

HEC Curriculum of Compulsory Islamic Studies Course in all Bachelor Degree Programs in Pakistani Universities: A critical and analytical study

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Abstract

Islamic Republic of Pakistan is an Islamic state constitutionally as well as by the International Charter. In its constitution, the state will promote Islamic manner, education and the atmosphere for worship to Allah Almighty among its masses. Keeping in view, the Higher Education Commission developed the curriculum of compulsory course; Islamic Studies for all Bachelor Degree Programs in Pakistani Universities. The Curriculum was arranged by the educationists, subject specialists and experts of Islamic education. It stipulates to focus the aims: (1) to provide basic information about Islamic Studies, (2) to enhance understanding of Islamic Civilization, (3) to improve student's skill to perform prayers and other worships, (4) to enhance the skill of the students for understanding of issues related to faith and religious life.

This paper ventures to highlight the merits and demerits of the HEC Curriculum for the compulsory course of Islamic Studies. It examines the given aims and objectives in the curriculum are achieved by this course with the following key questions: Is there given aims meet the contemporary challenges facing students for the promotion of Islamic knowledge? What is current problems of the bachelor degree students? How can we fulfil the thrust of the student about Islamic knowledge? Does the Islamic Studies Curriculum update time to time for enhancing the students about the modern challenges of Islam in the world? This study analysis unites of the curriculum one by one and to improve with new topic and units for the development of Islamic education in the university students.

TAGS: *Islamic Education, Pakistani Universities, HEC Curriculum, Islamic Studies, Compulsory Course,*

Introduction

Education gives awareness and knowledge to upgrade and update everyday sciences in humanity. With knowledge by God, human preference is accepted upon the angles after the creation of universe. Islamic civilization starts from the first revelation "*iqra'*" by God to the last Prophet (PBUH). The first revelation consists upon first five verses of *surah al-'Alaq* which describe to get knowledge with reading and writing with pen four time to promote humanity. The important direction of this first revelation is to highlight the knowledge and source of knowledge even for the recognition of God. Knowledge accordingly has pivotal role. Without knowledge, man can not recognize his creator. The universe and the creation of the universe attract human mind to understand the creation of the creator but the all process of this episode comes with education and knowledge.

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The knowledge and education develops not only a person but it also promotes nation economically, socially and politically. Islam do not divide the education into its parts being its need in the world i.e. Islamic studies or non-Islamic studies. This division was arranged by the western scholars they adopted education according to sciences being Islamic studies is a part of social sciences. In this case, western universities established the branches of the knowledge which relates to the one part of the world studding its culture, religion and society. According to Western phenomenon, Islam exists in the society as religion and Muslim civilization has grown in different part of the world, with the evaluation of this system Islamic studies was adopted, as course, in the institutions. Islamic studies as a part of education, western scholars specified few approaches to get the research accordingly.

After independence, Muslim nation of Pakistan devoted to establish society according to Islamic faith and *Shari'ah*.² Government of Pakistan has taken place few steps for the reconstruction of the society according to Islam in newly established state. The University Grant Commission later on Higher Education Commission (HEC) decided to introduce the compulsory course; Islamic Studies in degree classes. With the passage of time, curriculum and syllabus was set with the cooperation of experts of Islamic studies from different institutions of the country. By last modified curriculum of HEC in 2015, that was arranged for all bachelor programs either they belong to sciences or technologies it was compulsory for all equally.

This article explores the curriculum of HEC that was compiled for bachelor programs in the education of Pakistan that meets the aims and objectives or not. The curriculum has aims and objectives to promote Islamic knowledge and education among youth of the country. It aims to establish Muslim nation for facing challenges and problem by the non-Muslims and ditheists in current era. This papers presents merits and demerits of this curriculum with analysis and critical methodology. This research aims to provide way out to promote Islamic education system developing the youth of Pakistan with the curriculum of bachelor degree programs.

Overview of the Study

In Pakistan, the Islamic Studies course has two dimensions: classical and modern. The classical dimension is running in traditional institutions like *madāris* etc. and modern system has been adopting in schools, collages, and universities. According of Islamic perception of Pakistan, reconstruction of Islamic society is a prime need which had been moving the legislation system of the country³ to lunch Islamic studies course in educational institutions. In the constitution of the country, Islamic education was declared a compulsory subject for the basic education system. Education ministry advised all provincial text book boards to compile Islamic Studies book to teach the compulsory as course from grade first to degree class.

