

## Islamic Education and Islamization of Education in Bangladesh: A Critical Study

Dr. Mohammad Nayamat Ullah\*

### Abstract

Bangladesh is a developing and predominantly Muslim country with 170 million populations in South Asia. About 90% of the large populations are Muslims who believe in Islam. Although they are religious in spirit they are unable to practice Islam in all spheres of life because of the dominating and influential secular system of education prevailing in the country ever since the British colonial period. Apart from this, like other part of the Muslim world, the country witnesses numerous crises such as corruption, oppression, depression, extremism, violation of human rights, unethical activities among the young generation and so on. Due to educational dualism of the country and several shortcomings, both Islamic education and general education do not effectively serve in respect to both individual and social needs. The responsible people of the society feel concern regarding increasing above-mentioned problems. As the majority people of the country are religious in spirit, Islamic education and Islamization of education would create awareness among the people particularly, young generation about spirituality and rationality of Islamic guidelines and ensure remedy for the above-mentioned crises to a large extent. Islamic education is a process of transmission and transformation of Islam as a complete way of life, the beliefs, values, knowledge, skills and ideologies of Islam from one generation to the next. On the other hand, Islamization refers to the inculcation of Islamic world views in the body of knowledge. This study aims to focus on how to implement Islamic education and Islamization of education to minimize or remove dichotomy and compartmentalization between tow streams of education systems and the graduates in Bangladesh. Hopefully, this research would be guideline for other Muslims of the world. A combination approach of historical, philosophical and analytical research methods will be employed in this study.

### Introduction

Human prosperity and progress since the beginning of human creation depends on education. Similarly, any problem or crisis of the human beings to a large extent can be solved through education. At the outset of human creation, the Creator established this reality by bestowing upon

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\*Professor, Department of Arabic, University of Chittagong

human beings a superior status over all other creations by equipping them with knowledge. “And He (Allah SWT) taught Adam the names of all things; then He placed them before the angels, and said: Tell Me the names of these if you are right” (Al-Baqarah: 31). Global history witnessed that no nation could gain significant ascendancy without commensurate superiority in education and intellectual performance. Likewise at the very beginning of revelation to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), Allah sent the command to read, which forms the foundation of education. Allah (SWT) says, “Read in the name of your Lord and Cherisher, who created” (Al-‘Alaq: 1).

Bangladesh is a predominantly Muslim country in South Asia and the majority of its populations wholeheartedly believe in Islam. Although they are religious in spirit, they are unable to practise Islam in all spheres of life because of the dominating and influential secular system of education prevailing in the country ever since the British colonial period (1757 AD). Due to several shortcomings, traditional Islamic education as well as modern education does not effectively serve in respect to both individual and social needs. Like other parts of the Muslim world, in Bangladesh dualistic education that leads to dichotomy in terms of mind set, worldview, personality etc. has been regarded vital crisis. In order to remedy from this crisis Islamization of education through various process has been felt immense need and has become an intellectual issue.

This study aims to focus on history of dualistic education system of Bangladesh, and how educational dualism has created dichotomy. Moreover, a brief account on Islamization, how Islamization of education would create awareness among the people particularly, young generation about spirituality and rationality of Islamic guidelines and then ensure remedy from the dichotomy and dualism gradually.

#### **An Introduction to Bangladesh and its Educational System**

Bangladesh is a developing and democratic Muslim majority country in South Asia. It is located at the north-eastern part of the Indian sub-continent. It is flanked by India on three sides; west, east and north with a small common border with Myanmar in the south east. In the south its only outlet is provided by the Bay of Bengal. The total area of the country is about 147, 570 sq. km (56,977 sq. miles). It is one of the most densely populated rural areas in the world with an average population density of 1,400 persons per sq. mile, or 1,237.51 persons per sq. km. The capital city Dhaka was established in 1608 AD during the reign of Mughal emperor Jahangir (1605-1625) which known as the city of mosques (Statistical Pocket Book Bangladesh-2018).

The history of traditional Islamic education or Islamization of education in Bangladesh is naturally connected with the advent of Islam in Bangladesh as well as in the Indian Sub-continent. Islam came in different parts of India at different times through several means. Islamic education was introduced in the Indian sub-continent through Arab Muslim traders who were the first carriers of Islam in India. The second way of Islamic education can be linked to the Muslim conquests of India. The common soldiers and the commanders were not only fighters, but were also teachers and preachers of Islam and Islamic learning. Muslim rule was first founded in the Indian sub-continent with the conquest of Sindh (now in Pakistan) in 711 by Muhammad Bin Qasim (d.715). The administrative boundaries of the Sind extended subsequently in the eighth and the ninth centuries to include most of the present territories of the Indian sub-continent. Almost

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the whole sub-continent came under the Muslim rule by the beginning of the thirteenth century. Since then the glorious Muslim rule remained uninterrupted up to 1757 when the British came into power and ruled India including Bengal for about two hundred years. The British rule came to an end on 14 August 1947 with the establishment of two independent sovereign states in the sub-continent, namely Pakistan and India. Present day Bangladesh, then came to be known as East Bengal and later as East Pakistan as one of Pakistan's provinces. Afterwards, in the bloody war of liberation, Bangladesh emerged as an independent sovereign state on the 16 December 1971.

