



MODERNIZATION OF QURANIC SCHOOLS IN ILORIN EMIRATE, KWARA STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This paper investigated some of the methodologies employed in teaching in Quranic schools in Ilorin metropolis, Kwara State, Nigeria. The study revealed that improper implementation and inadequate orientation on the modernization of Qur'ānic schools are causes of negligence of some Islāmic moral teachings in our various levels of education in Ilorin Kwara State, Nigeria. However, this research work seems to be very fit to provide Arabic and Islāmic education to meet the challenges of present or modern time. This could be seen in the system of opening the school, lack of curriculum contents, syllabus are common factors among the proprietors of the medieval teachers in the teachings of Qur'an in some of the Centers in Ilorin Emirate Kwara State. In order to improve the teaching and learning of the Qur'ānic education centres, some recommendations are offered for the effective teaching and learning of Qur'ānic education. These include making use of game in teaching and learning in Qur'anic schools. It is our belief that if these recommendations could be taken into consideration; there would be great improvement in the teaching and learning of Qur'ānic education in Nigeria. Thus, it is concluded that Modern Qur'ānic Schools in Ilorin Kwara State has a great effect in the emirates.

Keywords: *Alfa, Modernization, Quranic Schools, and Ile-Kewu.*

Introduction

Quranic Education in Nigeria has evolved several dimensions which are of paramount importance to the concept of Islāmic Education. Islāmic education began with the introduction of Islām as a religion in about fifteen centuries ago when Prophet Muhammad (SAW) received message from the Almighty Allāh at the cave Hirah as it is contained in the Qur'ān and expressed by (Shehu 1992, 56)

أَفْرَأُ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ (1) خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ
مِنْ عَلَقٍ (2) أَفْرَأُ وَرَبُّكَ الْأَكْرَمُ (3) الَّذِي
عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ (4) عَلَّمَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ

1. Proclaim! (or read!) In the name of Thy Lord and Cherisher, who created-
2. Created man, out of a (mere) clot of congealed Blood:
3. Proclaim! and Thy Lord is Most Bountiful, -
4. He who taught (the use of) the pen, -
5. Taught man that which He knew not.

(Q:96 1-5)

Following the receipt of the first message from Allāh, documentation and teaching of the message especially to those who were closely related to the Prophet (SAW) started. With the attendant teaching, and learning of the Qur'ān, there emerged several methods of disseminating infor-

mation and the text received by Prophet Muhammad. In addition, the wide spread of Islāmic Education paved way for various ways of learning the practice of the new faith especially in 572 when the message was first received by prophet Muhammad (SAW), (Fafunwa,19). For instance, learning was the first process of education the early followers of the religion (i.e Islām) as the Prophet himself was said to have been unlettered (*Al-Hummiyu*) (Lemu, 34). So the art of writing was not immediately introduced at the inception of Qur'ānic education in Islām. The art of the teachings and learning Qur'ān evolved another dimension especially (the immediate followers of the prophet when the recording of Qur'ān was said to have been done following the demise of those who learnt Qur'ān by heart. (Lemu,43). In the battle (i.e religions battles) although, during the period of the prophet, the slates of animals bones were said to have been used for recording of Qur'ān. The importance of Prophet documentation and the attendant problem inherent in getting the message of Islām straight. There was thought for proper as said and practiced by prophet Muhammad (SAW) Hence, the teaching and learning of Qur'ānic education become an area of interest especially to the Islāmic scholars. (Shehu,56)



Qur'ānic education, like any other types of education, has various processes of acquisition which actually bring about the knowledge of such processes. For instance, when and how best to teach a child as prophet has said in one of his traditions that children should be enforced to observe their prayers at the age of seven which consequently indicates at teaching and learning should begin at the tender age.

To this end, it is imperative to note that formal Quranic teaching and learning as an area focused on mode of instruction as we have in western education could be a bit classified into formal and semi-formal (i.e those who make use of formal characteristic as obtained in the western system and those that do not involve those formal features in its totality). Suffice it to say that Qur'ānic education evolved two stages of developments i.e the traditional stage and the modern or western stage of development. (Adam, 35) Therefore, modernization of Qur'ānic schools in Ilorin is anchored on the mode of instruction of the predecessors Quranic proprietors laid down in the available Qur'ānic schools in the area.