² E-Proceedings of the 4th International Conference on Arabic Studies and Islamic Civilization 2017 (iCasic 2017). E-ISBN: 978-967-0792-16-3. 27th & 28th March 2017, Berjaya Times Square Hotel, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Accessed at 23-3-2021 <http://WorldConferences.net>

³ Waris Husain, *The Judicialization of Politics in Pakistan*, (London: Routledge, 2007), 98.

In this process, HEC organized a curriculum committee to compile Islamic Studies curriculum to enhance Islamic tradition among Muslim youth. The HEC curriculum of Islamic Studies Compulsory Course was developed or updated, last time in 2015 which is uploaded now on HEC webpage⁴ under the title Curriculum Archive in all bachelor programs either engineering or sciences. As annexure C, the Islamic Studies outline is attached with each curriculum of the program.

Analyzing the Objectives of the Outline

The outline starts from the objectives which were focused to improve skills of the students during teachings. It is initially, analyzed these objectives with observing the need of the students and society. There were mentioned four objectives:

1. To provide Basic information about Islamic Studies.
2. To enhance understanding of the students regarding Islamic Civilization.
3. To improve Students skill to perform prayers and other worships.
4. To enhance the skill of the students for understanding of issues related to faith and religious life.

The imperative study of the course is to set according to the level of the student with keeping in knowledge their previous studies as pre requisite course before degree class. The students have been acquired basic teaching of Islam from grade one to intermediate classes. They have gotten the Islamic education from basic roots to describe the doctrines, worships and ethics of the religion. Even somehow, the students have been practically adopted some good values of the religion but they sue these habits regularly. In this regard, it does not display the current condition of the students to require knowledge about Islam with initial stage. The repeating of the matter about worthy religion with higher philosophy and skills can give higher techniques for improving human habits according to understanding. The factual knowledge about first said objective expresses to get basic education of Islamic studies although the students have already gotten these basic concepts about Islam repeating in previous classes. Basic education of Islam is divided with three categories: doctrine, system of worship and ethics.⁵ The students have been learnt these knowledge from different previous steps. The said outline requires improved objectives according to degree class level. Understanding of Islamic Civilization is not core issue of Muslim *Ummah* which has need to discuss among the student especially in the students of university level. The universe has been changing with global village to promote global ideas with the awareness of materialistic tools. The young mind has self-analyzing power to satisfy his or her body with mater escaping soul satisfaction which is not significantly objective in the modern time. In current time, the students ought to aware Islamic Civilization with the comparison to other civilizations exist in modern era especially with the western civilization because it has influence materialistically in the humanity promoting financial development of the

⁴<https://www.hec.gov.pk/english/services/universities/RevisedCurricula/Page%2FCurriculum-Archive.aspx> accessed 23-10-2020

⁵ Rukhsana Zia, Religion and Education in Pakistan: An Overview, accessed at 20-02-2021,

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/226221076_Religion_and_education_in_Pakistan_an_overview

man.⁶ Islamic civilization promotes both side of the humanity; mater and soul while western civilization focuses mater only which has root in this world and that has to die in there as well. The students must be award by this comparison in both civilization otherwise basic education of Islamic civilization was conveyed to them.

It is effective and attractive way to explain worship system of Islam with the needs human body by its benefits rather than to explain improvement of skills of worship. Wish to perform worship and duty does not acquire with improvement of the skills but it comes with strong relations by creating strong personal accountability in hereafter. Willing to say prayer produces self-assessment regarding personal relationship with God. It mostly depends upon the habit of practice in whole previous life not in few months. The process of lesson with repeating Islamic knowledge in one semester it truly drops desire in the heart of the student for improvement of this practice regarding prayer and other compulsory duties by God.

Today, Islam and Muslim *Ummah* are facing many issues either in one Muslim country or in whole Muslim community in the world. Some issues were adopted individually and some others are growing in Muslim societies with collective misdeeds. For addressing such issues, there is no need to include skill in compiling the objectives of the study of Islamic education.⁷ The Islamic Studies faculty should understand the background of those students they come to different discipline to the universities in bachelor level. The objectives should be compiled accordingly to grow their thoughts on strong Islamic foundation. They should convey the authentic knowledge to compete modern challenges grown by the western thoughts such as naturalism, atheism, humanism, Marxism etc. The thoughts provide to get dynamics of the society which develop societies on soft foundation. The foundation generates strong and positive relations with other nations to enhance human dignity and peace for the recognition fruit and conclusion of that foundation.

Analyzing the Course of the Outline

The improvement of the syllabus is educational science to give updated knowledge with time to time according to need of the course. It is not difficult to grow the knowledge with facing challenges. The HEC curriculum of Islamic studies as compulsory subject for degree classes was not updated after 2015. The curriculum is analyzed with the needs of the time and challenges faced by the Muslim youth especially in the country.

