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The World Conferences on Muslim Education & their Influences on Islamic Education in Nigeria

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Abstract

The world conferences on Muslim Education which commenced in 1977 have been an eye opener for the Muslim Ummah to realize its educational backwardness and to proffer solutions to them. Various communiqués of the conferences have assisted in shaping the standard of education of some Muslim dominated countries. Islamic education in Nigeria has been influenced by the decisions reached at the conferences as well. This paper attempts to consider these influences as well as the tasks ahead of Muslims in the country in their effort to address the challenges of total implementation of the decisions.

Introduction

The much-cherished flavour of true Islamic education which produced men of great intellectual acumen had for long been soured by quite a number of internal and external polluting forces. The colonization of the Muslim world by the western imperialists worsened the situation with the imposition of an alien system of education properly financed and monitored by the colonialists. The resultant effect of this is the gradual reduction of Islamic education to a mere private affair with no financial assistance from the public fund. The menacing effect of this is felt when considering the pathetic conditions of the products of this system of education during their studentship days and after their graduation. The situation was so bad that they resorted to street begging before they could keep body and soul together. After graduation, they became only functional at socio-religious gatherings and were unable to compete favourably in the labour market with the products of the western school system. Where they were considered for any gainful employment, they were mostly found in such low-paying and non-prestigious cadre jobs as security men, night guards, gardeners or cleaners.

With the adoption of the alien system of education by the Muslim world, Muslims became exposed to two parallel and contradictory systems of education namely the traditional Muslim system and the imported European system of education. This resulted in what Kasule refers to as "divided loyalties, confusion in the minds of students and intellectual schizophrenia of the *ummah's* educated elites". Apart from this, the philosophical foundation upon which the western system of education is built is grossly inimical to the teaching of Islam. Among its inhibitive features that make it incompatible with the teaching of Islam are, the relegation of God to the lowest ebb in its curriculum, excessive materialism, over dependence on contradictory philosophies, a culture of skepticism, absolute dependence on techniques, and tight compartmentalization of disciplines among others.

Unsatisfied with the nature of education Muslims were being exposed to, there emerged agitations here and there calling for a complete overhauling of the body of knowledge in its entirety. Initially personal efforts were made by scholars and educators like Rashid Rida (d. 1935CE), Jamaluddin Afghani (d. 1897CE), Sayyid Quth (d. 1966CE), and some others. Scholars like Sayyid Abul-Ala Mawdudi (d. 1979CE), Hassan al-Banna (d. 1949CE), and Allama Muhammad Iqbal also made remarkable contributions towards having comprehensive and dynamic concepts of Islamization of education in their

¹O.H. Kasule, "Islamisation (Return) of Disciplines of Knowledge: Procedures & Processes." A paper presented at the 6th World Conference on Islamic Education, Cape Town, South Africa, between September 19-25 1996, p.1

speeches and writings. The inclusion of Islamic Studies into the western school curricula as well as adjustment of the curriculum of the traditional Muslim schools to incorporate some western disciplines could be said to be one of the consequences of the numerous agitations. However, when it was obvious that the crises of Muslim education was far beyond this, Muslim scholars went back to the drawing board in 1977 when the First World Conference on Muslim Education was held with a view to addressing globally the multifarious problems facing the education of the *ummah*. Between then and 1996, six of such conferences were organized and held in some countries. This paper is therefore aimed at studying the outcome of these conferences with a view to seeing how far the recommendations made at the conferences are being implemented in Nigeria and what should be the future direction of the programme of Islamization of knowledge which culminated in the conferences in the country.

A Synopsis of the Conferences

The First World Conference on Muslim Education was held in Makkah between March 31 and April 8 1977 (12-20 Rabi' al-Thani 1397), with the theme: "Basis for an Islamic Education System." King Abdul-Aziz University and the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia organized the conference. Among the members of the organizing committee of the conference were Professor Syed Ali Ashraf, Dr. Abdullah Mohammed Zaid and Dr. G.N. Saeed.¹ About three hundred and fifty Muslim scholars from various parts of the world and from different areas of disciplines and specializations attended the conference. Generally speaking, the conference unanimously observed that:

