Change in Educational System: Exigency and Prospective

Farhat Naz Rahman[1]

Abstract

Education is inseparable from life. The educational system, which a people evolve, is one of the most important and the most characteristic institutions of its corporate life. Education is not a mater of stuffing the child with certain basic minimum knowledge; the mere acquisition of knowledge cannot give that broad basis of understanding which is essential for leading a successful life as citizen of a free nation. Education in Islam has from the very beginning been religious in character and ethical in aim. Today the Islamic world is faced with several challenges and problems. One of them being education, which is most vital for the well being of all nations. There is a general unrest among the Muslim youth today. Their minds are unhinged on account of the impact of western ideas, scientific progress and political ideologies. The Muslims all over the globe are faced with grave national problems and with economic, social and political turmoil, which does not, needed to be pointed out as we all are witnessing these changes every day. This means that the representative educationists of the world must put their heads together and evolve a plan by which modern education, side by side with the spirituality of Islam might reform the Muslim brotherhood afresh, and propel the energies, which are today acting in every

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[1] Dr Farhat Naz Rahman, is Associate Professor and Chairperson Division of Islamic Studies and Research, Sir Syed University of Engineering and Technology, Karachi, Email: rahmanfarhat@hotmail.com

country and in almost every faith, to convert mankind into a single brotherhood. Present era is the epoch of economic development and progress through science and technologies, which unfortunately we are lacking behind. The curricula should be formulated in the manner that it gives the creative discipline in the mind of the student in order to attain success through discoveries and inventions so that they can compete the modern days challenges.

Key words: Education, Islam, Curricula, Muslim youth, challenges

INTRODUCTION

Education is the sole enterprise on which destiny of a nation depends. The foundation on which Muslim Ummah can stand, flourish and progress is, "The Knowledge" (*Al-Ilm*) and "The Wisdom" (Al Hikma) revealed by Allah to human beings so that they can fulfill the purpose of their creation i.e. to be the sincere servants of Allah and to follow the path of life set by Allah for the humanity.

Of all the religions, Islam comes much nearer to the ideal as it is a natural and scientific religion, and appeals to the intellectual strata of Europe and America equally.

The need for the change in society always developed and gradual adjustments are always implemented throughout the history of Islam." Citing the verse106 of Surah 2 of Qur'an which says that: *None of Our revelations do We abrogate or cause to be forgotten but We substitute something better or similar; knowest thou not that Allah hath power over all things?* Likewise there are several similitude in the Qur'an e.g. injunctions on the prohibition of wine and interest were changed gradually even the Qibla was also changed. That means if Allah Almighty had continued the process of changing the injunctions for the guidance of the humanity according to the need and requirements of the time through divine revelations then if Muslims in their circumstances and environment for the progress and development of their educational system would take a step to reform and re-juvenate the curricula then there is no harm as it would be according to the Islamic teachings.

It is through education that the cultural heritage, knowledge, and values of a social group are preserved and the continuity of its collective life ensured. In short, education imparts meaning to the existence of a culture and helps it sustain its world-view. As such, it cannot be equated with a mere inventory of the paraphernalia and instruments of instruction, including even institutions and external structures. On the contrary, in every meaningful and constructive way education is inextricably linked with the general intellectualism of a culture, the principal task of which is to provide a forum for self-analysis, criticism, and search for authenticity. Educational philosophy, therefore, not only shapes the destiny and identity of any historical community in its functions as the guardian.

EXIGENCY & PROSPECTIVE

Our present system of education needs changes and the great emphasis should be laid on to incorporate the modern system of education in curricula to ensure the full development of personality and preservation of life in evolving a higher state of society. The supreme need of education today is for a unifying purpose and idea. It has become necessary to re-orientate our educational policy according to our present needs.

Our academic institutions are not equipped with the knowledge to compete the modern day challenges, so it is imperative to review the curricula of these institutes and include the necessary matter and information which can be required by the present day generation, these can be included in such a way that it can not be an extra burden on the students e.g. through refresher courses or seminars this information can be imparted.

Present era is the epoch of economic development and progress through science and technologies, which unfortunately we are lacking behind. The curricula should be formulated in the manner that it gives the creative discipline in the mind of the student in order to attain success through discoveries and inventions so that they can compete the modern days challenges.

