

# THE NEEDS FOR ECLECTIC MODEL IN HIGHER ISLAMIC EDUCATION IN RESPONSE TO GLOBALIZATION

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## Introduction

In respond to change, Islamic Education in the Muslim World needs to be revisited. The wake of globalization is multi-dimensional in nature. Abundant issues and challenges can be traced not only related to the scope of curriculum but also the methodology or the delivery system used and the orientation of teaching-learning processes applied. Islamic Education of today should embark to a new paradigm that can lead to a more civilization in approach, professional in orientation and integrative in contents. Reflecting to the strength of the past civilization, the tradition of scholarship had become the central focus in building a truly representing human resource development, which was compatible to the time and space factor. The Islamic tradition of learning to some extent maintains the prescriptive approach rather than the articulative one. Globalization in its nature is not only structural in its setting but also hegemonic in approach. Neglecting the importance of compatibility in responding to change, Islamic Education in its present scope and orientation may lead to the marginalization of the ummah. Globalization substantially will led to the maximum utilization of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in developing new strategies of learning making the roles of educators, '*murabbi*' and '*muallim*' in a more challenging atmosphere. The immediate challenge is the role of facilitators to inculcate '*adab*' in the teaching-learning processes by using portal delivery system.

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## Islamic Education In The Asean Region

In most Muslim society in the Asean region, Islamic education is still perpetuating its traditional mode of learning with limited contents revolving the teaching of the Quran as the basis of Islamic understanding, 'fard 'ain', *usuluddin*, *syari'ah*, *fiqh* and *usul-fiqh*, *seerah* and *lughah*. The objective is to develop the Islamic 'akhlak', sound belief (*aqidah*) and proper understanding of 'ibadah' on the spiritual domain of Islam. But the challenges confronted by Muslims today are not only in the areas of belief but also the contemporary challenges in the fields of science and technology. Despite the basic characteristics of globalization, not only knowledge-based curriculum is in focus but also at the same time informative and skill-based human resource has become the emphasis. In order to respond to the new global challenges, the curriculum, methodology, facilities and the nature of research tradition need to be reformed and upgraded. One of the ways to achieve this objective is to introduce the method of integration and Islamization. This can be done if there exist regional cooperation among scholars and institutions so that Islamic education is always compatible with the time and space factors.

## Islamic Education And Human Resource Development

Sayyed Hossein Nasr in his book 'Islam and the Challenge of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century', mentioned that,

"Another major challenge which Islam faces from the outside is what I could call the imposition of Western order in the name of global order. That is one of the trickiest and most important games that is going on right now in the world. The colonial period is supposed to be over, but there is a new form of colonialism which always speaks in the name of global order, but which really does not mean a global order at all, because all of the globe has not been consulted"<sup>1</sup>

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1 Hossein Nasr, "Islam and the Challenge of the 21st Century", Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1993, pp.6-7

Ishaq Farhan in looking through the crisis in Muslim education is of the opinion that,

“Numerous Muslim educators have become aware of the importance of Islamic education within the frame work of the rejuvenation plan of the Muslim nation in recent decades. Hundreds of research papers and books have been written in this area. Many educational symposium and conferences have been held in an attempt to sense the features of educational thought in Muslim heritage”<sup>2</sup>

He added that,

“The increasingly growing role of education in modern society by viewing education as a means of achieving human development which is regarded to be indispensable for bridging the gap of backwardness, emphasizes the need for crystallizing a clearer attitude in order to rationalize the steps taken by those who work in the field of Muslim education authentically and strive for movement from slogan to plan, from idea to program and from general to particular”<sup>3</sup>

In his special address to a conference entitled, “Towards Constructing a Contemporary Islamic Education Theory”, he outlined some pertinent hypotheses;

- i) Islam encompasses all aspects of life, thus Islamic education is comprehensive and not synonymous to religious education as in the West.