After independence of Bangladesh in 1971, a radical change was made by the then new government in the constitution. Among four principles of the constitution secularism and socialism were included and subsequently reflected almost all ideological, economic and social aspects. The Government of Bangladesh, on the 26<sup>th</sup> July, 1972 set up an Education Commission with Dr. Mohammad Qudrat-i-Khuda as its Chairman to prepare a comprehensive scheme for new educational pattern suitable for the changed economic and social conditions of the country. The Commission submitted its final comprehensive report on the 30<sup>th</sup> May, 1974. The report considered Madrasah education or Islamic education as one-sided system of education. The comment was to a great extent undue because the report itself was one-sided and was indifferent towards Islamic education (Mijy, 2001).

### **The Structure of the Education System in Bangladesh**

Like most of the Muslim countries of the world, there exist today two parallel systems of education in Bangladesh; one is traditional Islamic education or *Madrasah* Education and the other is western or modern secular education. At present, both systems are operative in Bangladesh. In terms of stages or levels, the whole education system of Bangladesh is classified into six levels; pre-primary of one-year schooling, primary of five years, junior secondary of three years, secondary of two years, higher secondary of two years and higher or tertiary of four-year/three-year education.

Tertiary education comprises of three to four years of formal schooling. After completion of HSC (Higher Secondary Certificate), a student can take admission to higher education and get qualified to enrol in three-year degree pass courses or four-year Bachelor's degree honours course in degree level college or in universities. Degree pass or honours Bachelor's degree holders are qualified to enrol in the Master's degree course which is one year for honours Bachelor's degree holders and two years for Degree pass Bachelor holders (<http://banbeis.gov.bd/data/index.php>, Retrieved on 26/9/2019).

### **Traditional Madrasah/Islamic Education**

There are many educational institutions called *madaris* (plural of *madrasah*) offering traditional education in Islamic subjects or Islamic Sciences and working under the control of a Madrasah Education Board. *Madrasah* education is the unique representative of Islamic education in Bangladesh. *Madaris* are divided into two different types named *Alia* and *Qawmi* streams.

#### ***Alia* Stream of Madrasah Education**

The *Alia madaris* are government-controlled and funded. Bangladesh Madrasah Education Board is the supervising authority of all *Madaris* from *ibtidai* (primary) to *Alim* (higher secondary) levels while Islamic Arabic University is an affiliating university that is for all *Fazil* (Bachelor's degree)

and *Kamil* (Master's degree) *madaris*. Madrasah education is classified into six levels; *ibtidai* (primary) of five-year schooling, junior *dakhil* (junior secondary) of three years, *dakhil* (secondary) of two years, *Alim* (higher secondary) of two-years and *Fazil* (bachelor) of four-year/three-year and finally *Kamil* of one/two-year.

*Alia madaris* offer almost all subjects of Islamic Studies and modern subjects. From time to time, reforms in this type of education have been made. Efforts are being made to integrate the reformed *madrasah* into the general system of education where subjects like Arithmetic, English, Bengali, Science, etc. are taught, although the main emphasis is on Islamic Studies and Arabic. After passing the examination of the *Alim*, *madrasah* students can enrol at higher modern educational institutions like the university, Medical College and so on.

#### **Qawmi Madrasah Stream**

The *Qawmi madaris* are run completely by private management and supported by religious endowments like *zakat*, *sadaqa* and private donations. *Qawmi madaris* follow the Deoband madrasah of India in terms of curriculum. There is no government control over this type of *madaris*. The *Qawmi* system of madrasah education is classified into five levels; *Ibtidai* (Primary) of a five-year period, *Thanuwiyyah* (Secondary) of a five-year period, *Alim* (Higher Secondary) of a two-year period and *Fazilat/Tafzil* (Tertiary) of a four-year period.

#### **Islamic Education**

Islamic education is the overall development of the human personality ranging from intellectual, physical, mental and behavioural to innate, spiritual and moral so that s/he can perform the responsibilities and duties of being servants and vicegerents of the Almighty Allah (SWT). In another language, Islamic education refers to a lifelong process of transmission and transformation of the beliefs, values and ideologies of a particular nation from one generation to the next.

After independence in 1971, the people of Bangladesh hoped to establish a country of righteous citizens to give the younger generation a golden future, despite the fact that the secular intelligentsia tended to misrepresent the aspiration of the majority of the people. Their expectation was to form a fair and sound society where everybody would have an equal right to live a happy life. But unfortunately, corruption, human rights violations and injustice have reached sickening heights (Akhter, 2019).

With the influence of materialistic philosophy and technological advancement, life has become complex and corrupt. Members of the young generation are threatened with secularism, modernity, globalization, and un-Islamic culture and values. Consequently, the country is losing many of the traditional values and manners which are largely based on Islam. In order to address these crises, the society demands an all-round and well-balanced development of its entire student community. However, the authorities have not yet been able to introduce any such system of education which may lead the country and its population towards the right direction. It was solely due to this reason of imbalance as stated above that the products of the *madrasah* system of education are not generally regarded as proper useful citizens. On the other hand, the products of the secular education system are mostly ignorant of their own religious values and moralities (Ibrahimy, 1990).

