Islamization of Human Sciences: Need, Prospects and Challenges

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Abstract: Islamization of Human sciences is much debated area in the Islamic intellectual discourse which do not works in the contradiction to modern sciences but ally with it. The efforts are going on to integrate the Islamic knowledge into the modern human/social science in order to promote Islamization. This paper is based on the assessment of the contributions of Muslim social scientist in the related field by studying need, prospects and challenges of the Islamization of Human Knowledge. The analysis of related literature depicted that Islamization of Human sciences is needed in the modern society in order to promote and preserve the Islamic Civilization. Many efforts have been made by various Islamic sociologists all over the Muslim world to introduce and integrate Islamization of Human sciences into societies. They have established educational institutions and introduce curriculum and courses related to Islamization of human sciences. Islamic sociology is one of the initiatives of those efforts to realize the Malaise of the society through Islamic Perspective and how to solve these problems in the light of Quran and Sunnah. Despite great work done by Muslim social scientists, some impediments are there such as lack of training and education to integrate the curriculum based on Islamic ideology. Socio-cultural, political, economic and religious problems are also creating hurdles in its way to progress. It is recommended that Muslim Ummah should unite on one paradigm and ideology to promote Islamization of Human Sciences in the contemporary world.

Keywords: Islamization, Human Sciences, Prospect & Challenges

INTRODUCTION

Islamization of Human Knowledge is a very wide perspective in the toady’s Intellectual discourse on Islam and modern sciences. Since the last decade, several attempts have been made in the cause of translating the concept of Islamization of Knowledge into concrete forms of activities such as the publication of monographs and textbooks, and in the establishment of institutions that offer related academic programmes to further the cause. Among those who were in the forefront in the effort are two major scholars, namely Syed Muhammad NaquibalAttas and the late Isma’ilRaji al-Faruqi. Both of them have attempted to define the problem and the concept and translate it through their works. Beside these two scholars other Muslim scholars at that time such as AbrhaimRagab, and the current Muslim social scientists namely, JamilFarooqui, AslamHanif also contributed to promote the Islamization of Knowledge in the modern social sciences.

Before going into the debate on particular aspect, it is firstly need to understand the concepts of Islamization, Islamization of Knowledge and its application Human sciences with special reference to Islamic Sociology.

Generally, Islamization is known as a process to Islamize the society with respect to faith, belief on the Islamic principles and its application on the individual and the society as whole. In the contemporary world of human sciences, Islamization can be understood as the process of gaining education based on the Islamic objectives and methods as well as later on to transform it to the whole society. In this regard Islamization is also known as “da’wah” which was also the mission of Prophet Muhammad S.A.W. (Abdallah, 2013).

Ismail Farooqi defined Islamization as:

“Recast Knowledge as Islam relates to it, i.e, to redefine and reorder the data, to rethink the reasoning and relating of the data, to reevaluate the conclusions, to re-project the goals, and to do so in such a way as to make the disciplines enrich the vision and serve the cause of Islam” (pg.15).

(Ragab, 1999) define Islamization as:

"Integration of Islamic revealed knowledge and the human sciences”
Islamization of Knowledge is further elaborating the concept of Islamization into the intellectual discourse. A Malaysian scholar Syed Muhammad Naqib al Attas is known as the originator of the contemporary concept of Islamization of Knowledge (IOK). He defined IOK as:

“Islamation of knowledge does not mean that the curriculum of Islamic education is exclusively for Muslims, but due to the universality of Islam, Islamic education is applicable to and can accommodate all of the mankind” (Md. Helal Uddin, 2014)

This paper is consisted of the understanding of the need, prospects and challenges of Islamization of Human sciences in contemporary world. In order to know the need of IOK/Islamization of human sciences, its history is study to trace the origin and evolution of Islamization of knowledge. The prospects have been developed to achieve its goals and what are challenges Muslim Ummah is facing for integrating Islamization of Knowledge is also discussed in this paper.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Following are the some of the objectives of the study:

- To examine the need of the Islamization of Human sciences in Muslim World
- To explore the current prospects of the Islamization of Human sciences with respect to Islamic Sociology
- To highlights the challenges facing by Muslim Ummah in order to integrate Islamization of Human Sciences.

