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**AN ISLAMIC IMPERATIVES FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL  
CURRICULUM: A NEED ANALYSIS FOR INTEGRATION**

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**ABSTRACT**

*It is an ultimate reality that the emergence of globalization and future challenges of this competitive world provokes the Think-Tankers to lay the foundations of education on its actual axis (i.e. Qur'an). Human history has proved that prosperity of Human being was the prime goal of Islamic System of Education. This evaluation research study is an extended research work of my Ph.D thesis aims to analyze the need of integrated curriculum for Islamic Elementary School System in the light of Islamic imperatives scientifically. Proportional Stratified Sampling provides the data, collected through ten (10) Open-cum-Close-Ended Questionnaires. The conclusion was drawn by Quantitative and Qualitative assessment which revealed that Integrated Curriculum fulfills the need of Islamic Elementary School System.*

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**Keywords:** Islamic Imperatives, Elementary School Curriculum, Integration, Need Analyses

**INTRODUCTION**

It is a crux of matter that after the advancement in all inventions and innovations of this technological era, every developed, developing and under developed country is presenting a gloomy picture of social values. They are stuck in the economic perplexity which is moving towards social turmoil and disorganization. The increased rate of crime reflects the loopholes of their Education System. Because the present education system seems to lay its foundation on Darwinism which suggests that humans should possess control over all human needs. Contrarily, peace, harmony, contentment, and prosperity

possess secondary importance which originated the famous notion of “Survival of the Fittest” where the dominant species diminishes the weak one and the weakest one becomes extinct. The same theory is applicable to the ruthless historians Halako Khan, Changez Khan, and Hitler. On the contrary, Islam emphasizes on the preservation and implementation of Devin human values by QURAN which provide us a clear vision: “wealth and sons are allurements of the life of this world, but the things that endure, good deeds are best in the insight of thy Lord” (18:46). Because, the Lord of the universe knows the best.” (96:1-8). The first and the foremost instruction of Allah is Proclaim: in the name of the Architect of this universe, who brought you into existence from a mass of coagulated blood; Proclaim: and your Lord is the most magnificent. He taught you the use of pen and revealed what mankind did not know. Your Lord is sufficient and all of you shall return to Him. (96:1-8) The ultimate teaching of Allah is to provide the sustainable status to human beings as: “We (Allah) have indeed created man to its superior form and the one who performs good deeds shall enjoy privileges in this world. (Quran, 105:4,16:30). So, His apostle Hazrat Muhammad Salal-La-HoAl-e-HeWasalam ordered us: “Acquisition of knowledge is compulsory for all Muslim males and females”.

#### LITERATURE REVIEW

The main source of Islam is Qur'an. It provides complete guideline to human beings in every respect as confessed by Qazi (2002) that “Qur'an Contained guidance for the believers, pertained to different aspects such as the doctrinal principles, behavioral practices and developmental initiatives”. He further said that “It also provides information on certain human experiences through the ages and some historical events relevant to the educational needs of the young people”(Qazi et.al.,2002). Quran proclaims that Allah has revealed upon you a scared book to bring you to light and set you free from the shackles of darkness” (Quran,14:1-2).

Darkness connotes not only unawareness of the nature and place of one's destination, but also unawareness of the correct path that leads towards that destination. Therefore, Qur'anic instruction is pragmatic: their natures of guiding and directing force for human world remain in consonance with the nature of the physical universe. During the chequered history of mankind, Qur'anic message is free from wishful

thinking and all kinds of fantasy. It relates directly to the practical approach in terms of unity of doing and saying exposed through character development. (The high quality values education contributes to holistic educational development including academic advancement of students across all school sector) (Terence Lovat, Neville Clement, Kerry Dally & Ronald Toommey, 2010).

Indeed Islam has an effective Education System (The contributions of Muslim Scholars are witnessed of this), where Qur'an is its curriculum, Shari'a is pedagogy, and life hereafter is evaluation process. The Islamic curriculum (Quran) is radical, and integrated in its nature which leads the students towards active learning experiences and pervasive social problems, i.e. deterioration of Human status in societies. Because, curriculum is a "planned and guided learning experience and intended out comes: formulated through systematic reconstruction of knowledge and experience under the auspices of the school for the learners continuous and willful growth in personal social competence".