The supreme need of education today is for a unifying purpose and idea. It has become necessary to re-orientate our educational policy according to our present needs. It is not enough to study Islam in its theoretical aspect alone, we must also consider its actual influence on life of its adherents, and this can be satisfactorily done only when we make a complete survey of Islamic culture and history in its entire sphere. As Muslim history is usually Mediaeval in spirit, failing to throw light on the problems of modern times, the youth turn from it to a study of Western Civilization. Only when there are studies as profound as Dr. George Sarton's "Introduction to the History of Science" can the youth be expected to solve the problem of blending ancient culture with the demands of modern thought. The best way to interest the youth in Islamic education is to confront them with the present-day problems of their own countries, so that they will be obliged to seek a clear understanding by studying themselves. Unfortunately, our literature is weak in the following ways:

a)   it is too often an appeal to the emotion and vanity, rather than to accurate research and balance of judgment.

b)   Even the textbooks have this failing to it is superficial, listing great names instead of trying to determine in an exact and detailed manner specific cultural contributions.

c)   it emphasizes on dynastic history, outstanding caliphs, generals and theologians d) the subject matter is composed into a bare outline of dates, events and names. e) any new interpretation to adjust Islam to modern conditions is heretical, and the door of "ijtehad" or independent investigation is closed.

Freedom of thought, expression and distribution, without danger of injury are necessary, if Islamic education is to be made to appeal to the youth. Independence of judgment as practiced by the early scholars and doctors of Islam should not be no more considered taboo.

In my opinion the great and most essential need as far as Muslims are concerned is to have Islamic Education on modern lines combined with Western Education as understood today. The two must be made complementary to each other if really beneficial results are to be obtained. Islamic education on the old lines is no longer compatible with the needs of the present world, nor can Western

Education alone be of much help to Muslims other than on the material plane. The former can only end in stagnation and decay; the latter can but lead to spiritual barrenness and apathy. If only the Islamic world develops a common educational outlook, it may foster a mind such as may be a force for true democracy and a force for an abiding peace.

Islamic education in the true sense is greatly lacking in Muslim countries. Every Muslim reads the Qur'an but very rarely any of them understands anything of it. The book of Allah only regarded as providing charms and amulets and is read only for its mysterious virtues. Anyone trying to improve the situation is hindered or discouraged by the "alims" and sometimes branded as an innovator, desiring to lead the common people astray from Islam and orthodoxy. Serious Muslim thinkers everywhere today do realize the great need for reform, rejuvenation and re-adjustment in Islam, going back to first principles where necessary and starting over all anew. They are convinced that this can be done for Islam if only Muslim scholars of today adopt the same freedom of judgment and of investigation as did the Muslim scholars of the first five or six centuries of Islam. This can only be achieved if Muslims are given both liberal Western education of the present day.

Muslims all over the world firmly believe that the Qur'an is perfect in all essentials, which they have in it and in the record of the Prophet's sayings and doings, the gems of teaching, capable to be developed or adapted to meet any new situation that arises facing Islam. This can only be realized by having Islamic and Western education going hand in hand.

The education system should aim to produce individuals who can survive in and relate to a society of diverse faiths without feeling a need to compromise their own faith.
In Islam the purpose of education is to impart beneficial forms of knowledge in a manner that will help the individual attain success in this life and the next. In more contemporary terminology, such an observation might suggest that in Islam there is a requirement for both temporal and spiritual knowledge. Education should aim at the balanced growth of the total personality of the man through the

training of man's spirit, intellect, the rational self, feelings, and bodily senses. Education should therefore cater for the growth of man in all aspects: spiritual, intellectual, imaginative, physical, scientific, linguistic, both individually and collectively and motivate all these aspects towards goodness and the attainment of perfection. The ultimate aim of Muslim education lies in the realization of complete submission to Allah on the level of the individual, the community and humanity at large." (Recommendations of the first world conference on Muslim Education in Makkah 1997)

It is quite clear that the present curriculum is based largely upon temporal knowledge therefore a spiritual learning as a counter balance should be incorporated in several key subjects. For example in science, we are teaching our students to look at the universe from the viewpoint of a person who does not know God. "And how many Signs in the heavens and the earth do they pass by? Yet they turn their faces away from them." [Yusuf, 12:105]. A proper study of science would make one appreciate the Power, Majesty, and Grandeur of Allah's creations and the humbleness and limitations of human knowledge and abilities. Today our science education, in its best form, gives exactly the opposite message. It also fails to enable students to separate scientist's opinions from their facts. Let's ask: In the wide Muslim world is there any, Islamic school teaching science whose graduates can challenge Darwin's Theory of Evolution on scientific grounds? As we teach science, are we teaching our children to put science in its proper place, to know its limitations? Can they competently question the "technological imperative"? Modern educational theory also tends to regard the perfection of the individual as the proper end of educational effort.

