

## **Some Reflections on Islamization of Education Since 1977 Makkah Conference: Accomplishments, Failures and Tasks Ahead**

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*Abstract: The revival of Islamic civilisation and culture is possible only by revitalising Islamic education and reorganising it on the basis of Islamic concepts. This opinion has been consistently voiced by leading 19<sup>th</sup> century Muslim reformers. In 1977 the First World Conference on Muslim Education was held at Makkah. The conference proved to be a major landmark in Muslim education. Over 350 Muslim scholars representing various academic fields and coming from Muslim as well as Western countries participated in this event, presented papers and approved crucial recommendations. This paper highlights the antecedents of this conference, reviews the progress achieved and failures experienced during the post-conference decades, and makes suggestions for concerted efforts to be undertaken in the 21<sup>st</sup> century towards fulfilment of the objectives of the conference.*

The holding of the First World Conference on Muslim Education in 1977 at the holy city of Makkah, was an extremely significant event for the resurgence of education in Muslim societies. Some 350 Muslim scholars representing various fields of education and academic pursuits and various countries met to diagnose the problems facing education, determine aims and objectives and to chalk out policies and programmes for the reconstruction of Muslim education to meet the challenges and to satisfy Muslim social and cultural needs. The essential purpose of the conference was to bring back into the Muslim

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education, its true lifeblood of the Islamic vision from which it had been severed. Two decades on, it will be an interesting exercise to make an appraisal of its accomplishments, and the setbacks which have hindered the process of the implementation of that charter. This paper is an attempt to reflect upon the two decades post-conference history of Islamisation of Muslim education as visualised and recommended by that Conference.<sup>1</sup>

## **Background**

At the background of this historic event, there was the realisation among Muslim scholars of the major crises that had beset their education over time. These crises had sprung initially from the Muslim decline that had started to set in during the terminal periods of Muslim rule especially towards the latter part of the Middle Ages, and reinforced during the two centuries of the colonial hegemony. Consequently, at the dawn of their independence in the post-war years, in the 1950s and 1960s, the larger Muslim Ummah found their national education systems suffering from serious problems of backwardness, widespread ignorance and illiteracy in all Muslim countries. Most of the Muslim children were without basic primary education. Trained teachers, equipment and textbooks were by and large missing. Secondary schools were limited in their scope. Technical and vocational education was available only at the basic level. Tertiary and university education were inadequate and restricted to basic teaching without any research. Curricula for schools, colleges and universities were without clear goals and objectives. The quality of education at all levels was poor. Then there was the problem of educational dualism. Excessive rigidity and *taqlid* characterised the traditional educational system. The product of the traditional Muslim education, religious scholars, the '*ulamā*', had alienated themselves from the current educational practices and trends. On the other end of the spectrum, Euro-centric concepts and secularism permeated the entire modern Muslim education. Modern Muslim scholars suffered from chronic dependency and slavery of the mind, making them rely heavily on Western concepts. They were, therefore, only too prone to the tendency of imitation and borrowing of easy, ready-made Western prescriptions. On the whole, education suffered from the most serious problem of all; it did not promote Islamic vision. Hence it failed to bring about the essential awareness among Muslim youth, of their identity of belonging to the Muslim Ummah. There were no Ummah

level organisations to co-ordinate cross-national Muslim education and to highlight global issues and problems affecting the Muslims.

This Conference thus had a wide-ranging agenda. However, it did not indulge in the futile exercise of criticising and blaming the past failings. These were well understood. Its entire approach was positive. It took a pragmatic view of the contemporary realities. With the colonial experiences in the hindsight, it stressed the need to plan for reconstruction of Muslim education for the future. It also stressed the vital elements of spiritual and moral excellence, badly needed for the regeneration of Muslim life and culture. Its distinguishing feature was its articulation in succinct terms, of the aims of education for the contemporary conditions of life.<sup>2</sup> Next it reconstructed the Islamic classification of knowledge based on the historically devised Islamic concept of epistemology as understood and articulated by master Muslim scholars like Al-Fārābī, al-Ghazālī and Ibn Khaldūn. In committees sessions, it also discussed various other educational issues and problems and issued a communiqué consisting of some general Plenary and some specific Committee recommendations whose summary is reproduced below.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. Aims of Education

(a) *General Aims of Education*: Education should aim at the balanced growth of the total personality of Man through the training of Man's spirit, intellect, the rational self, feelings and bodily senses. Education should therefore, cater for the growth of man in all its aspects: spiritual, intellectual, imaginative, physical, scientific, linguistic, both individually and collectively and motivate all these aspects towards goodness and the attainment of perfection.<sup>3</sup>

(b) *The Aims of Islamic Education*: The ultimate aim of Muslim education lies in the realisation of complete submission to Allah on the level of the individual, the community and humanity at large.<sup>4</sup>

### 2. Islamic Epistemology

(a) *Islamization of Knowledge*: Education could not be Islamized without first defining the Islamic epistemology and the methodology of Islamization of all areas of education. Clearly the entire rationale of the Conference sprang from a commitment to Islamize knowledge and

to make it viable for the present and future development of Islamic scholarship which would lead to the reconstruction of the Islamic world view.