METHODOLOGY

The study is conceptualized by using secondary data consisted of books and journal articles related to the topic. Broadly, Muslim Social Scientist such as Al-Faruqi, Al-shariati, JamilFarooqui, AbrahamRagab and Abu Suylaman were taking into consideration for developing comprehensive understanding of the Islamization of Human sciences. Some published work by different authors was also included in the study as reference.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

NEED FOR ISLAMIZATION OF HUMAN SCIENCES

To understand the need of the Islamization in social sciences, it is necessary to know the history of the transformation of the Islamization of knowledge at the outset. It can be traced from the time period of Islamic civilization which plays a significant role in constructing social structure composed on Islamic and Quranic principles of life and established an Islamic society. The basic intention of Islamic civilization was to promote peace and justice in the society which is the foundations of Islam. In order to develop a well-built Muslim ummah, number of ancient Muslim philosophers (such as Imam Ghazzali, Shah Waliullah, Imam Razi, etc) contributed their knowledge and potentials to formulate approaches of Quarnic epistemology which was needed to reorganized Muslim societies (Choudhury, 1999).

Unfortunately, the golden period of Islamic knowledge was starting to its decline with the advent of western civilization in 15th century. The western scholars started to build their own intellectual base by adopting the knowledge and contributions of Muslim scholars from different Musliminstitutions, due to which Muslim scholars lack motivations to quest for the knowledge. After the 18th century till the 20th century contemporary Islamic movements were started in many countries such as Turkey, Persia, Iran, India etc to unite the Muslim to save the Ummah and Islamic Knowledge(Barzinji, 1999). But that time period did not lay down any improvement in the declining image of the Muslim Ummah, as the ideology which they adopted was not focusing on the actual crisis and the movements did not incorporated the interests of all Muslim Ummah. Furthermore, some other movements by youth was started to establish some concrete approaches to incorporate the Islamic knowledge in the western discourse which resulted in the establishment of International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT), 1981 in United State of America. The institute instantly started its work on Islamization of knowledge and with the passage of time; various conferences have been organized in various parts of the Muslim world to address the issues related to Islamization of knowledge and explored different methodologies to incorporate the Islamization into Human Sciences (Ahsan, et al, 2013).

Due to the colonial powers, Muslim did not get an opportunity to exercise their Islamic potentials in order to explore the society. They even did not have liberty to practice their own social, cultural, economic and religious system according to their own thoughts and ideas based on Islamic prospectsin line with Quran and the Sunnah(Nadvi, 2013). Due to ignorance of knowledge the Muslim intellectuals manipulate the knowledge for their own interest only. Due to relying on the western ideologies and adopting there ways of
education and gaining knowledge, the Muslims own identity and moral as well as religious values are dismissing. The problems of all this crisis is grounded in intellectual prospects due to which a rich gap exists between revealed and acquired Knowledge (Ahsan & Ullah, 2013).

Therefore Farooqi (1982) stated that it was necessary to focus on Islamization of Knowledge. He also mentioned number of external and internal reason that make IOK essential which he discussed in his work plan as “malaise of the Ummah”. The external factors are social-cultural, economic, political and religious backwardness of the Muslim Ummah.

Islamization of Human Sciences

Islamization of Human sciences with reference to the disciplines of Islamic Sociology and Anthropology has significant importance in Islamization of Knowledge. Generally, modern sociology and Anthropology produce different results of societal studies based on the scientific studies of societies which are more align with the western knowledge of knowing societies, But Islamic sociology produce universal principles based on Tawhidic paradigm which can apply to analyze the realities of Muslim all over the world. There methods to study the particular culture/society and its people have important consideration to incorporate the Islamic principles into the western/modern societies, Islamic Sociology focused on the Islamic perceptive of man, society and social relations in the light of Quran and Sunnah which will leads toward the adoption of Islamic paradigms of social change. It demonstrated Islamic sources of social controls by different institutions. In the same way, Islamic Anthropology enables to study the historical struggle and heritage of Islam and its civilization in order to promote Islamization of human sciences (Farooqui, 2002).

