IMPLEMENTATION OF SUSTAINABLE ISLAMIC EDUCATION: A PANACEA FOR GLOBAL CHALLENGES OF IMMORALITY, INSTABILITY AND INSECURITY

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Abstract

Islam places prime importance on education. In fact the first revelation to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was on education where a messenger from Allah (Angel Jibril) instructed him to read. Islamic Education is the system of education which teaches the canon or tenets of the religion of Islam. It is an instrument of social control, order and accountability. The dictates of Islam are such instruments that ensure social control, discipline and order. This paper outlines what Islamic Education is and its objectives which include training the learner's personality towards the best moral and social conduct, healthy attitudes and self-discipline. The paper also discussed the global challenges facing Islamic Education especially implanting morality, discipline and order in its recipients. The paper finally offers some suggestions on how Islamic Education should respond to the challenges facing it.

Keywords: Islamic Education, Social control, Morality, Discipline and Order.

Education is an important factor in the development of any society. No doubt, the level of development of any nation is determined by its level of education. Education may be defined as a process, as a product and as a discipline (Oladosu, 2009). As a process, education is conceived as a set of activities which entail the handing down of the norms of a given society from generation to generation. It involves the transmission of worthwhile values and ideals in form of knowledge, skills, attitudes, beliefs and everything cherished and held in a very high esteem by a given society. Education refines man and enables him to cultivate and develop the qualities that are necessary for his integration into the society as a responsible and self-reliant citizen. It makes him develop physical, cognitive and psycho-social qualities he requires to lead a happy and fulfilled life. As a product, education is measured by the qualities and qualifications possessed by an educated fellow. As a product, education is

conceived as the various branches of organized knowledge which students acquire in colleges, institutions and faculties of education.

Islamic Education

Islamic education is a divinely revealed system of education that prepares individuals to be upright on earth and attain happiness in this life and in the hereafter. It is also regarded as a process that completely nurtures the individual aimed at the balanced growth of the total personality of human being through the training of man's spirit, intellect, rational self, feelings and bodily senses (Siddiqque and Bello, 2016). In Islam, education does not necessarily mean the knowledge of the fundamentals or the cardinal principles of the religion or jurisprudence as seen by some scholars. Rather, education can be any activity which provides the learner or any individual with basic skills which will enable him to discharge not only his basic religious duties, but also such basic duties as personal hygiene, rudimentary of law, security and safety measures, home management, relation with other people, etc. Az-Zarnuji as quoted by Oloyede (1991) stated that, there is no line of demarcation between secular and religious education so long that, the secular education does not contradicts the moral values of Islam. He further added that, Islamic education takes full cognizance of the ideas and morals of the community. The religion therefore cannot reconcile itself to any education which lacks a spiritual dimension and which fails to place moral values at the very heart and centre of learning. The tenets of Islam should therefore be reflected in every discipline that is being taught to Muslims.

In this sense, therefore, Islam is not against even scientific and technological advancement in as much as they are not detrimental to the core values of piety and God consciousness. Allah the All-knowing is the root of all branches of knowledge. Muslim scholars in the past made significant contributions to world civilization and left indelible mark in almost all branches of knowledge like Astrology, Mathematics, Physics, Medicine, Chemistry, Surgery, Arts, Humanities, Social Sciences, not to talk of Arabic and Islamic Studies. For instance, Ibn Hayyan was one of the first modern chemists for his discovery of acids, success in distilling sulphuric acid and his extraction of sodium carbonis, potassium, arsenic and silver nitrates. He was said to have written about 500 books on philosophy, logic and alchemy. Al-Khawarizmi was noted for his invention of the term of logarithm in relation to numbers. He was said to have made the numerical system which was adopted in Europe at the end of the 16th century. Ibn Haitham was noted for being the first to draw the eye and to explain the phenomenon of reflection and expansion. Al-Idrisi was said to have made the first map of the world that was similar to those made by modern cartologists. Ibn Sina (known as Avicenna) was regarded as the first to identify tuberculosis, meningitis and other such inflammations as well as other fifteen types of illness with prescribed 760 remedies (Adebayo, 2009). These scientific and intellectual breakthroughs were brought about by a system of education premised on Islamic norms, values and ideals (Oladosu, 2009).

Objectives of Islamic Education

Every system of education has certain objectives or goals it sets to achieve. For instance, the goals of education generally in Nigeria as outlined by the National Policy of Education (NPE, 2013) are the:

a) Development of the individual into a morally sound, patriotic and effective citizen;

b) total integration of the individual into the immediate community, the Nigerian society and the world;

c) provision of equal access to qualitative educational opportunities for all citizens at all levels of education, within and outside the formal school system;

d) inculcation of national consciousness, values and national unity; and

e) development of appropriate skills, mental, physical and social abilities and competences to empower the individual to live in and contribute positively to the society.

