Role of Modern Education in Re-construction of Islamic Society[1]

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Abstract:

   Islam is a revealed religion of Allah to the humanity through the prophets started from Hadhrat Adam (PBUH) to Hadhrat Mohammad (PBUH).Islam had been completed by 1,24,000 prophets.

   The teachings of Islam are based on the commands of Allah revealed to the prophets. On the basis of teachings of Islam, what sort of society comes into existence can be called Islamic society. Any society can be Islamic society if that is based on the teachings of Islam. The aims and objectives of the establishment and functioning of that society must be the teachings of Islam.

   For an Islamic society there is needed that the members of the society must know and practice the teachings of Islam in day to day life. For the application of Islam in day to day life there should be proper system of teaching and training for the members of the society. Education serves that purposes.

   Education is an important system for producing the desired members for the society. Islam has emphasized greatly on education. The seeking of knowledge had been made obligatory for every Muslim. This declaration about education was to supply the desired persons to the need of the society. Prophet of Islam had arranged such system for sahabas (companion) at Sufa. This school of Sufa produced the required persons needed for the Islamic society during the period of prophet Mohammad (PBUH).As a result within a short period of time,

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[1] Presented at First High Profile International Conference, held at AMU, Aligarh on Monday & Tuesday, March 30-31, 2015

a model of Islamic society was established for which people are aspiring even in modern time.

The present age is of 21th century, ahead of more than 14 years of complete ion of Islam (not advent of Islam as many scholars preach today by cutting the Islam from the previous prophets). The present day is the hegemony of the West (the countries of Europe, Australia, America etc). The society of the west is different from the Islamic society. The west has created an education system to sustain the western society and has been implemented worldwide irrespective the region, culture, religion etc. The education system of the west is based on the need of their society, economy, culture, polity. The core values of the education of the west is to promote the western way of life.

Muslims and their societies around the world are facing the problem in decision of choice of education. Which system of education- Islamic or Western would be useful for Islamic society? The number of the seeker of both the system has increased. The questions that need answer before adopting a system of education are; Is Islamic education system different from the western education system? Can western education system re-construct Islamic society? Is there any need to re-construct Islamic system of education to promote the interests of Islamic society in present time? Is there any ground where both the systems of education collaborate to reconstruct Islamic society? What are the suggestions for developing an Islamic system of education for re-construction of Islamic society?

This paper has tried to find the answer of all these questions related to reconstruction of Islamic society in modern world with the help of modern and Islamic systems of education.

Key words: Modern Education; Islamic Society; Renaissance; Ulema; Sharia

Introduction:

Education is considered as one of the power tools for indoctrination and enculturation. This can also be used to impart knowledge and train individual in a particular way of life. Education provides human capital to the society.

Education is based on the philosophy of the society for which it aspires. A philosophy is to look into anything with a particular point of view. A society without a philosophy of life cannot move ahead. Islam being the chosen religion of almighty has a valid philosophy of life for this world and after. The members of Islamic society must be aware of that philosophy. And education is a better tool to preach that philosophy of life. Due to this reason Islam has made education obligatory on every Muslims .It has own system of education to educate own followers. Its education system has both theoretical and empirical aspects

With the coming of modernity and modern world of western civilization, a new way of life had started way back from the Sixteenth century and now has reached its zenith in the 21stcentury. This way of life has an own philosophy and own system of dissipating it among its own follower. This philosophy of life has changed the world very much and influencing the lives of the people around the world irrespective of region, religion, race etc that, other forms of philosophy of life are losing importance. Islamic society and philosophy are not the exception from this diminishing trend. The western civilization in general and modern education, in particular, has brought unparallel changes both at spiritual and materialistic levels. The power of the modern culture of the west can be seen in the manifestation of imperialism and colonialism which changed the course of Islamic society. The military power, control on the world economy, the hegemony of western political system and application of modern education to advance the western ideals in every nook and corner made Islamic society defensive. In this regard, Abusulayman says that "The two categories of knowledge from a tree which is unable to grow because the first category lacks the essential dynamism to foster growth, and the second is alien to the Muslims, their lands, goals, and objectives. For this reason, when one talks about reforming and reconstructing the perspectives of Islamic

knowledge and culture, one has in mind the initiation of a revival that should make them fit once again for production and growth, But that goal cannot be achieved without reconstructing the reorientation he programs of education and instruction."1

