

The Potentialities of an Integrated Islamic Curriculum: AES, Pakistan as a Case Study

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Abstract

Pakistan's emergence on world map was held on 14th August 1947 was a culminating point of the demand of the Muslims of sub-continent for their separate homeland. It was an "idea" or "ideology" they struggled for, to nurture and establish Islam as a living reality in all spheres of their lives, to maintain their Islamic identity and distinction.

Keeping in view these aims numerous efforts have been made to incorporate religious education in the curriculum of schools at various levels. Curriculum of religious education at AIMS is one of such efforts with an objective to produce true Muslims and good Pakistani's.

A notably designed syllabus of Islamic Studies is being taught at all levels that consist of all basic Islamic teachings like beliefs, Ibadat & Moamlat to furnish compact knowledge of Islam. Activity based learning in addition to use of resources stimulates the interest of students along with an environment conducive to learning. Various teaching strategies pertinent to different learning styles have been espoused to ensure participation of each learner.

For young montessorians Love Islam activities have been intercalated to expound the Love for Islam among the kids, its curriculum is merely grounded upon Islamic beliefs, Ibadat, Ethics and Moamlat. Beautiful Art & Craft activities have heightened and stimulated the interest of students towards their religion.

Arabic Department is another Hall mark of AIMS curriculum. This department puts great effort to enable the learners in the acquisition of Arabic Language which helps them to explore the meaning and translation of Holy Quran, the ultimate source of guidance and knowledge.

Special attention is being accustomed to the teaching of Quran from Junior Montessori till O levels and matric level. Target of Nazra Quran is accomplished till class III, and choice of Hifz is given in class IV it is mandatory for regular students to go through Translation of Holy Quran that plays vital role in the character education and moral grooming.

Curriculum of religious education at AIMS ensures integration of religion between other subjects like Maths, Science, English etc. Islamic linkage has been appended to lesson plans in all subjects to assimilate religion and worldly education learners remain in touch with.

Keywords: Religious education, Islamic Linkage, Various teaching strategies, Learning styles, character building, Love Islam activities, and Skill building teacher's training.

Curriculum of Religious Education At AIMS Education System

Pakistan's emergence on world map held on 14th August, 1947 was a culminating point of the demand of the Muslims of Sub-Continent for their separate Homeland. It was an 'idea' or 'ideology' they struggled for, to nurture and establish Islam as a living reality in all spheres of their lives, to maintain their Islamic identity and distinction.¹ It was established to enable Muslims to order their lives in the individual and collective spheres in accord with the teachings and requirements of Islam as set out in the Holy Quran and Sunnah.

Soon after inception of Pakistan there was a need to bring radical changes in the field of education to develop or harmonize education with the goals of establishment of Pakistan.

Although keeping in view these aims and objectives numerous efforts have been made to incorporate religious education in the curriculum of schools at various levels by individuals and religious organization but no systematic and fruitful effort we see particularly in government sector in which blend of both kind of education is focused to prepare. Committees are formed for curriculum as a whole in which subject of Islamic studies was also focused but as a subject again and again some time to increase the volume of books and some time to decrease the volume of books. Integration of Islamic knowledge with subject of worldly education had never been a priority of this sector.¹

We see some vague efforts at different times in form of committees and statements but no such effort is being made at government level which can lead education system of the country towards incorporation of Islam in contemporary education. Although with respect to its importance, it should be the first demand to be addressed by the public, the religious and the political parties who struggled for getting separate piece of land in order to bring Islam in practice but no one fulfilled their responsibility in any way. Continuous political instability and economic uncertainty may had been the major reasons for the nation and its leaders for not achieving these goals in this direction. Individual efforts of masses and collective efforts of organizations to Islamize the education system remained a desire of general public who love Islam. And it had been the part of statements and manifesto of religious leaders but not immaterialized due to so many reason, for instance no clear Vision, no concrete effort at grass root level, lack of solid and practical academic effort, discussions in terms of theories only, to highlight the need and importance of issue but no practical effort in this direction, dichotomy of knowledge and segregation of it, lack of mastery of modern knowledge and curriculum, no specific action plan defined, Lack of human and economic resources, No existing model of blended education etc.