*(b) Classification of Knowledge:* The Conference traced the enunciation and classification of categories of knowledge as had been devised by Muslim philosophers and savants during the heydays of the Islamic civilisation. Most recently independent Muslim countries had no clear idea of how to reconstruct their educational systems on the basis of a combination of modern scientific knowledge and the traditional Islamic sources of knowledge. The conference articulated a neat classification of knowledge based on the authentic Islamic criteria. This classification consists of two main categories: the Revealed or Perennial Knowledge and the Acquired or Empirical Knowledge. Detailed categories defined are specified below:

*(a) Revealed or Perennial Knowledge:* This includes the Qur'anic sciences: recitation (*qirā'ah*); memorisation (*tahfīz*); interpretation (*tafsīr*); tradition of the Prophet (Ḥadīth); Life model of the Prophet (Sunnah); Monotheism (*tawhīd*); Islamic Jurisprudence (*uṣūl al-fiqh* and *fiqh*); and Qur'anic Arabic. It also includes ancillary subjects like Islamic metaphysics, Comparative religion, Islamic culture and civilisation.

*(b) Acquired or empirical Knowledge:* This includes creative arts: Islamic arts and architecture, language, literature; intellectual sciences; social studies, philosophy, education, economics, political sciences history, Islamic civilisation, geography, sociology, linguistics, psychology and anthropology; Natural Sciences: philosophy of science, mathematics, statistics, physics, chemistry; life sciences; astronomy, and space sciences; Applied sciences: engineering, technology, medicine, agriculture and forestry; Practical sciences: commerce, administrative sciences, library sciences, home sciences, and communicative sciences.

This classification is meant to help Muslims at all times to formulate their curricula based on the Revealed Knowledge as the compulsory core subjects and additional or elective subjects and activities from the Acquired category to suit different levels of schooling and varying contexts.<sup>5</sup>

### 3. Place of Arabic in Muslim Education

The next important recommendation of the conference was to stress the role of the Arabic language in any programme of Muslim education. It urged all Muslim countries to teach Arabic as a compulsory subject and with the most appropriate and up to date teaching methods.<sup>6</sup>

### 4. Other Recommendations

(a) *Literature*: Men of letters in the Muslim world were urged to establish an Islamic school of literary criticism on the basis of Islamic principles and to scrutinise and highlight alien value systems enshrined in the foreign body of literature being taught to Muslims.<sup>7</sup>

(b) *Arts and Crafts*: The study of Islamic arts and crafts was emphasised to develop Islamic principles of aesthetics.<sup>8</sup>

(c) *Social Sciences*: The conference stressed that social sciences /studies should be reformulated from the Islamic points of view regarding man and society.<sup>9</sup>

(d) *Natural and Applied Sciences*: It was also recommended that courses in Natural and Applied Sciences should be reformulated to conform to the spirit of Islamic teachings.<sup>10</sup>

(e) *Mass Media*: Considering the fact that mass media are potent instruments influencing education of the young and old, it was recommended that serious effort should be made to produce cultural programmes based on Islamic values to substitute those present day programmes and films which subvert Islamic morality.<sup>11</sup>

(f) *Architecture*: The Conference urged that proper care should be taken to uphold Islamic atmosphere in architecture and town planning. Muslim architects ought to be guided by Islamic concepts and norms. It also proposed that King Abdulaziz University, Jeddah should undertake research in this particular field.<sup>12</sup>

(g) *Teacher Education*: The Conference stressed that Muslim teachers ought to be so trained that their ideas and conducts are inspired by the Islamic faith.<sup>13</sup>

(h) *Female Education*: As the obligation to acquire knowledge in Islam devolves on men and women alike, therefore the Conference urged that the education of Muslim females must be widely encouraged. But the Conference also warned against co-educational education as it

leads to those consequences that are at variance with the Islamic moral outlooks.<sup>14</sup>

(i) *Muslim Minorities*: Since the Islamic Education of Muslims living in non-Muslim lands as minorities is a crucial concern, therefore, the Conference recommended that enough funds should be created to help such Muslims to build their own schools and provide Islamic education for their children.<sup>15</sup>

(j) *Missionary Schools*: The harm arising out of education at the Mission schools in alienating Muslim youth from their cultural and religious identities was highlighted and it was recommended that Muslim parents should refrain from enrolling their children in foreign language and missionary schools. Building of new missionary schools should be discouraged and old ones phased out.<sup>16</sup>

(k) *Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation*: It was recommended that this Organisation should be established at Makkah on the model of the UNESCO to spearhead the progress of research on Islamic education, science and culture among member countries.<sup>17</sup>

(l) *World Centre for Islamic Education*: The Conference considered it appropriate that such a Centre should be established at Makkah. It should employ competent Muslim scholars who are entrusted with the responsibility for the implementation of resolutions of the Conference.<sup>18</sup>

(m) *World Union of Islamic Schools*: The setting up of such a Union was considered important to co-ordinate the work of emerging International Muslim schools.<sup>19</sup>

## 5. Selected Committee Recommendations

(a) *Core Knowledge*: The Conference recommended that the core curriculum in the Islamic world must consist of subjects of the Revealed Knowledge which ought to be obligatory at all levels of education and that a body of experts should be called to formulate it.<sup>20</sup>

(b) *Islamic Universities*: The Conference considered extremely important that international Islamic universities should be established in various parts of the Muslim world to integrate the Islamic Revealed Knowledge and the Acquired, sciences, and to spearhead research to carry out the Islamization mission.<sup>21</sup>