The existing conditions in present day educational institutions in most Muslim countries do not truly reflect the Islamic ideal, and these institutions do not play their rightful role in the education of the younger generation in Islamic faith, thought and conduct, and there exists at present a regrettable dichotomy in education in the Muslim world; one system namely, religious education being completely divorced from the secular sciences, and secular education being equally divorced from religion, although such compartmentalization was contrary to the true Islamic concept of education and made it impossible for the products of either system to represent Islam as a comprehensive and integrated vision of life.²

In compliance with the theme of the conference, different sub-committees were set up to design the aims and objectives of education in Islam and in relation to different disciplines. To bail out education from its basic predicament, the need to reframe the objective of education was emphasized. For instance, the aim of education in relation to natural sciences and as reported by the committee on natural sciences (including applied sciences and technology) was "to motivate the human intellect to ponder on the universe; to understand the nature of things and beings that are comprehensible; to discover Allah's laws of nature and use them beneficially, and thus enable man to be the vicegerent of Allah on earth."³ King Abdul-Aziz University, Jeddah, published the proceedings of the conference in six volumes in 1979.

The Second World Conference on Muslim Education was jointly organized by Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad, Pakistan and King Abdul-Aziz University, Saudi Arabia. It was held in Islamabad, Pakistan between March 15 and 20 1980 (1400A.H). The main task of the conference was to design curricula for different ladders of education with the view to bridging the gap between secular and

¹See the interim report on Sixth International Islamic Education Conference, Islamic College, Cape Town, South Africa, 1997, p.126.
G.N. Saeed, "Modernisation of Muslim Society & Education: Need for a Practical Approach", in *Education & Society in the Muslim World* (ed) M. Wazirullah Khan (Jeddah: Hodder & Stoughton & King Abdul-Aziz University, 1981) p.33

²First World Conference on Muslim Education: Conference Book (Makkah & Jeddah: King Abdul-Aziz University, 1977) pp.108ff. See also S.W.A. Hussaini, *Islamic Science & Public Education: Lessons from History of Science* (Malaysia: 1986) pp.45-46

madrasah systems of education. Participants at the conference jointly agreed with the classification of knowledge into perennial and acquired sciences. Perennial knowledge includes Qur'an, *Hadith*, Qur'anic Arabic, *Sirah*, *Usulul-Fiqh* and such ancillary subjects like Islamic culture, Comparative Religion and Islamic Metaphysics. Acquired knowledge has to do with all branches of knowledge categorized as Humanities, Social Sciences, Natural, Applied and Practical Sciences. However, there was the need to integrate the two branches of knowledge through a curriculum.

At the conference, the recommended curriculum for different strata of education was designed. The curriculum for different age groups in primary education include the teaching of the reading and meaning of some selected *sawar* through translation in the national language; *Diriyat* (including *Tawhid* and *Fiqh*), history, narratives and poems, geography, mathematics, Arabic, nature study and elementary science. At the secondary school level, the recommended compulsory subjects include Islamic Studies (including Qur'anic recitation, memorization and interpretation; *Hadith*, *Sirah* and History of Islam); Arabic, Mathematics, one of the natural sciences, Geography History and Civics. At the university level, it was recommended that Islamic education be made compulsory for all students and should consist of two courses, one Arabic language and the other, either Islamic Culture and Civilization, or History of Islamic Thought and Ideas, in addition to two other courses from acquired knowledge which could be Islamic philosophy of science and learning and either Islamic Arts and Architectures or any other one subject from History, Economics or Sociology to be taught from the Islamic perspective.¹

In its bid to facilitate and encourage the integration of science and technology with Islam, the conference set up a committee on science, *shari'ah* and education. The committee recommended among other things that, institutions, departments and centres be set-up for studies, research and publications on Islamic ethics and values in science and technology, and Islamic philosophy, sociology and history of science and technology for development. In non-Muslim or Muslim minority countries or educational institutions where optimum conditions are not present, the committee suggested the adoption of substitute, adjunct, source or relational strategies for introducing Islamic ideology, ethics and values in science and technology curricula. The substitute method is an approach where courses offered, for example, by the Department of Islamic Studies, is substituted in lieu of the courses in the social sciences required to be studied in the secularized departments. This method can be adopted after necessary permission has been sought from the appropriate authorities or educational institution concerned. The adjunct approach is a system whereby courses or supplementary readings from the Islamic viewpoint are introduced to add to courses in existing secular curricula.² The source approach is the system of making references to the Qur'an during the course of teaching science and technology, while the relational approach is a method of relating scientific and technological concepts and principles to the Qur'an and *sunnah*.³