The difference between the western sociology and Islamic social sciences are that, western science relies on empirical studies which can be quantified and perceived by senses. In this regard it has excluded the revealed knowledge and its findings are not universal and generalized. Although, sociology as defined by Comte, based on scientific study of the society but in a very objective manner and lacks the subjective meaning of the society and its related aspects. In this way numerical data do not portray the realities of the societies and just depicts one sided knowledge (Farooqui, 2002).

PROSPECTS OF ISLAMIZATION OF HUMAN SCIENCES

In the earlier 20th century, when Muslim nation feel liberated from the colonial rule, they have been motivated to revive the Islamic philosophy and integrate into the contemporary world of human sciences. With the continuous struggle of the Muslim thinkers, in late 20th century, the principles of scientific research have been aligning with the principles of Islamic Social Sciences. Due to this, Muslim and non Muslim researchers have taken interest in researching Islamization of scientific Knowledge (Nadvi, 2013).

Al-Ismail Farooqui describes three major elements of the process of Islamization of Knowledge process cited in (Ragab, 1999);

a) Need critical assessment of the methodologies, research finding and theories in the light of Islamic worldview.

b) Current need of ‘UMMAH’ and assessment of modern sciences.

c) Develop synthesis of Islamic legacy and modern sciences.

In this regard, IbsrainiFarooqi discussed twelve steps to recognize the basic methodology of Islamization of human sciences in his book titled “Islamization of Knowledge: General Principles and Work plan” which is based on the following five objectives:

1. To master the modem disciplines;
2. To master the Islamic legacy;
3. To establish the specific relevance of Islam to each area of modem knowledge;
4. To seek ways for creative synthesis between the legacy and modem knowledge;
5. To launch Islamic thought on the trajectory this leads it to fulfillment of the divine pattern of Allah.

In order to achieve the objectives of the work plan and the aims of Islamization of modem knowledge, al-Faruqi further outlines twelve steps through which one must go through. The steps are; Mastery of the modem disciplines, Discipline survey, Mastery of the Islamic legacy, Mastery of the Islamic legacy, Establishment of the specific relevance of Islam to the disciplines, Critical assessment of the modem discipline, The state-of-the art, Critical assessment of the Islamic legacy: The state -of-the art, Survey of the Ummah's major problems, Survey of the problems of humankind, Creative analyses and syntheses; Recasting the disciplines under the framework of Islam: The university textbook; Dissemination of Islamized knowledge. These steps ensure Muslims' understanding and mastery of the disciplines as they have developed in the West (Hashim, 2000).

Al-Faruqi’s work was further amended by Sulayman (1994) to identify the root cause of all the Malaise is “crisis of thought” due to which West taking advantage of it. Ragab (1997) stated that IOK is
gradually adhering importance and acceptance as it has reached to it clears vision and pathway. He discussed two pathways to promote IOK:

a) Islamization of social Science and
b) Reforms of Islamic Sciences.

For al-Attas the process of Islamization of contemporary knowledge works in two steps:

1) Isolation of Western elements and key concepts from existing body of knowledge.
2) The combination of Islamic elements and key concepts into it.

He reiterates that "knowledge must be imbued with Islamic elements and key concepts after the foreign elements and key concepts have been isolated from its every branch.

