in the seventh century was quite revolutionary for the predominantly illiterate Arabian society. Arab society had enjoyed a rich oral tradition, but the Koran was considered the word of God and needed to be organically interacted with by means of reading and reciting its words. Hence, reading and writing for the purpose of accessing the full blessings of the Koran was an aspiration

for most Muslims. Thus, education in Islam unequivocally derived its origins from a symbiotic relationship with religious instruction.

HISTORY OF ISLAMIC EDUCATION

This was the way, Islamic education began. Pious and learned Muslims (mu'allim or mudarris), dedicated to making the teachings of the Koran more accessible to the Islamic community, taught the faithful in what came to be known as the *kuttāb* (plural, *katātib*). The *kuttāb* could be located in a variety of venues: mosques, private homes, shops, tents, or even out in the open. Historians are uncertain as to when the *katātib* were first established, but with the widespread desire of the faithful to study the Koran, *katātib* could be found in virtually every part of the Islamic empire by the middle of the eighth century. The *kuttāb* served a vital social function as the only vehicle for formal public instruction for primary-age children and continued so until Western models of education were introduced in the modern period. Even at present, it has exhibited remarkable durability and continues to be an important means of religious instruction in many Islamic countries.

The curriculum of the *kuttāb* was primarily directed to young male children, beginning as early as age four, and was centered on Koranic studies and on religious obligations such as ritual ablutions, fasting, and prayer. The focus during the early history of Islam on the education of youth reflected the belief that raising children with correct principles was a holy obligation for parents and society. As Abdul Tibawi wrote in 1972, the mind of the child was believed to be "like a white clean paper, once anything is written on it, right or wrong, it will be difficult to erase it or superimpose new

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writing upon it". The approach to teaching children was strict, and the conditions in which young students learned could be quite harsh. Corporal punishment was often used to correct laziness or imprecision. Memorization of the Koran was central to the curriculum of the *kuttāb*, but little or no attempt was made to analyze and discuss the meaning of the text. Once students had memorized the greater part of the Koran, they could advance to higher stages of education, with increased complexity of instruction. Western analysts of the *kuttāb* system usually criticize two areas of its pedagogy: the limited range of subjects taught and the exclusive reliance on memorization. The contemporary *kuttāb* system still emphasizes memorization and recitation as important means of learning. The value placed on memorization during students' early religious training directly influences their approaches to learning when they enter formal education offered by the modern state. A common frustration of modern educators in the Islamic world is that while their students can memorize copious volumes of notes and textbook pages, they often lack competence in critical analysis and independent thinking.

During the golden age of the Islamic empire (usually defined as a period between the tenth and thirteenth centuries), when western Europe was intellectually backward and stagnant, Islamic scholarship flourished with an impressive openness to the rational sciences, art, and even literature. It was during this period that the Islamic world made most of its contributions to the scientific and artistic world. Ironically, Islamic scholars preserved much of the knowledge of the Greeks that had been prohibited by the Christian world. Other outstanding contributions were made in areas of chemistry, botany,

physics, mineralogy, mathematics, and astronomy, as many Muslim thinkers regarded scientific truths as tools for accessing religious truth.

Gradually the open and vigorous spirit of enquiry and individual judgment (ijtihad) that characterized the golden age gave way to a more insular, unquestioning acceptance (taqlid) of the traditional corpus of authoritative knowledge. By the thirteenth century, according to Aziz Talbani, the “ulama” (religious scholars) had become “self-appointed interpreters and guardians of religious knowledge.... learning was confined to the transmission of traditions and dogma, and [was] hostile to research and scientific inquiry”. The mentality of taqlid reigned supreme in all matters, and religious scholars condemned all other forms of inquiry and research. Exemplifying the taqlid mentality, Burhän al-Din al-Zarnüji wrote during the thirteenth century, “Stick to ancient things while avoiding new things” and “Beware of becoming engrossed in those disputes which come about after one has cut loose from the ancient authorities”. Much of what was written after the thirteenth century lacked originality, and it consisted mostly of commentaries on existing canonical works without adding any substantive new ideas. The lethal combination of taqlid and foreign invasion beginning in the thirteenth century served to dim Islam’s preeminence in both the artistic and scientific worlds.