The Objectives of Islamic education are centred on the Islamic concept of life here and the hereafter (Siddiqque & Bello, 2016). Therefore, the objectives are virtually related to the purpose of man's creation. In Islam, man is created for nothing than to serve and worship his Lord. The Glorious Qur'an attested to this: "And I created not the jinns and humans except they should worship Me" (Qur'an, 51:56). To teach the jinns and mankind the modalities of how He wants them to worship Him, Allah (the Glorified, the High) sent Messengers to them. Each Messenger had after him companions and scholars who took over the propagation of the divine knowledge, generation after generation for the same purpose.

Islamic education places prime importance on moral and cultural values which are among the most important factors in any social organization. It is on this note that, the Nigerian National Policy on Education placed character training by developing sound standards of individual conduct and behavior as one of the aims and purpose of education right at the primary level (FGN, 1981). It is necessary for every system of education to define clearly the type of individuals it aims at producing. Islamic education aimed at (among others) producing individuals who are of high level mentality, morality, and who respect other people's right, encourage what is right and prevent what is evil. Lemu (1980, p.1) outlined the aims and objectives of Islamic education as:

(i) To awaken in the learner the consciousness of Allah as the foundation of his intellectual, emotional and spiritual growth and to provide a sound Islamic basis for rational and reflective understanding of the world around him;

(ii) To teach the learner to be conscious of his responsibility to Allah, serving Him with all the talents and resources He has given him;

(iii) To enable the learner to know how to worship Allah in the manner He has prescribed;

(iv) To train the learner's personality towards the best moral and social conduct, healthy attitudes and self-discipline, in accordance with the guidance of the Qur'an and Sunnah (way of life of the prophet), and to encourage him through this training to grow up as a good and law-abiding citizen, who will contribute to the well-being of his society in particular and humanity in general.

In other words, Abdulkarim (1990, p.27) summarized the objectives and purpose of Islamic education as:

The attainment of Islamic virtues, integration of individual into a sound and effective citizen, socially, economically, culturally, intellectually, morally, Spiritually, and developing people's talents and inspiring lofty ethical values in them.

The aims and objectives stated above are the main foundation upon which Islamic civilization, society and people's personalities are built. Therefore, in order to mould people to be upright in all ramifications, Islamic education places much emphasis on Tarbiyyah (education), Ta'lim (instruction) and Ta'dib (moral teaching).

Islamic Education and Morality, Global Stability and Security

Islam emphasizes that a Muslim should get good education. Good education is that which seeks to build, imbibe, mould and maintain a good character in its recipient to become useful to himself and to the society. Therefore, any form of education that failed in shaping and moulding an individual to become of sound character and balanced perception is defective. A person lacking in upright character and moral soundness no matter how lettered or knowledgeable he is certainly is not educated. Such a person not so educated poses a threat to the society. In other words, Islamic education aimed at facilitating the balanced growth of the total personality of man through the training of the man's spirit, intellect, rational-self, feeling and bodily senses (Abubakar, 2011, p.4). In Islam therefore, the training imparted to a Muslim must be such that faith is infused in the whole system of his personality and create in him an emotional attachment to Islam and enables him to follow the Qur'an and the Sunnah and be governed by the Islamic system of values willingly and joyfully. This is the true educated man who will have the fear of Allah and who sees himself as the servant of Allah. Allah says: "…Those (who) truly fear Allah among His servants who have knowledge…" (Qur'an, 35: 28).

The objectives of Islamic education put much emphasis on morality, knowing quite well that when people are morally upright, peace and stability will prevail. The moral code of Islam is so encompassing as to provide the best form of character building for the production of a balanced society. It covers from the minute details of personal and domestic life to the broad aspect of communal, national and international behaviuor as between individuals, societies and nations. The moral code of Islam is also so comprehensive as providing the best form of character building of a personality and a society that is independent, balanced and best in character. Almighty Allah states:

"Thus have We made of you a Community justly balanced, that you might be witnesses over the nations, and the Apostle a witness over yourselves…" (Qur'an 2:143)

Islamic system of education therefore offers great importance and plays vital roles in moulding the life of people and as well enhancing their security and stability. One may need to ask: in what ways can the system of education offer such great importance and play such vital roles?

