

## ARABIC AND ISLAMIC EDUCATION IN THE CONTEMPORARY NIGERIA: CHALLENGES AND WAY FORWARDS

BY

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### **Abstract**

*Arabic and Islamic education has tremendous impact on the developmental indices of Nigeria. It is on this purpose the paper examines the modern challenges and way forward on Arabic and Islamic studies in the elementary and posts primary school. The study employs historical methodology to conduct the research it includes the following to the best of my knowledge my observation includes emphasis on character training to develop intellectual skill to acquire specific knowledge i.e learning of Quranic and Hadith and physical development to vividly observe in abstract that concern stake holders involve in Arabic and Islamic studies should make sure that the both subject are made core subject in order to strengthen its functionalism in the nation building. It also recommended among other that the educational supervision department and general curricula Department in the ministry of education should work together to conduct workshop concentrating on all new innovative approach in order to create a healthy atmosphere for repositioning Arabic and Islamic education.*

**Keywords: Challenges, Primary education, Arabic, Islamic studies, Teacher**

### **Introduction**

Education is centered on the individual and the society as attested to being various definitions. Fafunwa (2004) defines education as the process of acquiring skills, knowledge, attitude, ability, value, competence and the acceptable behaviour of the society which enable individual to live successfully and contribute to the development of the society. The teaching and learning of the Qur'an and the Arabic language started in northern Nigeria where the teachers in the early stage depended for their living on charity. Alikali (1967) lamented that the noble principle, which was successfully applied in the early stage of the development of Arabic and Islamic education reduced the status of a teacher to that of a mere beggar; he came to occupy socially a rather low status. He had to wander from place to place looking for charitable Muslim to patronize him and give him food and shelter. Whenever his efforts were not sufficient to procure the basic necessities of life, he had to send his pupils from door to door for charity to sustain himself and the pupils living with him.

Earlier on the beginning of qur'anic school in Nigeria, they were usually found in or outside the mosque as it was done in the oldest Muslim university, Al-Azhar in Cairo. Today thousand of these schools are found in Northern and southern Nigeria, located either in mosques, private houses or premises specially built for this purpose. In the southern part of Nigeria, the introduction of western oriented education was exclusively due to the effort of the Christian missionaries. In 1853, the Reverend David Hinderer's wife, Anna, wrote in her diary about the response of Ibadan people to the western education taught at the day school. This attitude of some people in Ibadan is easily understood if the curriculum of such primary schools is examined. Pupils were taught to read the New Testament, the Catechism and the commandment in Yoruba and to speak some words of English. Therefore, their parents were afraid that their children would be converted to Christianity by such an education (Adeyemi, 1996).

Nigeria Teacher Institute (NTI, 2003) states that Christian missionaries dominated the education on scene in Nigeria during the early period of western education, Muslim parents did not hide their discontent to the attitude of missionaries in winning convert the school. Later, the colonial government in the early 1930s

established several schools in response to appeal by Muslim Nigerians when many popular Muslim missionary organizations sprang up and built numerous primary and secondary school to teach western education alongside Arabic and Islamic Studies. Some of them had built Arabic and Qur'an school offering courses at primary and pre-university levels. Fafunwa (2004) explained that within the ranks of the orthodox Muslim, a number of organization sprang up at the turn of twentieth century to develop western derived education within a Muslim context. One of the most dynamic and the largest of these organization was the Ansar-ud-deen Society, it is stated that prior to the inauguration of the Society, only two or three Muslim schools were being run. The Christian missionaries on the other hand, dominated the educational life of the country, and pressure was being exerted on some of the Muslim pupils attending the Christian school to convert to Christianity.

The condition of the twin subject has changed today. Hassan (2015) explained that the revision of the national policy on education in 2004 in tune with the Universal Basic Education witnessed the emergence of the new Primary School Curriculum suggested a minimum of three per week for both subjects for effective teaching. Hassan (2015) states further that until 2015, Islamic studies as well as Arabic language have not got a desk officer in Nigeria Education Research and Development Council, Abuja, as other had. That is indeed detrimental to the progress of the subjects at that level. As regard the numeric of school offering Arabic language and Islamic education and their respective location throughout the thirty six states including Abuja, the federal capital territory.

### **Teaching Arabic and Islamic at Primary Level**

Primary school is the first tier of the 9-3-4 system of education the country operates; it is where formal education start. Therefore, it is from this stage in life that children will formally be taught Islamic studies. Arabic and Islamic optional subject being taught in government primary schools while Arabic is being taught as part of Islamic studies and not a separate subject on its own. The title was provided for in the curriculum is how to read fractional of the holy Qur'an. Although, some of the pupils might have attended Qur'an or nursery school or both. The lesson to be taught have been arranged to enable the pupils learn specific ideals. These ideas lead them to cultivate good moral habit. It is learning such habit that constitutes the aims and objectives of teaching Islamic studies in primary school (Lemu, 1988).