(c) *Universal Primary Education*: The Conference emphasised that basic primary education must be universalised and illiteracy eliminated in all Muslim countries.<sup>22</sup>

(e) *Equalisation of opportunities*: The Conference recommended that all barriers must be removed to give equal opportunity to all Muslims irrespective of their economic, geographical or social position to attain to the highest status in society according to their capacities.<sup>23</sup>

(f) *Recreational Activities and Community Service*: It also urged that youth organisations should be developed to provide appropriate recreational activities and to conduct camps to discuss and debate crucial issues, organise projects to help needy people, undertake social and community work, and to organise military training. They should also operate libraries, reading rooms, and study circles to provide opportunities to the participant members of expressing themselves in creative writing, speech making, debating and conducting meetings, seminars, symposia etc. Excursions to nearby historical sites should also be organised. These programmes and activities should focus on Islamic manners as exemplified by the behaviour and practices of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him), and his companions.<sup>24</sup>

(f) *Textbooks*: The Conference advised that suitable textbooks on Islamic subjects should be prepared in all Muslim languages and supplied to all schools.<sup>25</sup>

(g) *Students from Muslim Minority Countries*: The Conference recommended that Islamic countries must reserve places in their specialised colleges and technical institutions for Muslim students from Muslim minority countries.<sup>26</sup>

(h) *Teaching of Philosophy*: On the subject of teaching of Philosophy, the Conference recommended that Muslim students must be so educated as at first to form a firm foundation in Islamic philosophy and thought in general and only then may be exposed to the Western philosophy.<sup>27</sup>

(i) *Legal Education*: The conference recommended that education of the Islamic *fiqh* (jurisprudence) should be based on the sound analysis and study of practical, contemporary problems of the Muslims within their societies.<sup>28</sup>

(j) *Mosques in all Educational Institutions*: The Conference urged that there must be a mosque in every Muslim educational institution and prayers must be performed regularly on the premises.<sup>29</sup>

(k) *Association of the Universities of the Islamic world*: The Conference was of the view that such an Association must be set up to co-ordinate the policies, performance and plans of Muslim universities.<sup>30</sup>

(l) *Translations*: The Conference recommended that an Islamic Council for the promotion of translations must be formed in Makkah in order to encourage high level translation work in different languages. It also recommended translations from Arabic into Muslim vernaculars such as Persian, Turkish, Urdu, Hausa, Swahili, Bengali, Indonesian or Malay as well as into modern European languages such as English, French, German, Russian, Spanish and Chinese be attempted. Similarly translations of significant works in these languages on Islamic subjects should be carried out into the various Muslim languages.<sup>31</sup>

(m) *Central Research Library*: The Conference urged that an International Islamic Library must be established in Makkah together with adequate archives department attached to it for detailed reference on education in the Muslim world.<sup>32</sup>

(n) *Scholarships for Talented Muslims*: The conference stressed that adequate scholarships and travel grants ought to be provided to talented Muslims to study and carry out research on Islamic subjects at various Islamic and other universities.<sup>33</sup>

### FOLLOW-UP OF THE CONFERENCE

King Abdulaziz University, being the sponsor of the conference decided to set up a Follow-up Committee of the conference. Professor Syed Ali Ashraf and this author were commissioned to plan for ways and means of carrying out further work, and keep up the momentum produced by the conference. Professor Ashraf having masterminded the conference had further ideas as to how follow-up action should proceed. To begin with, a series of follow-up conferences were planned to be held in different Islamic capitals to elaborate on the conference recommendations and to produce guidelines on crucial aspects of Islamization of education process. Thus, the Second World Conference on Muslim Education was held at Islamabad in 1980 to investigate the question of preparation of integrated Islamic curricula



at all levels and in all subjects. The Third World Conference was held at Dhaka in 1981, to scrutinise questions related to the preparation of textbooks for use in Muslim and non-Muslim schools. The Fourth World Conference was held in Jakarta in 1982 to suggest the evolution of New Methods of Teaching from the Islamic viewpoints. The Fifth World Conference was held in Cairo in 1987 to review the achievements of previous conferences and examine ways and means of implementing of their resolutions. Finally, the Sixth World Conference was held at Cape Town in September, 1996, to prepare lesson plans and subject teaching guidelines for teaching of various school subjects from the Islamic point of view. This last conference was more of a workshop consisting of working sessions where subject specialists conferred with classroom teachers to devise concrete lesson plans of various school subjects. The South African National Curriculum which was also being taught by Muslim teachers in both state and private Muslim schools, was taken to form the basis of this work.<sup>34</sup>

## **TWO DECADES OF ACHIEVEMENTS**

The post-Conference period of over two decades has witnessed significant world-wide developments in Muslim education some directly arising from the resolutions of the conferences others indirectly inspired by them. Following is a summary of these developments:

### **1. World Centre for Islamic Education**

The Follow-up Committee started lobbying the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) which had initially undertaken to implement the conference recommendations to establish the World Centre for Islamic Education and the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (ISESCO) because of their international character. Their proposals were thoroughly discussed and debated at the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> OIC Annual Conferences; and finally at the 10<sup>th</sup> Session held at Islamabad in 1982, two resolutions were adopted to set up the World Centre for Islamic Education at Makkah and the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (ISESCO) at Rabat (Morocco). Both bodies were to be International Islamic Organisations under the OIC.