The progress in going on toward achieving these milestones but still more work is needed to generalize its methodology or work plan among the Muslim contributors. Furthermore, to promote Islamization of human sciences, various strategies and projects have been designed by Muslim intellectuals in different Muslim and non Muslim countries as well. In lieu of that, the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT) was established by Al-Faruqi in 1989 in Virginia. Later on al-Attas established the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC) in 1987 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Progressing with this, number of other international forums such as; the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA), the Islamic Circle of North America (ICNA), the Forum for Islamic Work, the Islamic Research Foundation, the Islamic Propagation Center, International Muslim Thinker Forum, the North American Association of Muslim Professionals and Scholars etc, promoting the agenda of Islamization of Knowledge through arranging conferences and seminars in all over the world (Ahse net al 2013).

The struggles are going on and resulted in the establishment of Islamic universities which are following Islamic pedagogies in their curriculum. International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), International Islamic University Bangladesh & International Islamic University Pakistan (IIUP), International Islamic University Chittagong (IIUC) is the examples of it. Ahse net al (2013) asserted the application of Islamization of Knowledge in various disciplines of Human Knowledge by various intellectuals such as; Abu Sulayman introduced IOK in politics, Ibrahim Ragaab, A usaf Ali, and Al Mubarak incorporates it in the field of Sociology. Furthermore, Muhammad Anwar, Muhammad Arifi(1984, 87), Zubair Has an (1998), Muhammad Nejatullah Siddiqi (1989) Masudul Alam Chawdhury (1986), Muhammad Akram Khan (1994) Syed Nawabi Haider Naqvi (1994), Muhammad Aslam Haneef (1995), Abul Hasan Muhammad Sadeq (1991) and Ataul Huq incorporated IOK in Economics. In addition to further progression of IOK, Nabil, A. Saleh (1986), Rodny Wilson (1990), Clement Moore (1990), Rafique Issa and Nazim Ali (1990) initiation it in the field of Philosophy of Science. In education, Syed Ali Asharf and Sayed Naqib Attas has contributed IOK, Linguistic is incorporating IOK by the efforts of Syyid Muhammad Syyed (1988), Islamic Sciences following the IOK model developed by Syed Waqar Ahmed Hu saini (2002) etc.

All the above mentioned disciplines as well as the rest of natural sciences, adopted IOK model to make a blend of Islamic and modern knowledge in ally with each other. In the intellectual discourse, IOK is playing its role in both theory and in research to explore the new avenues for the promulgation of Islamization of knowledge in to the modern sciences.

The aim of these institutions is to achieve that level of educational excellence which restores the dynamic and progressive role of the MuslimUmmah in all disciplines of knowledge and intellectual dialogue. The basic motives behind establishing Islamic centers and universities are to transfer the Islamic oriented learning and research in such a way which will create unity and justice among Muslims. The focus of reforming university curriculum is to practice knowledge based activity (such as research, seminar and conferences) by keeping Islamic perspective in mind.

Following are the some general principles of the Islamic universities to promote Islamization of Human Sciences:

a) Integration of Quran or Islamic perspectives into the contemporary human sciences.
b) Develop critical thinking and assessment of modern social sciences, their system, methods and theories. Reform them according to Islamic Ideology.
c) Recognize the good traits of Islamic perspectives in other sciences by comparing different disciplines.
d) Explanation of Islamic perspectives, theories, values, norms, ideas and school of thoughts in modern curriculum.
e) Promote and generate Intellectual discourse on Islamization of Human Knowledge.

Ali Shariati made very important contribution to explain sociology with the Islamic perspective and introduce the term Islamic Sociology. In order to understand the social life and social issues under the light of Qur’anic principles and guidance, Basharat Ali used the term “Qur'anic Sociology”. He asserted:

The Qur'anic Sociology should be brought into full accord with the requirements of reconstructing our societies along the value-oriented pattern suggested by the Qur'an. (Basharat Ali, Quranic Sociology, pg 10).
The ideology of the knowledge of Social Sciences under Islamic paradigm is that all contemporary sciences can be restructured under the principle of “Tawhid”. All objective knowledge is existing in the world because of His Will, of His Wisdom and arrangements. Therefore Islamic scientific analysis of this contemporary knowledge should be understood under the divine pattern of Allah, who is the only One to create the entire universe.