There is a general unrest among the Muslim youth over the globe. Their minds are unhinged on account of the impact of western ideas, scientific progress and political ideologies. On the other hand, Iran, Syria, Egypt, Afghanistan, Iraq, Morocco and several other countries are undergoing a crisis. So then they have also to adjust themselves to their environments and to think in broader terms. Hence the Muslims in other parts of the world are also faced with grave national problems and with economics, social and political

turmoil as they are witnessing these changes themselves every day. This means that the representative educationalists of the world must put their heads together and evolve a plan by which modern education, side by side with spirituality of Islam might reform the Muslim brotherhood afresh, and propel the energies, which are today acting in every country and in almost every faith, to convert mankind into a single brotherhood. There is no need to lay stress on this idea for; if only the Islamic world develops a common educational outlook, it may foster a mind such as may be a force for true democracy and a force for an abiding peace.

Today, the Muslims are acquiring good ideas, thoughts, knowledge, and skills, from every corners of the world. The concern is agitated very fast, and in this industrialize world, it is the duty of the teachers to give quality ethical designated education to the Islamic students worldwide, because children are invaluable assets of forthcoming generations. The Prophet Muhammad (SAW) encouraged every Muslims to acquire knowledge and share it. He said:

'Acquire knowledge, for he who acquires it in the way of God performs an act of piety; he who speaks of it, praises the Lord; he who seeks it, adores Allah; he who dispenses instruction in it, bestows alms; and he who imparts it to others, performs an act of devotion to Allah. (Bukhari, Muslim).

The main objectives and the purpose of the education is laid down by revealed religion and hence have an objective quality, there is no divergent according to individual opinion or experience. It applied that the curriculum should be designed in accordance with the Islamic thoughts and teachings of nature of knowledge and the human nature specifically with their spiritual nature. Such an approach also has an pedagogical consequences.

Al-Attas writes that 'there exist such profound and absolute differences between Islam and western culture that they cannot be reconciled' (quoted in Wan Daud, 1998, p. 72).

On the other hand Badawi (1979) has shown that conventional Muslim education had a number of distinctiveness that may seem progressive even today.

For Nasr, Islamization does not mean reproducing the social sciences anew but 'to reorient the outlook on ... the social sciences' (Nasr, 1991).

CONCLUSION

Education in the broadest sense should aim at harmonizing of interest and effort and should ensure the full development of personality and preservation of life in evolving a higher state of society. If education really means the gradual adjustment of the individual to the spiritual possessions of the race, then the problem arises; how far our institutions in the Middle East, Near East, Far East, and South East Asia and in other countries are conforming to these standards. If the older nations look back to their spiritual and cultural heritage and neglect the modern scientific progress, I am afraid they are falling short of the modern demand of society and the intellectual development of the human race, which is the prime object of education. Om the contrary, if they plunge into the abyss of materialism and become creatures of the machine age, the soul of those nations will become dead and cannot respond to the higher instincts of reason and morality. Therefore a balance has to be struck where in there is a healthy growth of the mind and the body, and harmony between reason and intuition, between abstract philosophical dogmas and practical necessities of life. This should be our aim in life.

A curriculum should present our own identity, our own history, our own religion. It's not for others to come and try to change it. Qualitative aspects such as spirituality and independence of thought are as important as qualitative aspects such as key education and examination grades in setting a vision for education.

Much of the literature on education in the Muslim world focuses on educational provision in individual states or between states, rather than literature which specifically links to religious

aspects of that provision. While there is a growing literature on aspects of research which might relate more specifically to aspects of Islam (e.g. curriculum content, types of service providers etc.), this is often less prevalent. What is available here should be seen as a starting point for debate; and hopefully as research interest in education in the Muslim world develops, more evidence-based resources will become available.

To retrieve Muslims from the Centuries old monarchy, colonialism and the oppressive rule of their own people of this degeneration, it is about time that the Muslim Ummah restructures its educational priorities along Islamic lines so as to combat the moral and spiritual degeneration of Muslims throughout the world.

In the end it must be said that only by rooting their education policy firmly in the matrix of Islamic concepts can Muslim countries generate the type of intellectual energy and productivity needed not only to meet the problems of the contemporary Ummah, but also to rejuvenate and re-establish Islam. A Muslim needs to penetrate beyond the external form of the Modern Age to understand and grasp its transcendental nature and reality. We firmly believe that a dynamic and pulsating faith is not possible to attain unless our knowledge-edifice is firmly based on the spiritual foundations of the Qur'an and Hadith.

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