Despite its glorious legacy of earlier periods, the Islamic world seemed unable to respond either culturally or educationally to the onslaught of Western advancement by the eighteenth century. One of the most damaging aspects of European colonialism was the deterioration of indigenous cultural norms through secularism. With its veneration of human reason over divine

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revelation and its insistence on separation of religion and state, secularism considered by many as anathema to Islam, in which all aspects of life, spiritual or temporal, are interrelated as a harmonious whole. At the same time, Western institutions of education, with their pronounced secular/religious dichotomy, were infused into Islamic countries in order to produce functionaries to feed the bureaucratic and administrative needs of the state. The early modernizers did not fully realize the extent to which secularized education fundamentally conflicted with Islamic thought and traditional lifestyle. Religious education was to remain a separate and personal responsibility, having no place in public education. If Muslim students desired religious training, they could supplement their existing education with moral instruction in traditional religious schools-the kuttab. As a consequence, the two differing education systems evolved independently with little or no official interface.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF ISLAMIC EDUCATION

3. 1. Problems in Islamic Schools

Before proceeding further, and in order to have a better understanding of the Aims Islamic Education it is better to first examine the problems facing the contemporary Islamic schools in the Western World. Generally these are:

No Adaab or Islamic etiquette or behaviour

Parents want teachers to be lenient

Some girls and boys meet secretly in the basement.

They have girl-friends and boy-friends.

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They do smoke.

Profanity is written on the walls, desks, blackboards, etc.

Behave roughly: laughing, talking, screaming, rip off their Hijab on the buses.

Discipline: Behaviour is no different from the Public Schools.

Teachers are not fair. Spoiled kids as their parents are rich or important.

Less school activities for girls. Little opportunity to interact with other students.

Islamic schools are running without an Islamic curriculum, often without a syllabus.

No textbooks.

No qualified and trained teachers or certified teachers. (Quality in education is not possible without good teachers.)

Those who attend Muslim high schools do not fare better in college.

Non-Muslim teachers who are qualified and certified. (Live-in boyfriend rejects institution of marriage. Wear tight and revealing outfit. Promote gay agenda, anti-religion agenda, or insensitive to Islamic values and events)

Qualified and certified Muslim teachers work in Public schools. As Islamic schools do not offer viable salaries, benefits (pension health benefits, etc.)

When they leave Islamic schools and graduate from colleges, some of them, they do marry non-Muslims as the Muslim community and their parents have exerted zero influence on them.

Chronic shortage of space, science labs, auditoriums, gyms, playgrounds, libraries, bathrooms.

High turnover rate (30 to 40 percent annually) of teachers.

Parents' fear Islamic schools trade off academics for Islamic environment.

Organization, planning and discipline -suffer most in Islamic schools.

Governance is the big reason why most Islamic schools suffer

Do not develop an autonomous and unique decision-making (governance) structure

School Boards require training in how to run a school

School Boards rarely include women

Parents do not play a part in Governance structure

No qualified administrators

Some parents worry Islamic schools offer an inferior quality of education.

Children are not prepared to face competitiveness and the challenges of the modern world.

Seriously lacking in Muslim literature and culture.

For many Muslim families, Islamic schools are not affordable.

In sparse Muslim population areas, Islamic schools are not financially viable.

Very few trained Muslim teachers in special education or none

The Arabic language has three terms for education, representing the various dimensions of the educational process as perceived by Islam. The most widely used word for education in a formal sense is ta'lim, from the root 'alima (to know, to be aware, to perceive, to learn), which is used to denote knowledge being sought or imparted through instruction and teaching.

Tarbiyah, from the root raba (to increase, to grow, to rear), implies a state of spiritual and ethical nurturing in accordance with the will of God. Ta'dib, from the root aduba (to be cultured, refined, well-mannered), suggests a person's development of sound social behavior. What is meant by sound requires a deeper understanding of the Islamic conception of the human being.

Education in the context of Islam is regarded as a process that involves the complete person, including the rational, spiritual, and social dimensions. As noted by Syed Muhammad al-Naquib al-Attas in 1979, the comprehensive and integrated approach to education in Islam is directed toward the "balanced growth of the total personality...through training Man's spirit, intellect, rational self, feelings and bodily senses...such that faith is infused into the whole of his personality". In Islamic educational theory knowledge is gained in order to actualize and perfect all dimensions of the human being.