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2 Ishaq Farhan, “Education Conference Book; Towards the Construction of a Contemporary Islamic Educational Theory”, Islamic Studies and Research: Amman, Jordan. 1991, pg. 15

3 *Ibid.*

- ii) Authentication of contemporary educational thought from an Islamic standpoint by starting from the Quran and Sunnah and relying on them as two basic sources.
- iii) Benefiting from, and critically analyzing Islamic educational intellectual heritage in order to utilize the useful parts thereof in our contemporary life without being enslaved to the educational interpretations of those who preceded us.
- iv) Addressing the educational issues of our age from an Islamic perspective and attempting to assemble together the features of a contemporary Islamic educational theory.
- v) Belief that educational theory represents the conclusions and interpretations of scientists and educators, that it develops according to time and place in terms of form and subsidiaries which are subject to experiment and interaction with human experience besides maintaining its essence and contents of the Quran and Sunnah and the paradigm of Islamic values in the field of psyche, mind, knowledge and society.<sup>4</sup>

Integration and Quality Human Resource Development are the two-pronged strategies in preparing the Muslims in responding to change. Change is something inevitable but the issue among Muslims is how to respond and manage change. Responding to change is not just for the sake of changing. We are promoting and responding to the changes because the vitality of Islam by its nature possess the elements of reform, revival and 'ijtihad'.

Generally, we have two kinds of educational institutions that provide Islamic Education in the modern days. There still exists in many Muslim world universities or higher institutions offering programmes related to *syari'ah*, *usuluddin*, *fiqh* and *usul fiqh*, *lughah*, the study of Quran and Sunnah and taught by Muslim scholars. Orientation like

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4 *Ibid*, pg. 16

Al Azhar, Madinah, Deoban and others are the most popular approach and strengthening the perspectives on authentication. There are orientations in the West such as in United Kingdom and also in the United States offering Islamic Studies in a more modern perspectives and Western in methodologies taught both by Muslims and non-Muslim scholars. Orientations like St.Andrews, Kent, SOAS, Temple or Chicago are giving new perspectives on Islamic studies related to contemporary issues.

The differences related between the two, are more on the interpretation of the sources, research methodologies and perspectives on time and space factors that brought to different inclination such as orientalism and others. To some extent, graduates from the traditional orientations having different perspectives on modernity, progress, change and development to that of the western-oriented one. These differences sometimes resulted to polemics in addressing *syariah* issues and issues related to knowledge and education as well. We need some kind of eclectic approach to solve the problems. If not, differences will develop between the two schools of orientation and this will affect the ummah.

In most Muslim countries there always exist two kinds of educational system, i.e the Islamic and the modern one. The Islamic ones concentrate more on the development of the foundation and at the same time stress more on character building. The latter, stress more on hard sciences and also social sciences and living skills. In many Muslim countries, the experience under the colonial period brought great impact to the educational policy, methodology and the end result to the type and nature of the human resource development. To some extent, this brought a dichotomous situation and at the end of the day, both settings produced contradictory approaches and resulted to conflicts.

In 1977, Muslim scholars and educationists met in Mecca to discuss the issues on Islamic education. They came to a recommendation that the existing state of education among the ummah may jeopardize the future, due to the deep infusion of secularization not only within the policy but the methodology used. The conference brought great impact not only to Muslim scholars but also the Islamic approaches towards education and

training. In this respect the quality of Human Resource Development (HRD) among younger generation is pertinent in determining their roles for future undertaking. The nature of HRD related closely to the kind of education and training that we are offering in the system today.

The international conference on Islamic Education was held in Islamabad, Pakistan in 1979 under the title; "Curricula Design". The third one was held in Dacca, Bangladesh, in 1981 under the title, "Development of School Textbooks"; and the fourth was in Jakarta, Indonesia and the fifth was in Cairo in 1987, to evaluate the achievements of previous conferences.