The Follow-up Committee then began efforts to set up the Centre. It devised its blue-print defining its structure and organisation and its programme of activities and held the first meeting of its Board of Governors to approve these plans. The Centre started to function in

right earnest. But then the Saudi government decided to remove the Centre from the OIC and affiliated it to the Umm al-Qurā' University at Makkah thereby reducing its international character. As a University Centre, it has, however, continued to work within its limited status.

## **2. The Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation**

The Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (ISESCO) was inaugurated in 1982 at Rabat, Morocco. Its charter stresses, *inter alia* the principles underlying joint action at international level to promote cooperation among member states in the fields of education, science and culture, to establish coordination among specialised organisations of the Islamic Conference in these areas and to consolidate the authentic Islamic culture and make it basis of curricula at all levels and stages of education, to protect the independence of Islamic thought against all forms of invasion and all forces of cultural alienation, distortion and disfigurement; and to promote the Islamic identity of Muslims in non-Islamic countries.<sup>35</sup>

In 1992, ISESCO published its progress report as "A Decade in the Service of the Islamic World" highlighting its activities and contributions in various parts of the world. It held a programme of training of Chinese Muslims in co-operation with the Chinese Literary Society in Beijing where thirty Chinese Muslim teachers were trained in Arabic and Islamic subjects. In 1998, ISESCO made an agreement with UNESCO in Paris to co-operate in the educational programmes for the war-torn Muslim countries of Bosnia, Palestine and Somalia where homeless children and youngsters were be given special educational protection through intensive care and appropriate training programmes. Another important world level initiative taken by ISESCO has been the intensification of its drive to remove illiteracy from amongst the Muslim countries. The Special Islamic Programme for Literacy and Basic Training was originally adopted at an Extraordinary General Conference held in Thailand in 1990. In 1998, ISESCO has called upon all Muslim countries and their NGOs to attach greater importance to programmes geared towards the eradication of illiteracy amidst all social strata.<sup>36</sup>

## **3. Publication of the Islamic Education Series**

The research papers presented at the First Conference were published as *Islamic Education Series* in six volumes, by the King Abdul Aziz

University, Jeddah and Hodder & Stoughton, U.K., with Professor Syed Ali Ashraf as the General Editor. They were widely distributed through the Muslim World League (Rābitā al-Ālam al-Islamī) and from its various international offices. These six books are now widely referred to in research on Islamic education.<sup>37</sup> Their titles are (i) Crisis in Muslim Education, (ii) Aims and Objectives of Islamic Education, (iii) Curriculum and Teacher Education, (iv) Philosophy, Literature and Fine Arts, (v) Social and Natural Sciences: the Islamic Perspective, and (vi) Education and Society in the Muslim World.

#### **4. International Institute of Islamic Thought**

Professor Ismāʿīl Rājī al-Fārūqī who had distinguished himself as a scholar of Islamic history and civilisation was a prominent member of the Steering Committee of the First World Conference.<sup>38</sup> He acted as the Chairman of its Committee on Social Sciences. So inspired was he with the Conference objectives that on return to the USA, he founded the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT) in 1981 with the aim of launching a programme of activities concerned with the integration of the Revealed Islamic sciences and the Acquired, secular sciences under the overall vision of Islamization of Knowledge. He launched his programme with the publication of his famous monograph entitled *Islamization of Knowledge: General Principles and Work Plan*. Since then the movement for Islamization of Knowledge has emerged as a significant intellectual pursuit engaging Muslim scholars round the world. Scores of studies have been produced to elaborate on its salient principles.<sup>39</sup> The IIIT has now a number of offices in Arab and Muslim countries.<sup>40</sup>

#### **5. International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilisation**

This is another important institute which emerged to uphold the ideals for which the First World Conference on Muslim Education was held. Its Founder and Director General, Professor Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas who was also a member of the Steering Committee of the Conference, presented a keynote paper on subject "Aims and Objectives of Islamic Education," which has since been published as a monograph and has inspired Muslim scholars to search for the true meanings of Islamic education. In 1987, ISTAC was formally established, at first within the International Islamic University, but later it moved out to its own new campus which stands on a distinctive hill top, described as "The Beacon on the Crest of a Hill."<sup>41</sup> The

Institute has, since its establishment, published a number of scholarly treatises and books as well as launching a journal named *al-Shajrah*. It promotes research on original Islamic themes and prepares students for the awards of doctoral degrees of the IIUM. It has also built a high-level library of its own and acquired library collections of several prominent scholars including Professor Fazlur Rahman and Professor Max Weisweiler, the latter being a noted German Arabist and philologist.<sup>42</sup>

## **6. The Islamic Academy, Cambridge**

After the abolition of the World Centre of Islamic Education in Makkah, Professor Ashraf who acted as its first Director General was seconded to the Cambridge University where he founded the Islamic Academy in order to disseminate the principles of the Conference and to generate awareness and understanding of Islamic concepts of education. The Academy has held occasional seminars in co-operation with the Department of Education University of Cambridge, on various subjects and brought out publications arising out of these discussions ranging from theoretical frameworks to practical concerns in Islamic education as well as the education of Muslims in the West. It also began publication of the *Muslim Education Quarterly* which still remains the most widely read scholarly journal on the subject of Islamic Education. The Academy has also published a number of monographs dealing with the problems and issues of education of the Muslim communities in the United Kingdom.<sup>43</sup> It also takes up important subjects of educational, moral and spiritual import such as faith-based curriculum, moral and spiritual education in British schools, sex education at schools and family, education and religious values; and invites scholars from all faith-groups as well as humanists for discussion and debate.

