

ENHANCING ISLAMIC STUDIES CURRICULUM FOR GLOBAL COMPETITIVENESS.

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Abstract

In Islam, knowledge is conceived to be universal and not limited to any area as the noble Qur'an cuts across all aspects of human existence. It is an indispensable drive for the development and growth of every person in the society. This is why Islamic Studies is noted to be a discipline that embraces within itself all other disciplines. However, the curriculum of this subject presently in Nigeria is inadequate. This paper looks at way in which Islamic Studies curriculum can be enriched for global usage.

Keywords: Islamic Studies, Curriculum, Global usage.

Islamic Studies

This is a subject through which everything about the religion of Islam can be learnt and taught. According to Oloyede (2012), Islamic studies is viewed as a terminology that is used to describe an aspect of theological sciences which seeks to influence natural, human and social science in their service to God and humanity from the prison of Islamic Credo. It is also viewed, according to Wikipedia (2021) as the

Umbrella for the Islamic Sciences (*'Ulūm al-din*), originally researched and as defined by the Islamization of knowledge. It includes all the traditional forms of religious thought such as *kalam* (Islamic Theology) and *Fiqh* (Islamic Jurisprudence) and also incorporates field generally considered secular in the West such as Islamic Sciences and Islamic economics. It is also referred to, according to Usman Andi (n.d), generally to be the historical study of Islam which includes Islamic civilization, Islamic history and historiography, Islamic law, Islamic theology and Islamic philosophy.

Curriculum

This word stems from a latin word '*Currere*' meaning 'to run or to proceed'. According to Online Etymology Dictionary (2001), the word curriculum as a noun is also a latin word which means 'a running, course, career'. In the context of education, it will be appropriate to view it as course of learning or a plan for learning.

According to Offorma (2005), it is an instrument by means of which school seek to translate the hopes of the society in which they function into concrete reality. Osokoya (1966) defined curriculum as all the planned and unplanned learning experiences that students undergo while in a school setting. Every school has a planned, formally acknowledged curriculum as well as an unplanned, informal,

and hidden one. Oyekan (2015) see it as hardcore of education that provides the basic contents and means of relevant knowledge.

Global

According to Merriam Webster dictionary it means involving the entire world.

Brief History Of Islamic Education In Nigeria

Islamic education is as old as Islam itself in Nigeria. According to Fafunwa (1974) Islamic religion is the basic of Islamic education; it is education in Islamic context and culture. Islam came to West Africa through the trade merchant in 7th century. Islam came to Nigeria through the North. It was in the 14th century by traders, scholars, cattle rearers. Islam came to Nigeria through trans-sahara trade route. Their first point call is Kanem Borno in 986 C.E from where it spread to Kastina, Kano, Sokoto, Borno, Bauchi, and Nupe. Kano had been centre of Islamic learning as far back as 16th Century, While Sokoto became a famous centre of learning in 19th century. In these places they established Islamic centers of learning and also introduced books on divinity and etymology, Islam further spread to Ilorin, Ibadan, Oyo, Iseyin, Abeokuta. By the beginning of 20th century, Islamic education had started to enjoy wide popularity in the south western part of Nigeria.

Wherever Islam spread, rudimentary knowledge of the Qur'an, the Hadith, Shari'ah, Sirah, e.t.c are still taught to its follower. One of the factors that aided the spread of Islamic education is the emphasis the Prophet put on seeking of knowledge. One of Prophetic saying "the best man among you is the one who learns Qur'an and then cares to teach other" (Buhari).

According to Fafunwa(1974) learners are brought under the same roof often referred to as "Makaranta " to receive training under a competent teacher (Mallam) Islamic education is also literate, functional and is an international course that studies across the globe.

The sole aim of Islamic education is to bring man to submit to his Lord (Allah). Earlier stage of Islamic Education in its developmental stages, Islamic education in Nigeria was characterized by feature that differs from the western oriented educational system.

There was no clear cut division into primary, secondary and tertiary levels. There was no classes, no age limit, and no rigid time table with neatly timed periods for subject. What we had instead was a structured of utmost simplicity.

According to Fafunwa (1974), he asserted that Islamic teacher wandered from place to place looking for charitable Muslims to shelter him. This reduced the status of a teacher (Mallam) to that of a beggar. He came to occupy socially rather low status. Fafunwa described the essence and structure of teaching Islamic education as such that did not facilitate permanence in learning. He inferred that a typical Qur'anic school the teacher sat under a tree or in a parlor, verandah, or posh, surrounded by volume of Qur'an and Islamic books.