According to Sayyid Ali Ashraf, the first Secretary of the Meccan Conference in analyzing all the conferences held, stated that;

"Among the important achievements of these conferences were the idea of Islamic character of education followed by the idea of the Islamic character of all branches of learning, and finally the formulation of a suitable methodology for this purpose. The steps adopted in this field included the classification of knowledge into divine knowledge coming from revelation and an acquired knowledge coming from the physical world, and the necessity of formulating Islamic concepts for all branches of knowledge"<sup>5</sup>

In short, Islamic studies of today demands a new theoretical foundation to address not only the authentic or traditional approach in addressing traditional sources and also 'turath' but also the modern factors in teaching-learning processes which are very contemporary in nature. The advancement of globalization under virtual networking, the challenge on artificial intelligence, genetic engineering, cloning and genome for instance post a new challenge to 'fuqaha' and Muslim scholars. A new theoretical foundation is pertinent in reflection to the importance of

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5 Sayyid Ali Ashraf, "Islamic Education: Evaluation of the Achievements of Previous Conferences", in "Education Conference Book", Islamic Studies and Research: Amman, Jordan, 1991, Pg.74

character building (*akhlaq*) and at the same time reflective to our past heritage in science and technology so that its compatibility can bring new approaches in learning.

### **The Eclectic Model**

Taha Jabir in his book, 'Outline of a Cultural Strategy' outlined some approaches to overcome the existing dichotomous situation prevalent in Muslim education.

- i) The first can be described as the traditionalists' approach, which by and large, considers the ummah's traditional thought to be self-sufficient and capable of being presented as it is or with very little alteration. This approach holds that the ummah's intellectual life can be founded and organized, and that the structure of its civilization can be built on this basis. This approach is often described as the approach of authenticity.
- ii) The second trend considers contemporary Western thought and its world-view- its concepts of existence, of life and man – to be universal; without it, modern culture and civilization cannot be built. This tendency maintains that Western thought must be adopted into and any consequent negative aspects are the price which must be paid if modern culture and civilization are to be established. This view is often described as modernistic.
- iii) The third trend, or the eclectic approach, advocates yet another view. It contends that one must select from the traditional thought what is most sound and from 'modern' contemporary thought that which one considers and proves to be correct, and weld the two to form an intellectual structure, which will provide a guaranteed basis for achieving what is required.<sup>6</sup>

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6 Taha Jabir, "Outline of A Cultural Strategy", International Islamic of International Thought, Herndon, USA, 1987.

The Eclectic Model in some Muslim Institutions or Islamic Universities has become a very popular agenda in addressing the dichotomy. The strategies on integration and Islamization of knowledge have become the prime issues and challenges. Muslim Students Association in America (MSA), International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT), Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC) and the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) are among the forefronts in this effort.

### The State Of Islamic Education In Asean Countries

Indonesia for instance, is very rich in her traditional mode of Islamic education. The well-established '*pesanteran*', State Religious Institutions (IAIN) and Islamic Universities can be found all over the country. Most institutions offer the non-sciences subjects. What is still prevailing basically is the spirit of volunteerism (*mandiri*), sense of sacrifice and with high degree of self-dependence in developing and sustaining the existence of Islamic education.

Malaysia has a unique experience in strengthening Islamic education since independence. It is developmental and more structured in nature despite the existing trend that creates nervousness to the stakeholders in which many private religious institutions operating in a way marginalizing themselves from the mainstream focus.

In Singapore, the Muslims have great interest in Islamic education. The existence of '*madrasah*' together with the other modes of Islamic non-formal education ended-up with controversy with the government on the issue of compulsory education. Eventually, great interest in the same trend is emerging in Brunei. In Brunei, basic Islamic education is provided to every Muslim and more students are sent abroad including Malaysia for better educational exposure. In Southern Thailand and Philippines, traditional Islamic schools and institutions maintain their scope and status similar to that of other Asean countries. Thai students in the International Islamic University Malaysia have become the largest group pursuing their studies in various fields of knowledge. Recently there was



a seminar in Yala Islamic College in Southern Thailand represented by 37 higher institutions from Asean countries to discuss future cooperation in Islamic Education.