In the first instance, through proper imparting of Islamic education, learners will be motivated to work hard. When the learners are so motivated, they will have a great chance of success in school and in the later life endeavours. A Muslim learner with adequate knowledge of the religion will have inculcated in him a belief in Allah as his Creator, Guide and Judge; he will have the knowledge of distinguishing right from wrong and vice versa; he will have a sense of inner security which will help him to overcome many problems of the life of here and the hereafter. Islam is therefore a source of guidance, security and motivation.

In the second instance, the faith or belief that an individual will acquire through Islamic education will influence his moral conduct. Belief which is taught in the highest form in Islamic education will inculcate piety in the learner, thereby making him a citizen of high moral standard. No doubt, if any improvement is to be made in the moral standard of any nation, it must begin with beliefs and moral standards of its citizens.

Thirdly, through Islamic education, people will learn the position and importance of discipline and obedience. Islam enjoins people to obey their Lord, their Messenger and the constituted authorities or leaders. Almighty Allah states: "O you who believe! Obey Allah, and obey the Apostle, and those charged with authority among you…" (Qur'an 4:59). The system of education will also provide people with decent culture (way of life) as substitute to the western culture which is characterized by indecency. Also, the Ta'dib (moral) lessons which form a vital part of the curriculum of Islamic education provide moral and character training derived from Qur'an and Sunnah of the Prophet (peace be upon him). The purpose of moral and character training in Islam is to develop in people a consciousness of their Lord, integrity, consideration for others, peaceful and responsible relationships with all fellow citizens regardless of their tribal, regional or religious inclination. Producing citizens with this type of attitude and morale will go a long way in enhancing global peace and stability.

Living in harmony with one another is one of the cardinal teachings of Islam. Islamic education therefore plays a vital role in cementing brotherhood among Muslims and ensuring peaceful co-existence with all mankind including the people of other religions. Brotherhood and making peace between Muslims as well as peaceful relations, justice and fair play with the people of other religions are vital issues outlined and emphasized in Islam. Many verses of the Glorious Qur'an and Traditions of the Prophet (peace be upon him) affirmed this. Few of them are:

"Verily the believers are one brotherhood. Therefore make peace between your brothers and observe your duty so that you may obtain mercy" (Qur'an 49:10). "And hold fast to the rope of Allah all of you together, and do not be disunited." (Qur'an 3:103).

"A Muslim is a brother to a Muslim, he does not wrong him or abandon him." (Hadith reported by Abu Hurairah and transmitted by Muslim)."By Him in whose hand my soul is, one of you does not believe until he likes for his brother what he likes for himself." (Hadith reported by Anas and transmitted by Bukhari and Muslim).

"The best of Iman (faith) is to live in peace with people, and the best of Islam is that you do not hurt others with your hands and tongue." (Hadith reported by Ibn Umar and transmitted by Bukhari).

"Take note that there is no preference in being red or black (white or black skinned); greatness and nobility lies in your being God fearing (and having good conduct)." (Hadith transmitted by Baihaqee).

He is not of us who proclaims the cause of tribal partisanship;
and he is not of us who fights for the cause of tribal partisanship;
and he is not of us who dies in the cause of tribal partisanship.
Hadith reported by Abu Hurairah and transmitted by Tirmidhee and Abu Dawud).

O mankind; We have created you from a male and female
and made you into races and tribes that you may know
one another. Verily the most honorable among you in
the sight of Allah is the one who is most conscious of Allah.
(Qur'an 49:13).

"Revile not those whom they pray beside Allah lest they wrongfully revile Allah through ignorance" (Qur'an 6:108).

"And the servants of (God) Most Gracious are those who walk 0n the earth in humility, and when the ignorant address them, they say, "peace!" (Qur'an 25:63).

Islamic education emphasizes the importance of peace and stability among all people. The religion of Islam teaches the Muslims that even in situations where the followers of other religions seek to quarrel with them over issues of religion, they should respond with a peaceful reply. They are not to abuse the gods worshipped by others. They should always remain on peaceful terms with the followers of other religions unless they refuse to be peaceful with them or attempt to deny them the right to practice their religion. Even then, the Muslims are expected not to be excessive in responding to their persecution.

Challenges Facing Islamic Education

No system of education is free from one problem or another. Islamic education despite the role it plays in enhancing and uplifting the spiritual, moral, social, economic

political, cultural and intellectual standard of people is faced with a number of challenges. Some of such challenges include:

Lack of qualified teachers and relevant materials at the primary level: In most parts of African countries especially Nigeria, Niger, Chad, Cameroun, Republic of Benin, Togo and Ghana, the local Islamiyya schools organized by private proprietors served as places where children are expected to get a solid foundation upon which their future Islamic education is to be built. However, in many places, the operators of such schools lack adequate training in the methodology of teaching. In addition, there is lack of adequate relevant teaching materials and conducive environment for effective learning to take place. Lessons are in most cases conducted in open-air spaces, under tree shades or in the verandahs of the Malams. Most of the Malams are old-fashioned and conservatives who do not go with time. As a result of this, most of the training given in the schools seems to be crude and does not adequately prepare children for the challenges of the new era.

