ABSTRACT

This paper gives an overview on the development of Islamic Education Curriculum in Nigeria. The paper examines the developmental structure of Islamic Education curriculum by taking cognizance in to three epochs; pre-colonial, during colonial and post-colonial. However, inhibitive factors affecting efficacious development of the curriculum are chronicled especially in this era which is full of reformation and dynamism. Finally, possible solutions are offered on best to move Islamic Education Curriculum forward in Nigeria.

Keywords: Curriculum, Islamic Education, development
1.0 INTRODUCTION

There were trade routes linking North Africa and the Bilad al-Sudūn (Land of the blacks) as it was known, which is the presently known as West African sub-region. Thus, Islam reached Nigeria (as one of the West African countries) through the eastern Trans-saharah trade route which linked Tripoli and Kanem through Fezzan and Bilma. The Muslim merchants therefore are said to have been the brain behind this gigantic Islamic project of propagation. Other minor trade routes existed between the Kanem and other communities surrounding it. It could be suggested that probably through these routes, Islam spread into other parts of Nigeria. By the 15th century, most of the Northern part of the country has witnessed the penetration of Islam and its educational system. However, it is very important to note that Islam and its educational curriculum were introduced to Nigeria not by military conquests but peacefully through the influence of traders across the trans-saharah trade routes.

2.0 CONCEPT OF ISLAMIC EDUCATION

Many attempts have been made by Muslim Scholars [1&2] define Islamic Education. In reference to this article, al-Zayidi’s definition is chosen to serve the purpose of this paper. Alzayidi (nd) states that the term “Islamic Education” could referred into a number of things: It can be viewed as Islamic Religious Education in which the person studies religious knowledge, starting with the Qur’an and matters of worship such as purification, prayer, Zakat, fasting and Hajj. He may also learn other matters like the etiquettes of eating and drinking, Islamic dress, family relations, business transactions, criminal law, and inheritance. Al-Zayidi also elaborates farther stating that the term ‘Islamic Education’ can have a broader meaning, embracing knowledge in general in a framework where the teacher, the student, the school, and the curriculum are comply with Islamic values, and teachings. In this nature, student learns whatever he needs to learn of reading, mathematics and the various sciences. The curriculum will include a generous amount of coursework devoted to Islamic studies. Additionally, the syllabus would not include any texts that contradict Islamic beliefs and teachings.

3.0 CURRICULUM OF ISLAMIC EDUCATION BEFORE COLONIAL GOVERNMENT

The curriculum of Islamic Education in Nigeria appeared between 7th to 9th centuries as Muslims migrated from North Africa to West Africa. However, the curriculum was not documented; it was adopted from Tumbukto system of Islamic Education. Thus, at that time there were two types of Islamic schools in Nigeria. (i) Traditional Islamic Schools (Makarantun Allo) and (ii) Ilm schools (Makarantun Zaure).

3.1 Traditional Qur’an school (Makarantar Allo)

This school is considered as primary level of Islamic Education. The emphasis in this school is based on teaching Qur’an only. Children are admitted to this at 3 to 4 years old as they are expected to start learning Qur’an recitation. At this stage pupils learn the shorter chapters of the Qur’an by repetition and rote. The method of instruction at this stage is teacher centered in which teacher recites to his pupils verse to be learnt several times. Then pupils repeat the
verses after the teacher. Then the pupil or group of pupils is allowed to repeat the verse by themselves until they memorized them.

The next stage is learning Arabic text at which a pupil learns the alphabets of Arabic language. Pupil is expected to recognize Arabic letters which were written by the teacher on the student’s wooden slate (Allo). The teacher reads the alphabet carefully to the student by showing him each letter, thereafter; the student reads them several times. According to [3] this stage lasts between six and thirty six weeks depending on the learner’s ability. When the teacher is satisfied that the pupil has attained the standard skill of reading Arabic characters he introduces him to the formation of syllables with vowels. (Fatha, Kasra, Ruf’ah and Skaun). This stage lasts for six to eighteen months, depending on the learners’ intellectual capability [3].

The final stage is learning longer chapters of the Qur’an, at this stage student writes Qur’an chapters/ verses (on a wooden slate) he expects to learn prior to school hours. During the school hours student comes to teacher to learn what he had written on the wooden slate. At this juncture, teacher recites the verses for student two or three times depending on the student’s level of mastery, then the student recite the verses after the teacher once or twice this is also depends on the student’s intellectual capability in one hand and the number of students waiting to learn before the teacher on the other hand. However, student will not exceed to next chapter/ verses unless the teacher is satisfied that the student mastered the previous chapters/verses very well. This continues till student complete the Holy Qur’an. this marks the end of primary level of Islamic education.