Brief History of early Quranic Schools in Ilorin Metropolis

Ilorin as it is usually called is a town of Mallams and citadel of Islāmic knowledge. According to (Jimoh, 67), Ilorin was reconstituted into an Emirate by Oba Abdulsalam and incooperated into the Sokoto caliphate in 1828. There is no doubt that the town went on a serious strategies of development.

However, despite its divergent opinions and several ethnic groups. It has been noted for her Islāmic prowess, specifically the migration that comes from the northern part of Nigeria. To this end, (Fafunwa, 88) revealed that Islām spread with the rudimentary knowledge of Hadith/Quranic and Shari'ah with migration of *Jihadists* to Ilorin. Consequently, Islāmic education came as a result of the migrants into the town.

The development of Quranic education in Ilorin metropolis began as far back as 19th century which according to Oke-Suna Muslim community and according to (Al-Ilory 19) was exclusively a centre for Islāmic education.

Similarly, it was documented that, before the arrival of Shehu Alimi, there had been Islāmic

scholars in Ilorin for instance (Jimoh, 87), further explained that Kanuri migrants were the earliest Islāmic scholars who settled in Ilorin. Their leader was called Abdullahi Tahir (Solagberu) a Beriberi migrant.

After the arrival of Solagberu, it was then the arrival of Shehu Alimi into Ilorin. (Al-Ilory, 7), explained that Shehu Alimi was an intellectual scholar who was well versed in many fields of Arabic and Islāmic Studies which attracted all other scholars and appointed him as their leaders. He did a lot of contributions in the teaching and learning of Qur'ān in the Ilorin town. Other Fulani scholars from Mali and Sudan actually joined hands with Shehu to give Quranic Education a boost in Ilorin and its environs. Quranic schools in Ilorin was established by Muslim traders who according to (Adam, 32), are referred to as "Mallams" who were always assisted by the brilliant pupils, the school is always organized in a veranda of a building or under a big tree (Gimba, 67). The Mallam is responsible for collecting and enrolling pupils into school between three to four years.

According to (Jimoh, 65), Islāmic scholars were mainly from Kanuris, Fulanis and Sudanese who established advanced Islāmic schools in the town. Among these were; Abubakar Bube, Shaykh Muhammad Al-Tākuti. These men were said to have been responsible for raising of many reputable Islāmic students like Shaykh Busari and Shaykh Musa Atere who also established schools for advanced Islāmic Studies. Shaykh Ahmad Belgore, Ahmad bn. Abubakar Omo-Ikokoro and others according to (Jimoh, 67) were products of early learned men in Ilorin.

Learning System in the early Quranic Schools

The instruction in the school under the early scholars could be characterized by informal. The teachers do not actually charge any money for the services they render to Muslim children. The teacher survived mainly by writing Qur'ān, *Dalailu Khairāt* and *Sadaqah* (alms). Consequently, the learning was not well organized and the teaching attracted many pupils to be taught under the tree or Veranda. According to (Adam, 43), learning at that time was based on rote, pupils in the early stage of studies were introduced to sample and shorter passage of the holy Quran. Besides, teacher used the sing-song pattern which aided



memorization of the first two parts of the holy Quranic. (Fafunwa, 87), observed that teacher recites to his pupils the verse to be learnt and they repeat it after him. According to him, the teachers do this several to ascertain that the pupils master the correct pronunciation.

Graduation in the Early Quranic Schools

Although, there was no definite period of graduation for pupils in the early Islāmic School, it is conceived that they would go as soon as they finished the recitation of the sixty parts of the holy Qur'ān. The teacher would have fixed a day for *Walimah* ceremony in the school premises. (Muhammad 87), holds that completion of 114 chapter is marked by a “*Wolimat*”, although, this is not usually done immediately after the termination of the reading but during the Marriage ceremony in which a cow is killed by the grandaunds who take a part of the, animal and some money which is determined by a teacher.