The table shows the previous topics in the said curriculum and new topics which can be include in that outline.

<u>Previous Topics</u>	<u>Current Suggested Topics</u>
Introduction to Quranic Studies a. Basic Concepts of Quran b. History of Quran c. <i>Uloom-ul-Qur'ān</i> (Difficult to understand)	Human thrust to religion: Islam a. Comparison and Preference b. Introduction to other

⁶ Prof. M. Saleem, Tarikh Nazriah Pakistan, (Lahore: Idarah Talimi Tahqiq, 1994), 141.

⁷ C. Christine Fair, "Islamic Education in Pakistan" in Asia Policy Number 4 (July, 2007), 107-134, Accessed at 13-02-2021, <http://asiapolicy.nbr.org>

	<p>religions</p> <p>c. Progressive and growing religion in the world</p> <p>d. Characteristics of Islam</p>
<p>Study of Selected Text of Holly Quran</p> <p>a. Basic <i>Qur'ānic</i> Teachings of Faith related to Surah Baqarah Verse 284-286</p> <p>b. Verses of <i>Sūrah Al-Mumanoon</i> Related to Characteristics of faithful people (Verse No-1-11)</p>	<p>Introduction to Reveled books</p> <p>a. The Holy Bible</p> <p>b. <i>Qur'ān</i></p> <p>c. Comparison between reveled books</p> <p>d. Revelation and writing by human text</p>
<p>Study of Selected Text of Holy <i>Qur'ān</i></p> <p>c. Faith on the Day of Judgment with Verses of <i>Sūrah Al-Hashar</i> (18,19,20) Related to Day of Judgment</p>	<p>Study of Selected Text about challenge to Arabs</p> <p>a. Arabian language and <i>Qur'ānic</i> Text</p> <p>b. Protection and significance</p> <p>c. Challenges by Modern Orientalists</p>
<p>Seerat of Holy Prophet (S.A.W) I</p> <p>a. Important Events with Lessons Derived from the life of Holy Prophet in Makkah</p> <p>b. Basic <i>Qur'ānic</i> Teachings of <i>Adab-e-Nabi</i> relate to <i>Sūrah Al-ahzāb</i></p>	<p><i>Sīrah</i> of Holy Prophet (S.A.W) I</p> <p>a. <i>Risālah</i> and <i>Nabūwah</i></p> <p>b. <i>Sīrah</i> for all the time</p> <p>c. Role Modal in every age</p> <p>d. Blessed in indoor and outdoor activities</p> <p>e. Study of Makkan and Medinian Times</p>
<p>Seerat of Holy Prophet (S.A.W) II</p> <p>a. Important Events with Lessons Derived from the life of Holy Prophet in Makkah</p> <p>b. Basic <i>Qur'ānic</i> Teachings of <i>Adab-e-Nabi</i> relate to <i>Surah Al-ahzāb</i></p>	<p><i>Sīrah</i> of Holy Prophet (S.A.W) II</p> <p>a. Finality of the Prop hood</p> <p>b. Ware and Peace in the <i>Sīrah</i></p> <p>c. Status of the Prophets and Religious personalities</p> <p>d. Cartoon Issue and Western civilization</p>
<p>Introduction to <i>Sunnah</i></p> <p>a. Basic Concepts of Hadith</p> <p>b. History of Hadith</p> <p>c. <i>Uloom –ul-Hadīth</i></p>	<p>Introduction to <i>Ḥadīth</i></p> <p>Added: Modern challenges to <i>Ḥadīth</i></p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> d. Kinds of <i>Hadīth</i> e. Sunnah & <i>Hadīth</i> f. Legal Position of <i>Hadīth</i> 	
Introduction to Islamic Law and Jurisprudence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Basic Concepts of Islamic Law and Jurisprudence. b. History and Importance of Islamic Law and Jurisprudence. c. Sources of Islamic Law and Jurisprudence. d. Nature of Differences in Islamic Law. e. Islam and Sectarianism. 	Introduction to Islamic Law <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Basic Concepts of Islamic Law and Jurisprudence. (Same) b. Comparison between Islamic Law and Manmade law c. Sources of Islamic Law and Jurisprudence. (Same) d. Compatible with the time e. <i>Ijtihād</i>; the modern phenomenon of Islam
Islamic Culture and Civilization <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Basic Concepts of Islamic Culture and Civilization. b. Historical Development of Islamic Culture and Civilization. c. Characteristics of Islamic Culture and Civilization. d. Islamic Culture and Civilization and Contemporary Issues. 	Islamic Civilization <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Foundation of Islamic Civilization: Iqra' (Knowledge and Science) b. Historical Development of Islamic Culture and Civilization. (Same) c. Comparison in Islamic Civilization and others d. Islamic Civilization local Muslim culture e. <i>Khilāhpat</i> System in Islam
Islam and Science <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Basic Concepts of Islam and Science. b. Contributions of Muslims in the Development of Science. c. Quran and Science. 	Development of Sciences in Islam <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Creation of the universe and Islam b. Science and Knowledge c. Introduction to Muslim Sentences and their role d. Science and modern Muslims
Islamic Economic System <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Basic Concepts of Islamic Economic System. b. Means of Distribution of wealth in Islamic Economics. c. Islamic Concept of <i>Ribā</i>. d. Islamic Ways of Trade and Commerce. 	Economical System of Islam-I <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Islamic Economic System. (<i>Kitāb ul Byuū' and Fiqh ul Mua'āmlāt</i>) b. Means of Distribution of wealth c. Halal Source of <i>Rizq</i> d. Islamic Concept of