Moreover, [3] expressed that when a pupil passed primary level of Islamic Education (that student can recite and write the whole Qur’an) his family organizes walimat for him. During the walimat day the student appears with his decorated slate on his hand, visiting the houses of his relatives. However, the student's relatives use to gather at the foyer of the Qur’an schools waiting for him to recite the first five verses of surat Baqara in front of his teacher, once he finished the recitation his relatives welcome him and rejoice with him. In many circumstances, gifts have been given to him. More interestingly, on the walimat day, a ram or cow bought by the student’s parent is slaughtered at the teacher’s house. Half of the slaughtered animal meat is kept for the teacher.

The school week starts on Saturday and ends on Wednesday. There is no bell to alert the pupil to school; no is there a mode of dress. However, in many parts of Nigeria there are three sessions of the Qur’an school in a day: morning afternoon and evening. Morning session begins from 8:00 A.M to 10; 00 A.M. Afternoon commences from 2:00 P.M to 4:00 P.M and evening starts from 4:00 P.M to 6:00 P.M. [3]

3.1.1 Curriculum of Traditional Qur’an School

Based on the above description we can itemize the curriculum of traditional Qur’an school as follow:

i) Qur’an is the only teaching subject in the school
ii) Pupils are admitted to the school at the age of 3-4 years
iii) The first stage of learning is memorizing some short chapters of Qur’an (e.g from Surat Fatiha to Surat Fil).
iv) The next stage is learning Arabic text of Qur’an through writing them on the pupil’s wooden slate by the teacher, thereafter, the pupil start to write by himself.
v) Completion of Qur’an recitation in front of Malam is considered as graduation level of the pupil.
vi) Walima is organized by the pupil’s parent on the day of Qur’an graduation ceremony.
vii) The school week starts on Saturday and ends on Wednesday.
viii) The school has three seasons morning, afternoon and evening season.
ix) The school goes to break in the 9th month of Hijri Calendar (Ramadan), Eid Fitr and Adha, and Maulud day.
x) The method of instruction is “rote learning” which is strictly traditional.

3.2 Ilm Schools:

This type of school is for older students who graduated from the Qur’anic schools and who want to further their Islamic Education. The students study under one or more Malams depending on their levels, types and depth of specialization [3]. Some time students used to learn from malam individually in one hand and collectively on the other hand. Subjects taught at this type of school include: Qur’an commentary (tafseer) tradition and history of Prophet Muhammad peace be upon him (Hadith and Sira) principles and rules of Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh and usul fiqh) theology (ilm tauheed) mysticism (Tasawwuf) medicine (Tibb) and history (Tarikh) Arabic Grammar (Nahwu) morphology of verbs (Sarf) etc.

In this respect [3] regarded the above subjects as different branches of knowledge and it is not every teacher attained perfect of each of the above branches of knowledge. Thus, at this stage students of the Qur’an schools are instructed by more than one Malam. It is also at this stage students decide in what area he wishes to specialize.

3.2.1 Curriculum of Ilm School

i) It is only for older students who graduated from traditional Qur’an school
ii) Tafseer, hadith, Fiqhu, Ilm Tauheed, Tasawwuf, Sira, Nahwu, Sarfu, Balaga, Lugha etc are the teaching subjects at the school.
iii) Students learn from different teachers, based on the students’ interest and their area of specialization.
iv) For some circumstances students are grouped based on their age and intellectual capability.
v) The method of instruction is individualistic in most circumstances.

3.3 Limitations of Both Traditional Qur’an School and Ilmi Schools

i) The curriculum is not documented
ii) The curriculum is static not dynamic
iii) Un-prescribed date/period of graduation.
iv) There is no terminal or promotional exam.
v) Students’ sitting arrangement is random
vi) Certificate is not awarded for the graduand
vii) No physical facility such as building.

3.4 The Fund of the above two schools

These two types of schools represent old curriculum of Islamic education in Nigeria which was strictly traditional and completely private with no formal funding. The Malamai
(ulama’a) took care of the educational and spiritual development of children on behalf of the society. The society and parents in turn took care of the Malamai through fees (every Wednesday) zakat and Sadaqat. However, the society took care of the Almajirai by giving them leftover food, and offering them opportunity to work as house helpers [4].

4.0 ISLAMIC EDUCATION CURRICULUM DURING COLONIAL GOVERNMENT

When Western Education came to Nigeria with colonization, the development of Islamic Education was completely ignored by British colony. Even the Ajami system (is a system of writing local language with Arabic scripts) which existed as official means of communications between the emirs of the states, Ulama’a and other people, was not recognized officially. This marked the commencement of a slow death process of Islamic Education [5].

It is clear that British colony introduced formal system of education to Nigeria, and is perceived as a welcoming development in southern part of the country. While in the northern part of Nigerian was perceived as way for propagating Christianity to the region with dominant of Muslim Ummah.

