

Challenges in providing the Islamic Education at Elementary Level: Teachers Perspectives

***Dr. Alia Ayub**

Assoc. Prof. in department of Education, SBKWU, Quetta

****Dr. Sadia Suleman Khan**

Assistant Professor in Education dept, SBKWU, Quetta

*****Dr. Maroof Bin Rauf**

Assistant Professor in Education dept, University of Loralai

Abstract:

Islam always emphasized on providing the education to the Muslims. The first Ayat of Islam was also focused on learning. Islamic education focused on overall building of human beings. As overall development of human beings is a challenging task the teachers face many problems in providing the quality education. This study highlighted the challenges in teaching of Islamiyat, analyzing these challenges and suggested a plan for good quality of Islamic education. Quantitative approach was used to achieve the research objectives. 70 male and 70 female teachers, involved in teaching of Islamiyat at public sector elementary schools were the sample of this research study. 5 point likert scale survey was developed to achieve the objectives, challenges, reasons behind these challenges and a plan for improving quality education.

Keywords: Quality, challenges, Islamic Education

What is Education?

All the knowledge and skill pass through observation and demonstrated in logical bases. Before Plato societies were completed course orally, storytelling and imitation. In past era the formal education was not much developed, it was the duty of parents to impart the knowledge to their youngsters, but with the passage of time, the education process got the shape as formal education and different pedagogies were introduced. The teachers became the integral part of education systems schools were introduced to provide the quality education to the youths, make them aware with their culture, values, philosophies of life, social development. To sum up schools appeared as the source of national harmony and a revolution¹.

Quality of education

The learning outcomes depends on the quality of education in an educational organization. Quality of teaching – learning improves the quality of education. The classroom practices measures the quality of education. Teaching in the classrooms determines the students' educational achievements. A quality education enable the students to meet their future needs successfully. A quality education enable the students to compete in a democratic society and prove him/herself as active partner of the society².

The development of a country depends upon the quality of education. Thus the developing countries always tried their best to improve the quality of education. The educated and skilled people are the tools of development of a country. A quality education improves the personal and social lives of the people. They can solve the different financial, societal issues of the society. Not only this the education also improves the decision making skill of the students, they can take decisions on time³.

Value of Education in Islam

The main focus of Islam was always on getting the education. The value of getting education is pointed out in the Holy Quran. Not only it was described in the Holy Quran but also its value is given by the verses of Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH)

- <<طلب العلم فريضة على كل مسلم>>

Effort for getting education is mandatory for all Muslims⁴

Character Building (Known as ‘tarbiyah’ in Islam), was the main focus in the teaching of the Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH). Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH) told us about the power of the Allah. He told us that the life and universe is created by the Allah. Allah is the only source of Power in this world. Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH) also explain the way of livings to live a successful life and compete with the society. Thus it is clear from his (PBUH) teaching that Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH) focused on the students’ all round developments.

But when we see around us, it is appeared that our students lack strong Islamic Character. And they are not exhibit the skills in various fields of life. Due these observations, this research study was conducted to highlights the challenges, faced by the elementary teachers in providing the quality Islamic education. The results of this study will guide the curriculum developer, educationalist, educational management for improving the quality of Islamic education.

Objectives

1. To highlight the challenges of teachers engaged in teaching of Islamic studies.
2. To analyze the reasons behind the identified challenges.
3. To suggest a plan for good quality of Islamic education.

Research Questions

1. What challenges are faced by teachers, teaching the islamiat?
2. What are the reasons which make teaching of islamiat a challenge?
3. How quality of Islamic education can be enhanced?

Literature Review

Formal Education

Formal education starts when the number of students increased. With the increase in number of, it become difficult to provide education to each student through old teaching patterns (individual teaching by any elder people). So the need of formal institutions was arrived and special buildings were constructed to provide education in a formal way. Plato and different scholars given different philosophies to teach the large group of students. An academy was founded by Plato in Athens. He open a first educational institution in Europe. Plato give different teaching strategies to impart the knowledge, thus education system acquire a formal process⁵.

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Saint Albert established a university in 1088. He was the inventor of the organic field of exploration. The university established by the Saint Albert is known as the first formal/regular operational university. In the middle ages a great work was presented by the Muslim philosophers in the fields of Islamic science, Mathematics, arts and medicine⁶.

Prestige of Education

To empower the children with interaction skills and the rational thinking, education is an important tool. Education enable the children to understand the world around them and compete to survive with confidence. Education make the children responsible and provide them the skills for supporting their society. Students develop self-understanding and may guide others. Education creates the ability of working in a team, people behave in a good way in any kind of situations. Education is a source of technical competencies, professional maturity, communication skills and social skills. Education improves the physical dimensions of the learners and it promotes the individual perspectives of the learners. It also polishes the aesthetic sense of the learners and support the learners to uncover their hidden abilities. To sum up education is the value able process which makes a great difference in the people personalities⁷.