### **Challenges of Arabic and Islamic Teacher**

There are many challenges faced by Arabic and Islamic teacher which include:

**Resources:** The area of resources is also very vital for effectiveness and efficiency of running of primary and post primary school programmes. To succeed, it requires both human and material resources. Arabic and Islamic teaching in secondary school definity faces the problem of manpower. There are no enough personnel to man the subject; even if government can source for personnel locally there is need for professionals who have knowledge in different areas such as fiqi'u, tafsir, and other area, so as to complement the teaching of Arabic and Islamic studies. Still, most of the resources that are available for teachers are obsolete materials which cannot leaf to achieve anything tangible.

**Religion Diversity:** The principle of traditional approach in education has shaped and influenced the way teacher approaches religion education. Wuthnow (2005) stated that one of the visible characteristics of the traditional approach in teaching religion education lies in lack of religion diversity. Student in religion education classroom know very little about basic religion most especially when it is about teaching of moral and values. Although, most of the teachers may be based on designed curriculum but not with standing, whatever may be said about the present conduction of the Qur'anic schools. One should not forget the admirable role they played. After being passed from one teacher to another in this era.

Where different society or Association in other religion group were springing. Some good schoolars were produced in the all-embracing field of Islamic studies or Arabic language. They wrote books and preached the religion of Islam. Keeping it going area during the days of active Christian.

**State Arabic/Islamic Curriculum:** In fact, unchangeable religious curriculum imply sacredness on subject matter that closes the door for any attempt to analyze, discuss, synthesize, or apply. An

unchangeable religion curriculum not only creates passive learners, but it also to the use of traditional way in teaching, such as lecturing and memorizing. Jackson (2004) demonstrated that the control of the content of the religion curriculum tends to be in the hands of the religion insiders who construct the knowledge according to the rules of their own language and culture. As result of this control, the knowledge is delivered to students who are prevented from their own knowledge. Students are left out of the educational equation. They are derivate from expressing themselves and being heard.

**Inadequacy of Qualified Teacher:** According to Abdul (1983), basic elementary knowledge of linguistics ought to be a prerequisite for anymore who wishes to specialize in the teaching of a language. Arabic, especially, requires this and something more: motivation. To teach or learn a language outside its native environment requires motivation and devotion. There is a dearth of qualified teachers in quantity vis-a-vis primary, secondary and tertiary institutions many part of the country. Beside, a great number of the few available ones lack linguistic background.

**Teacher need to be Better Prepared:** As a result of ages of stagnation, teaching method in Islamic education institutions had not seen improvement. The concern over teacher preparation has been identified in several studies. The USAID (2007); study titled strengthening education in the Muslim world, validated those concerns. Most teachers are the product of the madrasah system and have no or minimal exposure to the alternative way of teaching or encouraging their students to ask questions about what they are being taught.

### The Way Forward

Teaches of Arabic and Islamic studies having being faced with many challenges most especially in the secondary schools, although there are many way forward but if government can merge both the two Subjects together and make it core subject like that of English and mathematics and also make the subject a requirement for gaining admission in to Nigerian tertiary institutions there would be limited challenges in the area of human and material resources. Also there would be change in Arabic and Islamic studies curriculum review as at when due, many innovation would be introduced to teaching of Arabic and Islamic studies, there would be diversification in teaching among teachers. In short, the Arabic teachers would be give same treatment as other teachers of core subjects have been given. Therefore, if government can consider both subjects as core subjects there would be great positive significant influence on Arabic and Islamic studies teachers in secondary schools.

### Conclusion

Arabic and Islamic studies education is optional subjects in secondary school that are much interwoven which the teachers are faced by many challenges in their areas of teaching. Therefore, this study concluded that Arabic and Islamic teachers in kwara state has been confronting with the challenges of resources, unqualified teachers, innovation, diversification, curriculum review and so many other.

### Recommendations

1. There should be provision of physical and human resources for the increase in enrolment and material resources for effective and efficient teaching of Arabic and Islamic studies.
2. The educational supervision department and the general curricula department in the ministry of education should work together to conduct workshops concentrating on all new innovative approaches in order to create a healthy atmosphere for creativity to take place.
3. There should be involvement of expert in teaching of Arabic and Islamic studies in secondary schools. Teachers should always get prepare for their lesson.
4. Various stakeholders in concern should try and make Arabic and Islamic studies core subject so that there would be limited challenges to teachers.

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