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### **Educational Dualism and Dichotomy in Bangladesh**

Educational dualism was first introduced during the period of British rule (1757-1947) and then chiefly two systems of education developed:

1. Western education, the purpose of which was to create some clerks and assistants who could help the English rulers in their administrative duties.
2. Traditional *Madrasah* education, which would enable *Madrasah* educated students to learn some particular aspects of Islam and would not make them feel the necessity of learning its other important aspects (Ibrahimi, 1990).

The two types of education produced two types of individuals leading to two different ideas and conflicting mind-sets. Those who obtained Western education were in the good looks of English ruling class and got employment under the Government while those who acquired *Madrasah* education did not get any material benefit in the Government sector even they did not get opportunity to fulfil their basic needs; for their theological education brought no remarkable material gain.

Still now, the system of education in Bangladesh has been divided into secular modern or general education and religious or *madrasah* education. The society has been deprived of true Islamic education due to the educational dualism of the two different systems of education being operated side by side in Bangladesh today. This dualistic education system was developed during the British colonial period (1757-1947). This system has remained largely unchanged since independence (1947-1971, 1971-till present). As such, it cannot be considered suitable for an independent developing nation. It is clear, therefore, that neither of the two systems of education currently operating in Bangladesh is entirely satisfactory. The divided and contradictory systems of education divide the nation and beget the tremendous problems in the society, yet no substantial changes were made in the system of education in Pakistan period (1947-1971) and Bangladesh (1971- present) (Nayamat Ullah, 2016).

Before British colonization (712-1757), Muslim education or Islamic education in India generally, and in Bengal particularly was one and comprehensive which was able to fulfil the needs of society. Western and eastern scholars and educationists agree to this fact unanimously. From time to time, changes and modification of curriculum occurred as per necessity. Any dissatisfaction concerning curriculum or education system from any section or corner is not recorded. Among the scholars and great reformers, Shah Waliullah Muhaddith Dehlawi, and Nizamuddin Shahlawi contributed to great extent to curriculum while among rulers, the emperor Akbar and Awrangzeb also contributed significantly.

### **Degrading Values**

There are two types of values such as supreme values or belief system in Islam another is interactive values like honesty, sincerity, responsibility, and so on. The both types of values have been regarded as inseparable characteristics of Muslim individuals and society. Nowadays parents, conscious people of Bangladesh are very much concerned about the degrading of values particularly among young generation of the society. Suffice to state that almost all stakeholders feel the importance of value education in all levels of education system. But anybody of them or

education leaders and concerned authority could not clarify how to execute this vital issue for safety of whole nation from upcoming dangers.

#### **Compartmentalization of Knowledge**

According to Islamic epistemology all kinds of knowledge are from the Almighty Allah (SWT) and subsequently unity of knowledge is a true fact in Islam. So there is no scope to differentiate between various types of knowledge (Ayatul Kursi)

#### **Reform of Madrasah Curriculum or Modernization**

In some occasions, the call for madrasah curriculum reform is raised randomly by concerned officials like minister, secretary or other officials and educationists and intellectuals (Barkat et al.2011; Manzur, 2008). But it is not defined and determined explicitly as to what type of reform and to what extent or how it ought to be done. Similarly, this type of reform question was raised in the past and accordingly from time to time some reforms occurred but it did not reach the satisfactory level till now. The main point of these demands, particularly at the contemporary situations is related to the issues of the graduates of higher Islamic learning being incapable to respond to the social, cultural, political and economic issues of the nation. This demerit is ascribed to the shallow understanding of their own disciplines, deficiency in modern knowledge and language as well as other religions and cultures. Nevertheless, this system of education and its graduates are playing a significant part in preserving and safeguarding of Islamic culture in the society of Bangladesh.

As discussed previously, there is a dualistic educational system prevailing in Bangladesh which leads to conflict among the graduates of confronting systems of education with the exclusive dominance of the modern or general stream. On the other hand, several streams of Islamic education also exist where unity in terms of curriculum, aims and objective is quite impossible. It seems the problem of educational dualism cannot be solved easily in Bangladesh without effective initiatives by the government, educationists and intellectuals. Gradually the effect of this crisis has spread to the whole society and made it worse. In order to remedy the crisis, at least initial steps should be taken by creating awareness among the graduates, educationists and thinkers on Islamization and integration. Al-Attas emphasizes the concepts by introducing a course on Islamization, particularly at the tertiary levels (Daud, 1998).