## **7. International Islamic Universities**

The Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) Jeddah, proposed the establishment of four International Islamic Universities: at Islamabad, Kuala Lumpur, Kampala and in Niger. But only the Kuala Lumpur and Islamabad International Islamic universities were able to take off and carry out their mission in earnest. The International Islamic University of Malaysia (IIUM) has emerged to be a unique Islamic university. It has set for itself a clear vision and a mission statement for whose fulfilment, the University and its various Faculties and

Departments have been working since 1983 in all seriousness and with dedication.

Through its various academic programmes, teaching, research and the various cultural activities, the IIUM has already won world-wide repute and has been recognised as one of the best universities in the region. Over the years, the student population of the university has grown to some eight thousand students from 92 countries reflecting geographic and cultural diversity of the Ummah. The IIUM was established under the Malaysian Company Law as Company and operates under the direction of a Board of Governors with representatives from the sponsoring governments and Organisations namely Malaysia, Bangladesh, Egypt, Libya, the Maldives, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Turkey. This is due to the fact that Malaysian law does not allow a public university to use any medium of instruction other than the national language: Bahasa Malaysia. Presently, therefore, English and Arabic are the media of instruction at the University. It aspires to increase the ratio of international students and academic staff to 30 per cent.<sup>44</sup>

Among the periodicals published by the IIUM to reflect research and academic efforts in various fields of studies undertaken by the University are included (1) the *Intellectual Discourse* being the Journal of the Kulliyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences, (2) the *IIUM Journal of Economics and Management*, (3) the *IIUM Law Journal* of the Kulliyah of Laws, (4) the *Gombak Review* being the Journal of the Department of English Language and Literature and (5) *Al-Tajdid* (Modernization) in Arabic. The IIUM could boast to house a magnificent and constantly expanding library containing large collections of Arabic and English books on various aspects of the Islamic legacy and modern western systems of thought.

The Islamabad International Islamic University is also functioning though with a rather limited scope. It is doing significant work in the training of law students, both men and women, in Fiqh studies with particular focus on the teaching of Arabic. Its Dawah Academy is also active in training Islamic preachers and teachers. The Kampala University is, however, functioning on a limited scale only with the goodwill of a few dedicated Muslim leaders who have little or no political power. The Niger University, however, seems to have collapsed for want of economic and political support from the government.

## 8. Teaching

The Conference set in motion a world-wide momentum of academic activities. As a result, demand for Islamic education grew in various universities including some universities in the West. A good number of Muslim students from different countries were studying in the faculties and schools of education. Many of them were attracted to enter the teaching profession and to qualify as teachers and work in Muslim and national schools to teach Islam. To cater for this demand different arrangements were made in different countries. This author was appointed to promote the cause of Islamic education in Britain by lecturing on and supervising higher degrees research at the University of London, Institute of Education in the subject of Islamic Education and Education in Muslim countries. I set up a unit within the Comparative and International Education Department of the Institute to teach the Foundations of Islamic Education at post-graduate Academic Diploma and Masters levels. This course was later offered as an external programme so that students from overseas could prepare themselves and sit for examination abroad at their local British Council centres.<sup>45</sup>

I also organised programmes of lectures and invited prominent Muslim scholars such as Professor Syed Ali Ashraf, Professor Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas, Professor Sayyid Hussain Nasr, Professor Abdelhadi Boutaleb, Dr. Abdullah Omar Nasseef and others to lecture on selected topics of Islamic education. Students and staff of the University of London flocked to these lecture programmes and benefited from the guidance received from these scholars. Research on the subject of Muslim education also began to receive some attention.

Both Professor Ashraf at Cambridge and myself in London participated in the work of various Islamic organisations in the country and provided them guidance on Islamic education. These activities at the two universities in England had a snowball effect and demand grew at various other British universities for similar teaching courses. At Birmingham University, the Newman and Westhill Colleges offered to run a course offering four year B.Ed. degree programme for the training of teachers of Islam. I was invited to devise its curriculum for pedagogy section while Professor Ibrahim Surty of that University devised the Islamic studies side. The course soon became so popular that even non-Muslim teacher trainees joined it. Their objective was to be able to teach Muslim children effectively in the LEA/county schools.<sup>46</sup> As a result of our joint efforts, Islamic Education is now an

accepted programme of studies and research at various universities, schools of education and teacher training colleges in Britain. Similarly, in the USA the Muslim community of Virginia has established a Muslim Teacher's College. This college is training Muslim teachers who teach in the emerging Clara Muhammad Schools. Some well-known Muslim scholars and teacher trainers have lectured at this college. In England now, there are attempts to set up institutions to be jointly managed by Muslim organisations and British universities. The Islamic Foundation at Markfield, Leicester has already established such an Institute of Higher Islamic Studies and Yusuf Islam's (formerly Cat Stevens) Islamia Schools Trust is planning to set up a similar one in London.

### 9. Research

It appears that more research is presently being done on the subject of Islamic education in Western universities including the American universities than even in Muslim countries. The number of Doctoral theses on Islamic subjects especially on Islamic education ranks quite high on the list of Abstracts. I have myself examined about a dozen Ph.D. theses dealing with different aspects of Islamic education at various British universities. There are plans now to integrate Islamic educational programmes all across Europe where the number of Muslims is increasing and research is being undertaken by various universities on Islamic subjects.