Keeping in view these aims and objectives AIMS education system was established in March 1998, to offer blended education at school level from Montessori section till O level and matric. Soon after its inception a curriculum committee was formed to develop an integrated curriculum and to incorporate Islamic thought in the syllabus. The committee consisted of individuals who had mastery of various disciplines of modern knowledge like science, social studies, English, mathematics etc. and the members who were well versed in Islamic specialization like Tafseer, Fiqh and Hadith etc. together they developed the curriculum of general education and religious education at AIMS education system and the process is still going on. Today this institution is running seven campuses with more than 1800 students. Learners from various sects are being entertained at this institution.²

So, the experience of AIMS Education System proved that quality education blended with religious education is mandatory to achieve this target that provides the foundational skills that students need to become productive citizens capable of civic engagement according to religious beliefs and values.

So quality education depends upon productive, constructive and comprehensive curriculum that meets all kinds of needs of students and facilitates them in achieving identified objectives.

¹. Afzal Iqbal, Islamization of Pakistan, (Lahore: Vanguard Books Ltd, 1986), P 42

². VK Rao, Principles of Curriculum, (New Delhi: Aplt publishing corporation, 2005), P I

Since curriculum is the means and materials with which the students will interact for the purpose of development of individuality and development of society ¹ so it is the curriculum through which the general aims of any institutions are realized.

Education influences and reflects the values of society, and the kind of society we want to be. It is important therefore, to recognize a broad set of common values and purposes that underpins the school curriculum and the work of schools.

Foremost is a belief in education, at home and at school, as a route to the spiritual, moral, social, cultural, physical, mental and religious development and thus the well being of learner. It is also a route to equality of opportunity to all, a healthy and just society, and sustainable development. It also enables us to respond positively to the opportunities and challenges of rapidly growing world.

So, an ideal curriculum is the one that provides equal opportunities for all pupils to learn and to achieve. It develops the enjoyment of, and commitment to, learning as a means of encouraging and stimulating the best possible progress it also enables pupils to think critically and creatively while applying his knowledge, to solve the problems and make decisions.³

It promotes the learners social, spiritual, moral and cultural developments and prepare all students for the opportunities and responsibilities of future life and thus he can distinguish between wrong and right .It passes on enduring values, develops their integrity and autonomy to become an effective member of society. It also promotes learners self-respect and self-esteem and emotional wellbeing, and helps them to form and maintain worthwhile and satisfying relationships. It also develops the ability to relate to others and work for common good.

Despite of all these claims by Western educationists, some inadequacies of Western / Secular education has been observed. According to many Muslim thinkers these current Curriculums do not reflect the Islamic aims and objectives they also do not represent the Islamic Values implicit in Islam.

A characteristic of western / modern education is its primary reliance on the rational faculties to know the truth, while in Islam revelatory experience, intuition and faith are not only valid but are absolutely necessary in ascertaining the truth.

So if general curriculum plays vital role in the development of personality of learners with its multiple perspectives, than consequences of religious education and its curriculum are more consequential simply because it is widely deemed that religious education builds up awareness of religion in the following ways:

- It means demanding subject about the crucial significance and function of life, faith in ALLAH, moral issues and what it means to be human.
- It boosts student's consciousness of religious convictions and values, as well as influence of faith on persons, families, societies and traditions.
- It encourages school students to understand way of life.
- It gives confidence to students help them to expand their own sense of belonging and reasoning.
- Religious education prepares its learners to play their role in adulthood and in their life long education.⁴

³.A K Nayak VK Rao , Secondary education , (New Delhi : A P H Publishing corporation , 2010 , P 94-95

⁴."The significance of religious education in local Primary schools," Flourish Itulua-Abumere, accessed January 10, 2014. P 15

- It shapes up the world view of learner in addition to all above mentioned objectives, that reflect the significance of religious or Islamic education being Muslims it for us to prepare our successive generations for the life here after as well. Since life isn't confined to this world only as ALLAH (S.W.T) says:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا قُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَأَهْلِيكُمْ نَارًا.⁵