A year after the Second World Conference on Muslim Education, the third of its nature came up at Dhaka, Bangladesh between March 5 and 11 1981. It was co-organised by the Institute of Islamic Education and Research, Bangladesh, and King Abdul-Aziz University, Saudi Arabia. The conference which was a follow up of the recommendations of the previous ones was aimed at getting textbooks written on the basis of the curricula designed in the last conference. At the conference, the need to source information towards development of textbooks in various fields of disciplines and at various ladders of education was stressed. The World Centre for Muslim Education was said to have been given the responsibility of coordinating, publishing and disseminating through translations into major languages of the Muslim world, such textbooks. As part of the measures to source information, university libraries

¹ N. Zaim, "Evaluation & Implementation of Islamic Education in the Context of Modern Systems in Turkey" in *Muslim Education Quarterly*, Vol IV, No IV, 1987, Pp.16-18

² Hussaini, p.54

were implored to establish centres of information, documentation and data retrieval pertaining to every subject treated from the Islamic viewpoint.⁷ It was also recommended that centres of translation be established to translate texts into and from Arabic, English, French and other national languages. Universities were equally implored to borrow a leaf from King Abdul-Aziz University, Jeddah which established the International Center for Research in Islamic Economics and which is championing the course of developing textbooks in Islamic Economics. The conference also recommended that specialized compendia be prepared on every subject based on the Qur'an, the *sunnah* and history of Islamic ideas drawn from the writings of all the great Muslim scholars of the last fourteen centuries.⁸

As part of the measures to set the ball rolling on the preparation of Islamic based textbooks on various subjects, identification of Islamic topics, theories, terms or concepts from the existing textbooks were made, while preparation of supplementary texts for teachers to replace un-Islamic elements as well as writing of revised or new texts from the tested supplementary texts were suggested.⁹ In addition to this, publication of occasional papers, monograph series, professional journals, bulletins and newsletters as well as organization of seminars, conferences, workshops, in-service training and continuing education activities were some of the strategies suggested for the development of Islamic textbooks.

In 1982, the Fourth World Conference on Muslim Education was held in Jakarta, Indonesia. The theme of the conference was "Islamic Methods of Teaching." The conference noted with dismay that the teaching methodology which was highly rooted in Islamic teachings, had been totally re-coloured to non-portrayal of Islam and thus recommended the revision of teacher education courses and an Islamic pattern in training teachers.

The Fifth World Conference on Muslim Education was held in Cairo, Egypt, in March 1987. The conference came long after the one held at Jakarta in 1982, and the reason for this is yet unclear. However, participants in the conference were drawn from both Muslim majority and Muslim minority countries. Selections were made from different continents - Indonesia from the East, England from Europe, Bangladesh and Pakistan from South Asia, Turkey and the Gulf area from the Middle East, United States of America from the Americas and Nigeria from Africa.¹⁰ Sheikh Ahmad Lemu and Hajiya Aisha Lemu were Nigerian delegates at the conference.¹¹

At the practical workshop sessions of the conference, scholars were divided into twelve groups based on their field of specializations to discuss how syllabuses and lesson plans of such subjects as Arabic, Islamic Studies, Biology, Mathematics, Arts and Crafts, English, History, Geography, Science, commercial subjects, physical science and other junior primary subjects could be Islamized. At each session, each subject was tabled before the scholars for proper evaluation while the recommendations of the various subject-groups were forwarded to the Review Committee for proper scrutiny, criticism, correction, evaluation and comments before the final approval.¹²

In order to ensure a success of the conference, experienced Muslim teachers were drawn from various Muslim private and public schools in South Africa to attend the conference in addition to other numerous delegates from countries like United Kingdom, United States of America, Saudi Arabia, Egypt,

⁷Husaini...p.57

⁸Zaim...p.38

⁹Zaim...p.38

¹⁰S.A.Ashraf, "Evaluation of Muslim Education in the East & the West: A Contemporary Image" in *Muslim Education Quarterly*, Vol IV, No IV, 1987, p.1

¹¹Oral interview conducted with Hajiya Aisha Lemu, the Director-General of the Islamic Education Trust, Minna, on January 19 2000. At the conference Shaykh Ahmad Lemu delivered a paper titled "The Approach to Islamization of Education: A Primary Level Experiment in Nigeria." Aisha Lemu's paper was published in Vol IV, No IV, 1987 edition of the *Muslim Education Quarterly*. Ahmad Lemu's was published in Vol V, No 2 of 1988.