A little further off, but near enough to be within reach of his long cane surrounded some ten to forty pupils in a semi circle. The teacher then was assisted by one of the pupils who was considered to be brightest or the oldest or both. As early as third year of life of Muslim children

were expected to start the first stage of Qur'anic education. At this stage the pupils learn the short chapters of the Qur'an through repetition and by rote, the pleasure they derived from the system at this stage lied in the choral recitation which often followed a sing song pattern. The teacher explained the Arabic text, which was often difficult for the pupils. Furthermore, pupils were introduced to other aspects such exegesis of the Quran (Tafsir) Theology, Hadith, Jurisprudence, Logic, Arithmetic etc. At this level, the translation was adopted and students still used repetition in readings. It was at this stage that a student choose a specific field he was going to specialize. Malik (1993) observed that the Muslim parents in the south, felt reluctant in enrolling their children in Christian Mission schools for fear of being converted to Christianity. This further aroused their interest in setting up Qura'nic schools. As time went by, the furniture and variety of subjects that could make the products of such professionals in different fields led to a relative decline of students enrolling for Qur'anic schools, in some areas the interest of some Muslim children and their parents were developed toward western education.

After seeing the rate of decline in enrollment in Qur'anic schools due to the presence of western oriented school and the insufficiency of Arabic and Islamic studies teacher Fafunwa (1987) asserted that in 1934, a school was set up in Kano by Alhaji Abdullah Bayero called Northern provinces law school and was later changed to school for Arabic studies and Islamic studies and maintained by the government. The school was charged with the responsibility to train teachers for Arabic and Islamic Studies subject as well as English and Arithmetic. The government introduced a scheme by which untrained junior primary school teacher attended course at Arabic and Islamic studies. The then Northern Region Ministry of Education and Northern provinces law school which metamorphosed to Abdullahi Bayero College worked out a comprehensive plan whereby the traditional way of imparting knowledge was directly to follow the westernized ways so as to bring uniformity at pre-University level.

The school of Arabic Studies at Sokoto started in this direction. In the south, university of Ibadan established Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies in which one year certificate course and two years Diploma course were introduced. This was meant to raise the poor status and standard of Arabic teachers and graduates of the traditional school. But despite the training they had undergone, the certificate was not recognized by the Ministry of Education when presented for employment (Balogun 1983). Yaqub (1986) asserted that due to the problem caused by western education through absence of Arabic and Islamic Studies in its curriculum brought about the demand and agitation by the Muslim for the introduction of these two subjects and the establishment of Muslim schools. In achieving this demand, Blogun (1983) asserts in their efforts to preserve the knowledge of Arabic and Islamic culture, some Muslim dignitaries in Nigeria held a meeting in 1953, with the then Northern Ministry of Education Kaduna with a view of including Arabic and Islamic Religion knowledge's among the subject for the West Africa Examination council (WAEC). Consequently, schools started preparing for examination in both subjects in the late fifties. In further response to the agitation of the Muslim, the Colonial government established the first Muslim organizations like Zumaratul Islamiyyah, Ansarudeen , Nawarudeen e.t.c set up their own school to cater for both Islamic and western education. The name "Islamic studies" was officially adopted in 1983 as the name for the teaching of Islamic education taught in primary and post primary schools in Nigeria. It was adopted at the first workshop of the Islam under the auspices of the Nigeria Education Research Council (NER) now NERC. At the end of the workshop, the National Islamic Studies curriculum was fashioned out and published in 1985 by the Federal Ministry of Education. The reason advanced for choosing the title "Islamic

Studies” was that it was more appropriate and comprehensive to the subject matter in the curriculum than Islamic Religious Knowledge.

The curriculum in use since 1983 has not changed and world is advancing in all ramifications. In order to meet up with other courses or subjects, Islamic Studies curriculum needs serious overhauling in order to make it relevant in present day without losing its pristine objective.

Objective Of Islamic Studies

Saheed B.S (2017) sees Islam as a religion which is very dynamic and practical as it deals with the life of man in all ramifications. It wants a very active and dynamic person in the social order. The objectives of Islamic studies vary from primary level to higher institution level.