O believers save yourself and your families from hell fire. ²

Therefore religious / Islamic education facilitates learners to prepare himself not only to accept the challenges and responsibilities of this life but also to plan his life hereafter and Islamic education is the only meant to establish the relationship between ALLAH and human beings .⁶

Realizing the importance of an education system based on Islamic principles AES tool an initiative to remove the dichotomy of religious and secular education at school level from Montessori or pre-school level up to O levels & Matric. Tremendous and systematic efforts have been made at various levels to incorporate Islamic knowledge, values and traditions in the curriculum.

Keeping in view the importance of religious and blended education the curriculum development committee at AIMS Education System decided to introduce Holy Quran and its relevant sciences in the curriculum of AIMS. Department of Aiwan-e-Quran was established for this purpose that suggested learning and teaching of Quran-i-Kareem from Montessori level till matric, O levels. A complete scheme of study was tailored to ensure that each and every pupil at AIMS Education System learns Holy Quran in terms of Tajweed, Nazra and Translation of Holy Quran.

Quran-i-Kareem- the ultimate source of knowledge at AES

ALLAH (SWT) created human beings, blessed them with the gift of expression and revealed for them the Holy Quran that is source of advice, healing, guidance and mercy for faithful. It is the source of enlightenment for the believers it is the final divine revelation (message of ALLAH) through his last messenger Prophet Muhammad (SAWW). It is the complete code of life that guides us in all walks of life, it contains a universal message for all human beings, and it also develops the personality of individual and his world view.

ALLAH (SWT) says in Quran:

إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ.⁷

“Allah has preserved it and protected it

Keeping in view all these glories of Quran that is the ultimate source of knowledge, it was included in the curriculum of Islamic studies at AES. It is impossible to imagine an Islamic system of education without teaching Quran-i-Kareem to its learners.

Special attention is attention is paid to enable the pupils to recite Quran-i-Kareem with Tajweed. Tajweed means mastering the articulation of letters and reaching the utmost level in pronouncing it well, giving the letter to its right.

وَرَتِّلِ الْقُرْآنَ تَرْتِيلًا.⁸

⁵. Al- Quran 66 : 6

⁶.Syed M. Naqib Al-Ahas , The concept of education in Islam, key not delivered at First world conference on Muslim Education vmef-ca, org/ files/altas-text-final pdf Accessed on Jan 11, 2014.

⁷. Al-Quran 15 : 09

⁸.Al-Quran 73 :4

“And recite the Quran (aloud) in a slow, (pleasant tone and) style”

It means to recite it clearly, reading it letter by letter, reading it slowly, this makes easier pondering the meaning ³, so learning of Holy Quran is the basic requirement of system. It is compulsory for any newly admitted student to take lessons of Nazrah and Tajweed for whole Holy Quran before has starts taking his academic classes.

Therefore syllabus of learning Quran-i-Kareem is mandatory for every learner at all levels.

Holy Quran at Montessori level

Little montessorians are taught basic alphabets with the help of Norani Qaida, with special attention to Tajweed. Since this is the phase in which a Montessorians learns basics of each subject.

To stimulate the interest of students, beautiful, colourful flash cards have been prepared and daily drill helps in reinforcement of material learnt, consequently student is prepared for Nazara during three years of Montessori or pre-school education.⁹

Nazrah of Holy Quran in Class III

Class III is the year, when according to institution policy extensive coaching of reading Quran with Tajweed is given, non core subjects like Art and Craft, Social studies are eliminated and only three core subjects are taught to spare enough time for learning of Quran. The learners usually achieve the target of complete Nazra Quran-i-Kareem in the whole year with 70 % Tajweed level.

Later on in class 4th they take all subjects as per normal routine, along with daily period or session of Tajweed for the re-enforcement of learning Quran. In this way a student remains in touch with Quran-i-Kareem till Matric and O’Level.