#### **Outcomes of Madaris**

There are around sixteen hundred *Fazil* and *Kamil Madaris* throughout the country and about one million students are studying in different levels. About 150 thousand students graduated from madaris. Unemployment is regarded a far-reaching malaise which causes deep impact upon the educational system, graduates' psychology, parents' attitudes and mass people perception over Islamic education. According to a survey report conducted by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (dhakatribunecom/opin, 26 September 2019) 46% of higher educated graduates in Bangladesh are unemployed or jobless. This high unemployment figure is undoubtedly alarming and worrying for a nation. This state of affairs causes frustration among young generation and unrest in society. The reasons, as the newspaper analysed, are lack of clear aims and objectives of higher education, and that curriculum has not been developed from time to time according to the job market's requirements in the domestic and global context. Although this report focuses in general, the

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unemployment and under-employment problem might be more in the case of higher Islamic education graduates. There does not seem to be any concentrated efforts from the authority to take steps in solving the problem of unemployment. The researcher observes that the responsibility, firstly, goes to the teachers' community who design the curriculum at the university level. Sometimes different education commissions and committees are recommended for introducing befitting vocational courses in *madaris*, but no measures have been taken in implementing such recommendations. Of course, recently the government took initiatives to establish some vocational *madaris*.

### **The Failure of the Traditional Islamic Education System**

Ahmad (2005) observes that "the characteristics of the *Madrasah* Education System are Islamic in nature but it has failed to meet the requirements of the present day" (p. 316). Any sort of science education is neglected in the *Qawmi madrasah* system. One can find the negative effects of these half-baked systems of education. The prevailing Islamic education system does not fulfil the national aspiration as the graduates are not granted sufficient scope to equip themselves with the modern arts and sciences, and thus remain unaware of modern knowledge and techniques. At the same time, *madrasah* graduates do not have in-depth knowledge of Islamic disciplines; they are also not well aware of the philosophical thoughts that are influential all over the world such as socialism, capitalism, secularism, Marxism and Darwinism. No curriculum has yet been developed to familiarize the students with the ideological, political and social impacts caused by these 'isms' over the last century throughout the world (Azharul Islam & Habibur Rahman, 2003).

### **The Crisis of Modern Secular Education**

The decline in morality is a major problem of Bangladeshi society. The society is now fully immersed in corruption, hypocrisy, bribery and other immoral acts. Unethical attitudes and immoral activities among the people have become a big barrier for sound development. In the perspective of Bangladesh, Islamic worldview has always been the driving force for a moral based education system. However, due to the onset of secularism, there has been a decline in Islamic values in the society. Along with a lack of good governance, this has contributed to further deterioration in social values. The annual reports of Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) on corruption provide explicit evidence as Bangladesh is represented as the corrupt country of the world. The prevailing modern secular education system more possibly has failed to uphold morality in the society. The graduates of this system, to a great extent, are concerned merely with their individual material gain, but do not acknowledge their own Islamic culture and legacy or spiritual aspects. The system of education has been divided into the so called secular education and Islamic religious education but in fact Bangladeshi people are deprived of true Islamic education (Ibrahimi, 1990; Hasan, 2004).

### **Alienation of Madrasah Graduates**

Since the British rule (1757-1947) and during the Pakistan period (1947-1971) madrasah graduates were alienated more or less everywhere and they were suffering from inferiority complex and discrimination unfortunately. After independence of Bangladesh in 1971 it emerged as a secular country. As a result their problems had not been solved rather increased at the first few years of independence. However, through various reforming steps development of madrasah

education were initiated but regarding secular education system nothing had been done to minimize dichotomy. Salema Begum (2002) conducted an interview and some respondents viewed that madrasah graduates do not have same opportunities what the graduates of secular institutions get. The former like mainstream and the later are marginalized. For example, public services, job opportunity and so on.

#### **Educational Dualism in Bangladesh and its remedy through Islamization**

In the present system of education in Bangladesh there is dualism and dichotomy prevailing too deep rooted and tough to remedy from this crisis. Though this type of educational dichotomy more or less is found everywhere in the Muslim world the situation of Bangladesh is seemed quite different as the worst. It affects almost all spheres of lives individuals and the society. Almost eighty percent of the graduates educated in secular/general educational institutions. A graduate could not know how to recite the Holy Qur'an after study primary. Secondary, higher secondary, undergraduate and post-graduation let alone required knowledge about Islam as a Muslim. To overcome the problem overnight is quite impossible. Multidimensional comprehensive measures in the name of Islamization or in another name should be taken sincerely and wisely by the concerned scholars, organizations or research centres.

#### **Islamization of Knowledge/Education**

Islamization of knowledge is an intellectual movement and scholarly notion in order to remedy the malaise of Muslim *Ummah* such as dichotomy and dualism in personality and society. The conception of Islamization of knowledge was introduced almost more than four decades ago. It is still a new perception as well as complex and difficult to understand clearly to many scholars and students in some parts of the Muslim world and Bangladesh is supposed to be one of them. Haneef (2009, p 2) "considers it one of the more important intellectual movements of the 20<sup>th</sup> century,... It can certainly be considered one of the more credible and long standing contemporary Muslim response to modernity". A considerable number of literature works on this concept have been produced through conferences, seminars, discussion groups, and workshop all over the world. Academic activities in this direction have continued to increase and newer works are being added daily. Many studies have been conducted to examine and clarify the existing conceptions of Islamization. A good number of scholars and institutions are playing an important role in the field of Islamization of knowledge all over the world.