The graduation ceremony is done under a colourful atmosphere with Mallams sitting and reciting *Suratul Fatha* and verses 1-5 of *Suratul Baqorah* are read to the granduand while he reads after. Muhammad (67) further explained that ceremony is usually done during the marriage period in the public. Similarly, (Adam, 45) has it that the graduation period is a notable period that a student travels to a far and wide town relating the excerpt of *Suratul Baqorah* in a designed slate. The learning at this stage has a requisite or a stepping stone to further studies.

The Higher Education in the Early Quranic Schools

A further study is carried out by a learner on the basis of choice, though prophet has said searching for knowledge is incumbent on every Muslim: male and female. In respect of this, (Adam, 90) said "knowledge (i.e Islāmic knowledge) is important. Let everyone seek for knowledge, it guides in this life and the life after". Consequently, learning to translate is another stage of Quranic education where the learner would learn actual translation of Arabic text learnt at first stage which according to Ansarul Islaām society (Interviewed), such subjects as *Tafsir*, *Fiqh*, *Tawheed* are taught. The learners at this stage are exposed critical studies and there

is no definite time for graduation; the graduation is usually when he/she is able to establish his own school.

Besides, Studen neither write any examination at the termination of their studie nor do they have any certificate at the end. The learners in-addition do not regard their learning as a means of livelihood. (Adam, 54), regards this level of education as an advanced-class for the teaching and learning of Islāmic Science.

Academic Period in the Early Quranic Schools

The periods at which learning is carried out is divided into: the first term and the second term. According to (Adam,56), this period starts a week after Eld-Kabbir festival and ends in a week before Eid-El-Ftr and one week after Eid El-Ftr and ends 9weeks before Eid El-Kabir. But the daily period starts from Saturday and ends on Wednesday with each day opening three times viz viz, morning, afternoon and evening. With this division, learners are given opportunity to study at their own convenient time. The period is specially designed for learning other jobs or working although those who attend morning and afternoons do attend. (interviewed)

Modernization of Quranic Schools

The introduction of innovations in a Quranic School is traceable to the coming of Arabic language into Ilorin around 20th century. Though, there had been Mallams in the town before the arrival of the migrant for instance Taju El-Adabiy (R.A) has been a reputable scholar who taught many renowned scholars like Shaykh Kamaldeen and others. (Adamu, 32), has 'it that many Islāmic Schools lose enrolment because the schools then did not provide for job opportunity. Besides Ansarul Islaāmic society (1998), that introduce Quranic schools in the olden days was characterized by attaching a learner to his teacher consequent upon these were changes which were brought by Ansarul Islaām society of Nigeria (1998). For instance, Az-Zumuratul-Adabiyah was established to give a type of the formal school structure where students were taught Arabic and Islāmic Studies, with Arabic manuscripts as against the use of slate of the olden days.

Alanamu (2000, 78) observed that reformation was carried out in Islāmic schools to cater for the future of the young Muslim children who



would be leaders of tomorrow. As a result of this, formal teaching approaches were used in various Quranic schools in Ilorin and its environs.

Major Reformations in Modern Quranic Schools

According to (Alanamu, 72), Alhaji Abdullahi Bayero, the then Emir of Kano established a school for the training of judges (*Alkalis*) although 'this was later changed to school for Arabic and Islāmic Studied 1974'. This type school was eventually used and converted into some modern Quranic schools in Ilorin Metropolis. (Shehu, 87), believed that the school represent an advanced class for teaching and learning of Islāmic studies like jurisprudence, Arabic and other Islāmic Studies Books.

Ansarul Islām Society (1998), in her observation of nature of modernization in Islāmic education believed that formal classes system was used where children of similar age group and ability were brought together to study in the same building. This (Alanamu, 67) says "Teaching and learning of Islāmic education witnessed great and young Muslim in academic proliferation in Ilorin and its environs" because many young talented children emerged as scholars.

Similarly, use of syllabus was adopted to ensure uniformity in the teaching and learning. According to Lemu, 54), at institutes of Education Ahmadu Bello University (ABU), Zaria produced a syllabus. "in 1972" which (Alanamu, 69) called "on impetus" in the development of Islāmic education because the products of these schools were no longer liabilities to their parents. They can now work with their counterparts in western schools.