From an Islamic perspective the highest and most useful model of perfection is the prophet Muhammad, and the goal of Islamic education is that people

be able to live as he lived. Seyyed Hossein Nasr wrote in 1984 that while <https://assignbuster.com/the-aims-of-education-in-the-islamic-world-religion-essay/>

education does prepare humankind for happiness in this life, “ its ultimate goal is the abode of permanence and all education points to the permanent world of eternity”. To ascertain truth by reason alone is restrictive, according to Islam, because spiritual and temporal reality are two sides of the same sphere. Many Muslim educationists argue that favoring reason at the expense of spirituality interferes with balanced growth. Exclusive training of the intellect, for example, is inadequate in developing and refining elements of love, kindness, compassion, and selflessness, which have an altogether spiritual ambiance and can be engaged only by processes of spiritual training. Therefore Education in Islam is twofold: acquiring intellectual knowledge (through the application of reason and logic) and developing spiritual knowledge (derived from divine revelation and spiritual experience). According to the worldview of Islam, provision in education must be made equally for both. Acquiring knowledge in Islam is not intended as an end but as a means to stimulate a more elevated moral and spiritual consciousness, leading to faith and righteous action.

EDUCATION OF MUSLIM CHILDREN – CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Education is the birth right of every Muslim and Muslimah. Islam puts considerable emphasis on its followers to acquire knowledge. Investment in education is the best investment one can make, because it eventually leads to intellectual property. Intellectual property is the intangible property, which no one can steal or destroy. This is the property on which no Government can levy a tax. It was as a result of application of knowledge that Muslims were the superpower of the world for twelve centuries.

Today, globally Muslims have the lowest literacy rate. Education of Muslim children in the west has both opportunities and challenges.

In the Western World the purpose of education is to provide for the economic prosperity of a nation. At a personal level the purpose of education is to acquire academic and professional skills that enable one to earn a respectable living with riches and fame, and also a luxurious and comfortable life. For a Muslim providing economic prosperity of a nation does not contradict his/her Islamic beliefs, however focusing the goals of education solely for the purpose of money making is unpalatable. Muslims want to impart Islamic education.

The vast majority of Muslims think that Islamic education means acquiring Islamic religious knowledge-study of Qur'an, Arabic, Hadith, Sunnah, Seerah, Fiqh, Islamic history, and allied subjects. As a matter of fact, in the present world broadly speaking we have two types of Muslims: a) those who have followed the Western type of education, or secular education, and b) those who have acquired Deeni or Islamic education.

In the twentieth century, due to colonialism and Western influence, Muslim parents concentrated on imparting only Secular education to their children. The weak or not so bright students were sent to Deeni (religious) Madrasas (schools) in their own countries or to one of the Middle Eastern countries. The Muslims who immigrated to Western countries became aware of their religious identity and wanted to impart both Islamic and Secular education, what is now known as "Integrated Education". When they lacked the numbers and resources, they sent their children to public schools during the

week and to the Islamic schools in the Mosque or Islamic Centre during the weekends.

As their numbers grew and acquired sufficient resources, they have opened full-time Islamic Schools from kindergarten to 12th grade (senior or final year) in High School.[2]It takes about two to three years of full-time study to become a Hafeez. During this time the student takes an equivalent to sabbatical leave from his or her public or parochial school.

The greatest objective of education is to prepare the young generation for leadership. Islamic education is of course has the highest objective, and more than that can hardly be imagined. The aim of Islamic education is Character building. Growth and development of an Islamic personality should be the final goal of any Islamic School. Islamic values are the foundation of the Islamic personality. For Muslims the educational aim is to develop the personalities of children to the end that they will be conscious of their responsibility to God (the Creator) and to fellow humans. The aims and objectives of Islamic education have been defined in the Recommendation of the Committee of the First World Conference on Muslim Education as:

“ Education should aim at the balanced growth of the total personality of man through training of the human spirit, intellect, rational self, feelings and senses. The training imparted to a Muslim must be such that faith is infused into the whole of his/her personality and creates in him/her an emotional attachment to Islam and enables him to follow the Qur'an and Sunnah and be governed by Islamic system of values willingly and joyfully so that he/she

may proceed to the realization of his/her status as Khalifatullah to whom God has promised the authority of the universe”.

There is a need to prepare the younger generation having leadership quality and not to be the followers of alien ideologies but to play the role of torchbearer by their excellence in knowledge, character, and positive action. Some scholars believe that this quality can be developed in Muslim youth by a direct study of the Qur’an with a view to solve the problems of life in its light. A program of action to bring up the younger generation for leadership has not yet been formulated.