Islamic society in the absence of dynamic discourse in every walk of life has become stagnant. As a result, all sorts of crisis have engulfed the Islamic society. Islamic world has lost the dominance and is losing grounds against the western civilization in many walks of life. In response to this trend of decline there has emerged two responses in the Islamic world; one is either to counter the west and second to collaborate to assimilate. For the countering of western civilization, Islamic civilization needs re-construct the Islamic philosophy and its system of the delivery-the education system. The education of Islamic society which is mainly based on religious discourse and delivered in seminaries are losing relevance do due to sectarian division. There is found the negligence of the worldly affairs in their discourse. They have sidelined the applicability of the modern trends of education in their pursuit of knowledge. As a result, they are nowhere to challenge the hegemony of the western civilization.

Other hands their own society is moving towards massive disintegration and decline. In such condition, what should be done to reconstruct the Islamic society? Can modern education help Islamic society in reconstruction? Modern education which helped the western domination over the world, can help Islamic society which is spiritual in nature to re-dominate again? Can Modern education empower Islamic society to counter the political, social and cultural hegemony of the West? Can a secular Christianize modern education help in building of a religious Islamic society as desired by the members of the Muslim society?

In the present time, the standard of any society is measured in terms of the applicability of the norms of the

western civilization. It is stated that a society is evaluated "by various indices of modernity, development or modernization, and tried to determine to what extent the societies studied approximated to the model or models of modern industrial society or else what impeded their advance in terms of these indices-patters of modernity"2 And at present, Islamic society is also evaluated on the same norms of the western civilization. Can Islamic society have its own parameter to evaluate?

Introspection

The philosophy of education is vital source for training of the members of the society. There is close relationship between philosophy of education and the aspiration of the society. In Islam, the basis of the society is the will of the Allah. What are the wills of Allah? What are the sources of knowing the Will of Allah? In case of Islam, the wills of Allah can be known through the verses of Holy Quran and life of the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) (the Ahadith). The philosophy of Islamic society and education can be derived from the holy Quran and Ahadith. In secular matter, the society can have philosophy of life from other than Islamic Sharia. But it should not deny the fundamental basis of Islamic sharia.

During the time of the prophet of Allah and the period of Khilafat Rashidah, there was strong relationship between the theoretical basis of Islam education and practical lives of the members of the society. As a result, the society was peaceful and emerged as a model society for coming generation. The method of training and education of the members of the society were led by the prophet of Allah himself and Khalifaas the head of the society in later stage. The main emphasis of Islamic education at this time was the character building through Taqwa (the fear and love of God).

With the passage of time, the emergence of numerous schools of thoughts, broke the proper training of the members of

the Islamic society in Islamic teachings, changed the aims and objectives of the Islamic society, changed the aspiration of the people, bent the minds towards material world on the cost of spirituality, divided the role of Ulema in the society, decline the training centers of the members of the society. There started many movements by various schools of thoughts which put the Muslims in inactive states and brought degradation and decline of Islamic society. The other reason was the imported secular knowledge of the philosophical discourse of Greek and Roman civilization. These philosophical discourses were adopted and propagated by a group in Islamic society. According to Abusulayman "there also exits in the Muslim world an imported, secular knowledge, which dominates every aspect of life, and whose advocates respond thoughtlessly to imitate blindly the trends and developments of the age. This secularism is perpetuated and popularized by institutions, universities and organization in the various Islamic countries."3

The Western World came in direct contact with Islamic world during crusade, introduced Islamic world with European thoughts particularly Greek and Roman. A new world of thought had been opened to both Islamic and European worlds. The coming of Renaissance has been seen in the light of spreading of free intellectual thought of the Islamic world to the western world via Spain. Islamic civilization at that time was in dominance with the education system based on free thinking, rationality and knowledge production. The period of medieval world is an example of the glory of Islamic education system based on the free thought delivered by Madaris. Europe had been awakened from long slumber by the Islamic world. The society which enslaved by the Church was freed by the rational education of Islamic world. A new will and new thought entered in the life of the western civilization, which led the emergence of modern western world-different from earlier in terms of thought, polity, economy, society, religion, culture and morality.