¹²Interim Report on 6th International Islamic Education Conference, p.15

India, Jordan, Mauritius, Malaysia and Uganda. According to the organizer of the conference, Maulana Ali Adam, the aim of the conference was "to produce approved blueprints for twelve core school subjects for both primary and secondary schools."²¹ "We want practical results – the teacher in the classroom has needs and we must deliver the goods", emphasised Maulana Ali Adam.²²

To conclude this aspect of the paper, it is observed that there had been a long period of break on the world conferences. From 1996 when the last one was held, it was only in December 2009 that the Seventh World Conference was held in Malaysia. Whatever the case may be, the conferences' objectives have not been jeopardized, as they served as important landmarks in the history of Islamic education and thought throughout the world. The conferences strengthened the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT), a body established in 1981 for the purpose of championing the course of Islamisation of Knowledge.²³ The IIIT has equally organized some international conferences on Islamisation of knowledge to complement the achievements of the world conferences. The rationale behind the Islamisation of knowledge programme is, according to Abu Sulayman, "the conviction that the Ummah's crisis and performance deficiencies lie first and foremost in the distortions that have plagued Islamic thought, disrupting its unity of knowledge, and transforming it into a stagnant textual body of knowledge... The Islamisation of knowledge is a plan to reformulate Islamic thought, using as its starting point Islamic beliefs and Islam's humanitarian, global, and civilisational principles based on *tawhid* and deputation."²⁴

Influence of the conferences on Islamic Education in Nigeria

Apart from the fact that the conferences had afforded scholars from all walks of life, the opportunity of converging together for the realization of a common goal and objective, they had opened the eyes of the entire Muslims to realize the marginalisation of their education, colonisation of their tradition, distortion of their culture and erosion of their worldview. The conferences thus served as fora for the Muslim world to come together for the redemption, revitalisation and reorientation of its educational system. The task of reforming the education of the Muslim *ummah* was not equally seen as a sole responsibility of the intelligentsia; hence Muslims from different disciplines and professional sectors including government agencies were involved in the conferences. Other influences of the various conferences on Muslim education on Islamic education in Nigeria are considered below.

Rise of Educational and Intellectual Institutions and Organizations

The influx of educational and intellectual institutions and organizations is one of the aftermaths of the various conferences on Muslim education. The greatest consequence of the first conference was the establishment of the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT) in Herndon, Virginia, United States of America in 1981 C.E (1401 A.H). In the same year, the World Centre for Islamic Education was established in Makkah under the auspices of the Organization of Islamic Conferences (OIC) to "spearhead conceptual research and implementation of the blueprints and recommendation of the conference."²⁵ In Nigeria, the branch office of the IIIT was established in the premise of the Bayero University, Kano with zonal branches in some states of the federation. The Nigeria office of the IIIT like its head office in the United States is a non-political and non-profit making organization registered by the Corporate Affairs Commission with the objectives of developing and presenting to the world an alternative system of knowledge that is in accord with the Islamic worldview. It also aims at evolving a new system of education that will serve as a means of imparting and transmitting the Islamic system of

²¹Conference Update, NO 1, September 19 1996, p.1

²²Conference Update, p.1

²³For more information on the World Islamic Education & International Conferences on Islamisation of Knowledge, see R.I Adeboye, "Islamisation of Knowledge: Global Developments, Individual Efforts & Institutional Contributions" Kano IIIT Nigeria Office, 2008

²⁴A.A Abu Sulayman, "Revitalising Higher Education in the Muslim World", London IIIT, 2007 p.14

²⁵Interim Report on Sixth International Islamic Education Conference, p.2

knowledge; to initiate a process of making the Islamic epistemology prevail over other systems of knowledge and to use the knowledge system in making the Islamic civilization to become relevant and dominant in the future.¹⁹

