

EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM OF PAKISTAN: CRITICAL ANALYSIS IN ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

Education system of any country determines the direction of its future and reflects its ideology. Pakistan holds unique status in the Muslim World as it has been achieved on the basis of ideology of Islam through a popular democratic movement rather than by historical accident or colonial invention. The birth of Pakistan consequently witnessed the start of a popular demand for vital place of Islam in the individual and collective spheres of life. People felt that their sacrifices and efforts for the establishment Pakistan would have been in vain if Islam was not enshrined in the every sphere of life. So ever since its inception Islamisation of the society has remained dominant theme of public debate in Pakistan. In this context, discussion about the education system of Pakistan in Islamic perspective is very important and relevant. Statements of the founders of Pakistan reflect that they aspired to design the education system of country on Islamic lines. Educational policies of Pakistan also reflected the same desire. However many flaws still exist in education system of the country as far as its Islamic identity is concerned. Solution lies in sincerity and commitment of political and educational leadership with Islam.

Keywords: Education, Pakistan, Islam, Knowledge, Educational Policies

INTRODUCTION

Islam has declared education a fundamental necessity of the mankind. The term ‘education’ in Islam is understood and comprehended in a totally different manner to what is understood within Western societies. The general understanding of an educated individual within Western societies is a person “with more access to the accumulated learning in various disciplines...than the average person”. (Suri 2015) In Islamic perspective an educated individual might possess similar attributes; however the vital aspect of education in Islam requires the belief and knowledge to recognize the creator of the Universe and how to live life in accordance with His commandments. Education means “the process of receiving or giving systematic instruction”. Etymologically, English word Education is derived from Latin word Edex meaning ‘to infer’ and Ducer-Duc meaning ‘guidance’. (Ahmad, 1993: 422)

There is no one word that describes ‘education’ within the Arabic language, however scholars generally tend to use this word in three dimensions i.e *Tarbiyah*, *Ta’dib* and *Ta’lim*. (Hussain, 2016: 394). Word *Tarbiyah* stems from the root word *raba* (to grow, to increase, to rear, spiritual nurturing), which suggests a state of ethical and spiritual nurturing in developing the individuals potential and guidance of the child to the state of complete maturity. Word *Ta’dib* stems from the root word *aduba* (to be refined, disciplined, cultured, well mannered), which implies the social aspects of a human being including the process of character development and good social behavior. *Ta’lim* is derived from the root word

of *'alima* (to know, to be informed, to perceive, to learn, to discern), this refers to knowledge, the imparting and receiving of it through instruction and teaching (Hussain, 2016: 394). Morphologically the Arabic word *ilm* means 'to know' and 'to understand'. Word *Ta'lim* represents a process to inform repeatedly and frequently. (Ahmad, 1993: 422)

ISLAM AND EDUCATION: THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

Theory of knowledge in Islam is based upon the fact that humanity started its journey with the knowledge. First man in the world was directly informed and educated by Allah. The Qur'an mentions man's knowledge as his distinguishing characteristic, which places him above all the creatures, including even angels, because Adam, when commanded, could name things which the angels could not. When the Prophet Adam (A.S.) was created, Allah S.W.T. said to the angels to bow down before him. Everybody bowed down except *Iblis*, who argued that Adam (A.S.) was made of clay and he was made from fire. How can fire bow down to clay? The angels looked at it in a different way. They expressed the respect for the Prophet Adam (A.S.) because Allah S.W.T. gave knowledge to him.

In the Holy Quran Allah S.W.T says:

And He taught Adam all the names, then presented him to the angels; then He said: Tell me the names of those if you are right. They said: Glory be to thee! We have no knowledge but that which Thou hast taught us; surely Thou art the knowing, the wise. He said: O Adam! Inform them of their names, And when he had informed them of their names, He said: Did I not tell you that I know the unseen (aspects) of the heavens and the Earth and I know what you manifest and what you hide?. And when We said to the angels: "Prostrate before Adam". So they prostrated except Iblees. He refused and he was proud and became of the disbelievers. (The Quran: 2: 31-34)

The Quran is unambiguous and clear regarding the concept of knowledge. The first few verses of the Holy Quran that were revealed to the Holy Prophet (PBUH) mention the importance of education, knowledge and pen. First verse signifies the fact that education must be associated with the name of the creator i.e. his remembrance and obedience:

Read in the name of your Lord who created. Created man, out of a (mere) clot of congealed blood. Read, and your Lord is the most Generous. Who taught by the pen. Taught man which he knew not. (The Quran: 96: 1-5)