Nazrah Quran and its translation Class 4th onwards

After learning Quran in class 3, the pupil is expected to revise it in daily sessions, along with translation of Holy Quran. Special periods have been allocated to learn the translation of Holy Quran, since it can’t reflect in the behaviour, attitude and personality culture of the student till the time he absorbs its teaching. And translation of Holy Quran is the tool of it that builds his character and fosters his thinking.

Hifz of Holy Quran Class 5th onwards

Allah the exalted says:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَتْلُونَ كِتَابَ اللَّهِ وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَأَنفَقُوا مِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ سِرًّا وَعَلَانِيَةً يَرْجُونَ تِجَارَةً لَّن تَبُورَ.¹⁰

Indeed, those who recite the Book of Allah and establish prayer and spend (in his cause) out of what we have provided them, secretly and publicity, can expect profit that will never perish.

⁹. Abul Fida Ismail Bin Umar Bin Kaseer Al Basari, Tafseer Ibn-i-Kaseer, , Tehqiq Sami Bin Mohammad Salamah, Ed 2, 1999, tayaba House, Vol.08, P 250

¹⁰. Al-Quran 35 : 29

The Prophet said, "Such a person as recites the Quran and masters it by heart, will be with the noble righteous scribes (in Heaven). And such a person exerts himself to learn the Quran by heart, and recites it with great difficulty, will have a double reward."

Therefore, it had been the tradition of Muslim world to strive to memorise Holy Quran. AES established a full fledged department is launched to facilitate the pupil for memorization of Holy Quran without any discontinuity of his academics. Students are given the option of Hifz in Class 5, along with three core subjects English, Math's, Science and Tarbiyah classes. The pupils continue their academics to have its overview along with memorization of Holy Quran . And the target is achieved by students within 2-3 years approximately. Later on, the student joins his regular classes and revise the memorized Quran in his Tajweed classes. So, it is a strong conviction of AES that Holy Quran, its teachings and learning is the back bone of academics. Since the best person is he who learns Quran and teaches it. It also believes that revival of Ummah and its resurgence lies in learning and practicing teachings of Holy Quran.

Development of Curriculum of Islamic studies

Islamic studies and Islamic thought are central to the curriculum of AES and is at the heart of the philosophy of Quran and Sunnah to furnish authentic knowledge of Islam.

So, an overview of contents of the syllabus of Islamic Studies reflects the approach of institution and curriculum both. Beliefs or Aqaid includes topics like Blessings of ALLAH, faith in Angels and authenticity of Quran is a valid source of knowledge.

The second section is about the pillars of Islam, concept of prayer, its contents, requirement do's and Don'ts have been elaborated, highlighting the Sunnah ways to offer prayers.

The very third section has been allocated to cleanliness and purification, use of miswaak, taking bath, personal hygiene are the primary focus with an objective to explain the ways, importance and significance of cleanliness and purification.

Keeping in view the importance of mannerism, behaviours and attitudes in relation to personal and social life of learners, fourth chapter has been allocated to manners of life. Sunnah ways of conversation, manners to recite Holy Quran are examples of this section.

One of the significant areas focused by this syllabus is morals and ethics, realizing its significance for the well being of pupils fifth section has been assigned to morals and its various components like honesty, truth etc.

Sixth section is about stories of Prophets like Hazrat Ismail (A.S) and Hazrat Ayoub (A.S) with an aim to introduce the concept of Prophet Hood and some famous Prophets. Keeping in mind the main aim of these stories to learn lessons, wisdoms and morals from what happened in past in order to foster positive attitudes and behaviors.

Next section is about noble Seerah of our last Prophet Muhammad (SAWW) to instill the true love for Prophet Muhammad (SAWW) and to absorb his noble character, since he is a role model for every Muslim.

The eighth section is about companions of Prophet Muhammad (SAWW) who played vital role in his support and served him with great dedication. So students are being given an exposure of these

¹¹. Sahih Bukhari Al-Sufah o Alraqam 4937 Khulasa Hukum Muhadis

Heroes of Islam. At the end some surahs have been included in the syllabus for Hifz that can be recited by pupils in their prayers.