Also, the Islamic Trust of Nigeria (ITN) and the Nigerian Association of Model Islamic Schools (NAMIS) were established. These organisations and institutions have been making efforts at solving the educational and intellectual problems of the Muslims. The motion for the establishment of NAMIS was moved at a seminar organized by the Islamic Education Trust (IET) on behalf of the Nigerian Da'wah Coordination Council for proprietors and head-teachers of private Islamic schools between April 19 and 23 1995 (19th - 23rd Dhul-Qidah 1415). At the end of the seminar, it was decided that an association to be called NAMIS be formed to create an avenue for Muslim schools to come together for matters of general interest.²⁰ According to the first National Secretary of the Association, the idea to establish NAMIS is to educate Muslim proprietors of private schools on their dual role of providing standard Islamic as well as western education.²¹

Publication of Books and Journals:

The series of conferences have led to the publication of textbooks and journals with the view of selling out the Islamisation of knowledge programme. The Nigeria office of the IIIT in addition to publishing different related textbooks floats a journal called *Al-Ijtihad: The Journal of Islamisation of Knowledge and Contemporary Issues*. This journal like the American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences (AJISS) of the mother institute contributes to Muslim manpower development especially in academic institutions. It has also published many textbooks, as well as the Nigerian edition of *Islamisation of knowledge: A Methodology* by Imad al-Din Khalil and Rafik Issa Beckun's *Islamic Business Ethics* for accessibility purposes. Most of these materials are distributed freely or sold at subsidised rates to individuals, organisations or academic institutions.

In addition to various long essays, dissertations and theses written on different disciplines from an Islamic perspective, the Usmanu Dan Fodio University, Sokoto, has published some textbooks to ease the problem of literature in some areas of disciplines from the Islamic point of view. Among such books are *fiqh* and economics, nature and methodology of Islamic Sociology, and a three-volume book titled *Reading in Islamic Economics*.

Establishment of Model Primary and Post-Primary schools:

One of the outcomes of the conferences was the establishment of International Islamic universities of Islamabad, Dhaka, Kuala Lumpur, Niger and Uganda with the aim of implementing the recommendations of the conferences. In Nigeria, many Muslim schools are springing up as private institutions of learning for the implementation of the conferences' resolutions. It needs to be mentioned that the Founder Trustees of the Islamic Education Trust have been participating actively in various conferences on Muslim education at national and international level. Both Sheikh Lemu and Aisha Lemu presented papers at the Fifth World Conference on Muslim Education held in Cairo.²² In order to implement the various ideas put together at the various world conferences, the I.E.T in September 1984 established a Model Islamic Senior Primary School in Minna with a view to teaching the secular subjects from the Islamic point of view. To start the Islamisation process in this school, such subjects as Health Science, General Science, Agricultural Science and Social Studies syllabi were critically examined and subjected to rigorous Islamic revision. The revised syllabi have since been adopted by the school while

¹⁹This is contained in the hard bill printed by the Nigeria office of the IIIT.

²⁰This writer attended the conference where the decision was taken.

²¹An oral interview conducted with Alhaji Ibrahim Yahya, the first National Secretary of NAMIS. Interviewed at Da'wah Institute of Nigeria, IET, Minna on April 5 1997.

²²See the *Muslim Education Quarterly* Vol IV, No IV, 1987, pp. 4-13 & Vol V, No II, 1988, pp. 76-80 for the text of the papers.

many other private Islamic schools have been borrowing a leaf from there”

After the successful implementation of the Islamisation of knowledge programme in the LET pre-primary and primary schools, it started selling the idea to other private Islamic schools in the country by compiling the list of the schools and inviting them to a national seminar on Islamization of knowledge in 1994. The 1995 seminar of same nature culminated in the birth of the Nigerian Association of Model Islamic Schools (NAMIS) which is a conglomerate of all registered private Islamic schools in Nigeria. The Association was however registered with the name Association of Model Islamic Schools in Nigeria (AMIS).