Quran claims with absoluteness that knowledge of the manifest as well as of the hidden belongs to God, that nothing occurs in the world which is unknown to Him. About the man it says that most of them know not: and those few who know, 'They know what is apparent of the worldly life,..' (The Quran: 30: 6-7). It means that whatever knowledge they possess is of the external aspects of the world ('appearances') only and not of the 'reality' itself. The Quran emphasizes the innate nature of all human knowledge, which is bestowed by God Himself (Maruf, 1996: 100). Quran advises the Muslims to recite following prayer: "O My Lord! Increase me in knowledge." (The Quran: 20: 114)

Quran declares the knowledge as a criterion of superiority. Among men the Qur'an places the men of learning and knowledge far above the ignorant. Quran raises the question: 'Shall those who know be deemed equal with those who do not'. (The Quran: 39: 9). Quran declares the men of knowledge as the 'men of sight' and the ignorant as 'blind'. (Maruf, 1996: 102)

Various statements of the Prophet of Islam (Peace Be Upon Him) confirm the importance of knowledge and education. The Prophet is reported to have said, 'The learned men are the heirs of the prophets'. (Ghazali: 1974: 11) The Holy Prophet of Allah (S.A.W.) has said: "Atta

libul ilm faridhatol kuli muslim." This Hadith means: "*Attainment of knowledge is a must for every Muslim*". (<http://www.islamicentre.org/articles/edu.htm>) and 'Behold the worst beings are the wicked among the learned ones and the best are the virtuous among the learned. (Tabrizi, 1980: 152)

Education System of Pakistan: Vision and Aspirations of Founders

Islamic Ideology was the most forceful drive behind the demand for Pakistan and its creation in 1947. The Muslims demanded a separate homeland for themselves so as to live their lives according to the Islamic ideology and to preserve and perpetuate their culture. Addressing to civil and military officers of the Pakistan Government at Khaliqdina Hall, Karachi on October 11, 1947, founder of Pakistan clarified this fact in the following words:

The establishment of Pakistan for which we have been striving for the last ten years is, by the grace of God, an established fact today, but the creation of a State of our own was means to end and not the end itself. The idea was that we should have a state in which we could live and breathe as free men and which we could develop according to our own lights and culture and where principles of Islamic social justice could find freplay. (Speeches, 1989: 74)

Constitution of Pakistan (Article 2 A) declares that:

Wherein the Muslims shall be enabled to order their lives in the individual and collective spheres in accordance with the teachings and requirements of Islam as set out in the Holy Quran and the Sunnah.

To translate this statement of the Quaid-i-Azam education system of the Pakistan should revolve around the Islamic culture while above-mentioned provision of the constitution demands that education system of the country must facilitate the students to understand the teachings of Quran and *Sunnah* about the life. It is the responsibility of state to improve education to strengthen the society in accordance with Islamic norms and traditions (Khan, 1972: 112) Islam is not a religion in the western sense, consisting of some religious rites and rituals but it is a systematic and comprehensive code of life providing guidance in all walks of life. So Education system should take care of preserving the ideals which led to the creation of Pakistan. In accordance with these words of the constitution, purpose of education in Pakistan should be to develop consciousness of the Islamic way of life among the students and to give them insight into the fundamental values of Islam.

Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah was in favour of educational system according to Islamic values. In a moving plea made in his inaugural speech at the Gujerat Muslim Educational Conference, he underscored the importance of education:

The Holy Prophet (PBUH) had enjoined his followers to go even to China in the pursuit of knowledge. If that was the commandment in those days when communication was difficult, then truly, Muslims, as the true followers of the glorious heritage Islam, should surely utilize all available opportunities. No sacrifice of time or personal comfort should be regarded too great for the advancement of the cause of education. (Zaman, 1995: xxix)

Throughout his career as the leader of Muslims in Indian subcontinent he "was never unmindful of the role of education in the social, cultural, economic and political uplift of the Muslim nation". (Zaman, 1995: xxxiii)

He believed that Islam is a complete code of life which provides guidance in every sphere of life. Following speech of Quaid-i-Azam at the AIMSFC Conference of 1938 demonstrates conclusively and unambiguously his firm beliefs in Islam as complete code of life:

People who talked of exploitation of religion did not understand what was meant by saying that they stood by Islam and that Islam was in danger. Islam was a sacred code handed down to them. A code which did not consist merely of religion but was a complete scheme embodying political, social, economic and educational ideals. (Zaman, 1995: li)