Poor Economic Status of Operators of Islamiyya Schools: Another challenge facing Islamic education can be seen from the economic status of the teachers of most Islamiyyah schools. In the first place, the traditional scholars operating such schools are neither salary earners nor do they have any serious source of income. They therefore rely much on alms and the little they can get from the parents of their pupils which is not always forthcoming. Even in public schools where Islamic teacher are salary earners, they are looked down with despise or inferior to teachers of other fields. On the other hand, the issue of street begging associated with pupils of Islamiyyah schools and the unwarranted movement from one place to another in the name of seeking knowledge are causing serious havoc to their character and security as well as tarnishing the image of the religion of Islam in general.

Lack of Marrying Theory with Practice: Another major challenge facing Islamic education is that of marrying theory with practice. Many teachers and students of Islamic education are very reluctant to put what they teach or learn into practice. The resultant effect of this is that, despite the moral lessons of the system of education, there is growing rate of moral decadence among youths and adults in many parts of the world. This in most cases is one of the causes of drug abuse, religious and tribal clashes and many other social vices in many parts of the world. If Muslims are to follow the true teachings of their system of education there will be peace and stability all over the world.

Lack of Proper Organization: Islamic education at the local Islamiyya schools (makarantun allo) especially in some West African countries is characterized by lack of proper organization and structure. Its structure differs very much with what obtains in public schools. Abdurrahman and Canham (1978, p.51) described the structure of education at the local Islamiyya schools thus:

> There is no clear-cut division into primary, secondary and tertiary levels. Also there is no progression from one class to another and from one level to another with examination barriers erected. All along the line, there is no class, no age limit and no rigid timetable with neatly timed periods for subjects.

Implanting Morality and Discipline: Morality refers to beliefs or ideas about what is right or wrong and how people should behave or a kind of pleasure or pain which is felt by the human mind in contemplating certain course of action as right or wrong. On the other hand, discipline is the training of mind and character of man to produce in him self- control and decent behaviuor according to established rules in a society (Amoloye, 1987). Islamic education therefore has the challenge of fighting moral laxity so as to make its recipients morally upright and highly disciplined so that global peace and stability could be achieved.

Controlling Extremism, Fanaticism and Radicalism: This is yet another challenge facing Islamic education. Extremism refers to holding opinions, ideas or actions that most people think are unreasonable and unacceptable. Fanaticism refers to extreme political or religious beliefs used to show disapproval. Radicalism refers to ideas that are very new and different and are against what most people think or believe (Bullon, 2003). Islamic education in particular and Islamic religion in general does not teach or accept these ideologies and beliefs. Rather, they teach and accept the orthodox teachings of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) which holds that, "The best of the things is that which takes the middle course." These ideologies are posing serious challenge to Islamic education especially in Nigeria, Niger, Cameroon and Chad where we have "Boko Haram," Somalia where we have "Ash-shabab," Afghanistan where there is "Taliban" and Syria and Iraq where there is "Islamic State" (I.S.).

Conclusion and Suggestions

The modern world is full of challenges from almost every aspect of life or system. Such challenges could be seen in social, economic, political, educational, cultural and religious aspects of the life of people or in a system. It is the objective of every system of education to bring about positive change in human life in such a way that, those changes could improve the lot of the people. Islamic education like any system of education plays a vital role in enhancing and uplifting the spiritual, moral, social, economic, political, cultural and intellectual standard of people. Therefore,

going by the challenges surrounding the system of education, this paper wishes to suggest as follows:

1. Government and proprietors of Islamic schools should recruit adequate qualified Islamic teachers at all levels of education more especially the elementary level which serves as the foundation. The unqualified teachers should be sponsored to go for further training and the qualified ones should be provided with adequate relevant teaching materials.
2. Government and proprietors of Islamic schools should improve the economic status of teachers by giving them better salaries and better condition of service.
3. Teachers and students of Islamic education should as much as possible put what they teach or learn into practice so that it would manifest in other people's life.
4. Islamic education especially at the elementary level and Islamiyyah schools should be well structured and well organized to go with the modern era.
5. Islamic education should emphasize more on instilling the fear of God and moral uprightness and it should intensify more efforts in fighting moral laxity.
6. Islamic education should strict more to the orthodox and true teachings of Islam so as to guard against religious extremism, fanaticism and radicalism.

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