

Islamization of Knowledge in Bangladesh Hindrances and Solutions

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Abstract

The global Muslim Ummah along with Bangladesh is being declined because of their backward and lowly contemporary position in all fields political, economic and religio-cultural. The main factors behind this decline are the current secular-religious duality of the educational system in Muslim societies and the lack of clear vision to guide and direct Muslim action. In this regard, the Islamization of Knowledge is a comprehensive phenomenon what re-establishes the knowledge on its original basis according to the light of revealed knowledge and it is a reform-oriented movement driven by a conscious change in Muslim thought, attitude and behavior and characterized by a commitment to revive Islamic Civilization. The study shows that the IOK project has played a prominent role in contemporary scholarship and literature in Bangladesh, both in theory and practices highlighting the concept, origin and development of IOK. It also attempts to identify the problems and obstacles in the way to promote IOK in Bangladesh with recommending its solutions.

Key words: Islamization of Knowledge (IOK), the role of IOK, Hindrance, Solutions, Bangladesh

1.0: Introduction

In course of history, many types of epistemology, philosophy, and method of thought and methodology have evolved. Only revealed knowledge can offer ultimate relief to man. However, there are some deceitful men who hide the truth to keep the common mass in

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ignorance. They manipulate knowledge for their own vested interest and they preserve self-interest, greed and malice to fetter people with ignorance. On the other hand, the Muslim *Ummah* is looking in the eye of a storm, which is violently pulling it out of its moral and cultural anchor, and uprooting its spiritual habitat. Now the *Ummah* is decadent and despondent. It is in decline. They suffer from a threateningly dangerous malaise. The intellectual crisis is at the root of the problem. Besides, the alarming rate at which knowledge is being dichotomized, bifurcated and distorted as well as the wide gap between the revealed knowledge and the acquired knowledge as a matter of great concern to the Muslim world. In these circumstances, a general awaking among Muslim men and women, searching for their Islamic roots and identity, and aspiring for the revival of the Islamic Civilization, is a well-recognized social reality. Several different terms, such as Islamic Renaissance, Islamic Revivalist Movement, Islamic Reformation, are used to capture the meaning and purpose of the 20th and 21st Century social phenomenon of immense significance to both Muslim and non-Muslim worlds. Islamization of Knowledge is such type of comprehensive phenomenon, which re-establishes the knowledge on its original basis. Knowledge is a medium to perceive the entity of Allah. The purpose of knowledge is to extract the essence of the nature and the universe and then to prostrate and surrender in complete humility before Allah, the most Merciful and the most Beneficent. It also makes a general impression of goodness, purity and piety.

IOK project is widening over the world. Many organizations and individuals have a great role and contributions to promote the project. The present position as regards the attempts for Islamization of knowledge in Bangladesh is not satisfactory, because no comprehensive program either at private or government levels has been started for Islamizing the courses and syllabi at different levels of education. It should be attempted to identify the obstacles in the wheel of the progress of IOK in Bangladesh with a view to exploring solutions to them.

2.0: Objectives of the study

The main objective of the study is to critically review the existing scenario of IOK in Bangladesh pointing out the major problems involved therein. To achieve the main objective, it is to cover the following specific objectives:

- To examine the concept, background and characteristic features of IOK.
- To highlight on the present scenario of IOK in Bangladesh.
- To identify the major problems hindering IOK in Bangladesh perspective.
- To recommend some suggestions to remove the problems.

3.0: Research methodology

This study is mainly based on the secondary data. Secondary data has been collected from various sources such as several websites, related research papers and journals.

4.0: Literature review

Isma'il Raji al-Faruqi (1982) mentioned in the section entitled "The Problem" in his 1982 work-plan, the "malaise of the *ummah*," i.e. the backward and lowly contemporary position of the *ummah* in all fields, political (divided, disunited, military rule), economic (undeveloped, dependent on the West, illiteracy despite huge new found oil wealth) and religio-cultural (westernized, alienated from Islam and its culture). He pointed out two factors of this malaise of *ummah*: the first was the current secular-religious duality of the educational system in Muslim societies and second, the lack of clear vision to guide and direct Muslim action. So he argues IOK is needed to recast the whole legacy of human knowledge from the stand point of Islam.