The establishment of New Horizons College in 1993 by this body marked the extension of the implementation of the various recommendations of the world conferences on Muslim Education to secondary school level. This step was taken to guide against any negative effect which subsequent studies under secular education system might have on the students at post primary level of education, and to ensure continuity in the students' exposure to Islamic education. Though, teaching and learning are going on in a strict Islamic environment and the College has amenities of international standard, the New Horizons College is yet to Islamize all its academic syllabus as it still follows the secular government approved curricula.

Conferences, Seminars, Workshops and Enlightenment programmes

The world conferences have given birth and are still giving birth to subsequent conferences, seminars, workshops and lectures organized by various organizations with the aim of echoing out the recommendations of the earlier conferences. The Nigeria office of the IIT through its outreach activities has organized quite a good number of seminars, conferences, workshops and discussions with the aim of taking the Islamisation of knowledge programme to the academic staff and students on campuses of higher institutions across the country. More than 200 seminars on the relevance of Islamisation of knowledge to various disciplines have been organised in various universities, colleges of Education, polytechnics and even secondary schools.²¹

The IITN has also sponsored some workshops and seminars on Islamisation of knowledge in collaboration with some institutions of higher learning and Islamic boards. For example the Workshop on Islamisation of knowledge held from March 27-29, 1989 (Sha'ban 20-22, 1409) at Usmanu Dan Fodio University, Sokoto was jointly organised and sponsored by the University's Centre for Islamic Studies, the I. E. T, the Muslim World League and the IITN.²² Also the IITN in conjunction with the Muslim Forum of Bayero University, Kano, jointly organised and conducted a One-Day Seminar on Islamisation of knowledge in July 1996. Another National Workshop on Islamisation of knowledge was jointly organised by the IITN and Usmanu Dan Fodio University in May 2000. The body also co-organised a National Higher Institutions Convention of Muslim Students (NHICOMS) with the MSSN National headquarters in February 2001 at the University of Ilorin. In May the same year, it co-organised an International Workshop on Muslim Education Reforms in the Muslim World with the Faculty of Education, Bayero University, Kano, where more than twenty papers were presented. Between January 22 and 24 2003, the Institute co-organised an "International Workshop on Quranic Schools for West and Central African Countries", with the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO), Morocco, the International Islamic Charitable Organization (IICO) and Faculty of Arts and Islamic Studies, Bayero University, Kano. Delegates from more than fifteen African countries attended

²¹ Oral interview conducted with Mallam Ghazayy Bala, Education Secretary, IET Minna, January 21 2000

²² S. Sulaiman, "An Appraisal of the Islamisation of Knowledge Programme in Nigeria" in *Ishtaq-The Journal of Islamization of Knowledge & Contemporary Issues*, Vol II, No 1, January 2001, Pp 8-10.

²³ T. Z. Abedin, "Workshop on Islamisation of Knowledge, Sokoto, Nigeria" *AJISS*, Vol VI, No I, Henson, IIT & AMIS, 1989, pp 106-109.

this workshop held in Kano. Between September 14 and 18 2010, the Nigeria office of the IIIT also organized a three-day International Conference and one-day Summit on Islamic Universities in Kano, where more than fifty papers were presented. All the four recognized private Islamic universities in Nigeria were represented at the conference.

Another means through which the conclusions of the conferences are planted into the minds of intellectuals is by evolving discussion groups in some institutions of higher learning. There is the Muslim Forum Islamisation of knowledge Group Discussion at Bayero University. At the Universities of Maiduguri and Ilorin, there is also a Discussion Group where Muslim intellectuals converge to discuss the teaching of secular subjects from Islamic perspective and to provide a forum for regular meeting and exchange of ideas on Islamic education.

In addition to its annual general meeting, AMIS, at the national level has organised workshops and seminars on various aspects of school administration, innovative teaching methods for various subject areas, developing an Islamic culture and environment in the school, the making of effective audio-visual teaching aids and many others. For instance, a seminar on "The Administration of Model Islamic Schools" and a workshop on "Developing and Sustaining a Muslim School" were organized by the Association in 1997 and 2000 respectively. At the state level, lectures and seminars are also organized where able lecturers are invited to handle various topical issues regarding Muslim schools.

