



EDUCATION UNDER ISLAM: MODERN OUTLOOK

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ABSTRACT

Generally we know that Islam is the religion of the Muslim. Islam is not only a religion but also a total life system where Islam instructs the followers (men and women) to do the right actions and not to do the wrong actions. 'Qur'an' and 'Hadith' are the two great elements of Islam. In the various places of Qur'an and Hadith the word 'Ilm' which means knowledge is used in terms of education. The importance and excellence of education has been highlighted both directly and indirectly in Qur'an and Hadith. Qur'an is the source of all knowledge. Islam has a modern outlook for earthly education as well as religious education. The first & all embracing need of Education in Muslim society today is that it should be realistic, related to life. Education has a special role in order to play it successfully in society today. But the Muslim have been a backward section because of history, because of circumstances and social force have kept them down, but through the studies and researches on Modern Education as reference to Qur'an and Hadith we are trying to change the social force. Education is an attempt to improve the position of men, to make them educated and to make the people realize that Education can contribute to the socio-cultural and socio-economic development of the nation.



KEY WORD: Qur'an, Hadith, Ilm(Knowledge), Earthly education, Religious education, Socio-cultural & Socio-economic development.

INTRODUCTION

Islam makes it mandatory for its followers (Men & Women) to seek knowledge and travel to distant lands, in search of it. Holy Qur'an says that Allah has given us knowledge and skill to grab it and impart it to others. Quranic commands and Ahadit are enthusiastic to provide the people, with such knowledge, so that Human beings could be able to make distinction between good and evil and could emerge out successfully, shaping their life in a better way. Islam uses the word knowledge in terms of education. Islam has a modern outlook for education. It lays emphasis on enriching a child with education.

The Islamic Education is seeking to achieve the distinct role of the human being which is reform and construction of human life. This Islamic concept of life based on the fundamental concepts as individual, society and the world, and education works to find a balanced relationship and equitable, so one party cannot survive without the other parties. This relationship is based on ethical authority, who is the religion or the Holy Qur'an which represents the source of Islamic education that derive their universal values from it, so the task of education to link every human activity or behaviour with ideal moral value. Therefore, Islamic education is interested in all activities of the individual at the physical, mental, psychological, spiritual, and try to find a balance between these forces that comprise the human being. For example education on independent thinking and creativity takes a great interest in Islamic culture; we find that the

Qur'an, as well as many Muslim scholars, Ibn al-Haytham and al Ghazali stress the importance of critical thinking and independent.

For this purpose, Islam holds parents, teachers, rulers and the Govt., equally liable to task the responsibility to provide useful and better education to the children. Islam talks about a specific Budget and allocation of funds for education and also calls for a perfect assessment system. In Islam for imparting education, the roll of parents and teachers has been defined, with a belief that a child learns his first lessons from his mother only.

But unfortunately, gender inequality is a common accusation made against Islam and a disparity in Educational opportunity between men and women in much Muslim country is often cited as a primary example of this. Education is seen as one of the pivotal factors in determining the economic, social and political advancement of a society .Islam is cited as a major stumbling block for advancement.

Qur'an: The 1st Element of Islam

The 'Qur'an' is a Holy Scripture of Islam. This Holy Qur'an is Allah's Last prefect Will revealed to His last ideal Messenger Muhammad (S.A.W.). The word Qur'an is came from the Arabic word 'Qara'a' which means 'read beautifully' or repeated reading or recitation again and again. Qur'an means 'which must be read beautifully'. The word 'Iqraa' has been derived from this root which means 'Read'. First revelation of Quran was the instruction to the Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.)

“Read with the name of your Rubb
Who has created everything,
Who has created the human being from the blood –clot,
Read, for your Rubb (Sustainer) is the most Generous,
Who teaches writing by pen.
Who teaches that, which man does not know.”
Sura-Al Aluq (96 :1-5)

These five verses were revealed upon the Prophet (S.A.W.) in the cave of Mount Hira at Mecca. The man was nothing more than an animal until, Allah realized him the importance of education and He Himself guided the man kind through “Prophet” and “Divine verses” .In this Sura (Chapter) Allah himself destines the man to acquire learning by reading , writing , research and advancement. Moreover, there are so many Ahadith which emphasis about the importance of education in our life. But two ‘Ahadith’ of the Prophet S

The five initial verses of sura ‘Alaq’ being the first and the foremost revelation to the Holy Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) from Allah Almighty, start from the word ‘Iqraa’or ‘read’. So, ‘Al-Quran’ means –a compiled, comprehensible and written work which is intelligibly read repeatedly with good insight. The Holy Qur'an is revealed for all the human beings for the welfare of the whole mankind. It is revealed Divine book upon the Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.).No human being is the writer of Qur'an.