Thus, the reconceptualization, formulation, implementation, and evaluation of the curriculum for Islamic school system is a call of time. No doubt, it is a hard nut to crack but the teachings of Qur'an surely guide us as Allah Claimed: "The divine code has been revealed from Allah, Who Wields absolute command and authority and has Knowledge of everything. It guides those who adopt this code, to the way they can remain safe from adverse effects of any lapse that may occur at their hands. If they take wrong turn at a cross roads and come back after realizing their mistake, the Code provides the opportunity to reprieve. However, on those who deliberately commit aggression His grip is very rigorous. His Law of consequences encompasses everything and thus its grip is very rigorous. No one except Him holds any authority or power in universe" (40:1-3).

#### **STATEMENT OF THE TOPIC**

Elementary school curriculum has appeared to be one of the prominent programs of 21<sup>st</sup> century. In this highly combative era, there has come a subtle requirement for the revitalization and reconsideration of Elementary school curriculum for the Islamic System of Education. So, the title of this research study is: “An Islamic Imperatives for Elementary School Curriculum: A Need Analysis for Integration” provides the ways & means to address all the challenges of new era.

#### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

Following objectives were determined for the purpose of research study:

- To, highlight the need of integrated curriculum for Islamic School System at elementary level.
- To analyze the integrated curriculum for Islamic Elementary School, in the light of Islamic imperatives.
- To evaluate the basis of Islamic imperatives of Integrated Curriculum for Islamic Elementary School System.
- To suggest the measures for the development of Islamic elementary school curriculum.

#### **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The progress of students cannot be fully defined without bringing their curriculum efficiency into account. Regardless of whether the fundamental agenda of education is to transfer the ethical values of a specific society for the sake of individual development; to enable students to contribute effectively towards the society. The Islamic education system itself implies dealing, both Formal & Informal Education Systems, with specific areas of Information, Knowledge, Feelings, Values and Skills or technically to “Curriculum”. So, this study provides the solutions of problems, related to selecting such content (within predetermined aims and objectives of Curriculum) limits to organizing them in a way, which facilitates their meaningful treatment within the framework of the Education System in general, and in Islamic school programs in particular as:

**Learners’ Development:** By identifying the needs of the students, judging the students’ academic targets, and evaluating the wholesome personality development under the parameters of Islam.

**Teaching Methodologies:** By deciding what instructional materials and methods are efficient for a Muslim pedagogue having a clear vision of wholesome personality development at elementary level.

**Administration:** By judging, the Islamic criteria for the evaluation of Islamic school system and the feasibility of the goals related to Integrated Curriculum for Islamic Elementary School System.

**Society:** By evaluating the role played by supporting agents of society (i.e. Parents, Commissioner, Mass Media, and Educators), and making them aware to play their due role for the establishment of an effective Islamic education system.

#### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The nature of this study is Applied followed by Evaluation Research (as a type of research). So, Mixed Method Approach was used for the assessment of collected data. The Province of Sindh was the population of this study. Proportional Stratified Sampling was used to select the sample size. Ten (10) Open-cum-Close Ended Questionnaires were developed as tools of research; the results of the study were drawn by Descriptive Statistics.

#### RESULTS & DISCUSSIONS

The quantitative data collected through ten questionnaires developed for ten strata i.e. Elementary school teachers, parents of elementary school learners, Headmaster/mistress of elementary school, Head Teachers of Elementary schools, Taluka Education Officers of Elementary Schools, District Education Officer for Elementary School, Educators, Journalists, TV analysis & Commissioners. The responses of the strata was tabulated in percentile frequencies as mentioned in table below:

**TABLE - 1**  
**SHOWING THE QUANTITATIVE ASSESSMENT OF NEED ANALYSIS**  
**FOR THE INTEGRATION OF CURRICULUM FOR ISLAMIC**  
**ELEMENTARY SCHOOL SYSTEM**

S. No	Respondents		Responses on Need For Integration in %		Responses on Wholistic Development in %		Responses on Islamic Imperatives in %	
	Strata	Nos.	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO
1	Teachers	200	83	17	88	12	84	16
2	Parents	400	80	20	91	09	88	12