#### **An Introduction to Islamization of Knowledge/Education**

Islamization is the process through which an entity is transformed by the ideology or the teaching of Islam to become a new entity with Islamic features and characteristics. However, Islamization of knowledge and Islamization of education both is often used for same meaning though Islamization of education refers to the wider sense and the term Islamization of knowledge (IOK) is more familiar and known to all. Several Muslim scholars define this term of IOK in different ways. Haneef (2009, p16, 17) mentions as follows;

- 1) Islamization of Social Sciences that means to Islamize one area or category of knowledge.
- 2) Islamization of specific discipline, such as Islamization of economics that one discipline of the social science.



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3) Islamization of curriculum i.e. the content of programme in universities aimed at enhancement of Islamic perspective of different subjects.

4) Islamization of education which leads to Islamize whole system of education and societies.

On the other hand, many scholars define the notion in different ways that are as follows;

- a) The inculcation of Islamic world views in the body of knowledge.
- b) The process by which the whole body of human knowledge is particularized, classified, organized and systemized in conformity with Islamic epistemological principles (Osman Bakar).
- c) To synthesize the ethics of Islam or Islamic world view with different fields of modern knowledge.
- d) It refers to synthesizing the Islamic world-view with the secular system of knowledge.
- e) According to Nasr, "Islamization of knowledge means integrating various subjects into the Islamic worldview".

#### Islamic Worldview

As the inculcation of Islamic worldview and Islamic values in the body of knowledge without Islamic worldview cannot be imagined Islamization movement. The Islamic worldview is concerning God, man, society, nature, history and cosmic order. Islamic concepts of God, man, nature, and cosmic order are Islamic worldview. So the Islamic worldview refers to ontological aspect firstly which pertain to the theory of existence or being. The second is the epistemological aspect that is philosophical and studies the nature of knowledge, its sources and methodologies. It also highlights the unity of knowledge and different kinds of enumerations. The third is the theological aspect that constructs the Islamic belief system based on the unity of Divinity and thus, it creates *tawhidic* paradigm. The fourth is the axiological aspect that emphasizes certain key values underlying Islamic values system and is vital to achieving overall excellence.

#### Background

For a long time almost all Muslim worlds had been subjugated by the colonial powers. Muslims depended on the West for science and technology. This state of affair accelerated the process of westernization and secularization of modern knowledge acquired and assimilated uncritically by Muslims through the Western secular system of education. The Western and secular system of education secularized their minds and exacerbated the malaise of the Muslim *Ummah*. When almost all Muslim countries got independence from the colonial powers after the Second World War, Muslims became aware and raised pressure on their governments to solve their all problems based on Islamic perspective. At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and first half of 20<sup>th</sup> century some Muslim scholars like Al-Afghani, Abduhu, Rida, and Iqbal realized backwardness of Muslim *Ummah* and stated and criticised their worse situations regarding the both intellectual and material. Accordingly they called to reform the society. They pointed out that the vital fact of almost all problems and the solution to these problems is knowledge and education. The problem is not in terms of ignorance or want of knowledge, but the problem is making the Western worldview as epistemological foundation rather than Islamic worldview (Haneef, 2009).

Many of the early Muslim scholars had devoted their intellectual energy to Islamize, recast, assimilate, reconstruct and develop knowledge of their time in accordance with the Islamic

worldview. They did not blindly accept knowledge from other civilization. They critically examined and isolated the foreign elements and key concepts which were in contradiction to the Islamic worldview from the body of knowledge and then infused it with Islamic elements and key concepts. Haneef (2009) stated that according to al-Faruqi the main internal reason of backwardness of the Muslim Ummah is 'present state of education in the Muslim world' or educational dualism and the lack of vision' but he did not elaborate the latter.

#### **The Malaise of the Muslim Ummah**

Abu Sulaiman asserted that the current crisis of Islamic thought is more serious than it was in the past because our thinkers are not able to measure the range of educational radical change as well as cultural and civilization in this modern era. In order to solve this crisis, he opined to change our mentality towards knowledge profoundly. With IOK only we can solve our problem by reforming in three areas; "rectifying the revelation-reason; redefining the knowledge and clarifying the role of *ijtihad* and the *ifta* ; reorganizing and reorienting the methodology of Islamic education in order to end the existing dualism between secular and religious education" (Haneef, 2009, p 23).

#### **History**

Moten (2006) asserts the genesis of Islamization of knowledge is from the early Muslim period, Allama Muhammad Iqbal (1873-1938 CE), Sayyid Abul A'la Mawdudi (1903-1979 CE), and Syed Naqib al-'Attas (b1931 CE) were the pioneers of this scholarly movement. M. A. Kazi (1993) identifies that IOK movement is not a new matter because it had been done in our past particularly in Abbasid period (750-1258). During this period many branches of knowledge were obtained from Greek, Persian, Chinese and Hindu literature and had been synthesized and Islamized. Haneef (2009, p12) opined that "the IOK idea can possibly be traced back to the mid-sixties". In 1970, some Muslim social scientists who graduated in American and European universities, laid down the foundation of the Association of Muslim Social Scientists (AMSS) in Chicago. Ismail al-Faruqi, Anis Ahmad and Abdul Hamid Abu Sulaiman were among the founding executive. The prime aim of this association was to reconstruct and review critically the Western social science theory based on Islamic epistemology.