Reaching to the seventeenth century, the world of the western civilization succeeded to build a powerful system of trade and commerce, discovered the new regions of the world, society, economy, culture and morality. They developed own system of education which strengthened the western civilization. The western system was further strengthened with free will, logic, reasoning and practical demonstration of the Islamic education. The new discourse of knowledge suited the ethos of the western civilization which gave them power and dominance over the world. In the later stage they implemented it all over the world as one scholar states that "the idea of progress considered unnatural general law, and the west regarded as peak of progress both lead to the tacit acceptance of the premise that the epistemological paradigm underline the modern western cultural formation is superior and universal and that it is the standard norm to be adopted by all societies"4

When the west met with Islamic world in seventeenth Century, Islamic world was no match for it. The Islamic world has already lost grip on knowledge and learning. According to Abusulayman(2010) "Historically, the dichotomy between the political and the intellectual leadership was the main cause of the weakness and gradual withering away of Islamic knowledge and culture, and also of the tyranny, ignorance, and despotism of the politician. At present, as a result of the historical vacuum created by that dichotomy and the military, political, and cultural impact of western colonial influence, there is still a dualism is knowledge itself".5 As a result Islamic world experienced the power of "imperialism" and a large part of Islamic world had been turned into colonies of the western world. Reaching to the 20th century, the Islamic world was completely subdued by the west in every walk of life. The destruction of Islamic societies, economy, culture, polity could be seen in prevailing anarchy of the Islamic world.

The credit for success of the western world has been given to the modern education. Modern education has been

explained as the act or process of imparting the knowledge about contemporary world and society. It is related to various aspects of the society in which a man or woman use to live. Modern education is considered progressive and recent. It has passed through the age of subject centered to teacher centered and now students centered .In pro children centered approach to education, it is argued for the use of such content, methodology and evaluation processes which meet the requirements of the child.

In comparison to the western modern civilization, Islamic civilization is presenting decay and destruction in recent times. Numerous Muslims scholars like Allama Iqbal have argued for reconstruction of Islamic society based on the modern values. According to Allama Iqbal "The claim of the present generation of Muslim liberals to reinterpret the foundational legal principles in the light of their own experience and altered conditions of modern life is, in my opinion, perfectly justified"6 Could these modern values come from the application of modern education into Islamic society?

What is the meaning of reconstruction of Islamic society? According to a view "the reconstruction of Muslim civilization is essentially a progress of elaborating the world view of Islam. The complete way of life 'group of scholars are content with restating the classical and traditional positions as if the old jurists and scholars had solved all the problems of humanity for all time. The avant-garde seems to believe that casting contemporary concerns in ethical moulds in enough. We need to go beyond all this and produce distinctively Islamic alternative and solution to the vast array of the problems faced by societies. We need to do this by producing the whole array of theoretical alternatives and by demonstrating these alternatives practically".7

For achieving the reconstruction, there is need of producing knowledge, theorizing and conceptualizing Islamic principles rationally and demonstrating practically. Can

Islamic system of education impart these requirements alone or need the help of modern education? This is a matter of debate.

There are many factors which were responsible for decline and defeat of Islamic civilization against the western civilization for the dominance of world. Numerous scholars have come with numerous explanation of the decline of the Islamic civilization. Many of them have put forwarded solutions for reconstruction of Islamic society on various models. Can these models be constructed with the use of Islamic education or need help of modern education? For better solutions the tool of modern education should be incorporated with Islamic education.

The present paper has taken role of modern education in reconstruction of Islamic society. It has studied the various dimensions of modern education and it's applicability in reconstruction and propagation of western civilization around the world. This paper has taken modern education as a tool for Islamic society to move ahead in modern age. This paper has argued logically the utility of modern education to Islamic society and use of modern education as a tool to make Islamic society militarily powerful to challenge the hegemony of the western civilization. This paper has put forwarded numerous suggestions for the use of modern education in reconstruction of vibrate and thriving society of Islam, which could counter the problems of modern lives of Muslims and create an atmosphere of cordial relation with other religious groups. According to Smith (2005) there is problem of assimilation of modern day values with Islam. He states that "the fundamental problem of modern Muslim is how to rehabilitate that history: to set it going in full vigor ,so that Islamic society may once again flourish as a divinely guided society should and must".8