Abdul Hamid A. Sulayman (1994), Taha Jabir Al-Alwani (1989), further elaborated, revised, modified, and updated the views of Faruqi and his work-plan with critical assessment. According to A. Sulayman, he saw the root cause of the malaise of Ummah's (mis)conception of knowledge creating a "crisis of thought" that led Muslims to be bad imitators of the West. Alwani (1989) sees IOK requires the combination of "two readings" that of revelation and the natural universe. Ibrahim Ragab (1995, 97, 99) sees IOK term has been used in many "confusing ways", so he prefers it is be used as Islamization of social sciences, Islamization of specific disciplines, Islamization of curriculum or Islamization of education etc.

On the other hand, Naqib al-Attas (1978, 1980) while acknowledging that the problems faced by Muslim societies cannot be separated from the external factors, specially the historical confrontation with Western culture and civilization and the consequences of colonization, locates the primary reason for this backwardness as being due to internal causes, more specifically to what he terms "loss of adab" within the Muslims themselves. According to him, concerning contemporary knowledge, Islamization means "the deliverance of knowledge from its interpretations based on secular ideology and from meanings and expressions of the secular".

According to Ziauddin Sardar (1988, 89), Muslims need to evolve their own paradigms and innovate appropriate disciplines within the conceptual categories and value framework of Islam, not the emphasis should be on Islamizing existing disciplines. According to Fazlur Rahman (1988) while *ilm* (knowledge) by itself is good, the problem is its misuse. He calls for the creation of thinkers who are able to examine our own tradition in the light of the Qur'an and *Sunnah* then critically study the body of knowledge created by modernity.

Bangladesh, having the third largest Muslim population, is one of the leading parts of the Muslim Ummah. Like elsewhere, it also faces the challenges of moral and ethical degradation especially in the educational arena through secularization and westernization of academic areas and majors. With an education system devoid of clear vision and goal without Islamic perspective, the knowledge being propagated and preached, has become the tool for absolutely materialistic gain in Bangladesh. The IOK can play the vital role in guiding the derailed and misguided Ummah in Bangladesh. This study seeks to investigate the challenges in the process of IOK and, thus, explore the solutions to the challenges in Bangladesh perspective.

5.0: Findings & Analysis

5.1: An overview of IOK: The Concept and Origin & development of Islamization of Knowledge

The Concept of IOK:

Islamization of knowledge has been understood in different ways due to the differences in concepts and practices by its proponents. Nevertheless, they share the essential belief, that knowledge (especially modern science) needs to be islamized. There are at least three schools of thought of the Islamization of knowledge that should be addressed briefly in below:

Naquib Al-Attas

Naqib al-Attas (1978) is considered to be the pioneer in proposing the idea of Islamization of Knowledge. In the individual sense, Islamization refers to the recognition of the Holy Prophet as the exemplary leader and personality, whereas in the collective sense, it refers to the Community's striving towards realization of the moral and ethical perfection achieved during the age of the Holy Prophet. Epistemologically, Islamization refers to the liberation of human intellect from doubt, speculation and vain argument to the attainment of certainty of the truth concerning spiritual, intelligible and material realities. Finally, with regards to contemporary knowledge, Islamization means "the deliverance of knowledge from its interpretations based on secular ideology and from meanings and expressions of the secular". To him, Islamization of knowledge should undergo two processes:

- De-westernization, that is, the isolation of key elements and concepts that make up Western culture and civilization from every branch of present-day knowledge.
- Islamization: the infusion of Islamic elements and key concepts in every branch of relevant present day knowledge.

Isma‘il Raji al-Faruqi

Isma‘il Raji al-Faruqi (1982) defined the task of Islamizing knowledge as to recast the whole legacy of human knowledge from the stand point of Islam. He also adds to 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. He also sees that IOK aims to “produce university level textbooks recasting some twenty disciplines in accordance to the Islamic vision”.

A further clarification made with some additions and critiques to make IOK as a comprehensive agenda by Abdul Hamid A. Sulayman (1997), ‘Imad al Din Khalil (1994), Taha Jabir Al-Alwani (1995) and many other proponent contributors.