### 10. Periodicals

(i) *The Muslim Education Quarterly*: With Professor Ashraf as its Chief Editor, this journal was started in 1983 under the auspices of the Islamic Academy and is now in its sixteenth years of publication. The MEQ has gained international reputation as the only renowned journal on Muslim education. It consistently promotes the aims and objectives of Islamic education as promulgated in the First World Conference and its follow-up conferences.<sup>47</sup>

(ii) *The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences*: The Association of Muslim Social Scientists (AMSS) was established in 1977 for the express purpose of providing a forum for both Muslim and non-Muslim social scientists interested in pursuing Islamic-oriented research and scholarship in the social sciences. The AMSS organises seminars and conferences to discuss and debate issues, principles and social science theories and their relevance to Islamic teachings. The

Journal of the Association (AJISS) publishes articles, papers and discussion documents on these subjects.<sup>48</sup>

### **11. Emergence of Muslim Schools**

Muslim schools are emerging fast in the Western countries to cater for the specific educational and cultural needs of Muslim children. There are over 200 of them in the US and Canada, 70 in Britain, 50 in South Africa, 12 in Australia and New Zealand. There are also a number of them in other European countries as well as in smaller countries and islands around the world such as Fiji, Philippines, Mauritius, Jamaica and West Indies. In Germany, the Turkish community have also established Muslim schools and devised their curricula and text-books which aim at safe-guarding the Islamic faith and identity of their younger generations. Similarly, in Belgium, France, Italy, Netherlands, Spain and in Scandinavian countries, the number of Muslim schools is rising.

Earlier in the 1960s and 1970s, governments in European countries were reluctant to recognise the specific cultural and religious needs in education of the Muslim communities, and refused to consider Muslim schools for state grants. As a result, Muslim philanthropy provided funds to bear the educational expenses of their schools. In London, for example, Yusuf Islam set up his own private school in 1984. It has now grown into three separate schools: a Muslim Girls Primary school, Islamia Girls Secondary School and a Boys' Muslim Secondary College. In these schools the demand for admissions is constantly rising and some Muslims from Arab and Asian countries are also keen to send their children to these schools for their good quality, integrated education, sound discipline and moral ethos. Like all schools in the country, Muslim schools have also to teach their students the National Curricula of the country where they operate. Additionally, they also teach Islamic studies curriculum. Recently the present Labour government has approved government grant for two Muslim schools, the Islamia School in London and the Al-Furqan School in Birmingham.

In the United States and Canada there is a rapidly expanding network of Muslim schools where enrolments are expanding and examination results are creating nation-wide news headlines. The largest number of Muslim schools belong to the Clara Muhammad group of schools which have been established in various American states. Now, the Farrakhan sect of the Nation of Islam, has also set up



their own Muslim schools and are accelerating efforts to attract black children away from the state schools.<sup>49</sup>

Similarly, in Nigeria, Shaikh Ahmed Lemu and Mrs Ayesha Lemu have also done excellent work by establishing a series of Islamic schools under the umbrella of the Islamic Education Trust [IET] with its headquarter at Minna. Their mission is to Islamize education for the Muslims of Nigeria especially in the Hausa and Yaruba regions. They have also published suitable textbooks and reading materials on physical sciences and agricultural science.

In South Africa, the Muslim communities in different areas have also established some twenty Islamic schools and carried out original work on the reformulation of curricula and writing of Islamic textbooks. In Cape Town educators like Maulana Ali Adam and in Durban, the Lockhart School under the headship of Edris Khamisa, and others have been doing pioneering work towards spearheading of Islamisation of education in that region.

In Mauritius, the Muslim community having previously established a number of Islamic schools on the island have now set up an Institute of Islamic Education and Research in order to train Muslim teachers for the English- and French-speaking Muslim countries. In the same manner, Zimbabwean and Zambian Muslims have set up their Islamic schools where Islamic education is being provided to Muslims who until quite recently had no opportunities to obtain this type of knowledge.

With the emergence of the Muslim schools in various non-Muslim Western countries, the need to co-ordinate their programmes has been felt and so National Associations of Muslim Schools, have been organised in England, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand and in the USA and Canada. What is required now is to set up an International Association of Muslim Schools as was recommended by the Conference, so as to devise uniform world-wide policies and programmes and cater for the various regional and national needs. This IAMS may also be the accreditation agency very much like the international baccalaureate system of schools.

## **12. Curriculum Reformulation**

Following the guidelines of the First and Second World Conferences, attempts have been made by some scholars and Muslim organisations to reformulate Islamic school curricula in which the Revealed

Knowledge subjects and Acquired Knowledge subjects are integrated. The problem then arises as to how such universal and supra-national Islamic curriculum should be adjusted within the national curricula. Within the Muslim schools, teachers are, of course, able to make the desired adjustments in theory as well as in practice.

But reformulation of the entire curricula of Islamic education has to remain as the ongoing activity and successive generations of Muslim scholars and teachers would have to continue to reformulate curricula to adjust with the changing circumstances of their schooling. Some efforts have been made in the US and England to devise new curricula for Islamic Studies and, in some cases, as for example, in England and Wales, these have been incorporated within the National Curriculum. But the problem of teaching all subjects from the Islamic point of view remains.