However, the basic and general aims are:

- a. To enable a Muslim have basic information in order to live an honourable life.
- b. To enable a Muslim develop sound mentally, physically and spiritually so as to live a healthy life.
- c. To develop in a Muslim the spirit of brotherhood and tolerance so as to live harmonious life in the society.
- d. To fully inform a Muslim about the socio-political and economic affairs of his contemporary world or society so as to play his/her roles in the societal development.
- e. To imbibe in a Muslim and the society a simple life style
- f. According to Abdul-Fatouh as quoted by Saheed B.S (2017), to plant in a Muslim a firm religious belief and a good moral by way of religion which come to purify soul, improve moral and propagate it.

However, as the paper is addressing Islamic studies curriculum in tertiary institution, it hereby gives the following aims and objectives according to the Nigeria University Commission (NUC) Benchmark for Islamic Studies (2014):

- i. To acquaint the student with the broad outline of Islam as a religion and as a way of life.
- ii. To prepare the student to understand Islam as culture and civilization
- iii. To present Islam to the student as it is in its original sources of the Prophets particularly the Qur’an and Sunnah
- iv. To sustain rigorous academic research into all issues affecting contemporary Muslim communities with focus on Nigeria.
- v. To place Islam in the context of other world religious traditions, especially those relevant to Nigeria.
- vi. To prepare the student who will progress to postgraduate level with intellectual capabilities and imaginative thoughts.
- vii. To produce graduates that would adequately fit into establishments of administration, Islamic legal departments, teaching at various levels, and the foreign service.

Scope of Islamic Studies.

Islamic studies, as said earlier is an all-encompassing subject that is so comprehensive to the extent that it leaves nothing untouched. It is regarded as the mother of all subjects. Therefore, its contents are divided into five (5) different parts, according to Sidek (2000), as follows

- a. Tawhid (Theology): This part is concerned with the Islamic creed which entails the study of the attributes of Allah and the relationship of the Creator with the creatures especially mankind as well as the belief in the Prophets, Books, Qadar and eschatology.

- b. Fiqh (worship and jurisprudence): This part focuses on the way Allah is to be worshiped and those things He has made lawful and unlawful. This also includes the five (5) pillars of Islam.
- c. Sirah (Life History of the Prophet): The historical life of Prophet Muhammad as well as his conduct. This also includes the life history of the four rightly guided Caliphs and other Muslim scholars.
- d. Tahdhib (Moral and Social Teaching): This part deals with the study of moral and social teachings of Islam as contained in the Qur'an and Sunnah.
- e. Qur'an: The revelation and compilation of the Qur'an as well as its explanation (Tafsir) and reasons for its revelation.

Based on the above analysis, it can be deduced that Hadith or Sunnah has been incorporated into Sirah instead of standing independently. This is because the history of the Prophet entails everything in his life time including his sayings and actions. Similarly, hadith entails the life history of the Prophets.

Ways Of Enriching The Islami Studies In Ngeria For Global Usage.

1. Inclusion of Entrepreneurial Courses in Islamic Studies Curriculum to overcome the unemployment epidemic setback the country is currently facing
2. Information Communication Technology (ICT) related Courses should be Introduced and Adopted into the Curriculum of Islamic Studies due to global trends in ICT.
3. Inclusion of Islamic Finance or Islamic Banking System as a Course in Islamic Studies Curriculum. Other institutions should borrow a leaf from the Islamic Unit of Tai-Solarin University of Education, Ijebu-Ode where Islamic Finance is a Core-Course
4. Related Courses on Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) should be included in the Curriculum as a process of initiating and managing new venture for self reliance
5. The Increasing Industrialization, Urbanization, Occupational Nobility and Human Diversity, Vocational Training becomes a necessity in order to enriching Islamic Studies Curriculum
6. Provision for relevant and adequate instructional materials should be included in Islamic Studies curriculum.
7. There should be courses like Islamic banking and finance, Islamic Insurance (Takaful) e.t.c. the courses mentioned should not just be studied as subject course under Islamic Studies but to be studied as programme or course in the university or other tertiary institution.

Conclusion

The Nexus between the present Islamic Studies and Curriculum and enriching the curriculum with more innovations shall provide vibrant platform for integrated professionalization and vocationalization of learning contents. Enriching the Islamic Studies Curriculum with the above innovations will go a long way to motivate students to have interest in the choice of choosing Islamic Studies as a subject.

Islamic studies as course has been in existence for decades, the curriculum need overhauling in order to be globally useful. Stakeholders involved in Islamic Studies education need to re-train all agents in Islamic Studies in order to meet up with present day teaching. Teacher and lecturer of Islamic studies should be computer literate so as to be sophisticated in teaching the subject or course at all level. All recommendations should be follow to later.

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