So it can safely be said that this syllabus is comprehensive and provides solid knowledge of Islam contents wise. As far as the teaching strategies are concerned practical teaching approaches like discussion methods, activity based learning, use of resources, relevant art and craft activities to stimulate the interest of students have been adopted, with an objective to invite young learners to respond to message of Islam. Activity sessions are conducted to convey the concepts in an interesting way and can practically apply the learnt lesson.

The exercises are designed in a way that can assess the understanding and comprehension of pupils, model making and art and craft activities have been incorporated. Role plays are an item of special interest.

At senior level assignment sheets have been introduced so that pupils can explore authentic references and sources like Books of Ahadith and Seerah etc.

Though the contents of Islamic studies curriculum are same but they differ in quantity of knowledge than those at junior level. Following are the salient features of syllabus of Islamic studies.

1. An attempt has been made to provide authentic knowledge of basic Islamic beliefs, Ibadat and morals.
2. Special emphasis on character building
3. Original terms of Islam has been introduced to students like “Sallallah-o-Alaihi wa sallam” instead of peace be upon him, “wazu” instead of ablution etc
4. The syllabus is in Urdu language rather than English, to ensure comprehension of students and understanding of Islam.
5. Various teaching strategies, like discussion, role plays¹ etc has been adopted to make it equally interesting subject like English, Science etc. use of resources and Art and Craft activities have stimulated the interest of students notably.¹²
6. Critical and Creative thinking have been incorporated. Worksheets have been designed for this purpose particularly at senior level.
7. Assignment sheets provide an opportunity to establish research skills of students that satisfies their curiosity and learning.
8. Hifz section deals with three types of material like Surahs of Quran, selected Ahadith and supplications.
9. Critical and Creative thinking¹ have been incorporated. Worksheets have been designed for this purpose particularly at senior level.
10. Assignment sheets provide an opportunity to establish research skills of students that satisfies their curiosity and learning.
11. Hifz section deals with three types of material like Surahs of Quran, selected Ahadith and supplications.

¹². Roy Killen, Effective teaching strategies, Thomson social science press, 2005, P. 128

Consequently teachers of Islamic studies have been able to successfully engage their students for effective learning. It is expected that learners at this stage not only would develop an Islamic world view rather they will experience some values in relationship to others respect for individuals, compassion, self control, mature decision making etc. particularly because learners at senior level need four essentials to be engaged in any type of learning.

a.Knowledge

b.Authenticity

c.Relevance

d.Relationship¹³

12.Careful efforts have been made to include all these principles along with modern approaches in the curriculum of Islamic studies. In addition to prepare the text book, teacher's guide has been arranged to achieve the goals and document comprising of lesson plan is available to facilitate the teachers in their teaching. The management intends to publish these text books in future.¹⁴

Curriculum of Islamic Studies at Montessori level:

Needless to say that pre-school level is an important phase in the life of pupil that prepares him for primary school. With the rapid growth of modern education system, child centered educational applications are being promoted and focused. So modern approaches are child centered and efficient learning methods are in practice¹ to develop social, emotional and perpetual skills of students at the very early stage, that's why Montessori teaching techniques are preferred by schools and parents. Keeping in view the significance of this modern approach, AES has developed its own document of curriculum of Islamic Studies for little montessorians in the title of "Love Islam" at its three levels i-e Junior Montessori, Senior Montessori and Prep. Four main benchmarks have been designed including Aqaid, Ibadat, Akhlaq and Moamlat. Aqaid includes faith in ALLAH, Tauheed, and its impact on human life. Ibadat section is about prayer, zakat, fasting Ramzan etc to provide the students basic information about these significant forms of worship and Sunnah ways to perform it. Akhlaq section deals to develop responsible behaviour among learners to nurture honesty, truth, concern for others, patience etc with an aim to build the noble character of students. Moamlat section also focuses on developing good social relationships.