### 13. Textbooks

The question of preparation of new authentic Islamic school and college/university textbooks and reading material being used in teaching has been more problematic than other developments. There are two inter-related imperatives to deal with:

(a) To screen and critique the existing textbooks and remove from them factual errors about Islam and wilful anti-Islamic stereotyping. This is a gigantic task in itself. The Iqra Trust, London started to do this work and this author was involved in it, but the project had to be abandoned for shortage of financial resources. In Germany, Professor Abdoldjavad Falaturi however carried out this work with the help of a German scholar Dr Herbert Schultze and some German publishers who published their books highlighting some Islamic topics. But their work could not be institutionalised as an on-going activity.<sup>50</sup>

(b) To prepare original, well-written and well illustrated textbooks of high standards, along with reading materials and teaching aids for use in Muslim schools. Again, the initiative was started in 1993 at the Islamic Schools Trust in London with the co-operation of Professor Umar Hasan Kasule, then at the IIIT Educational Office at Herndon, Virginia. This author was appointed the Director of a newly created unit on textbooks called the Islamic Textbooks International at the Islamia School's Research and Resource centre in London. Two International Textbook Seminars were held, one in London in April, 1994, and the other in Cape Town ( South Africa) in October, 1994

and a Five-year Plan was approved but because of paucity of funds the project was again shelved.

To produce new textbooks involves research guidance from scholars on which textbooks are based. The textbook writers and editors have to be engaged. Printing, publication and distribution are required. All these activities require huge funds which are not forthcoming. No single Islamic organisation has taken responsibility to finance this work.<sup>51</sup> However, the Iqra International Foundation of Chicago and its chairman Dr Abidullah Ghazi and Dr Mrs. Tasneema Ghazi have now brought out some reading materials and textbooks which they are supplying to various Muslim and non-Muslim schools in the US and other parts of the world.

#### **14. Overview of Achievements**

To conclude this section on achievements, it may be stressed that the movement for Islamization has clearly taken off the ground. Slowly but surely, the guidelines enshrined in the recommendations of the World Conferences on Muslim Education have become a subject of serious studies and research among Muslim and even non-Muslim scholars.<sup>53</sup> It may be too early to prophecy on the outcome in the near future, but it appears that the unchecked onslaught on Islam of the secularist and anti-faith theories of education coming from the West seems, to some extent, to have been stunted by the thinking generated by the Conference. However, the percolation of the process down to the grass-root levels, to become available to practitioners in the field for use in their teaching and guidance work, remains a far cry. Until these practitioners, educators and teachers have available to them, standard textbooks, reading materials, guidance on Islamic concepts of knowledge, curriculum and subject teaching guidelines, methodologies and teaching aids, Islamization of education will remain a pie in the sky.

### **FAILURES AND SETBACKS**

#### **1. Implementation of the Recommendations**

The Follow-up Committee of the Conference first forwarded the resolutions of the Conferences to all Muslim governments and Ministries of Education, and made a strong plea for their implementation, even if partly and in some crucial areas of their

educational systems. Later, to give it the Ummatic importance, a resolution was adopted in the historic Makkah Declaration in 1981, which appeared at the Muslim Heads of States Summit called by King Khalid bin Abdulaziz, appealing to all Muslim countries to make efforts to implement the resolutions of the Conference. But with all these appeals not a single Muslim country has shown the seriousness to enforce even the most crucial recommendations. This is not because of a lack of financial resources but because of lack of political will! The only exception to this indifference, stands out to be the case of Malaysia where the government took the Conference decisions seriously and have implemented the Islamization of education programmes at all levels in spite of their challenging, multi-ethnic and multi-faith society. The establishment of the International Islamic University Malaysia, the IIITM and ISTAC, all of which are seriously engaged in the mission of Islamization of knowledge must remain a source of honour and pride for the government and people of Malaysia. The country has successfully universalised primary education among all its citizens. It has also made serious attempts to remove dualism in Muslim education by introducing integrated Islamic curricula, the New Primary School Curriculum (KBSR) and the Integrated Curriculum for Secondary School (KBSM).<sup>54</sup>

## **2. Abolition of World Centre for Islamic Education**

The abolition of this important Islamic Centre was a serious setback which has thwarted progress towards regeneration of Islamic education as visualised in the Conference. Had the Centre continued to work for its objectives, hopefully by now sufficient ground could have been covered and positive results achieved.

## **3. Other Miscellaneous Shortfalls**

Among other failures may be included the failure to promote the Teaching of Arabic in non-Arab Muslim countries. The proposed Islamic School of Literary Criticism have not been established. The task of Islamization of Social Sciences and Social Studies has not proceeded as desired. Education and Training of Muslim teachers through out the Islamic world remains unplanned and haphazard. Female education has made progress in various countries and Muslim young women are more conspicuous at schools, colleges and universities as well as in the world of work. But at the same time the distracting and evil influences of the media, aggressive advertising and targeting of the Muslim womanhood in the West continues. Christian

Missionary and Convent schools are continuing to expand their enrolments in Muslim countries and it is children from the upper and middle classes who flock to these schools. Similarly, the teaching of modern foreign languages especially English has become widespread and English medium private schools are mushrooming in every Muslim city where only economically well off may send their children.