Question and importance of study

The present paper has analyzed the role of modern education in the reconstruction of Islamic society. The rational in taking modern education as an important tool in the reconstruction of Islamic society is the vast changes that have occurred in Islamic society and the lives of Muslims. There is much intervention of modernity in every walk of life. The modern education has brought a large number of Muslims in its ambit. If we take one example from India then one finds as per the report of Sachar Committee only 4 percent of Muslim children use to go to Madaris. The Modern education which is the harbinger of the modernity needs reinterpretation and redefinition in the context of application in the Islamic society. The individual who are the main source of strength of society, at large, has been changed on the line of western values. Their aims and objectives have been changed; their moralities have been changed and; their lifestyles have been changed. In such cases can Islamic societies allow such trend or stop this trend? The reasons for these trends are the aspiration of the individual; society and Islam are not identical with each other. They are different and approaching in their own directions. How can Islamic society encounter such trends? The Muslims of the world are living in the duality which should be ended for the advancement of the Islamic world.

There is no doubt that modern education has changed the western society beyond imagination. It has made the western society the dominant model of society for humanity too. In such cases, there are certain questions which need an answer. These questions are:

1. What is Modern education?
2. What are the aims and objectives of Modern education?
3. Does Islamic society need reconstruction?

4. Should Islamic societies accept modern education to reconstruct it to meet the modern challenges?

5. Can a secular Modern education help to reconstruct a religious Islamic society based on the will of Allah?

6. How can Modern education be helpful to reconstruct Islamic society?

Discussion on the Questions

Modern education can be defined as an up-to-date or recent education of an age. In the present context, the modern education means the education which started by modern Europe after renaissance. The modern education is the exclusive education system developed and preached by the western countries to meet their specific aims and objectives. The aim has been defined as "the historical context of the Eurocentric mode of production and control of knowledge and subjectivity is the emergence and global expansion of the modern/colonial world system, which centrally involves the modern educational apparatus, from the sixteenth century to the present".9

For the point of views of Muslims, the modern education is solely a system of education of west to promote the values of western civilization. This education system is more and more materialistic in nature. This is a tool to advance the sphere of the western civilization and shape a world based on the values of the west. This system of education negates the revelation/divine as a source of knowledge which is the basis of Islamic education and stresses on the sensory knowledge and has imposed on the world. According to Baker (2009) "Over the past five hundred years, this epistemic framework was imposed upon the entire world and became part of the "standard of civilization" (Gong, 1984).All other forms of knowledge and learning were subordinated to the universalized standards".10

Can this system of education help Islamic society to meet the wills of Allah?

What are the aims and objectives of the Modern education? Modern education is a product of the modern civilization of the western world. So, the aims and objectives are to promote the values and culture of the western civilization and deconstruct the knowledge of others. Baker(2009) argues that "the purposes of education should now include unlearning the cultural biases of the dominant Eurocentric cosmology, particularly the western system of knowledge, and opening the western imagination to the multiple ways of perceiving and conceiving the world that have been occluded within the Eurocentric imaginary".11

The main aims and objectives of the modern education do not match with the very purposes of Islamic society. According to Mingolo (2000) there are four aims of the Eurocentric modernity which modern education has preached. These are "Christianize, civilize, modernize and marketize".12To promote these four aims the Modern education has been used. The structure of the course, the content of the curriculum, the philosophy of education, the aims and objective, all have been derived from the basics values of Greek, Roman, and modern European civilization. According to Foucault (1983) "Modern schooling is designed to (re)produce modern subjects who will in turn contribute to the reproduction of the modern/colonial world system through the reproduction of the dominant culture within particular nation-states. State mass compulsory education is a political structure of individualization techniques and totalization procedures".13

The modern education of the west is based on the Eurocentric approach. So, the modern education promotes the values and strengthens the western system. This has been done by demolishing all others systems and values of the societies. According to Santos (2007), "Eurocentric modernity was constructed through an epistemic conceptual apparatus that

subalternized all other ways of conceiving and organizing knowledge. Eurocentric involves the epistemological conceptualization of what constitutes "knowledge" within a categorical imperative to "educate" through and into this particular conception of knowledge. On-western forms of knowledge that could not be assimilated were effectively eliminated".14