The First World Conference on Muslim Education in 1977 in Mecca was the turning point for the movement of Islamization. This issue was discussed among Muslim scholars in this conference and initially they diagnosed that the today's crisis of *Ummah* was the result of secularization brought about by the Western colonialism. They felt the necessity for reform education through IOK. Their diagnosis indicates that the root cause of *Ummatic* malaise is related to its education system. Thus the notion was introduced as solution to resolve the dilemma, especially the issue of educational dualism. The First and Second World Conference on Muslim education were momentous events for idea of Islamization (Haneef, 2009).

#### **Purpose**

According to Moten (2006), prime aim of Islamization of knowledge is to solve the vital problem of educational dualism by introducing an integrated system of education in the Muslim world. However, Alwani states the Islamization of knowledge aims at developing an Islamic paradigm of knowledge that will play role as an alternative to the dominating Western secular paradigm. This alternative unifies Islamic and universalistic perspectives; addresses the intellectual and

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conceptual problems of all humanity, not just of Muslims; and includes a *tawhid*-based reconstruction of the concepts of life, humankind and the universe.

Hussain (2006) views Islamization of knowledge aims at strengthening the future leaders with “Islamized knowledge”. In the words of al-Faruqi “Islamizing knowledge (is) in concrete terms, to Islamize the disciplines, or better, to produce university level textbooks recasting some twenty disciplines in accordance with the Islamic vision.”

The another purpose of Islamization of knowledge in regard of the Revealed discipline was to reopen the gate of *Ijtihad* and to interpret the revelation a new in order to find comprehensive and adequate solution for the contemporary complicated problems which the Muslim community is facing. The production of text books for teaching social sciences from the Islamic perspective was considered first priority.

#### Process

There are two levels of IOK process according to Khalil (1991). The first one is the theoretical and second one is practical. Theoretical level deals with the clarification of the ways, patterns, goals, stages. In this level the theory of IOK, definition, and justification should be presented. Practical level means Islamization of various disciplines by the specialists of those by applying the theories of first level. They would apply various processes to various body of knowledge. Those who involve in Islamizing movement should understand the fact of Islamic worldview properly (Haneef, 2009).

According to Faruqi (1982) the process of IOK is “recasting knowledge as Islam relates to it”. This way needs a cluster of works in order to solve the problem of dualism. On the other hand, IOK aims at ‘producing university level textbooks recasting some twenty disciplines in accordance to the Islamic vision’. After mastering modern knowledge Islamizers must integrate or infuse new knowledge into Islamic legacy. Further Faruqi (1981) mentioned some methodological ways of Islam entitled the unity of truth, unity of knowledge, unity of humanity, unity of life etc. (Haneef, 2009). Ragab (1995) stated the IOK initially an epistemological and methodological matter. In fact, this is a research oriented and theory building effort which leads to the synthesis or integration of revealed knowledge and watching the universe through scientific enterprise.

Brohi (1993) stated the process of IOK is to reform the components of modern knowledge and to make it consistent with the main aspects of the Holy Qur’an concerning ‘human life, mind and social behaviour’. According to Ragab (1999) without serious and organized plan with perfect methodologies production of university level text-books that is vital programme of IOK is not possible. Publishing some booklets and articles does not lead us to Islamize higher learning books rather than concentrated efforts can be carried out for the process of IOK and its procedure smoothly (Haneef, 2009).

The pioneer of Islamization of Knowledge al-Faruqi provided in his ‘Work plan’ twelve steps and five ontological principles of Islamic methodology which are: the unity of Allah, the unity of creation, the unity of truth, the unity of life and humanity. Hussain (2006) states the methodology of Louay Safi much easier and more effective where the revelation was considered primary source of knowledge and both text and action or behaviour analysis techniques as means for theory

construction. Islamization of personality is the inseparable part of Islamization of knowledge. Those who are involved in this movement, they should be God fearing, sincere and honest.

Al-Faruqi presented twelve steps of work plan to achieve the objectives and aims of Islamization of knowledge. Whoever wants to achieve the effective results of this movement must go through these steps. They are:

1. To master the modern disciplines;
2. Discipline survey;
3. To master the Islamic legacy; The Anthology;
4. Mastery of the Islamic legacy; The analysis;
5. Establishment of the specific relevance of Islam to each area of modern knowledge;
6. Critical assessment of the modern discipline: The state -of- the art;
7. Critical assessment of the Islamic legacy : The state -of- the art;
8. Survey of the *ummah*'s major problems;
9. Survey of the problems of humankind;
10. Creative analyses and syntheses between the Islamic legacy and modern knowledge;
11. Recasting the discipline under the framework of Islam: The university textbook;
12. Dissemination of Islamized knowledge

### **Challenges**

It seems that Islamization movement activities are not sound compared to the Western new knowledge produced time to time in terms of quality and quantity. Naturally, due to slow motion, it lagged behind. Many university level text books have not been produced sufficiently. Further Hussain (2006) drew our attention to another challenge in this connection, that is internet or website basis huge amount of Western knowledge that gradually de-Islamize the minds of Muslim young generation.