Sayyed Hossein Nasr

Another great thinker that contributes to the idea of Islamization of knowledge is Prof. Sayyed Hossein Nasr. For him the Islamization of knowledge can mean “the reassertion of the immutable principles of Islam and their application to methods and fields of knowledge claimed by modern, Western education and learning. But this authentic and contemporary Islamic education will not shun these disciplines, nor would it surrender to the modern theories. Rather, it would conquer these domains and make them its own. According to him, knowledge cannot be separated from sacred science, since everything known always has a profound religious character, for every type of knowledge is created by God. Prof. Nasr’s ideas are spread widely through his works and the works of his devout disciple and close friend, Prof. Osman Bakar of Malaysia. (Mulyadhi Kartanegara)

Origin and development of Islamization of Knowledge

In the widest sense, we can presume without any hesitation that the Islamization of knowledge seems to have started from the dawn of Qur’anic revelation to the Prophet Muhammad (SAS). Muhammad (SAS) used knowledge to change in thinking, attitudes and behaviors of people. In their quest for knowledge, Muslim scholars made great efforts in translating and studying the writings of the early Greek philosophers. Some Muslim scholars became so impressed by them such as *Mutazzilites*, Ibn Rushd, al-Farabi, Ibn Sina and many others in the school of *Kalam*. On the other hand, some scholars made tremendous efforts to clean Muslim minds from this corruption and to reform Muslim society according the Qur’anic epistemological approach, such as, Imam Ghazzali, Imam Shatibi, Imam Razi, Imam Ibn Taimiyyah and Shah Waliullah.

At the beginning of the 15th Century the decline of the Muslim civilization and the rise of Western civilization were marked. Muslims lost their motivation for seeking knowledge, whereas the West started building its intellectual base and they became successful to de-

Islamize the knowledge. In the second half of the 18th century an approach pursued was the political reform by Muslim reformers, outstanding among whom were Sheykh Mohammad Ibn Abd al-Wahab in the Arabian Peninsula, the Sunusi Movement of North Africa, the Mahdi Movement of Sudan, the reform movement of Midhat Pasha in Turkey, Khayri-i-Din Pasha in Tunisia, Malikum Khan in Persia, and Sayyid Ahmed Khan and Amir Ali in India. The culmination of all these efforts was the reform movement of the late 19th century and early 20th century. This was pioneered by Sayyid Jamal al-Din al Afgani (1837-1897), his colleague and contemporary Sayyid Abd Rahman al-Kawakibi (1848- 1902), Sheykh Mohammad Abduh (1849- 1935), and his student Sayyid Mohammad Rashid Ridha (1865-1935). There were some modern Islamic movements took over and carried the banner such as *al-Ikwan al-Muslimin* (the Muslim Brotherhood) established by Imam Shahid Hassan al-Bannah in 1928, *Jama'at-i- Islami* which Abu al-A'la al-Mawdudi established in 1941 in the Indian Subcontinent. These contemporary Islamic movements actually, contributed to its failures, because little attention was given to the essence of the crisis of thought. They have addressed the *ummah's* deterioration more deeply and sought more radically. Thus, the movement could grow in numbers but not in ideological depth, which is the requirement of change prescribed by the divine decree.

As the condition of the *Ummah* continued to deteriorate, a group of Muslim youth, while attending different universities in the United States, had the opportunity for revaluation and reassessment of the various Islamic movements in the Muslim world. They established the Association of Muslim Social Scientists in 1382 A.H. / 1972 A.D. The Association addressed itself to the intellectual problems facing Islamic thought and contacted a number of Muslim activists (*du'at*) as well as contemporary Muslim scholars and reformers. In 1397A.H./ 1977 A.D., the Association sponsored a two-week international conference that was held in Switzerland in Europe. The seminar participants concluded that the Muslim thought process and methodology needed to be given priority in the effort to achieve reform and that a specialized body needed to be established to conduct research into these areas. It was then agreed that a collective effort is needed in the form of specialized institutions working specifically toward a resolution of the crisis. These efforts of the young intellectuals culminated in the establishment of the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT) under the leadership of Isma'il Razi Al Faruqi. The Institute was officially incorporated in the United States of America at the beginning of the fifteenth Hijri century (1401 AH/ 1981 AC), and it immediately addressed itself to the issue of Islamic thought and Islamization of knowledge as a whole.