As far as the teaching techniques are concerned instead of relying upon direct instructions methods, indirect teaching strategies like activity based learning, discussion method, role plays, use of resources, interesting worksheet, relevant art and craft activities have been adopted to stimulate the interest of students of this level labs of Love Islam has been introduced to ensure the use of IT technology to make the subject more interesting.¹⁵

In addition to above mentioned environment for Love Islam, Quran has been introduced as subject. Flash cards, resources draw the attention of child and accurate pronunciation has been targeted to facilitate the student in proper recitation of Quran-i-Qareem at later stage.

¹³. Kerry Ang, Engaging the secondary school students in religious education, Journal of Religious education, P 13

¹⁴. John Langrehr, Teaching our children to think, Solution tree Bloomington, 2001,P 74

¹⁵. The new book of knowledge, (Grolier incorporation, 1890),P 78

Arabic language is being taught as subject to create awareness among learners about the significance of this language, integrated syllabus has been designed to provide the same vocabulary taught in English, Science, Mathematics etc for instance colours, number, seasons etc. bulletin boards are prepared with relevant resource in order to provide complete environment about a specific theme.

Islamic Linkage- A step towards Integration / Islamization of knowledge

The most prominent manifestation of the knowledge crisis is current dichotomy prevailing in the field of education particularly at school level. Our young learners are either getting traditional Islamic education versus imported European education. Secular education eliminated the moral dimensions and violated the aim of an Islamic education system to shape up the world view of young Muslim pupil. It is the only paradigm that is reflected in behaviour, attitude and thoughts of a Muslim. Hence values are attached to knowledge that one receives and information is processed by teacher, the knowledge given, this knowledge along with values is assimilated by students.

Therefore many prominent Muslim scholars called for Islamization of knowledge at every level to overcome the existing dichotomy. Mr. Naqib al Attas and Ismail Raji Al Farooqi are among the pioneers who highlighted the significance of issue and described in detail how to achieve the objective.¹⁶

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¹⁶. M Amin-ul-Hassan, Abdul Kalam, Afzal Ahmad Islamization of knowledge, An agenda for Muslim intellectuals, , global Journal of management and business research Administration and Management, <http://www.globaljournals.org/> GIM BR, P 35

pioneers who highlighted the significance of issue and described in detail how to achieve the objective.¹⁷

Since modern knowledge has been embodied in current disciplines of science and technology, therefore Muslims have to learn it by filtering out its theories with the help of their world view, at the same Muslims must not confine themselves to reinterpretation of this knowledge rather they must explore and form their own theories¹, says Al Attas.

So, the mission is conceptual transformation of the education system from kindergarten till graduation level. Islamization of knowledge doesn't mean to reinvent the wheel but calls for reform correction and re-orientation. So, it is corrective and reformative, evolutionary and not revolutionary.¹⁸

Keeping in mind some issues and challenges, the management planned the Islamic orientation of its academics in order to provide best Islamic modern education at school level. The major challenge it had to face was non availability of any existing model that could be replicated. So the process of synthesizing Islamic teachings is taking time and the process so far has been following steps.

1-Islamic studies along with Quran-i-Kareem was given equal status unlike other modern school systems, where Islamic studies isn't having status of English or science rather it is not considered a specialization, usually any subject teacher is expected to teach it.

But at AES its own designed syllabus of Islamic studies was introduced and teachers of this specialization were hired. Though, still management is facing an issue that Islamic studies teachers are not good at pronunciation of Quranic Surahs and Duas or supplications.

2-The next step was synthesizing the Islamic teachings or integration of Islamic values and modern western academics, wherever found possible. So that learner could recall Islamic values whenever studying any concept, theory or fact. The example of this step at Montessori level is teaching the concept of shapes. Islamic linkage or relevant Islamic information is being given to learner is that ALLAH has created different things in different shapes. Thus, keeping the pupil in touch with his own religion all the time.

Another example in social studies at junior level is "My neighbour" and the Islamic linkage is rights of neighbours¹ according to Islam, with an aim to establish mature Islamic thought among our pupils and to transfer the Islamic values to successive generations. Needless to say that science is the area that witnessed tremendous efforts of Muslim scholars and west has recognized the contribution of Muslim scholars who possessed multi-dimensional knowledge, Islamic references, contribution of Muslim scholars like Al- Beruni, Al- Khawarizmi, Ibn-al-Haytham etc have been incorporated to create an awareness of this Muslim contribution, so that they could develop a balanced view of science in their young minds.