This means that privatisation of education is on the increase while the standard of public schooling has rapidly fallen for want of adequate funding and negligence. But the most serious shortfall remains the lack of authentic, well-written and standard textbooks, teaching aids and reading materials for use in schools. Most teaching materials are produced in the West and do not represent the Islamic world-view.

### **TASKS AHEAD INTO THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY**

While the world of Islam is facing the above inventory of failures and crises in education, the dawn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century has brought in new challenges. In the West, the 21<sup>st</sup> century has been celebrated as a new millennium—two thousand years of the rise of Christianity. But Western civilisation today represents much more than Christianity. It looks poised to set new goals and new targets in science and technology particularly the Information Technology, to conquering new heights and making new breakthrough especially within the overall Western ideology of globalisation.

Muslims have to face formidable challenges ahead. But are they ready for them? If Islamization of education is considered as the strategy to cure the ailment that have crept into the Islamic civilisation, then the above inchoate and truncated inventory of achievements in Muslim education within the last two decades since the 1977, does not indicate that the Muslims have a chance in the next decades to come out of their backwardness. There have been more failures and shortfalls than achievements! Whatever precious little has been achieved is due more to the persistent efforts of some concerned and inspired individuals or groups of scholars who had felt the agonies, and pains arising out of the present malaise of the Muslim Ummah. Often they have worked alone, without the essential and vital political and financial support required of their governments. Had there been an equally enthusiastic response and a concerted effort on the part of Muslim governments to implement at least the major recommendations

of the Conference, two decades are not too short a period to make worthwhile progress towards reformulation of Muslim education.

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### Notes

1. For a full list of all members and participants see, *Conference Book* (Jeddah: King Abdulaziz University, 1977).
2. Ibid. 14-15.
3. Ibid., 78.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid., 85.
7. Ibid., 24, 110.
8. Ibid., 110-111.
9. Ibid., 19-22; and 105-108.
10. Ibid., 23-24; and 108-109.
11. Ibid., 82.
12. Ibid., 22, 110-113.
13. Ibid., 116-119.
14. Ibid., 53; and 119-120.
15. Ibid., 84.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid., 85.
18. Ibid., 85 and 125.
19. Ibid., 87.
20. Ibid., 90.
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid.
23. Ibid., 94.
24. Ibid., 92.
25. Ibid., 101.
26. Ibid.
27. Ibid., 110.
28. Ibid., 115.
29. Ibid.
30. Ibid., 116.
31. Ibid., 124.

32. Ibid., 125.
33. Ibid.
34. See G. N. Saqeb, "Conference Report" *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* 14 (1997): 115-121.
35. *ISESCO and the Islamic Revival* (Rabat: ISESCO, 1984).
36. Ibid. 1992. "A Decade in the Service of the Islamic World" .
37. All these books have been published in the Islamic Education Series, (London: Hodder & Stoughton; Jeddah: King Abdulaziz University, 1977-83).
38. For details of his life and the circumstances of his tragic murder, see M. Tariq Quraishi, *Ismā'īl Al-Fārūqī: An Enduring Legacy* (Plainfield Indiana, USA: MSA, 1986)
39. See Brochure of the IIIT (Herndon, Virginia: IIIT, 1982).
40. See Brochure of the IIITM, (Kuala Lumpur: IIITM, 1993).
41. See Wan Muhammad Nor Wan Daud. *The Beacon on the Crest of a Hill: Being a Brief History and Philosophy ISTAC* (Kuala Lumpur: ISTAC, 1991).
42. Syed Naqib al-Attas, *The Concept of Education in Islam: A Framework for an Islamic Philosophy of Education* (Kuala Lumpur: ISTAC, 1991).
43. See Syed Ali Ashraf, *New Horizon in Muslim Education* (Cambridge: Islamic Academy, 1979).
44. IIUM Brochure (Kuala Lumpur: IIUM, 1997-98). It is reported that the initiative to set up an Islamic University at Kuala Lumpur was that of Prime Minister Dato' Sri Mahathir Mohammed who himself along with his team of experts attended the conference and some time after his return set up a committee to devise the plan to establish an Islamic University in Malaysia.
45. *Diploma in Education Course on Education in Muslim Countries* (London: University of London, 1987).
46. The Muslim Community in Birmingham played an active role in supporting this initiative. Leaders of the community collected funds to meet the initial expenses and negotiated with the University and the two Colleges whose principals showed keenness for the project. The course is still being offered.
47. *The Muslim Education Quarterly*, is now in its 16<sup>th</sup> year and Dr Shaikh Abdul Mabud is its present editor after the demise of Professor Syed Ali Ashraf.
48. *American Journal of Islamic social Sciences*, Published by IIIT, Herndon, Virginia.

49. See Dennis Walker, "The Revived Nation of Islam and America's Western system in the 1990s: Ambiguous Protest of a New Black Elite," *Islamic Studies*, 37 (1998): 445-478.
50. Abdoldjavad Falaturi, *Islam in Religious Education Textbooks in Europe*, (trans. Herbert Scultze), (Islamic Scientific Academy, 1988).
51. *Seminar Report, International Islamic Textbook*, (London: Islamia Schools Trust, 1994).
52. See John Sahadat, "Islamic Education: A Challenge to Conscience," in the *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* 14 (1997) 4: 19-33.
53. See Rosnani Hashim, *Educational Dualism in Malaysia: Implications for Theory and Practice* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1996).