A second international conference was held in Islamabad under the aegis of IIIT in cooperation with the Islamic University Islamabad, Pakistan in 1402/1982. Its theme was the Islamization of Knowledge. In order to promote it, to examine its product, and generally to move it toward realization, it was decided to hold a third international conference on 25 *Shawwal* 1404/ July 24 1984 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Scholars and researchers were

urged to submit their papers in the following disciplines: Economics, Sociology, Psychology, Anthropology, Political Science and International Relations, and Philosophy. The fourth international conference on the Islamization of knowledge was held in Khartoum, Sudan (*Jumada al 'Ula* 1407 A.H. / January 1987 A.C.), in cooperation with the University of Khartoum. The theme of this conference was “Methodology of Islamic Thought and Islamization of the Behavioral Sciences.”

However, IOK project is widening over the world launching near about twenty offices and affiliates of IIT. Besides, many organizations and institutions attempt to promote the project such as International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), International Islamic University Islamabad, (IIU), Pakistan International Islamic University Chittagong (IIUC), the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC), 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 the Muslim Thinker Forum, the North American Association of Muslim Professionals and Scholars etc. who also claim to be promoting the IOK project through arranging conferences and seminars. Besides these organizations and institutes there are some prominent individuals who also attempted to promote the IOK project. Such as Syed Muhammad Naqib al-Attas, a Malaysian scholar who some would say was the originator of the contemporary IOK idea and wrote a numerous articles and books for clarifying the idea and late Syed Ali Ashraf, who focused on the educational dimension of the IOK, and established Dar al Ihsan University in Bangladesh.

5.2: The existing scenario of IOK in Bangladesh:

Now we would like to mention about our homeland Bangladesh and her contribution to Islamization of knowledge and education. It is the third largest Muslim country of the world. Although the people of the country are very religious in mind with Islam, they cannot practice it as the complete and comprehensive way of life because of anti-Islamic laws and customs as well as the secular system of education prevailing in the country since British rule. As a legacy of the colonial past, secular and anti-Islamic concepts have developed in every sphere of modern education system in the country. Most of the intellectuals, teachers of universities and colleges, doctors, engineers, scientists, political leaders and administrators holding positions of leadership are not aware of the real Islamic way of life and even they do not feel the need for Islamic system of education in the country.

The present position as regards the attempts for Islamization of knowledge in Bangladesh is not satisfactory, because no comprehensive program either at private or government levels has been started for Islamizing the courses and syllabi at different levels of education. Although an Islamic university has been established under the patronage of the government with the declared program of introducing and implementing Islamic education system in the

country, unfortunately, it has completely failed to fulfill its commitments in practice and presently it is offering the same secular courses in Economics, Political Science, Accounting, Management, Islamic History etc. like other universities of the county. Further, although a course/paper on Islamic economics has been introduced in honors level in some universities, it is not being properly taught. In some universities (like university of Dhaka, university of Rajshahi, university of Chittagong) Arabic, Islamic Studies, and Islamic History and Culture departments are functioning, but their syllabi are not properly structured in accordance with Islamic philosophy and principles.

On the other hand, the present *Madrassa* education system is also not free from faults and deficiencies from Islamic viewpoints of education in as much as that while undertaking the program of restructuring the traditional religious conception in *Madrassa* some modern secular subjects/courses on science, arts, commerce and social science have been widely introduced there in the same manner and style as introduced in modern schools, colleges and universities, although some success are showed aiming to Islamize the students mind. Nevertheless, no attempt has yet been made by the authorities concerned to Islamize these subjects in order to inculcate in the minds of the students the Qur'anic spirits and principles in these subjects.