Thus, British colony reluctantly added Islamic subjects in their educational system in order to pursue the parents to enroll their children to school. In such case, Islamic subjects were taught at the last period in the schools while students are tired. Moreover, Islamic studies teachers were appointed as discipline masters (who administer corporal punishment to students who misbehave) of the schools. Subsequently, students could easily hate them and the subjects they teach.

Despite the initial resistance, it became necessary for Muslims to enroll their children in to Western Education program or lose the opportunity to participate in running the affairs of the country. This led to the establishment of the new Islamic institutions in the 1950-1960c by private organizations. They adopted all features of formal school system that were lacked in Qur’an Ilm schools.

5.0 ISLAMIC EDUCATION CURRICULUM FROM INDEPENDENCE TO DATE

Nigeria became an independent Nation on the 1st October, 1960 from British. But, due to multi religious and cultural nature of the country, syllabi for Islamic and Christian Education were drawn up by State and Federal Ministries of Education since 1950’s. The syllabi prepared students for the subject in the West African School Certificate Examinations. The medium of instruction is English language.

In the case of Islamic Education there were no textbooks in English until about 1968 – 1970. The teachers, who were mostly traditional Mallians (scholars) who passed through Arabic Teachers Colleges, would use Arabic books, from which they would translate to the students [5].

With the production of books in English written to cover the syllabus, Islamic Religious Knowledge became much easier to teach. The Government-run post-secondary Advanced
Teachers Colleges and Colleges of Education ran three year courses in Islamic Studies (as well as Christian Religious Knowledge) and the subject became widely available in the universities. Gradually the Arabic speaking Mallams were replaced at secondary level by English-speaking young teachers who were the products of the mainstream educational system [5].

She also expressed that the way of teaching Islamic Education in Nigeria is expected to be confessional that is, students are taught how to practice their religion as well as being taught about their religion. Muslim students are therefore expected to memorize portions of the Qur’an and Hadith and their meanings, to know how to perform the duties of prayer, fasting, zakat and hajj, to evaluate the evidence for the authenticity of the Qur’an and so on, as well as learning essential historical information.

On the other hands, there are many secondary schools which purposely initiated to teach Islamic Education and Arabic Language especially in the Northern Part of Nigeria. The schools are sponsored by Muslim State Governments. At these schools teachers teach Islamic Education in advanced. Teaching subjects of the schools include: Qur’an commentary (Tafseer) tradition and history of Prophet Muhammad peace be upon him (Hadith and Sira) principles and rules of Islamic jurisprudence (Fiqh and Usul Fiqh) theology (Ilm Tauheed) mysticism (Tasawwuf) medicine (Tibb) and history (Tarikh) Arabic Grammar (Nahwu) morphology of verbs (Sarf) etc.

The medium of instruction at these schools is Arabic. Therefore, the schools have special final secondary exam named Higher Islamic Secondary School Examination under the supervision of National Board of Arabic and Islamic Studies (NBAIS) Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. Some of these schools are:

i) School for Higher Islamic Studies (Aliya)
ii) School for Arabic studies (S.A.S)
iii) Government Arabic College (G.A.C)
iv) Girls Arabic Secondary School, Gorandutse.

However, the inception of the ideology “Islamization of Knowledge or Education” in the late 1970th serves as other facet for restructuring Islamic education curriculum in Muslim countries such as Malaysia and Nigeria. In respect to the latter, curriculum of primary and secondary school becomes integrated (combining Islamic and modern education).

In order to produce versatile Muslim students in Nigeria, Four Islamic universities were established by Islamic bodies and Muslim philanthropists. The universities are

i) Katsina University, Katsina.
ii) Al- Hikma University Ilorin, Kwara state.
iii) Cresence University, Abekuta
iv) Founting University, Oshogbo.

Despite the concerted effort to bring Islamic education at different level of education, still some parents are not well satisfied on the way their children learn Islamic Education in those schools. This gave rise to the development of Islamiyya schools or Madrasa in different sessions: morning, evening, and night depending on the type of public school a child attends. Students of any level of formal educations attend Islamiyya School orMadrasa.

Some of these Islamiyya schools have structured environments with Islamic images (Arabic calligraphy and mosques). School administrators actively foster Islamic identity and awareness among students and teachers, not only in the classroom but also in the all school activities like weekly lectures. Islamic congregational prayer in particular Asr prayer is
regularly observed in the school mosque. Islamic dress, particularly for female students is employed as virtually powerful way of fostering Islamic identity and awareness in these schools. However, it is important to note that old system of Islamic education (Qur’an Traditional Schools and Ilm Schools) still exist in some part of Nigeria [4].