Iqbal believes in religious orientation of education and considers all education satanic and evil for humanity which is not in harmony with the religion. In a letter to K. G. Sayidian, Iqbal writes:

I have generally use word 'knowledge' in the sense of knowledge based on the senses. It gives man power which should be subordinated to religion. It is not subordinated to religion, it is satanic force. (Masoodi, 2007: 53)

Iqbal, In his book, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* (Iqbal 2011: 8) refers to the verses of Holy Quran which state that "in the creation of the heavens and of the earth, and in the succession of the night and of the day, are signs for men of wisdom; who, standing and sitting and reclining, bear God in mind and reflect on the creation of the Heavens of the earth, and say: "Oh, our Lord ! Though hast not created this in vain". (The Quran: 3: 190-91)

These verses clarify that when wise persons think and study about the creation, characteristics and changes in the universe along while remembering the Allah, it becomes clear to them that there is a definite purpose behind the creation of universe

Analysis of Educational Policies in Islamic Perspective

After the creation of Pakistan on August 14, 1947, "The First All Pakistan Educational Conference" was called at the capital city Karachi from November 27 to December 1, 1947. Founder of Pakistan, Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah, in his message to the conference said:

You know that the importance of education and the right type of education cannot be over-emphasized...if we are to make any real, speedy and substantial progress, we must earnestly tackle this question and bring our educational policy and programme on the lines suited to the genius of our people, consonant with our history and culture, and having regard to the modern conditions and vast developments that have taken place all over the world. (Zaman, 1995: 431)

The conference recommended that "Education should be based on Islamic conception of universal brotherhood, social democracy and social justice." It also recommended the establishment of a Central Institute of Islamic Research "for organizing and stimulating Islamic research according to the modern needs of the society". (Shahid, 2011: 83-84)

Ayub Khan's government set up a commission on 3rd December 1958, under the supervision of Syed Muhammad Sharif to suggest measures for reformation of the educational system of Pakistan. Commission presented its report in August 1959.

By realizing the importance of Islamic values, commission stated:

Our educational system must have to play important role for protecting those theories by which Pakistan came into being. Struggle for Pakistan was actually shaping a path for the safety of Islamic way of life. The

people of Indo-pak demanded a separate country only for living their lives freely according to the Islamic values.” (Faizi, Shakil & Akhtar, 2012: 300)

Realizing the importance of religious education, the report says that Islamic values can be promoted in the society through religious education.

The report suggested that religious education should be given to children according to their age and grades. Three stages should be made for giving religious knowledge:

- (1) Compulsory
- (2) Optional
- (3) Research stage

Report suggested that for primary and middle classes the subject of Islamiyat should be compulsory for boys and girls. At first they should be taught Quraan (Nazira) then Kalma and Surahs which are recited in prayers. In subject of Islamiyat, knowledge or topics about Quraan, Seerat-Un-Nabi, Muslim history and literature should be included. Those verses from Holy Quraan should be selected which are ideal for moral and spiritual teachings. These verses should be taught with translation.

The report suggested that religious education should be compulsory for the students of A & O level schools as well. At secondary, intermediate and graduation level Islamic studies should be included as optional subject.

Report emphasized the importance Islamic research at university level. University teachers should be conversant over comparative religions and history of the world. At higher level Islamic *Fiqah*, Muslim history and Islamic thinking and philosophy should be important part of curriculum. For the promotion of Islamic research, commission suggested that “Scholarships should be given to universities and institutions of Islamic knowledge. The teachers of Islamic studies should be sent to Muslim and Non-Muslim countries. Higher educational institutions should give scholarships to Non-Muslim scholars, who want to do research on any aspect of Islamic thought.” (Faizi, Shakil & Akhtar, 2012: 301)

National Education Policy 1972-80 states that major objective of the policy would be to ensure “the preservation, promotion and practice of the ideology of Pakistan”. (Shahid, 2011: 89)

Following aims were set for National Education Policy 1978:

- a) To foster in the hearts and minds of the people of Pakistan in general and the students in Pakistan, in particular, deep and abiding loyalty to Islam and Pakistan.
- b) To create awareness in every student that he as a member of Pakistani nation as well as a part of Muslim Ummah is expected to contribute towards the welfare of fellow Muslims.
- c) To produce citizens who are fully conversant with the Pakistan Movement and its ideology, foundation, its history and culture.
- d) To develop and inculcate in accordance with Holy Quran and Sunnah, the character, conduct and motivation expected of a true Muslim. (Shahid, 2011: 93).