3	H Ms	100	81	19	86	14	87	13
4	Head Teachers	10	80	20	80	20	90	10
5	T. E. Os	10	90	10	90	10	80	20
6	D E Os	05	80	20	80	20	80	20
7	Educators	55	80	20	80	20	60	20
8	Journalists	10	60	40	70	30	70	30
9	T.V. Analysts	05	80	20	80	20	80	20
10	Commissioners	05	60	40	60	40	40	60
Cumulative Mean		800	77.4	22.6	80.5	19.5	75.9	24.1

**N = 800**

The cumulative mean of data reflects that 77.4% of the respondents have an opinion that there is acute need for the integration of curriculum at elementary schools in Sindh. While 85.5% of the respondents suggest that at Elementary level, focus should be given to the holistic development of learners rather than subject wise cognitive development. The 75.9% of the respondents emphasize that Islamic Imperatives are a prerequisite for Elementary School curriculum which fulfill all sided development of the learner. The summary of the data in aforementioned table reveals that more than 77% of the respondents have an agreement on the need of integrated curriculum from classes I to IIIV because it develops the intellectual, mental, physical, emotional and social abilities in a child to face the demands and challenges of upcoming life (Dipankar Surkar, 2020). The First one says that: "Integrated curriculum saves the teachers' time by the integration of General Science, Social Studies and Islamiyat in Mother Tongue. In this way, teacher and students have great opportunity to convert the theoretical (bookish) knowledge into empirical (practical) knowledge which leads towards holistic development of elementary school students". Because integrated learning is not only a shift from isolated disciplines to the integration of different subjects together, but also, a concept of 'bringing together in to a whole', which fosters the way for the discrepancies to be addressed through a longitudinal evaluation which is challenging but at the same time relevant and interesting to learners' and society's needs. More than half of the teachers showed positive inclination towards the need for integration of curriculum in Islamic education system. In this regard, one of the teachers quoted: Introducing students to integrated curriculum helps cultivate relative learning. It not only makes the process of teaching easier, but also helps ease the learning process for students. However, a few teachers seemed to negate the concept of integrated curriculum. Concerning this, one specific argument presented by one of the teachers was that: At elementary level, familiarizing students with integrated curriculum might lead to learning complexities among students as they cannot differentiate in between different subjects at such basic level. Other barriers include teachers' own knowledge of the subject matter and their traditional instructional methods of pedagogy. One of the teachers added: Both pure and integrated subjects deserve a place in the school's curricula. However, there are contexts where a single

discipline is adequate to explore a concept or solve a particular problem. There are, nonetheless, instances, where there is a dire need to borrow concepts and seek help through the integration of other subject for holistic development and complete understanding of the complexity of a problem. This is true for real-life problems that require an interdisciplinary approach for the problem solving. Therefore, conclusively, it is safe to say that the idea of crossing traditional subject boundaries is not out-dated, but progressive. It should be inculcated among learners at an Elementary level of education.

#### **QUALITATIVE ASSESSMENT**

When they were asked to justify their opinion (through qualitative portion of the questionnaire) their justifications were assessed into two categories: One for those who had positive responses and the other one was for negative respondents:

The verbatim also represents how parents showed inclination in favor of holistic development of students at elementary level of education. In this regard, most of the parents cited that, introducing students to a bit of every subject such as General science, Social studies and Islamiyat in the form of integrated curriculum might lead students to become more aware of their circumstances as an integrated curriculum connects different disciplines by bringing together different subject matters while focusing on a uniform concept. Such curriculum allows the learners to exercise meaningful activities that might connect them to real life learning experiences outside the classroom. On the contrary, a very few percentage of parents did not seem to favor holistic development of the students with regard to the integration of curriculum at elementary level of education because of a general perception that integrated studies are for less capable students i.e. the more capable students are advised to learn Chemistry, Physics, and Biology instead of combined science. They are also advised to take History, Geography, and Economics in isolation instead of opting for Social studies. However, there is no scientific justification for such attitude towards integrated learning. Consequently, most of the parents seemed to consider the objective of integrated curriculum and holistic approach useful also because they suggested that the root cause of all social evils and miseries is the lack of fundamental education, or in other cases, the loop holes in the present day education system.



The data received through the verbal account of respondents also supported the gist of the thesis which claims: Humans cannot survive only on food, water, air, and sex as suggested by Darwin. Humans are in dire need of social prosperity and peace which could only be maintained by virtue of planned and guided learning experience gained through the integration of curriculum at elementary level of education for students. The cumulative mean of the data also opens the view that teachers and educators, (who are the fundamental agents for introducing changes to curriculum) were more suggestive of the integration of curriculum at elementary level than their fellow respondents which included Head master/mistress, Commissioners, TV analysts and journalists, because teachers and educators seem to be more aware of the importance of curriculum in the domains of teaching and learning.