There are different views prevail regarding Islamic revealed subjects whether it should be Islamized or not. Some scholars opine, in fact, in the context of Islamic Revealed Knowledge courses no need of Islamization but it should be contextualized by making Islamic issues relevant with contemporary issues (Othman, 2006). Integration the disciplines of Revealed knowledge and acquired knowledge in school, college and university curriculum is another important task to implement the programme "Islamization of knowledge".

Accommodation of the people from root level of the society is the must for popularizing Islamization movement in Bangladesh. BIIT the branch of IIT has contributed a lot to this field. But failed to familiarize the concept of Islamization and its' importance among young generation as well as mass people. Almost all literatures on Islamization are in English language and content are seemed too complicated to understand the idea. Consequently, those publications could not draw attentions of general students. Apparently publications of IIT are for elite class or for the people of high thought. That is why some original publication should be written in Bengali language easily.

### **Islamization Phobia**

Whole education system of Bangladesh has been dominated by secular oriented educationists and secular politicians for long time. Sometimes they express concern about degrading of ethics and

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values among graduates. Accordingly, they emphasize value oriented education but never explain what type of values and how it should be taught. Similarly, they always also express deep concern and are afraid of Islamization of education. This is one kind of dilemma, dichotomy and dualistic characteristics that leads the whole nation to the vague. Moreover, they could not provide any guideline to uphold our traditional values and spiritual or inner development in the young graduates.

### **Solution**

#### **Islamization of Ourselves**

Stakeholders of this great movement always must bear in their minds to Islamize themselves. Besides academic activities, Islamic values should be instilled in the inner minds of students through co-curriculum programme. In order to solve the malaise of *Ummah* perfectly, we have to emphasize to Islamize our behaviour also along with Islamization of knowledge.

#### **Kalimah Sawah Theory**

Almost all citizens of the country Muslims or non-Muslims are supposed to be unanimously admit that some interactive values should be developed in the students such as honesty, justice, equity and equality, law of order, patriotism, democracy, and so on. In this regard Islamic educationists/ academicians/ scholars should organize interfaith dialogue and exchange ideas based on the Holy Qur'an's verse: "Say: O people of the Book! Come to common terms as between us and you: that we worship none but Allah; that we associate no partners with Him; that we erect not, from among ourselves, Lords and patrons other than Allah..... They would negotiate and exchange views to inculcate/incorporate values in the curriculum of all stages of education. This may be initial stage of Islamization of education.

#### **Role of 'Ulama/ Waizin to Islamization**

'Ulama/Waizin who graduated from madaris frequently deliver sermon or public lectures on various issues based on Islamic ideology or Sharia'h. Similarly they have direct interaction with mass people and they could influence them easily. If they talk on the dualistic education and its effects providing the guideline for resolution of this crisis as Islamization of education, people from different corners can be convinced.

#### **Integration and Islamization**

To a great extent, without integration Islamization is not possible. Now a question arises about integration and its criteria. In fact, perfect integration seems very complicated. Already some formula or initiatives have been taken in different parts of the Muslim worlds. If necessary, some methods of integrations could be examined and introduced to some extent.

#### **First Introduction of an Integrated Curriculum in Bangladesh**

According to Mijy (2004), at the beginning of the twentieth century, some practical and serious efforts were made towards reforming the *madrasah* education and to promote it in line with the needs and demands of modern life. Ibrahimy (1990) commented that in the Earle conference of 1908, several members vigorously discussed on the question of modernization of the *madrasah* courses. During 1909-13, a series of conferences were held at Dhaka. A notable personality of Bengal, A. N. M. Waheed, had framed a new scheme in 1910 to promote the educational sector in

favour of Muslims. His scheme was accepted by the government in 1914 and came into practice in almost all *madaris* of Bengal in 1915, except Calcutta Aliya Madrasah.

In conformity with this new system introduced by A.N.M. Waheed, English was included in the syllabi as a compulsory subject while Persian was excluded. Consequently, the course of study approved by the government included Qur'an, Urdu, Bengali, Arithmetic, Geography, History, English, Arabic, Drawing, Handicrafts, and drill as subjects of studies.

#### **Publications for Mass People and Students**

In order to make mass students or mass people easy understand and access about Islamization and its relevant issues steps for publication have to be taken immediately. However, there are a lot of publications by IIT and BIIT such as books, journals booklets and so on. This study observes that those publications could not draw attention of mass students to make understand the issue of Islamization and its significance as per expectation. However, a substantial number of literature works on the concept of Islamization or relevant must be produced in native language of Bangla in such articulated and flexible way that general students or mass educated people may understand the concept and importance of it. Subsequently, they could feel encouraged and materialize it in their practical life. This noble job has to be done by concerned individuals, research centre like BIIT and any other institutions.

#### **Education Model of Malaysia or Other Muslim Countries**

The government of Bangladesh and the people have always positive attitude towards Malaysia. More than one million people of Bangladesh live in Malaysia as students or professional of various sectors peacefully. Considering these circumstances, in order to develop or modify the education system of Bangladesh based on values or Islamization, Malaysian education system can be followed to some extent. In this regard the Bangladeshi faculties who are working in different Malaysian universities can take initiatives. In this way, to some extent Islamic world view or Islamization relevant courses or topics would introduced in all faculties of universities.