Hadith: The 2nd Element of Islam

The Arabic word ‘Hadith’ (Pronu.-Hadis) means ‘News’. ‘Hadith’ includes –

- 1). Statements of the Prophet,
- 2). Deeds of the Prophet,
- 3). Actions which were executed in front of the Prophet and he did not object.

The Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) is not only a social reformer, but also a great educationist. Though he is illiterate, he has a great interest or intention for education. He struggles through the whole life for education. He advised his followers to acquire education or knowledge. There are so many famous educational Ahadith of Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.), such as –

1. “A drop of ink of the pen of a scholar is better than the thousand blood drops of the martyr”
2. “Acquire knowledge even if you have to go to the land of China”.
3. “Attain knowledge from the cradle to the grave”.
4. “To acquire knowledge is obligatory upon every Muslim men and women”

So, these Ahadith prove that the Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) emphasized on education. Last Hadith says that men and women both showed acquire knowledge. He not only says for men education but also for the women education. According to this Hadith, every Muslim woman must be acquired education and they should be educated and knowledgeable women.

But, the following two Ahadith are important to education in our life. These two ‘Ahadith’ of the Prophet S.A.W. are quoted. One is, - “To acquire knowledge is obligatory upon every Muslim men and women.” Another Hadith is – “Acquire knowledge even if you have to go to the land of China”.

The first statement establishes the need of knowledge or education in our life. Without proper knowledge our practices of worship are useless. Islam has openly told via the Quran about the wrong and right action, doings sayings, objects and practices. It has clearly warned the humanity against the evils of interest, gambling, drinking wine, adultery, abusing, cheating in measurement, ‘haraam’ actions etc. If a Muslim does not learn these basic guidelines, his whole life is spoiled because of his ignorance and his life is not better than that of an animal. Thus to acquire knowledge is the integral part of Islamic faith and obligatory upon every Muslim.

The second statement (Hadith) is equally importance. The word ‘China’ is used symbolically for

- 1) China in those days was distant country. The distance provides more experience and increases knowledge

- 2) The difficulties, as born deserts, dense forest, wild animals and fear of dacoits where the hindrances in the way. It conveys that true knowledge cannot be acquired with ease and comfort.

Again, China was not a place to learn the religious principles of Islam then why the Prophet uses the name? It is symbolically used for worldly knowledge, again, the Prophet knew the capabilities of human brain as it set by Allah therefore he already declared the technical advancement of China in Future. He realized the need of technology for the benefit of worldly life. Science thus helps to strengthen the faith where a believer finds scientific miracles already in the verses of Quran.

Heart is the Seat of Learning

Islamic system of education starts from the purification of heart from all the doubts and confusions. ‘Ilm’ is the entity of heart whereas information is stored in brain. Reasoning, logic, debate, arguments and discussion are the methods applied by brain while contemplation, devotion, submission, and love are the modus operandi of heart. Since ‘Ilm’ (knowledge) is the finest attribute of Allah and Allah is free from impurities. So knowledge cannot come to an impure heart. The Qur’an reveals diseases of heart which hamper learning. Qur’an says, in their hearts is a sickness: ‘Allah keeps this sickness to increase. And for them is a painful punishment because they falsify.’

Sura Baqarah: (2:10)

Heart is often trapped in the clutches of ‘nafs’ (self) which in turn is playground of Satan. Purification of nafs and heart is the foremost condition for knowledge

Types of Islamic Education

Islamic education is divided into two broad categories, such as –

- A. ‘Ilm –e-Zahir’- The visible knowledge (shariat).
- B. ‘Ilm-e-Batin’- The hidden knowledge (Tariqat).

In Upanishad it is called “Para vidya” and “Aparavidya”

- A. ‘Ilm-e-Zahir’: It means the visible knowledge (Shariat) which leads the life only in this visible world. This is half portion of entire circle of knowledge. This knowledge is related to the brain. This type of knowledge is dealt in ‘Madrasha’.