The data also suggests that less than half of the commissioners valued the concept that integrated curriculum fulfills the need of Islamic elementary school system. Another justification for this unfavorable situation is that the commissioners are not enough acquainted with the crux of this matter. The verbal account of the respondents who invalidated the importance of the integrated curriculum argued that: in Pakistan, where education system is already at the verge of downfall, where there is very few professional development, workshops, and in-service training to educate staff to ensure proficiency, where elementary teachers hardly receive training before entering schools and colleges, where there are Government teachers with fake degrees, who are rarely qualified to teach basic courses, where there are teachers, who themselves struggle with language skills, where most of the teachers have specialized skills in one domain specifically and they are not multidisciplinary, sometimes, makes it difficult to put such curriculum in to practice and familiarizing students with such integrated curriculum becomes not less than a challenge. It is more like a “trial and error” process. Majority of the elementary school teachers is not even competent to put such critical curriculum in perspective.

In this context, based on teachers' concerns about teaching integrated curriculum, one of the teachers suggested that "there is more than one factor which influences teacher's implementation of integrated teaching approach in the classroom which includes teacher's

own perception about IC, which could be both positive or negative. In the second place, teacher's own skills/competence on integrated curriculum tends to determine the overall effectiveness of integrated approach of curriculum and pedagogy." For example, integrated curriculum does not only focus on fundamental skills but also inculcates higher level thinking among students. Besides, it makes active participation of students possible in real life experiences by integrating various curricular disciplines such as General Science, Maths and Language. A great example of this approach is Art. In an Arts class, students become acquainted with Maths and Science while singing, sculpting, painting, and dancing. However, multiple other factors such as students' perception, students' favorable attitude towards integrated approach, availability of time, management of students in big classrooms also need to be brought in to consideration in order to determine the effectiveness of integration of curriculum at Elementary level of education. On one hand, where teachers' heavy workload is a big barrier in implementing integrated curriculum, on the other, it is the lack of improvement on the part of teachers' pedagogical practices. It is not only difficult to integrate different disciplines such as English, Geography, Science, and Maths, but also, challenging in terms of planning more creative lessons that meet the demands of integrated curriculum at such basic level. Besides, Integrated curriculum can also be viewed as a new movement or renaissance of the elementary level of education, this is how, elementary education can undergo dramatic and far-reaching changes in recent decades. If elementary education, in past few decades can flourish without a very few teacher training programs or certification, then it can for sure, move to the sublime where many might see it as the precursor of things to come in all education which is only possible through the integration of curriculum at elementary level.

Respondents, who negated the statements, justified their opinion as: "Majority of the Elementary School Teachers is not competent to teach this complicated curriculum. So, they will treat it as subject-based curriculum. The overcrowded classes will not allow the teacher to pay special attention on holistic development of students. The change is demanding specially for those teachers who are only specialized in teaching one or two subjects and now they are expected to create integrated learning environment for students as well which is

not less than a challenge for Elementary school teachers". However, this gives rise to a question of how teacher education should be developed to meet the requirements and demands of integrated curriculum at elementary school level. Conversely, most of the teachers who reported their frequency for implementation of integrated curriculum were positive that they use integrated curriculum approach in the classroom on regular basis. A very few population of teachers who had no experience with integrated curriculum, occasionally or never used it in their classroom teaching.

The study reveals that, though, the teachers and educators are more supportive of the holistic development of students than their fellow respondents and firmly believe in the integration of curriculum at elementary level, their agreement level differs due to their knowledge, skill, attitude, and competence on Integrated curriculum. On one hand, where the demand from teachers is so high, on the other, the teachers believe that this job is the most relaxing one, the difference in opinion is the core problem in the implementation of an integrated curriculum.