	<i>Ribā</i>
Political System of Islam <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Basic Concepts of Islamic Political System. Islamic Concept of Sovereignty. Basic Institutions of Govt. in Islam 	Economical System of Islam-II <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Islamic Banking & Finance Comparison between Conventional and Islamic Banking system Welfare Tax and <i>Zakāh</i> <i>Sadāqat</i> and <i>infāq</i>
Islamic History <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Period of <i>Khilāf-E-Rāshida</i>. Period of Ummayyads. Period of Abbasids. 	Preaching System (Da'wah) in Islam <ol style="list-style-type: none"> What is <i>Da'wah</i> <i>Da'wah</i> according to <i>Sīrah</i> Modern techniques for <i>Da'wah</i> Modern Challenges to <i>Da'wah</i> <i>Da'wah</i> in Muslim and Non-Muslim Society
Social System of Islam <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Basic Concepts of Social System of Islam. Elements of Family. Ethical Values of Islam. 	Social System of Islam <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Basic Concepts of Social System of Islam. Elements of Family. Ethical Values of Islam. Human Rights in Islam
	Muslim and Non-Muslim Relation <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Relations with Non-Muslim neighbor Country vid Relations Worldwide Relations

The modern needed topics were included in said outline under the title of current suggested topics. Some relevant topics should be consisted under the major field. The outline needs to deliver the students with effective way by interested mythology that depends upon the faculty.

Analyzing the Referral Material

According to the topic, the faculty should get martial from specified books and that should be mentioned at the end of outline. In the HEC outline of Islamic Studies course, most of referral books were consisted by the discipline of Islamic Law although in only one class the Islamic Law should discuss among the student. For rest of the classes, only three books were consulted these were by Dr. Muhammad Hamidullah. The referral books should be consulted by different Muslim and Muslim scholars presenting unified material among the students. With this methodology they may analyze the concepts of Islam. The student can get the updated and approved knowledge from the basic sources of Islam.

Conclusion

According to specified material, the HEC outline was analyzed to improve the student's knowledge with current and important issues which have to be taught to the bachelor degree classes. The paper suggests new avenues for the improvement and betterment of the youth. Every challenge made stands in the society it must be addressed and the paper critically suggested replacement of the old curriculum. The old curriculum, almost was compiled all sides of Islamic studies but it was not briefed with removing those topics the student had touched in previous grades while new suggested curriculum removed taught material by the students. It gives awareness and knowledge to the students with new challenges in contemporary world due to need of the modern time. The bachelor degree programs in Pakistani Universities are the mostly signals for the students to earn and stable their practical life in the society. The suggested curriculum of the compulsory course, Islamic Studies guides the students to keep themselves on right way with meeting righteousness (*Khair*) in this world and achieving Jannah in hereafter.

Recommendations

By keeping in view the above findings and conclusion the study found that there is a need to improve the HEC curriculum with new topics that were the challenges of the Islamic Studies.

- 1 The curriculum of Islamic studies should be updated according to the need of time and society. The faculty should deliver relevant material according to the student of that sciences.
- 2 With the both theoretical and practical approaches should be employed into the course to mold the mind of the student to the Islamic true spirit.
- 3 The teachers should change the motives for creating interest in their teaching with modern techniques.
- 4 Modern challenges should be addressed in suggested curriculum to uplift the student to face current challenges under the Islamic tools and guidance.
- 5 Every degree programs should allow to change few topics according to the specialization of the degree background.
- 6 Major changes should be acquired to all degree programs like: Islamic concept of Interest, Islamic mode of business, Islamic Idea of administration, Blasphemy Law, Human rights in Islam etc.