Muslims in Asean countries must take bold steps to develop networking in sharing their diverse experience in running Islamic institutions and forging reform in Islamic Education. The conditions for a better future among others lie on the nature of human resource development programme we need to produce. Globalization within our doorsteps is having potentials to distract the focus of our younger generation from that of the importance of knowledge, skills and good moral character to that of utilitarian needs. That is acquiring knowledge purely for the sake of certification and credentials.

### Some Models In Malaysian Universities

Universities in Malaysia are also responding positively to the Eclectic Model. The Academy of Islamic Studies, University of Malaya, has started introducing a Major and Minor concepts in the Islamic Studies for undergraduate and post-graduate programmes. The subject of *syari'ah* as major is associated to law, economics and management and the subject of *usuluddin* associated to Islamic Thought, Civilization and Human Development. Interestingly, the Academy is also offering the degree on Islamic Studies along with Computer Science and Information Technology, Biotechnology and the study on environment.<sup>7</sup>

The newly established university, Islamic University College of Malaysia (KUIM) is taking the same approach in strengthening the Eclectic Model. For example, two faculties are offering the study on Dakwah and Islamic Management concurrently and *Mu'amalah* together with Economics in a wider perspective.<sup>8</sup>

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7 Academy of Islamic Studies, "Programmes Guide Book", Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya, 2002.

8 "Programmes Guide Book", Kuala Lumpur, Kolej Universiti Islam Malaysia, 2002.

Islamic Colleges in many states in Malaysia such as Terengganu (KUSZA), Malacca, Pahang (KIPSAS), Selangor (KISDAR), Perak and Kedah (INSANIAH), Inti College in Negeri Sembilan and many others are also stressing the importance of integration in curriculum.

International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), since the beginning of its inception is trying to crystallize the very meaning of integration and Islamization in all programmes. The approach on Major and Minor, Double Major and Double Degree, the importance of English and Arabic as the medium of instruction together with Islamizing the co-curricular activities are the fundamental effort in addressing the Muslim Education in the contemporary world so that Muslims all over the world can contribute positive roles in addressing the ummah of different contextuality.<sup>9</sup>

### IIUM, The Garden Of Knowledge and Virtues

Since its establishment in 1983, International Islamic University (IIUM) has embarked a challenging role in shaping new concept of Islamic education. The philosophy of IIUM stresses the importance of *tawhid* as the basis of holistic approach in teaching-learning processes. The niche of having a clear vision and mission i.e IIICE (Islamization, Integration, Internationalization and Comprehensive Excellence) has become the objective of this university.

English has become the language of instruction together with Arabic. This is to enable the students to be proficient in languages to acquire modern knowledge and at the same time Islamic knowledge. The major and minor concept is to assist the students from various disciplines in integrating their understanding of the conventional knowledge in various disciplines to that of the Islamic one. For example, students of Revealed Knowledge are required to take 17 credit hours Human Sciences

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9 Undergraduate Prospectus, International Islamic University Malaysia, "Kuala Lumpur: Malaysia, 2001

subjects such as Psychology, Sociology, Communication, and Philosophy etc. The same applied to students of Human Sciences are requested to enroll 17 credit hours on the subjects of Revealed Knowledge. The same requirements are also applied to Law, Economics and others. Upon graduation, they can apply for another year to finish the double major or double degree programmes to enable them to acquire both degrees such as Civil Law together with *Syari'ah*, Islamic Revealed Knowledge together with Human Sciences and Economic together with Islamic *Mu'amalat*. Through this kind of process we hope to produce graduates having integrated understanding of knowledge and can play better role in the system. The inclusion of Arabic, *tilawah*, Islamic Understanding and Civilization made compulsory to every student may enhance the vision for Integration and Islamization.