According to Ansarul Islām society (1998), graduates of Quranic schools were awarded certificates to enable them to work, as well as classifying them according to their educational achievement. For instance, Qur'ān, Hadith and *Fiqh* were for moral taught at the higher level to promote a good believer and worshiper. But nowadays, this curriculum has been diversified to cater for all round development of the completers. (Alanamu, 74), believed that this gives the learners opportunity and a wider range of career advantages after their education. To this end, sub-

jects like Islāmic law, Quranic exegesis, tradition of the prophet, Islāmic theology, Islāmic History, Geography, Literature, Rhetoric and Logic were dearly delineated for effective teaching and learning in modern Quranic Schools. (Fafunwa, 67) said "Muslim organizations established primary and post primary schools to cater for Muslim parents and their children with all round of education".

Similarly, there was the use of examination as means of evaluating student performances and approximate certificate and placement to give to such students. Ansarul Islām society (1998) observed that. "Period test and examinations were conducted" which (Rahim, 78) believed that it was a starting point of voyage of intellectual development where humanity was introduced to Islāmic education.

For instance, Ansarul Islām (1998), believes that modern Islāmic schools have spacious buildings with benches and desks, black board, chalk and printed text books to make learning and teaching easy and effective.

Although there are minor differences in schools that based their attendance on afternoon to evening and morning to afternoon or evening alone. The purpose was to ensure that education is well received by all and sundry. Although those that operate morning to afternoon are purely those that introduced Western culture into their learning system. Examples include Mahad El-Azhari, Daul-Uloom, Muhyideen College, Arabic college Omoiya College, and Ashraf Raodatul- Islāmiyyah Schools, all are in Ilorin to mention but few. (Interviewed)

Monetary wise, those Islāmiyyah schools operated as private entity and vary in their charges of fee and operation generally. Though, they operate according to Government dictates especially on the welfare of the society, the money paid by learners, ranges from N1,000 to N1,500 to cater for their learning expenses whereas in a government established Islāmiyyah schools, government subsidized education.

Besides, the use of uniform by government has modernised Islāmic school unlike the traditional or Islāmiyyah schools. This further differentiates one schools from the other and consequently adds to the status of such school and makes it identifiable.



From the study so far, it was discovered that a lot of changes have taken place in Qur'ānic schools. For instance, use of specialized building and environment has been a new innovation to Quranic education.

Similarly, age grouping system is another innovation because children under the same age ability are brought together. Instead of ages to the normal school ages of up to 7 were admitted and this gives credence to the learning system.

The Islāmiyyah Schools have come of age, in terms of setting standard using syllabus and curriculum examinations and test as well as certification all which give the products of this school earner opportunity. The content of the school nowadays become broad to ensure that it meets with the needs of the modern times.

In conclusion, the introduction of fee has set it apart from the former as this makes the education to be standard and become more credible in the system of education in Nigeria.

Conclusion

Islāmic knowledge for the young and old in Ilorin Metropolis makes the town to be regarded as “Ilu-Alfa” (the city of learned Mallams), as part of the first assignment given to Prophet of Islām to search and acquire knowledge. Therefore, modernization of Quranic Schools in Ilorin metropolis expresses the innovation brought to Islāmic education to meet the challenges of the time. These innovations could be seen in methodology, opening of the school teaching; building, syllabus subjects and. course contents enrolment and payment for the education services rendered become obvious in the present day Quranic schools. The opinion of the researcher in the paper shows that modernization in the teaching of Qur'ānic school has taken place greatly Ilorin Metropolis.

Recommendations

- i. Knowledge should be the first priority in Islām as Allah (SWT) encourages all the Prophet of Allah to acquire the teachings of Islām, morality, norms, value, culture and sound Education.
- ii. The parents should encourage their pupils to attain knowledge of Islām rather than engage themselves in money laundry, yahoo plus, 419 etc

- iii. Quranic Studies Teachers should look at how some of their schools could be change into modern way system of Education in Ilorin Kwara State, Nigeria.
- iv. Government should encourage the Quranic Schools Teachers by empowering these teachers or paying the staff of all the Quranic schools centers.

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