- B. 'Ilm-e-Batin': It means the hidden knowledge (Tariqat) for spiritual or heavenly affairs. This knowledge is related to the heart. This type of knowledge is dealt in 'Khanqah'. Tariqat is concerned with Sufi process of knowledge. Sufi is he who has purified his self from all the evils of nafs and his heart is in the vicinity of soul. The Qur'an says-"Only those of His devotees, who possess knowledge, fear Allah."

Sura Fatir (25 : 28)

These two types of knowledge are related to the complete circle of knowledge i.e. worldly and hereafter.

Division of Knowledge

In Islamic education system, following division of knowledge is seen –

1. Ill-ul –Yaqeen (Objective knowledge).
2. Ay-null-Yaqeen (Empirical knowledge).
3. Haq-ul-Yaqeen (Knowledge by insight/future).

The Qur'an and Modern Science

The Qur'an presents a generalized view of knowledge where all the branches of knowledge are correlated to one another. As in our day to day affairs all the branches as chemistry, physics, botany, biology, space, agriculture, literature, design, architecture, history, geography, sociology, polity, philosophy, and mathematics go hand in hand, the Qur'an presents same collaborative scenario in its verses. Our new education policies and recent thinkers in education are also realizing the importance of a generalized education system matched with life. 1430 years ago, when there was no nano technology, the mysterious facts were revealed in Qur'an which modern Science exactly found by experiments. Some glimpses are extracted here.

Embryology

Allah says in the Qur'an about the stages of the creation of man:

"And surely We (Allah) have created human beings from the extract of clay; then We (Allah) made him (her) sperm drop (nutfah) in a secure repository. Then We (Allah) create from sperm drop a clot of congealed blood (alaqah); Then of that clot We (Allah) make a lump piece of flesh (mudgah); Then We (Allah) make the bones and clothed the bones with flesh; Then We (Allah) develop out of it another creation.

Sura Al Mominoon (23:12-14)

Gravitation and Centrifugal Force:

"And you see the mountains, you think that they are firmly fixed, but they shall pass (like) the passing of the clouds. This is the work of Allah who made everything with wisdom."

Sura Namal (27:88)

The system of the understanding of Quran is not easy but to a purified heart .It requires a firm concentration and honest will for knowledge with faith. Allah Himself says,

"And certainly We (Allah) have made the Qur'an easy for comprehension. Is there anyone to pay attention?"

Sura Qamar (54:17)

There are open signs for the understanding of Divine mystery but they require special preparation as reasoning with faith, wisdom, piety etc. Ayat means 'sign' and the whole Qur'an is composed of 6666 such signs.

"And in the Earth there are signs for those having sure faith."

Sura Zariyat(51:20)

"Surely in the variation of night any day and whatever Allah has created in the heavens and earth, there are the signs for those, who are pious."

Sura Yunus (10:6)

“And one of His signs is the creation of heavens and earth and the diversity of your language and colours. Surely in it are signs for the mankind who know.”

Sura Rum (30:22)

“Allah has created the heavens and the earth with truth. Surely in it, there are signs for the believers.”

Sura Unkaboot (29:44)

The Qur’an talks about the importance of thinking largely, that mentions hundreds times the terms such as: consider (Yaaqilun), Understand (Yafqahun), learn wisdom (yataffakarun), see (Yanzurun), foresight (yubserun), meditate (Yaatabirun), speculate (Yatadabbarun), ponder (Yaamalun). In other instances it is used phrases such as uli al albbab, uli al absaar , or ulinahii in order to draw the attention to the functions of the mind.

The Qur’an expresses the meaning of mind forty nine times by the verb forms that derived from him as: yaaqilun, Taaqilun, (consider), but A ql (mind) as a Name from is not mentions in the Qur’an, because the verb reflects dynamic activity, but the name implies constant thing.

Islamic philosophy of education aspires to shape the human being based on matching between the three dimensions of sense, mind and religious faith, in the belief that harmony between those dimensions may achieve the human values in reality.

The Quranic discourse is not emphasizes only the rational way, but also the empirical method says: “Travel through the earth and see how Allah originate creation ...” It is obvious address for human being to inquire their reality by transition from the particular to universal in order to deduct the conclusion.