CHALLENGES FOR ISLAMIZATION OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

Despite the best efforts of institution to promote Islamization of knowledge, there are some constraints which creating hurdles in the way of its progress. For instance, less acceptance by the society, lack of women participation, lack of support from Ulama, modernism and less foreseen impact on the society. Other important impediments are multi-religious society, lack of efficient policy planning by the government and language barriers. Beside these problems, no support is available from the educational institutions for reforming the curriculum to integrate the Islamization of Knowledge into the modern structure of the institutions(Fahm, 2014).

Due to western influences on education and philosophy of knowledge, many Muslim intellectuals are not united on one particular ideology. Lack of textbooks and related material is one of the biggest challenge for the Muslim Ummah, many of the literature in current education system is based on the western theories and ideas. Another biggest challenge which is facing by Muslims is the employability, which demands the contemporary knowledge based on technology and modern curriculum and discourse. Due to which, students prefer to opt the contemporary sciences rather than Islamized knowledge.

In a globalized world, the Ummah is self-indulgent and incongruent due to which suffering from treacherous malaise of intellectual crisis. Due to western imperialism and influence of globalism, there is rich gap existed between revealed and human knowledge. To cope with these malaises of Muslim Ummah, various terms such as; Islamic Renaissance, Islamic Reformation, and Islamic Revivalist Movement have been introduced to grasp the attention of the both Muslim and Non-Muslim world toward the revival of Islamic Civilization. The purpose of these movements was to realize the existence of Allah and His Unity is the basis of all types of Knowledge in the Universe (Alsen, et al, 2013). The Islamization of Knowledge itself is the combination of two types of knowledge, one is revealed and other is Natural sciences (Alwani, 1989). Furthermore Attas (1980) also emphasize that in contemporary Intellectual discourse, Islamization refers to interpretations of Islam based on secular ideology grounded in the Unity of Allah is the only originator of the Universe.

Uddin, (2014) mentioned certain threats to IOK due to embedded problem of secularism and Dualism, world leadership in the hand of non-Muslim agents, negative propaganda of west against Islam, Colonial supremacy on Muslim’s ideology. In addition to that, Intellectuals and political hegemony of west, internal conflicts among the Muslim intellectuals, adopting western knowledge in educational institutions, the fear of terrorism in the Arab world, as well the sacred picture of Islam through media.

CONCLUSION

Islamization of knowledge is contributing to blend contemporary Social Sciences with Revealed knowledge which is the need of today’s Muslim Community around the globe. In this regard, the paper has discussed certain paradigms to integrate Islamization of knowledge into contemporary sciences. Islamization of Human sciences is progressing toward introducing the Islamic perspectives in all disciplines of the modern sciences by developing relationship and connection between the two. Under the umbrella of Human Sciences, Islamic Sociology is also an attempt to study society and its problems in the light of Islamic principles, which is not perceived as the liberation from modern sciences but integration in it.

RECOMMENDATIONS

ZiauddinSardar (1988) gave the critical analysis of the Islamization of knowledge and stated that Muslim needs to evolve their own paradigms and introduce appropriate disciplines within the conceptual categories and value framework of Islam, not the emphasis should be on Islamizing existing disciplines. SimilarFazlurRahman (1988) also added on that knowledge (ilm) is good but problems lies with its misuse.

Therefore it is recommended that Muslim Ummah should have one position or agenda on Islamization of Knowledge or Islamization of Human sciences and need to unite to promote peace and justice in the world. The government should take steps to develop strong institutions supported by Islamic scholars and intellectuals who must be devoted toward solving the malaise of the Ummah. The existing curriculum needs to revise in the light of Islamization as well as need to trained teachers and produce new text books.
There is need to unite by all Muslim Ummah, particularly the Muslim Educationist and policy makers to work together for the promotion of Islamization of Knowledge. The world conference on the related concern should be held repeatedly to identify the ongoing problems facing by Muslim Ummah as well as to design strategies to cope with these Malaises.

REFERENCES


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