The educated people show positive attitudes, the have a key quality to move from destructive mind condition to positive and impersonal positions of mind. They can show self-governing to handle the difficult situations. An education system can be called as effective if it provide the complete guidance to manage the daily routine of life through effective development programs arranged by the schools. Education change/improve the perception of the people about the life and its main focus is on constructivism of the mind. The abilities to manage the life involves basic consciousness, practical skills and community arrogances. A quality education make the students economically productive and they can show good performance in their practical life⁸.

Education is so powerful tool that it can be change the whole world, if we see the developing countries, it is clear that their education systems are very good. Developing countries pay more attention to their education system and trying to improve the quality of education. The main aim of education is to prepare the young people to cope with the problems and challenges which they may face in adult life. But still under

developed/deprived countries still facing troubles to solve the issues on industrial scale. To educate the people it doesn't matter to spend more money, to construct more schools, make examination system more difficult or employing more teachers, instead education system should be focused on fulfilling the students educational and future needs⁹.

Demands of Quality Education?

What a quality education demands? It demands a good facilitation environment, easy curriculum, trained teachers. A quality education demand an active and participating role of the students. The environment of the school must be healthy, safe and cooperative for the students. Parents feel safe to send their children to the schools. Child centered teaching pedagogies should be used by the qualified teacher in the classrooms. Students should be facilitated by the teachers during teaching-learning process. Visions and missions of the schools must reflect the national goals. A quality education is the right of all of the students¹⁰.

Quality education has following two main standards:

1. To identify the rational growth and perceptive skills of the learners.
2. Behavior and beliefs of the citizenships.

A quality education must develop clear objectives to measure the classroom practices of teaching and learning. Teachers must do efforts to provide good education and assess the students' achievements on regular basis¹¹.

We may define the quality of education as how well and how much student absorb from the teachers. How much education is valuable for the students? Teachers' teaching competencies are also improves the quality of education and strengthen the curriculum. Informative approaches are necessary for better learning and quality education. A quality education show complete and healthy learning¹².

Good and effective survival of the nation depends upon the quality education. A quality education strengthen learners' useful skills, learners' capacities, proper attitudes of the learners and their values. All above mentioned qualities of learners make the learner strong in their practical life and enable them to live a successful and peaceful life. And it also help the people to develop secure, safe and healthy interactions in their social life¹³.

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School management is responsible to fulfill the teaching requirements and monitor the teaching – learning process. A quality education system treat the different students with different educational and cultural backgrounds equally. In a quality education, the students show interest in achieving the learning goals and increases the inner and outer efficiency of the schools¹⁴.

The objectives of a quality education are vibrant. They measures the all happenings/activities going on in the schools. It measures the teaching-learning process on regular basis for maintaining the good quality of the education.¹⁵

It's a necessity to understand the inner and deep meaning of draft and direct implementation for existence of quality education in Pakistan. Different educational projects should be supervised, because the implementation of such plan is the real source of power and a step to success of Pakistan. Quality of education depends upon the classroom practices of teaching, learning and assessments¹⁶.

If classrooms are well managed it contribute in improving the quality of education. If all the requirements, which are needed to run the education cycles are fulfilled, students learning process become strong. Disciplines also matter for quality of education, if schools care for disciplines, students got discipline in their life too. If students exhibit disciplined and positive behavior, then it must be appreciated by the school administrators¹⁷.

Islamic Education

First verse of Qurane-Pak highlights the value of education as under:

﴿ اِقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ ﴾

Read with the name of Allah¹⁸.

The value of education in Islam is indicated by this verse. And it was the first verse this show that how much Islam valued the education. The Islamic Education emphasized on the recognition of the creators. It is necessary for a Muslim student to understand the value and dignity of his/her creator. If a Muslim students recognized the creator of the universe, they will be able to learn more and more concepts. If they do not valued the Islamic education they may remain immoral, unjust, unrighteous and ill-mannered.

The role of man in Quran – e – Pak is explained by the Allah

﴿ مَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ ﴾

I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me¹⁹.

- A man is known as educated if he can perform his all duties with honesty in all aspects in the light of Islam, E.g. honest with his relatives, neighbors, and even with himself. Along this he should be able to earn his livelihood with honesty.
- Islamic education support the human in its personality development completely, so it is different from common instructions, its' instructions just focus on the improvement and development of some performance tasks.
- Allah says in Quran-e-Pak “Faith on Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH) as a good leader and teacher²⁰.”
- Seeking knowledge doesn't mean to pass out the exams but also to become a good Muslim.
- Link it to Allah and His messenger, if you feel yourselves is different in anything²¹.