6.0 FACTORS MILITATING AGAINST DEVELOPMENT OF ISLAMIC EDUCATION CURRICULUM IN

There are many factors that militate against successful development of Islamic Education Curriculum in Nigeria which are emulated from Muslim community. [4] elaborated the factors as follow:

i) Government factor: the federal government of Nigeria marginalizes the role of Islamic education in developing the country. Therefore, the government does not adequately invest in the development of Islamic Education. As a result of that, majority of Islamic education teachers are not professional, insufficient text books, lack of instructional materials, and lack of students’ motivation. Subsequently, Islamic education becomes optional course to study even in Islamic states of Nigeria. However, the graduates of Islamic schools are given less priority by the government compared to other students whose specialization is sciences, or Technology. Thus, the optimum future of Islamic education students is either teaching or leading prayer in the mosque and occasions.

ii) Muslim proprietors’ factors: some of the Muslim proprietors of Islamic schools are dishonest and trust worthless, in the sense that they are not sincere in teaching. It is apparent that some of the proprietors go to some philanthropists as well as Arab countries’ government to seek for financial assistance for administrating the schools. Unfortunately, they divert such assistance they earned to their personal usage. Some also go to ridiculous level of selling the valuable Islamic books given to them for the development of Islamic Education.

iii) Muslim parents’ factor: Muslim parents of Islamic schools have their own share of the problem. The disdainful manner in which students attend Islamic school does more harm than any other. An average Nigerian Muslim parent spends heavily in western education for their children. When he comes to Islamic education he perceives the knowledge as secondary level. Therefore, he does not care to send his children to Islamic Schools. Teacher of such school suffer a lot in collecting monthly school fee from parent which is less than $ 2 in some of the Islamic schools.

iv) Community factor: most of Nigerian communities do not see anything beneficial in the Islamic system of Education other than religious activities. There is an impression that anybody undertaking Islamic education can only be a school teacher. The advent of Boko Haram ideology (Western Education is Forbidden) member insurgents in North Eastern part of Nigeria which bring another dimension of Islamic education in Nigeria, in the sense that Muslim scholars as well as their students are perceived as extremists in the society.

7.0 ISLAMIC EDUCATION CURRICULUM IN NIGERIA: WAY FORWARD

If it is undoubted that the Western system of education has come to stay in Nigeria and has even, to say the least, westernized most of our life style, there is the urgent need to find ways of moving Islamic education forward in order to guarantee its future. [6] made the followings suggestions that could be taking into consideration in order to mitigate the above obstacles:
i) One aspect that must be considered, and very urgently too, is Muslim state government should integrate Western education with that of the Islamic system. This integration, which should be in the area of learning experiences, must be done with a view to producing "double-baked" citizens. That is, students who would be versatile in both Islamic and Western education without any jeopardy to the former. Giving the present scenario in the country, this, to my mind, remains the only viable approach to re-launch Islamic education back to prominence. Some subject should be introduced into the Islamic schools and taught in English language (such as Mathematics, economics, integrated science, Geography and English Language itself). In the light of the foregoing, it is strongly suggested that a curriculum conference be summoned to assemble the representatives of all stakeholders in Islamic education. The conference would fashion out curricular for the different levels of Islamiyyah schools. To have a rewarding conference, mass enlightenment should be mounted to educate, especially the proprietors of Islamiyyah schools, on the benefits of such a gathering.

ii) Another area that needs attention is staff training and retraining. The appalling situation whereby teachers in our Islamiyya schools are not exposed to modern trends in pedagogy should be redressed. Some of these teachers just pick up the chalk, in most cases, after graduating from the same school where they are teaching. There should be a way of giving teachers in our Islamiyyah schools basic education courses. In the interim, induction/refresher courses, workshop and seminar, could be organized to take care of this important aspect of the system. Government should be involved in certification. This will put an end derogatory valuation of certificates from Islamiyya schools. It is depressing that, in some organizations, holders of certificates from Islamiyya institutions are placed on meager salary grade levels as low as 02 or 03. Our ministries of education should take over the certification as a follow-up to the harmonization of the curricula.

iii) Co-curricular activities such as Club and society meetings should be encouraged in the Islamiyyah schools. There should be football team as well other sporting activities. These activities help in no small measure to develop a child cognitively, affectively physically. Besides, they also give him the Islamic alternatives to what he is exposed to outside the school environment.

8.0 CONCLUSION

This paper gives an overview of the development of Islamic education curriculum in Nigeria in three historical era; pre-colonial, during colonial and post-colonial. Problems and prospects of Islamic education curriculum are also discussed in the paper.

REFERENCES


[8] [http://en.islamtoday.net/quesshow-25-1524.htm](http://en.islamtoday.net/quesshow-25-1524.htm)