The same applied to the development of co-curricular activities among students. *Halaqah* is compulsory to students. In the *halaqah*, not only the strengthening of the basic understanding of *aqidah*, *akhlak* and *ibadah* is in focus but also to make the study of Quran and Hadith related to the contemporary life. Students are given one credit hour for that programme. Students are also exposed to leadership training, parenting skills and other cultural and recreational activities in the Islamic way. By exposing them with this Islamic orientation, it may become the basis of practice in the future.

Students and academic staff of IIUM are diverse in nature coming from all over the world. IIUM has become the cultural meeting place for international students from almost 100 countries. Expertise from Muslim scholars are being tapped by the university for the benefit of the ummah. Students from ex Russian colonies, from China and Africa, from Europe to Australia registering their interest in learning Islam from a better perspective. In the long run, they may become future professionals and leaders of the ummah and with the strengthening of alumni and networking, they may become assets for the ummatic agenda.

As a government sponsored university, IIUM is giving more emphasis on science and technological subjects. The Kulliyyah of Medicine, Pharmacy, Engineering, Sciences, Architecture and

Environmental Design, Science, IT and Economic are expanding fast. The recent agenda is to recruit best students from the best religious schools all over Malaysia in an 18<sup>th</sup> months programme with Darul Quran, JAKIM integrating the skill of *tahfiz* and streaming them later into the discipline of sciences and other professional subjects. At the same time, IIUM is offering graduates from Maahad Tahfiz those getting good result to follow pre-economic programmes as a start and other programmes will follow suit. If this batch of *huffaz* are given proper attention and education, they may become future academicians in developing a more integrated way in Islamizing various disciplines. With this eclectic and integrative approach we hope to produce students and scholars from all fields of knowledge compatible with time and space factors.

### **The Importance of Networking and Reform**

Islamic institutions of education in Asean countries have little choice in responding to the wake of globalization. Since the nature of globalization is borderless in perspectives and Unipolar in form, the tradition of scholarship among Muslim educationists and scholars should embark into the phase of networking. Networking through seminars and conferences alone is not sufficient but should be extended to serious discussions on how the spirit of sharing and collaborating in a reciprocal manner could create the twin concept or a win-win benefit, through signing the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and exchange of academic staff and students for mutual benefits.

Networking also relates to a good database system in establishing alumni together with list of specialists, scholars, researchers and other proponents in various fields and disciplines. If the networking and reciprocity work, they may bring new light to a more meaningful regional cooperation in the future. The benefits from these efforts are really pertinent in bringing new climate of Islamic learning and to strengthen the tradition of Islamic education.

Islamic education in this region should embark into the tradition of reform from the taqlidic approach to that of a more innovative, creative

and *ijtihadic* one. The basic focus of reform should emphasize the integration between the knowledge of divinity to that of the knowledge of sciences. In this respect, the curriculum need to be revised and strengthened so that it is compatible with new challenges. The methodology of teaching learning reflects the inclusion of digital, smart and value-based education. Moreover, reform in Islamic Education should take into consideration the element of ICT in it.

## Conclusion

With the new theoretical foundation (epistemology) on Islamic Studies and Islamic Education based on the Eclectic model, the nature of Human Resource Development in the Muslim world would be different. Other than the quality of compatibility to the current needs, the Muslims under the orientation of the Eclectic Model can play their role positively in the process of nation building. Since integration and Islamization is a process, Muslim scholars and teachers must address not only the issues based on conceptual and philosophical foundations but also the operational abilities in utilizing current methodologies in teaching-learning techniques to produce talented students both for sound *akhlaq* and sound thinking as well. At this juncture, strategizing networking and collaboration in developing a more conducive curriculum in responding to change and the wake of globalization is extremely inevitable. Serious discussion and planning must be held at all levels to strategize the development of human resource, developing the work-plan, empowering them with integrated knowledge compatible to future reform of the ummah. The best respond to globalization is not merely through rhetoric or reactive respond alone but proactively through anticipative measures to make Islamic education relevant to our present challenges.

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