Responsibilities of education in the light of Islam

Education is the responsibilities of the teachers, in the light of Islam. She/he should be a role model for the students. Sheikh Al Abbasi stated that,

“The Islamic education focused on Tarbiyah which is more than just teaching some concept of Islam”.

According to Sheikh Al Abbasi, the story of our lovely Prophet must be told to the youths for their personality development. Islamic education focused that after telling the story of the holy prophet (PBUH), teach the students different skills which support them to earn their livelihood.

Sura Al Ahzab, explains that

﴿ لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ ﴾

“Rasool of Allah is the best example of Ikhlāq”²².

Aim of Education in Islam

Islam emphasized on the following aims of education:

- To produce the good man through education²³.
- To provide the training for the spirit and intellect of the Man for his overall growth²⁴.
- To accept that Allah is the creator of all universe and all things and all communities, humanity and individuals are created and supervised by the Allah²⁵.
- To transfer the knowledge about the eternal life²⁶.
- To shape the nature and the character of the man in a way that he become the example of Islamic values²⁷.
- To arm the individuals with knowledge and positive skills²⁸.

Challenges Faced by Teachers in Providing Islamic Education

International Creative Associate (2006) enlightens the challenges which may hinder the quality of Islamic education²⁹.

General Education should be given Importance

Students in the schools are involved in teaching of languages, mathematics, science education, Islamiat and social studies in Muslim countries. So teachers have no or little time to train the students in the light of Islam

Outdated Teaching Pedagogies

Use of interactive pedagogies for the teaching of Islamic education create long lasting results. But in our school systems the teachers are burdened with many school activities including teaching so it is a great challenge for the teachers to train the students according to the Islamic perspectives.

Islamic World and Terrorism

Terrorist activities are going up high in the Islamic world. So it is a great challenge for both students and teachers to pay their full attention to the teaching-learning process. So it hinders the Quality of Islamic education.

Muslim Education and Confusions

The non - Muslim countries developed a misconception about the Islamic education, they think that Islamic education preparing the Mujahid, who are the terrorist. To attain the attentions of the non-Muslim developed countries, the underdeveloped Islamic countries are shifting the Islamic education towards non Islamic concepts.

Research Methodology

The selected research design for this study was quantitative.

Research Instruments

A 5 point Likert scale survey was developed by the researcher herself. The items emphasized on exploring the challenges and reasons behind these challenges.

Sample

The teachers who were teaching the subject of Islamiyat at public sector schools were selected through simple random sampling procedure. 70 males and 70 females were the sample of this study. (N#140)

Results

Inferential, one way ANOVA and descriptive, percentages/frequencies tests were applied to analyze the collected quantitative data.

Table 1. Demographics about gender

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Male	70	50.0
	female	70	50.0
	Total	140	100.0

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Table 2. Academic Qualification of the sample

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	BA	27	19.2
	BSC	5	3.5
	MA	77	55
	MSC	27	19.2
	MPhil	4	2.8
	Total	140	100.0

Table 3. Sample' Experience

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	1-5	50	35.7
	6-10	44	31.5
	11-15	46	32.8
	Total	140	100.0

Independent sample t-test was applied to check the respondent's views about the curriculum of Islamiat, teaching pedagogies to teach the Islamiat and strategies to improve the quality of Islamic Education

Table 4. Differences in the views of Females and Males

Test Value = 0						
	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Interval Difference	Confidence of the
Gender	38	139	.000	1.50000	1.4217	1.5783

Females and males perceives the quality of Islamic education in different way, t (139), 38, p > .05

One way ANOVA was applied to check the respondent's views about the curriculum of Islamiat, teaching pedagogies to teach the Islamiat and strategies to improve the quality of Islamic Education.

Table 6. Difference in the views of sample having different academic qualification

		Sum of	Mean			
		Squares	df	Square	F	Sig.
Curriculum	Between Groups	15.978	4	3.995	1.9	.11
	Within Groups	325.997	135	2.103		
	Total	341.975	139			
Teaching competencies	Between Groups	7.203	4	1.801	1.9	.11
	Within Groups	149.572	135	.965		
	Total	156.775	139			
Strategies to improve	Between Groups	3.254	4	.813	.66	.62
	Within Groups	192.440	135	1.242		
	Total	195.694	139			

There was no difference in the respondent's views about the curriculum of Islamiat, [F (4, 135) = 1.9, p = .11, teaching pedagogies to teach the Islamiat [F (4, 135) = 1.9, p = .11 and strategies to improve the quality of Islamic Education [F (4, 135) = .66, p = .62.

