

International seminar of experts on textbook development

BACKGROUND PAPER

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how the entire creation is A yatullah, signs of God, manifestation of Divine power, symbols of Reality.

In order to implement the "Recommendations" of the First World Conference on Muslim Education held at Holy Mecca in April 1977 the Follow-up Committee of that conference considered it necessary to hold three other conferences, each with a limited number of experts, on the following themes: (1) Formulation of the Islamic Curriculum on the basis of the reclassification of knowledge made at the First World Conference (2) Text-Book development based on that curriculum (3) Teaching methodology devised to help teachers teach those books so as to instil in children an Islamic approach to all subjects without encroaching on or limiting their freedom of thinking.

The Second World Conference on the Curriculum was held at Islamabad from 15 to 20 March, 1980. Its recommendations may be summed up as follows:

1. The Conference reiterated the recommendation of the First Conference that knowledge be classified into two categories, 'perennial' and 'acquired' the former consisting of the Quran and the Hadith, Tauhid, Quranic Arabic, Seerah, Usul-i-Fiq and Fiq and ancillary subjects—Islamic Culture, Comparative Religion and Islamic Metaphysics, and the latter consisting of all branches of knowledge categorised as 'Humanities', Social Studies, Natural, Applied and Practical Sciences.
2. The Conference suggested a common curriculum for the two prevailing systems of education.
3. In order to remove the dichotomy of systems and give a unified Islamic approach to all branches of knowledge, a planned programme of research be undertaken so that Islamic schools of thought may be established in subjects which are regarded as 'secular subjects' in the West and 'acquired subjects' by the Conference.
4. If and when this is achieved the two systems be merged into one. The Follow-up Committee of King Abdulaziz University has been entrusted with the task of setting up committees of scholars and arrange research programmes as a first step towards achieving the above goal. The Follow-up Committee is going ahead with this task. It is also requesting each Muslim country to study this curriculum and send to the Follow-up Committee its comments on it and its suggestions regarding the ways and means of implementing this curriculum.

At the same time a further task has to be completed. Muslim countries must understand the shortcoming from the Islamic point of view of their own text-books prescribed for primary, secondary and higher education and formulate guidelines so that text-books may be written from the Islamic points of view. Muslim Scholars should therefore start this work immediately and meet at a third world conference on Muslim Education to discuss the results of their research and the research already undertaken to establish Islamic schools of thought in different branches of knowledge.

Theme of the Conference, Its Aims and Objectives

The major theme of the Conference is the development of text-books for all levels of education on the basis of Islamic concept of education and the curriculum recommended at the Second World Conference on Muslim Education.

Aims and Objectives

The Aims and objectives of the Third World Conference are therefore as follows:

- (a) To identify general shortcomings from Islamic point of view of present text-books in all branches of knowledge at all stages of education—primary, secondary, higher and suggest revision;
- (b) To prepare guidelines for text books in all branches of the curriculum designed at the Second World Conference on Muslim Education;
- (c) To recommend the setting up of scholarly and competent bodies in order to carry out research that may be considered necessary for implementing the guidelines for text-book writing;

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The training they receive to have love and respect for the prophet of Islam, peace be on him, would implant in them some basic assumptions which will provide them with an unconscious premise to start with when they begin using reason.

(d) Command over means of communication: For the Secondary Stage

(a) Evolution of the spiritual power to solve doubts and questions Adolescence is psychologically a difficult period of conflicts, doubts and questionings. The modern system of letting children loose in this field and even allowing them to question all fundamental premises of moral and spiritual existence of Man which have acquired universal and objectives status in mankind for hundreds of years in the past proved to be extremely dangerous, leading to juvenile delinquency and uncertainty and insecurity in life. It is necessary therefore to strengthen the spiritual and moral foundations through lessons in history (to rouse their emotive and intellectual response to their own sense of cultural identity and source of strength as Muslims), through deeper study of literature and the effective and adequate use of language (to deepening the universal and permanent feelings that contribute to the growth of humanity) and through the further intensive study of the Seerah, a selection of the Sunnah and the fundamentals of Tauhid.

(b) Training of logical thinking

As the rational faculty goes on ripening it becomes necessary at this stage to train it and guide to so that students are provided with basic Islamic concepts for all those branches of acquired knowledge including sciences and mathematics that are taught at school and are trained to use them logically. They should also be trained to reverse the process—start with ideas and apply them to concrete life-events and situations.

(c) Development of relational and environmental process: Social sensibility needs adequate training at this stage through social service, hygiene lessons, pilot projects and lessons in civics etc. from the Islamic point of view.