Reconstruction of society is based on the acceptability of reforms within society. In the case of Islam, is there any possibility of reformation? Islamic society has evolved for more than 1400 years. There occurred many changes in the very basic of Islamic society. The reasons of the changes are both the changing of the meaning and context of norms of Sharia and its applicability. The present time, which is the age of globalization, needs the incorporating those values worldwide which are the essence of Islamic society. The narrow-mindedness, the concentration of power of defining the sharia in few hands, the division of Islam on sectarian lines, the applicability of Islamic Sharia in a limited context and lack of appropriate response from the Ulema class to the many issues, have made Islamic society stagnant, resulting the decline and degradation.

To assimilate the other societies and their people there is need of reformation in Islam in terms of applicability and redefining of the laws of Sharia. A major part of Sharia had been codified thousand years back. Is that codification still valid in modern time or needs reinterpretation or what? The need of reconstruction of Sharia laws had also been felt by Allama Iqbal who stated that "Today, Islam's greatest need is the reconstruction of the Islamic law and its re-codification in such a way that it may provide the Islamic answer to the hundreds of thousands of new questions that have been posed by the modern economic, political, social, national and international development".15 And who should be given responsibility to bring reformation and reconstruction? On this

question, Iqbal says, "each generation, guided but unhampered by the work of its predecessors, should be permitted to solve its own problems."16

In the age of science and technology when numerous problems are solving by the application of the scientific method, there is a need to apply that in the redefining of the laws of sharia and application of Sharia in Islamic society. In this regard, Modern education can play an important role in bringing scientific knowledge, methodology and brains in Islamic society. The modern education can help in providing an understanding of problems of modern lives facing by the members of Islamic society.

Can Modern education help in the reconstruction of Islamic society? This question is in the main discourse of Islamic scholarship. The nature of Modern education is secular. Neither religion nor any other spirituality is inside of it content. The curriculum is mostly based on the needs of the individual and society. The rational spirit has been made a fundamental part of individuality, which can be exercised without any restraint. While the Islamic society needs individual who knows his limits and exercise his rationality with accountability. He has not given such power to question every norm and principle of Islamic society, particularly matter related to the faith and world after death.

Islamic society needs individual who are honest, have faith in almighty and do welfare for the whole society and mankind. They try to establish a society based on the will of Allah and want to see a society based on the principle of equality and justice? He neither violates the moral standard of the society on his will, nor allow anybody to do so.

For this sort of the society, there is need training of the individual in the teachings of Islam. How can secular Modern education help in the training of the individual in Islamic teachings? Has modern education complete solution for reconstruction of Islamic society? It can provide many other

essential elements which can be used for reconstruction of Islamic society but not all the elements required for reconstruction of Islamic society as desired by the Islamic scholars (Ulema).

Application of Modern Education in Reconstruction of Islamic Society

Modern education can be helpful in the reconstruction of Islamic society in the following ways.

1. Modern education can solve the problems of the economy, polity, and society of Islam. It can help in solving economic problems and facilitate the trade and commerce by providing the scientific technology.

2. Modern education can help in developing of rational approaches for the understanding of others religions and cultures. The practice of Taqleed (following) which has made the Islamic society stagnant can be counter and make active by rational approaches. It can help the Islamic society to check the orthodoxy which has been injected by the vested interest groups. It can help in the eradication of non-Islamic ideologies from Islamic society which has brought confusions and anarchy in Islamic society. Shaaz (2001) has pointed in his book "Muslim Masaala ki Tafheem" about the introduction of "non-Islamic concepts"17 as one of the reasons of distortion of Islamic teachings. Modern education can check the injecting alien concepts in Islamic discourse of knowledge.

3. Modern education can help in creating a better environment by providing common issues of benefits for debate and dialogue. This can provide a rational approach towards other religions and cultures. Modern educations can provide basic knowledge of other religions in general and western education in particular. This can provide a better understanding of the western society, economy, values and

cultures. This can help in the understanding of the real design of the western education, their purposes, aims, and objectives.

4.   Modern education can be used in re-examining the religious discourses, debates and texts which are in large number and needed rational approaches.