One way ANOVA was applied to check the respondent's views about the curriculum of Islamiat, teaching pedagogies to teach the Islamiat and strategies to improve the quality of Islamic Education

Table 8. Difference in the views of sample having different experience

		Sum of	Mean			
		Squares	df	Square	F	Sig.
Curriculum	Between Groups	1	2	.952	.43	.65
	Within Groups	340	137	2.166		
	Total	341	139			

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Teaching competencies	Between Groups	4	2	2.053	2.1	.13
	Within Groups	152	137	.972		
	Total	156	139			
Strategies to improve	Between Groups	4	2	2.172	1.8	.17
	Within Groups	191	137	1.219		
	Total	195	139			

There was no difference in the respondent's views about the curriculum of Islamiyat, [F (2, 137) = .43, p = .65, teaching pedagogies to teach the Islamiyat [F (2, 137) = 2.1, p = .13 and strategies to improve the quality of Islamic Education [F (2, 137) = 1.8, p = .17.

Discussion

The main challenges and their effects on students were highlighted by the teachers as:

Students do not attend the school regularly and due to short attendance of the students, teachers cannot give a good result of their class. Short attendance also affects performance of the students in the examination. As students do not visit the school regularly it also affects their personality development. Students attitude towards schools show irresponsible attitude of the students, so they cannot their selves as a good Muslim

The sudden emergency law and order situation affected the educational system on large scale. This affects the completion of the syllabus, teachers felt a great difficulty in completing the syllabus. And in turn it affects the total development of the students, because many topics are teach in hurry, ignore the absorption of the teaching material. So the content which was taught just for completing the content, affects the quality of Islamic education.

Student disinterest also a big challenge for the teachers, such students domnot complete their homework/assignments on time, so they cannot score high marks in examination and also they cannot show the disciplined personality, which is the important quality of Islam.

Teachers' lack of knowledge about the teaching pedagogy is a challenge. Untrained teachers cannot deliver a lecture in effective way so they are unable to play a part in the character building of the students. Character building (Tarbiyah) is mainly depend on the

teachers. As schools are considered as training centers, students learn more in schools as compared to their homes.

The discrimination on the basis of gender is also creates challenge and slowdown the process of improving quality of Islamic education.

Conclusion

It is concluded from the results of the study that government should pay attention to improve the quality of Islamic education. As Pakistan was came into being to live according to the ideology of Islam. The main objective of Pakistan is to preserve the ideology of Islam and education is the main source of preserving ideologies. Thus it is the duty of the government to improve the quality of Islamic education.

Recommendations

The results of this research study show that quality of Islamic education at elementary level is not satisfactory. In the light of the results of the study following proposal is suggested to improve the quality of Islamic Education.

- To aware the parents about the worth of Islamiat teaching and training (Tarbiyah) at homes, parent – teacher meeting should be organized. Because quality of Islamic education depends upon the mutual contribution of both parents and teachers. Awareness should emphasized on the following:
 - Parents should also be guided for completing the home task of the children.
 - Guidance should be about the Islamic home environment.
 - Parents should be told about the importance of regular attendance of the children.
 - Told the parents that their children is a building block of Islamic nation etc.
- Islamic education is the integral part of the Pakistani Education, or any Muslim country. The above mentioned challenges highlighted that there is greater need that federal and provincial government pay attention to solve these issues so that quality of Islamic education can be improved.
- Quality of Islamic education cannot be improve by the teaching of Islamiat only, but also each subject knowledge should be relate with the Islam. This will create an environment which is enriched by the Islamic concepts in various

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discipline of life. Islamic environment will support the children in quick acquiring of Islamic attitude.

- For Improving the quality of Islamic education training programs should be conducted general for all teachers and especially for Islamiat teachers. Training should be focused on the following:
 - Teaching pedagogies suitable for teaching Islamiat.
 - Methods for attracting the students towards Islamic environment.
 - Techniques of counselling of parents.
 - Procedures for creating Islamic environment at schools and homes
 - Techniques to relate the different concepts with Islam etc.
- Monitoring team should be organized by the provincial government to monitor the school environment and classroom practices.
- Proper funding should be provided to the institutes for organizing and managing Islamic environment in the educational institutions
- Highly Qualified Islamiat teachers should be appointed for the teaching of Islamiat.
- Islamiat teachers must be the part of curriculum development in all disciplines of education and all levels of education.
- The syllabus of Islamiat must be updated and related with the growing knowledge.
- Teachers should be a role model for the students. Because Islamic qualities cannot be only teach but they are acquired through the observations and imitations of the elders.
- The following teaching pedagogies may be suitable for the teaching of Islamiat:
 - Story telling methods
 - Demonstration method
 - Role play method
 - Discussions with students to remove their misconceptions
- To improve the quality of Islamic education, infrastructure also play an important role. If students feel happy and facilitating infrastructure, they can focus on their studies actively. So infrastructure must be enrich physically.

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