#### **Islamization of Disciplines**

Through past four decades different Muslim scholars attempted to write on Islamization of various disciplines applying the aspects of IOK like Abu Sulaiman in Political Science, Ibrahim Ragab and Awsaf Ali in Sociology, Muhammad Anwar, Muhammad Arif, Zubair Hasan and Ataul Haq in Economics (Haneef, 2009). Brohi (1993) argues that IOK is need "because modern knowledge is based on a framework that inconsistent with the Islamic worldview". Idris (1987) states modern knowledge is based on 'false assumption of materialistic atheistic philosophy'. As the contemporary knowledge or disciplines which are taught in universities all over the world in general, and the Muslim world in particular are representing the Western philosophy and based on western worldview, this is a need to Islamize this knowledge and evaluate and modify for being accepted in Muslim society. According to Al-Attas Islamization is applicable for humanities and social sciences not pure and natural sciences (Haneef, 2009).

There are some scholars who criticize the concept of Islamization in different angles. Haneef (2009) described that "Some works that are critical of the IOK project as a whole or approaches to IOK. In the former group there writers such as Fazlur Rahman (1988), Ziauddin Sardar (1988, 1989), Yasin Mohamed (1994), Seyyd Nasr (1991), and Hadi Sharifi (1984) who

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are critical of IOK". Hussain (2006) argues that it seems a new concept to many people and sometimes it is misinterpreted perception. On the other hand, Ali (2010) states that some are asking reasonable questions and arguing that they are still not satisfied "that the Islamization of knowledge is either relevant or urgent." Another scholar claimed that the term "Islamization of knowledge" itself is not perfect. It should be "Islamicization" or "contextualization" (Ali, 1). A number of scholars in different corners of the Muslim world think that it is not possible at all and they got annoyed when they hear this term.

According to Ragab (1995) the use of term of IOK in several ways creates confusion among the readers. The concept of IOK has not been clarified in clear way or better elaborately to those who are interested to contribute in this regard. Khalil (1991) criticized that theoretical level of IOK is still not realized clearly. Subsequently any real progress of practical is satisfactory (Haneef, 2009). Many criticise that those who involve in this movement, so far could not produce the university level textbooks in this regard which is main goal of it.

There is another matter of dispute among the scholars that which branch of knowledge should be Islamized. Some scholars do not perceive the necessity of Islamization of hard sciences, while some other think all branches of knowledge should be Islamized. However, IIUM has initiated to give priority in this regard the social sciences.

### **Question of Non-Muslims and Secularists/Communists**

In terms of location of this country, a large number of non-Muslim populations (Hindu, Buddhists, Christians and various tribal groups) and major educated people's mind set the situation of Bangladesh much more different from other Muslim countries. Bangladesh is the Muslim country which is surrounded by India a big Hindu country in three sides and Myanmar in another side. There is no neighbouring Muslim country. Moreover, there are many conflicting religious sects and political groups among Muslims. Keeping these all factors in mind, Islamization and integration programme should be taken forward with wisdom, sincerity, missionary mind set, and unitedly.

### **An Integrated Common Course**

In the Holy Qur'an, there are two types of great signs (Ayat) of the Almighty; Legislative Signs (آيات الأحكام) and Phenomenological Signs (آيات كونية). In order to create awareness, interest among the graduates towards the Holy Qur'an both of the signs should be taught in logical and scientific methods that it would be relevant to the contemporary circumstances and present situations. As the majority people of the country are religious in spirit, incorporation of the Qur'anic Signs in the curriculum of higher education and inculcation of Qur'anic world view in the body of higher learning or Islamization of education that would create awareness among the people particularly, young generation about spirituality and rationality of the Qur'anic guidelines and ensure remedy of the dichotomy crises to a large extent. Moreover, the curriculum of any education system has been regarded manifestation of the culture of any nation and influences the younger generation. This study recommends for introduction a Qur'anic course combined with both Signs of the Almighty and focuses on significance of incorporation of the course with the curriculum of higher education in all faculties of general /secular education.

### Conclusion

Islamization of knowledge/education in general and particularly in Bangladesh is not a short cut programme rather it is a long time ongoing process. Absolutely for the sake of Allah, a group of Muslim scholars of all disciplines of knowledge, students, teachers and stake holders of the country who are dedicated and sincere must come forth and provide their efforts constantly in order to help reach this movement to its zenith. Then it is real success can be expected. In fact, holistic and integrated education can produce more competent graduates who contribute to the socio-economic development of the society. Social sciences and natural sciences from the Islamic perspective ought to be taught. Some stakeholders of the various Universities, to Islamize of social science should be immediately made to ensure an integrated curriculum. The Islamization movement has not been familiar still now in the country and certainly secular educationists and scholars do not accept it positively. In these circumstances, higher Islamic learning graduates have to gain in-depth awareness concerning this movement as so that they can motivate the secular intelligentsia.

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