5.   Scientific education which is the main product of modern education can be used to present Islamic teaching and Islamic life in a better way to the individual of the modern world which can strengthen and facilitate the presentation of Islam. The resurgence of Islam in the western world is due to the modern education which questioned the numerous irrational thoughts of Christianity and modern life. The modern education has delusion from the western life style and paved the way towards Islam.

6.   Modern education can empower Islamic society by solving the numerous irrational thoughts which have emerged in Islam. The fighting in the Islamic world is due to irrational thoughts prevailed in the main discourse of education which has created numerous sects and each making themselves the true representative of Islam.

7.   The interference of others countries in the Islamic world can be solved with the application of modern education. Undoubtedly, modern education has empowered the western civilization in the fields of science and technology which has made them militarily powerful. This is the reason that Islamic world had and have to face imperial onslaught on their land. The presence of the western countries in Islamic world can be challenged by application of science and technology and making themselves powerful in terms of military power. Can Islamic discourse of education and knowledge make them militarily powerful?

8.   The modern education can be used to make society stable by providing means to exploit resources. There is no dearth of sources in Islamic world but the problem is that they lack in capital and technology. Due to negligence of modern

education, the Islamic society is unable to exploit their abundance resources. This is the reason that none of the Muslim country figured in the world strongest economies. The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of a small country Japan is larger than the combined GDP of many Muslim countries. Other communities and other people are dominating trade and commerce of the world .This has proved that how with the passage of time due to change in technology made possible lesser involvement of Islamic society in business of the world.

9.   Modern education has been used as a tool to advance the four goals of the western civilization the Christianizing, civilizing, modernizing and marketizing. This is the reason that modern education has been spread by the western world through numerous agencies. The modern education brought western civilizations into contact with Islamic world on large scale. It has helped the Islamic society to understand the western civilization in better way. In the light of the need of the Islamic society and the world now there should be five goals of Islamic civilization in spreading the modern education. These should be-Islamizing, civilizing, modernizing (in Islamic perspective), welfarizing and fraternizing to turn the whole human kind into a great family of God which the Christianity and other religions have forgotten.

10.   The modern education can help in bridge the gap between Islamic society and other societies of the world by understanding the cultural trends of each other civilizations. Both of these civilizations have made many practices, ideas, moralities as part and parcel of their civilization which has nothing to do with the real spirit of their religions. The west has eliminated religion from public life and Islamic civilization has made the life of individual so religious that it has made life full of hardship. Numerous practices which have nothing to do with the cultures of both civilizations are made part of them by some hidden hands. Is pub culture an essential part of the western Christian culture? Is scarf an essential symbol of faith

of Islamic civilization? This sort of differences has to be understood and modern education can help in understanding of them rationally. A culture has not just ideas but practiced. According to Schulze (2002) "Cultures are not based on utopian world view but refer to concept to origin and identity which have to be internalized and translated into action. That is why political discourse constantly reinvents these two terms. Islam is just as exposed to political acculturalization as other tradition, discourse and religions. Muslim who tries to mobilize Islam to gain political advantage can always rely on the effect of the keyword culture."18

Conclusion:

The Islamic society still at large has traditional thoughts of domination. The structure of the society, aims and objectives and aspiration have changed during the last fourteen hundred. The coming of modernity both as a project to promote the western values and a way of life has put forwarded numerous challenges before Islamic society. Modern education has served well in the promotion of modernity and western values. The domination of modern education in every walk of life has provoked the scholars of the Islamic world to use modern education as a tool to reconstruct the Islamic society to meet the challenges of the west.

      The Paper has studied the various dimensions of Modern education and its applicability in modern life, reached the conclusion that modern education with all its positive aspects can be used for reconstruction of Islamic society. It can meet the needs of the fast-moving world and keep Islam as a model for the people around the world. Modern education can liberate Islamic world from orthodoxy, give new tools to analysis its own values, to understand the values of other civilization and empower it to meet the challenges of the western world both spiritually and materialistically.

Modern education can empower Islamic society economically to exploit its own resources, militarily counter the hegemony of the west ,stop ongoing wars in the Islamic world by promoting tolerance and broadening and widening the thought towards others religions and cultures. Modern education will work and reconstruct the Islamic society in new perspective.

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