This education believe that human life progress is a duty of every Muslim, progress achievement is done by activism of the three dimensions, namely epistemology production ought to rely on experimental and rational methods, while the ethical dimension constitutes as a reference and authority to every human activity. Thus, Knowledge and science had a functional role which comes to achieve better life for humankind.

Therefore, Islamic education aware to the importance of development thinking and personal autonomy in order to achieve ideal values. It is apply continues negation to the reality in aim to change and improve it towards a better human life.

Knowledge is the soul of Islamic Philosophy. In the history of mankind we do not find anywhere such a single incidence when a victorious king releases the war prisoners at the compensation of teaching some illiterate people of the king. The Prophet did it at the Battle of Badr. Kiran Bedi introduced the centre of IGNOU at Tihar Jail for prisoners but Islam has already put the example 1430 years ago. First condition for knowledge is to purify the heart, trapped into the fetters of nafs and sedition of Satan. So purification starts at nafs which passes through three stages. Islamic education motivates to learn modern Science and Technology in order to understand the hidden mystery of Divinity. The Qur’an is the source of all knowledge. If a man realizes the causes of his degradation he can soon overcome them with Divine Guidance. Rethinking Islamic philosophy of education in present pandemonium is much require today in order to revive the tradition of peace, love, fraternity, fear of Allah, love and knowledge to make the world better and worth of living.

Hazrat Ali, in his book entitled “Nehjul Balaga” has beautifully portrayed the significance of knowledge saying:

“The beautiful dress does not reflect beauty.
The beauty is the beauty of knowledge and morals.
The one whose father dies is not an orphan,
The real orphan is he who brings bad name to his tribe.

Women under Islam

Besides the Quranic emphasis on education we find many sayings of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) on this subject. Moreover, Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) more emphasizes on education for both men and women. There are many Prophet’s educational Ahadith which prove that men and women are equal in

acquiring knowledge. In a famous Hadith, Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) says: “Acquiring of knowledge is obligatory upon every Muslim men and women”. It means that, every Muslim men and women must be acquired knowledge. They must be educated and knowledgeable men and women. By this Hadith, Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) says about education for men and women. Only this Hadith is enough which supports for women education. There is no hinder for women education. Maintaining the ‘Hijab’ the Muslim women can take up the any kind of Hallal (prohibited) professions or jobs, such as - Doctors, Nurses, Officers, Teachers, Business, etc.

Moreover, the Holy Qur’an gives the various types of rights, such as - Economic rights, Legal rights, Spiritual rights, Social rights to the women. To achieve these rights Islam says that the women must be educated.

CONCLUSION

The Holy Qur’an believes in the respect and equality of all humankind but it announces the superiority of the class of educated human beings. The Qur’an says: “Are the educated and uneducated equal?” In sura ‘Heifer’, the Qur’an declares the superiority of Adam in these words: “And He taught Adam, the names of all things; then He placed them before the angles and said: Tell me the names of these if you are right.” They said: “Glory to Thee: of knowledge we have none save Thou hast taught us, in truth it is Thou who art perfect in knowledge and wisdom”.

Sura ‘Baqarah’ (2:30-32)

The angels and Satan failed in the test of knowledge. Hence the vicegerency was assigned to Adam. Knowledge made him superior to all creatures. The first revelation in sura ‘Al-Aluq’ of the Holy Qur’an was the instruction to Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.): “Read with the name of your Rubb Who has created everything”. This first verse of the revelation deals with the importance of knowledge. In many places of the Qur’an the word ‘Ilm’ is used in terms of knowledge and education. The Holy Qur’an is the source of all knowledge. The Qur’an says that we send Prophets to teach people wisdom. It further says that only the people of knowledge fear Allah. In sura ‘Heifer’, the Qur’an says: “But the best of provisions is right conduct so fear me, o ye that are wise”.

Sura ‘Baqarah’ (2:197)

Hence, we see that the Qur’an is a Book of wisdom and exhorts to pick up the glistening pearls of wisdom.

Islam has a modern outlook for earthly education as well as religious education. Islam pays utmost importance to acquire knowledge in the field of medicine, in the field of science and in the field of religion because Islam tells that every man must be educated. In the concluding part, it may be said that Islam never neglects the earthly or materialistic education. The earthly education is dignified by the Islam.

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