Establishment of universities

It needs to be mentioned that consequent upon the conferences on Muslim education, some international Islamic universities were established in countries like Uganda, Malaysia, Niger, Islamabad, Dhaka and Kuala Lumpur. In Nigeria four private Islamic universities have been given license of operation by the National Universities Commission. These universities were established by either Muslim individuals or organizations. They are Al-Hikmah University Ilorin, Kwara State established in 2005; Katsina University, Katsina State, 2005; Crescent University, Abeokuta, Ogun State, 2005 and Fountain University, 2007.²³ There is no gainsaying that the fertile land for proper implementation of the world conferences is an institution owned and managed by a conscious Muslim or group. Establishing private Islamic schools up to university level will afford Muslims the opportunity to design appropriate Islamisation programmes for such schools as well as creating a conducive Islamic environment for learning.

Educational Reforms in some Institutions

Appreciable steps are being taken by some institutions to implement the recommendations of the various conferences. The Usmanu Dan Fodio University, Sokoto, for instance has taken a giant stride by introducing some Islam-based courses in its Departments of Economics, Management Studies, Sociology and Political Science in the Faculty of Social Sciences. The Faculty of Education and the Department of History also have some Islam-related courses. At Bayero University, Kano, some Islam-based courses are introduced in the Faculties of Arts and Islamic Studies, Law, Education and Social and Management Sciences at the undergraduate and post graduate levels.

The Task Ahead

In spite of all efforts towards implementation of the recommendations of the numerous world conferences on Muslim education, there are still some gigantic issues to be properly addressed for the overall interest of ideal Islamic education in the country. Some of these are considered below.

²³R.I Adedayo, "Prospects & Challenges of Private Universities in Nigeria: Focus on Islamic Mission Universities" in J. Oloje, LO Oloyede & P.Obanya (eds) 50 Years of University Education in Nigeria: Evolution, Achievements & Future Directions (Ilorin: Univ of Ilorin & National Universities Commission, 2010) p.193

Redesigning and Reformulating the Curriculum

The absence of a comprehensive curriculum has been hampering the progress of Islamic education at all levels of education in the country. Though the first world conference addresses the issue of educational aims in line with an Islamic paradigm, a curriculum epistemologically tied to *tawhid* is yet to be given prominence in the Nigerian education set-up, even in Muslim schools. It thus becomes expedient to formulate a curriculum in this direction. Curriculum in this wise is expected to cover the programme of studies, programme of activities and programme of guidance within the four walls of the school set-up. Such curriculum should not only address an aspect of the school system, but must cover all the levels of education from nursery to tertiary level.

The establishment of Islamic universities notwithstanding, it is our observation that these universities are facing some problems ranging from personnel, students' enrolment, language to be adapted to curriculum.²⁶ In his observation on the curriculum of the existing private Islamic universities in Nigeria, Adebayo has this to say:

The curriculum of some of these universities is as secular as other contemporary universities. The most pathetic of it all is that for a period of four academic sessions, students from departments other than Islamic Studies Department, if any, may offer only four Islamic related courses throughout their tenure in the university. In short, some of these universities will remain Islamic by virtue of their names, while their products will lack the much-cherished flavour of Islamic education. Another sad point is that some of these private Islamic universities do not mount Islamic Studies and Arabic as courses to be offered. Where there is any at all, few students offer it. This is because most parents are not ready to pay or that they cannot afford the exorbitant school fees charged by these institutions.²⁷

An Agenda for Women education

Scholars have extensively mentioned the role of some Muslim women in the transmission of Islamic knowledge to the world. The ignorance of some people about the stand of Islam on women education and the socio-cultural arrangements of some Muslim communities have been largely responsible for the unjustified prevention of women from education.²⁸ The Prophet without mincing words clearly states that seeking of knowledge is obligatory for every Muslim – male and female. Nasiru has highlighted some major reasons why Muslim female education was looked upon with contempt by traditional *ulama* in Nigeria. Such include indiscriminate mixing of boys and girls at school, school uniforms which expose mature girls' heads, bosom and legs bare, coupled with scanty, smart revealing sports wears and the behavioural patterns of many products of western education schools and life style after graduation among other.²⁹

For proper Islamic education to be well footed, Muslim women need to have their inputs, and this can only be ensured where females are carried along right from the beginning. Thus, a special agenda for Muslim female education becomes imperative in Nigeria. By this, all the factors hampering women's

²⁶ R.I Adebayo, "Obstacles to Implementation of Islamisation of Knowledge Programme in Nigerian Islamic Universities." A paper presented at a three-day international conference and one-day Summit on Islamic Universities organized by the IITI Nigeria office between September 14-18 2000, pp.8-11.