#### **NEED ANALYSES**

The mix methods approach reveals that deep rooted Islamic imperatives of integrated curriculum are a call of time. Qur'an provides these imperatives in terms of pray asked by Hazrat Ibrahim: "Our Lord! Sent amongst them a messenger of their own, who shall rehearse Thy Signs to them and instruct them in scripture and wisdom, and sanctify them (2:129). It means Islamic imperatives emphasize over:

- i) Rehearsing of signs: This concrete world is replete with signs which include all the physical entities such as humans, animals and their physiological process mountains, forests, phenomena of reflection/rarefaction and all the animate objects that we experience through our senses in the physical world and through instructional material in the classroom, contribute towards learning experience which comes by means of the instructions of a Holy Quran.
- ii) Instruction of book: The instructions inherited from Holy Quran aware students of the Dos and don'ts, customs and traditions, values of virtue and sin, forces of good and evil concerning human survival, but also encourage them to take great pride and delight in choosing, exercising, and incorporating right values in their lives. Therefore, Holy Quran is termed as the complete code of life.

- iii) Development of wisdom: Student carrying such a holistic view of education while at the same time, implementing it in his own life, contributes towards the betterment of society by not only doing the right thing but also enjoy doing it.

Sanctification (i.e., Growth, Development, Nourishment to Synchronize with Permanent Values enshrined in Qur'an): After being exposed to such integrated approach of curriculum and holistic view of world knowledge, a person fully purified with a firm value system. Rehearsing sings and practicing the instructions from the Holy Quran eventually leads to the sanctification and personal, professional, and social growth of an individual. Where rehearsing of sings motivate the students towards instruction. Instructions develop not only wisdom in students but also produce Sanctity. As a whole, Islamic disciplines not only persuade students to do the right things, but also to make right choices for others; not only to know, but also to put that knowledge into practice, not to be good for the sake of rewards, but to be good for the sake of survival of humanity. At the foundational stage of Islamic education, there is no evidence of a 'separate component' of curriculum for realizing any particular educational objective. From the very beginning, and throughout the first developmental period up to the 16<sup>th</sup> century of Hijra, instructional objectives and curriculum remained 'a unified whole', aiming at the 'holistic' education of the student in learning knowledge, in belief and observation of faith, in conduct and behavior, in cleanliness and polite manners. To use modern terminology, it was an 'Integrated Three-Dimensional Approach' at instructing and guiding the students. This process of imparting knowledge develops the responsible conduct and enables the students to achieve the best and the most according to Islamic potentialities. The foremost concern according to Baloch (2000:42), was to educate the child to become true muslim soulfully with the best of human traits and conduct. Because holistic education enable the child to tackle any of life's uncertainties (Wasuki Mathivanan, 2017).

## CONCLUSION

Integrated Curriculum for Islamic Elementary School System is fundamental to develop the students' language skill, social acquaintance skill, scientific skill, Islamic orientations, Creative talents, social adoptability and attitude towards Islamic values. The

integrated learning develops the cognitive flexibility among the students which leads them towards holistic development.

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

The ongoing study proposed the following recommendations:

- There is an acute need to reexamine the outcomes of elementary education. The core ambition of education should underpin the integrated and unified vision to resolve human problems. In other words, survival of the humanity should be the slogan of Islamic education system.
- Islamic Elementary School Curriculum should meet the challenges of: rapid growth of population, effectiveness of elementary education, explosion of knowledge and globalization.
- Teaching methods should involve prominent participation of students where the interrelationship of cause and impact should result in effective learning instead of rote learning.
- A teacher's guide covering the motives and missions of integrated curriculum for Islamic Education System should be composed; and which should further involve efficient teaching methods and operative evaluation techniques to meet the learning outcomes.
- For Islamic Elementary Schools, textbooks should be developed by the integration of Social Sciences. Pure Science and Language. Because such integration is necessary for creating correspondence and supporting the vision which might be of help to detect the teaching and learning barriers.
- Productive discussions on basic human values – welfare, justice, humanity, brotherhood, sympathy, goodness, and responsibility should be established among students by means of short stories, which may cultivate the sense of rightfulness in students according to the Islamic imperatives.
- The distribution of marks should be on Cognitive assessment and Personality Development partially. 40% marks will assess the wholesome personality components such as social adaptability, creative talents and attitude towards Islamic (permanent) Values. In this manner, both parents and students can contribute towards enhancing the impact factor of students.
- Co-curricular activities must be made an immediate component of Islamic Elementary School for the inculcation of Islamic Values. A

legal notification and programmed evaluation be established so that students' personality assessment may be verified.

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