The third stage is character building, since knowledge merely is not enough till the time it is reflected in the behaviours and attitudes of students in their daily interaction and this is the

¹⁷. The concept of education in Islam, Professor Naquib al-Attas, P 11
<http://mef-ca.org/files/attas-text-final.pdf>

¹⁸. Omer Hassan K, Islamization of knowledge, Islamic medical education resources,
accessed on January 18, 2014 P 8
www.omarkasule-tib1.blogspot.com

ultimate objective to prepare perfect and well-behaved individuals who live to revive the Islamic values like honesty, compassion, patience, care for others etc.

The process is going on and the objective of synthesizing modern education with Islamic values will take time.

Arabic language – Part of curriculum of Islamic Studies

Since learning and teaching of Holy Quran is mandatory in the curriculum of religious education at AES, therefore it necessitates learning of Arabic language as tool to understand not only Holy Quran rather all the authentic references of Islam in various disciplines like Hadith, Fiqh, Seerah etc. it is the language of Quran and Muslim world and Muslim culture. Since understanding Arabic is so significant, so Arabic department was established to study and plan and prepare the academic material of Arabic language. This department is supervising learning of Arabic from Montessori level till class 8th with an objective to develop the understanding of Muslim legacy and culture among young learners.¹⁹

Integrated curriculum has been planned with adequate and appropriate teaching methodologies. Use of resources has developed the interest of students in this subject with a special emphasis on skill building of students.

Creative exercises enable the learner to speak and understand Arabic well. The publication of Molana Muhammad Bashir with the title of “Iqra” and Asan Arabic course is part of curriculum that has a very systematic and scientific approach of teaching Arabic. Lughat-ul- Arabia lil Atfaal by Mr. Ubaid-ur-Rehman has been adopted at junior level to establish the basic vocabulary and skills of students along with specially designed focused activities. AES expects that this department will play vital role in developing the understanding of Quran among its students. Insha ALLAH.

Co-curricular Activities

Co-curricular activities are essential part of curriculum of any educational institution. They are means to enhance social, interaction, leadership, healthy re-creation, self-discipline and self-confidence. Thus, it plays significant role in personality development of pupils, along with reinforcement of concept learnt in the classroom. Morning assembly for instance is the session that is availed by students to present and deliver their precise discourses or briefings regarding various Islamic themes like cleanliness and purification, migration to Madinah etc. Role plays and interesting information is being provided to students.

Bulletin boards for students are another source of interest they explore the knowledge and exhibit for their fellows, thus learn and develop the research skill. Quizzes, resources, book fairs, departmental activities inside the classroom and presentations, preparation of pamphlets, journals in Islamic information are source of Islamic learning in an interesting and updating the students.

So, curriculum of religious education at AIMS Education System is a blend of classical Islamic traditions and modern western approaches. Efforts have been made to bring curriculum of religious education at par with modern, western, disciplines like math, science etc. and, in addition to that to

¹⁹. Azhra Raza, Social Studies, Book 1 (Lahore: Paramount publishing enterprises, 2012), P 06

incorporate Islamic thought wherever is possible in the general subjects to give them Islamic/ religious orientation with an objective to develop the character of learner.

Conclusion

1. In keeping with the ideology of Pakistan, there is a dire need to establish a system of education that offers an integrated curriculum to fulfill the spiritual & material needs of the 21st century Muslim learner.

2. The curriculum of AES can serve as an authentic case study with regard to the holistic development of young learners alongside their academic grooming, because the primary objective of an integrated curriculum is to boost God-consciousness, inculcate traditional religious values and convictions into the learner.

3. The teaching of the Holy Qur'an from diverse aspects (tajweed, translation, memorization) at early stages establishes a strong connection of the younger learners with the Qur'an. Incorporation of modern teaching techniques into the Islamic Studies classroom brings the subject at par with other subjects. Moreover, an integrated curriculum exposes students to a more balanced vision of the world around them.



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