The main thrust of the National Education Policy 1992 was “to restructure the continuing education system on modern lines in accordance with the principles of Islam so as to create a healthy, forward looking and egalitarian society”. (Shahid, 2011: 99).

Pakistan’s Education Policy 1998-2010 states that “Education and training should enable the citizens of Pakistan to lead their lives according to the teachings of Islam as laid down in the Qur’an and *Sunnah* and to educate and train them as a true practicing Muslim.” In order to bring the formal education and *Madaris* close to each other, policy promises “to evolve an integrated system of national education by bringing *Deeni Madaris* and modern schools closer to each stream in curriculum and the contents of education.” Policy states that “*Nazira Qur’an* will be introduced as a compulsory component from grade I-VIII while at secondary level translation of the selected verses from the Holy Qur’an will be offered. (Pakistan’s National Education Policy:1998- 2010:2)

Major inconsistency in the system of education in Pakistan is dualism. Education system is divided into traditional *Madrasas* and formal educational institutions. Traditional *Madrasas* are generally considered the schools of religious education. In fact these *Madrasas* are remnant of the system of education prior to the arrival of British in Indian Sub-continent. These were ordinary schools during the period of Muslim rule in India and its purpose was essentially to produce civil servants to run the administrative apparatus of the Muslim regimes. All necessary subjects including the subjects of religious knowledge were included in the curriculum. The major reason for having religious component in the curriculum was that Islamic jurisprudence was the law of land at that time, and therefore civil servants needed to have a basic understanding of Islamic jurisprudence to implement it in the state and society. (Moudoodi, 1988: 126) This system was quite suitable to meet the requirements of that time. After the arrival of British and introduction of new secular system of education in India, this system lost its importance and utility. However Muslims tried to preserve it to stay connected with their ancestral heritage. Considerable religious knowledge is departed in this system but it significantly lacks the knowledge of science and other subjects of contemporary importance. Consequently graduates of this system cannot play effective role in the society. Their role is limited to the activities associate with the religious rituals. It is the same role which priests play in the western society. But Islam does not recognize the existence of any priestly class with divine mission. Islam is a complete code of life and it demands that every Muslim should have the knowledge of Quran and Sunnah to lead the life according to their commandments. Iqbal says:

Islam does not bifurcate the unity of man into an irreconcilable duality of spirit and matter. In Islam God and the universe, spirit and matter, Church and State, are organic to each other. Man is not the citizen of a profane world to be renounced in the interest of a world of spirit situated elsewhere. (Dar, 2000: 56)

Explaining the concept of Islam as complete code of life, Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah wishes that every Muslim should possess the knowledge of Quran and be his own priest. He says:

Quran is the general code of the Muslims. A religious, social, commercial, military, judicial, criminal, penal code; it regulates everything from the ceremonies of religion to those of daily life; from the salvation of soul to the health of body; from the rights of all to those of each individual; from morality to crime; from punishment here to that in life to come, and our Prophet (PBUH) has enjoined on us that every Musselman should possess a copy of the Quran and be his own priest..(Mujahid,1999 :8)

In the light of these views of the founder of Pakistan, it is evident that education system should include the in-depth knowledge of Quran and *Sunnah* along with knowledge of contemporary importance designed in the Islamic milieu. However formal system of education considerably lacks the Islamic contents in the curriculum, Islamic environment and teachers trained to teach in Islamic perspective. Solution lies in the positive approach sincerity and commitment of political leadership with Islam. (Ahmad, 1996: 299)

CONCLUSION

Islam is the basic foundation of Pakistan's ideology. Hence educational system of the country should be organized in accordance with the Islamic values and civilization. According to the Islamic tradition, heritage and values it is the responsibility of state to facilitate Muslims to understand the real meaning of Islam and order their lives according to it. Although educational policies of Pakistan repeatedly mentioned the ideology of Islam as basis of educational system but several steps should be taken for to translate these policies into reality. Educational policies also be revised to suggest practical measures to build the character of the students according to Islamic values. All the discrepancies should be rectified by the Government, especially by the educational departments of the centre and provinces. The curriculum planning committee should take practical steps to include teachings of the Quran and *Sunnah* in the curriculum in accordance with the Islamic contents of educational policies. Moreover role of parents, teachers, text books and society in promoting Islamic knowledge among students should also be highlighted in educational policies.

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