²⁷ R.I Adebayo (ib), p.7

²⁸ A.A Salawu, "Education & the Status of Women in Sokoto State: Implication for Counselling" in *Muslim Quarterly*, Cambridge, Vol II, No I, (The Islamic Academy, 1993) pp.55-61

²⁹ W.O.A Nasiru, "The Attitude of Traditional Ulama to Muslim Female Education in Nigeria," in *Muslim Education Quarterly*, Cambridge, Vol XIV, No II, 1997, pp.70-75

acquisition of education will be corrected. It is our considered opinion that Muslim organizations like the Federation of Muslim Women Associations of Nigeria (FOMWAN), Ansaru-Deen, Ansarul-Islam and others must rise to the task of establishing girls' schools where Muslim girls will be trained within the provision of Islam.

A Policy for Translation

Muslim scholars' relentless efforts led to the discovery and adoption of the literary and scientific legacy of ancient civilizations of Greece, Persia and India. Over a period of centuries, they learnt, translated and commented on the works of these civilizations. Through translation, these ancient works were preserved. The European nations equally adopted the same method in the 12th and 13th centuries when they embarked on the translation of the Muslim works into Latin. Jabir ibn Hayyan's book on alchemy, *The Composition of alchemy* was translated into Latin while Gerard of Cremona, a famous translator of Arabic scientific works, was said to have translated Jabir's *Book of Seventy* into Latin.³⁷ Other books claimed to have been translated into Latin were Ar-Razi's books which run into twenty volumes and Ibn Sina's greatest work *Canon of Medicine* which was said to have been translated eighty seven times all or in part.³⁸ In the same vein, contemporary Muslim scholars in the country need to be alive to the task of translating from Arabic into their indigenous, national and international languages and vice-versa.

An Agenda for Teacher Education

Teachers no doubt are the interpreters and transmitters of the cultural values of the society. In this wise, it is expedient that the *ummah* designs an agenda for teacher education for the purpose of producing professionally competent and morally upright teaching force. The imperative for this is stressed by Ashraf and Hussein when they state:

In order to realize the aims and objectives of Islamic education, it is necessary for schools, colleges and universities to have an Islamic curriculum. But a curriculum and even textbooks prepared according to that curriculum cannot make education truly Islamic either in spirit or in practice if the teachers are not faithful Muslims and if they do not know the proper methods of teaching according to that curriculum.³⁹

Thus, there is the need to come up with an agenda for teacher education where the moral and spiritual impact of both the content of what is taught and the method of teaching are inculcated in the teachers.

Conclusion

From the foregoing, attempts have been made to give a critique of the traditional Islamic and prevailing western systems of education. The primitiveness of the dominant traditional Islamic system of education and the extremism of the western system in creating a wide dichotomy between mundane, empirical, metaphysical and spiritual matters, as well as its erasing God from its dictionary are some of the shortcomings of the systems respectively. Attempts to correct these anomalies in the systems of education Muslims are being exposed to, culminated in the various world conferences on Muslim education which were aimed at restoring the Islamic content of education.

Attempts made at implementing the recommendations of the various conferences in Nigeria are strong

³⁷ B.A. Alema, *Islamic Studies for Senior Secondary Schools Book II* (Minna: IET, 1990) pp. 268-269

³⁸ Alema, pp. 272-273

³⁹ S.A. Ashraf & S.S. Hussein, *Crisis in Muslim Education* (Jeddah: Hodder & Stoughton & King Abdul Aziz University, 1979) pp. 104-111

indications that Muslims are ready to meticulously follow the ordained way of the Creator in spite of the secular nature of the country. It is our feeling that the ummah would not relent in its efforts at revamping the educational system from true Islamic perspective by addressing the various tasks ahead of it and through this, a total transformation to Islamic education system would be realized. However, there is the serious need to address some issues hampering further implementation of the decisions reached at the conferences by Muslim intellectuals, organisations and institutions.