However, some attempts in limited form at private levels have been initiated with a view to introducing an integrated system of education in the country. Although in our country extensive dialogues and researches on Islamization of environment have been done, on Islamization of Knowledge no comprehensive research has been seen. The Islamization of environment has been somewhat successful politically, but it has very trifling cultural and social effect. After the independence of Pakistan a slogan based Islamization was publicized. A group of Islamic intellectuals influenced by Abul A'la Mowdudi, renowned Islamic researcher of the Sub-continent commenced an extensive project on Islamization, but how far they have been successful is doubtful. Because by neglecting deep research only with superficial study the whole perspective cannot be ordered according to the light of Islam and thereby, social and cultural salvation is not possible. However, in this regard they have immensely contributed. They have given huge endeavor to Islamize the spirit of students, youths and mass people. They have also contributed in the realm of Islamic Education. It may be mentioned that more than two hundred primary and secondary schools have been imparting integrated education under the guidance of the Islamic Education Society. Necessary curricula and syllabi have been designed, study materials have been produced and teachers' training program has been organized by the Society. Nevertheless, they do not seem to have any plan for deep research in the area of Islamization of Knowledge. Besides, personally and collectively some organizations have taken some initiatives to develop IOK Project such as Bangladesh Institute of Islamic Thought (BIIT), International Islamic University Chittagong (IIUC), Islamic Foundation Bangladesh, Islamic Economic Bouro, Darul Ihsan University, Bangladesh Islamic University, etc. In individual level some scholars contributed to the field of IOK in Bangladesh such as Sayed Ali Ashraf, M. Zohurul Islam

FCA, Md. Golam Mohiuddin, Dr. Muinuddin Ahmad Khan and Prof. Abdun Noor etc. Now we would like to mention the contributions of the some prominent institutes and figures to IOK:

a. Bangladesh Institute of Islamic Thought:

Bangladesh Institute of Islamic Thought (BIIT) is a registered non-government institute, established in the year 1989. The Institute came into existence through the initiative of a group of scholars, educationists and academicians to undertaken programs for harmonization of education, culture, political and economic thinking, morality and ethics. It was felt that the requires mastery over the disciplines and at the same time a profound understanding of the Divine Patterns set up in His creation by Allah (SWT). The thought of Dr. Isma'il Raji al Faruqi on "Islamization of Knowledge" published by the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT) USA, was taken as the starting point. The Book represents the perspective of a number of concerned and dedicated scholars. It is a "Vision" which embodies the basic principles of Islamization of humanities and social sciences. The organization "Bangladesh Institute of Islamic Thought" thus came into being by the driving spirit of bringing about a synthesis of derived and revealed knowledge. (Visit for details <http://iiitbd.org/>)

As the branch of IIIT, BIIT in Bangladesh have done much work. They have published many books. To develop IOK project publication, seminar, symposium, etc. are held regularly. Many scholars contributed to IOK program under the supervision of BIIT. From them Dr. Muinuddin Ahmad Khan in science, M. Zohurul Islam FCA in accounting and economics, Prof. M. Raihan Sharif in economics, M. Kabir Hasan in economics, Prof. Abdun Noor in public administration, Md. Gulam Muhiuddin in management, Masudul Alam Chawdhury in economics are mentionable. Recently it has taken step to produce university level text books more thirty books from different disciplines what successfully 70% of the project has been done. (Information has been retrieved from the official documents of BIIT)

b. Islamic Foundation:

Islamic Foundation is an autonomous organization under the Ministry of Religious Affairs in Bangladesh working to disseminate values and ideals of Islam and carry out activities related to those values and ideals. Islamic Foundation has contributed immensely in the field of Islamization of human mind generally and particularly Islamization of education and knowledge. IF has published many books of near about 400 different titles on Islamic economics, Social policy in Islamic perspective and Muslim philosophy, Science in Islamic perspective and Islamic history and tradition. From these books such as Economic Development in Islam, Quality Management Islamic perspectives by Dr. A. Hasan M. Sadeque, Social History of the Muslim Bangladesh Under the British Rule by Dr. Muinuddin Ahmad Khan, Economic Order of Islam by Shahed Ali, Islamic Concept of State by Justice

Hamoodur Rahman, Economic Development in Islam by Dr. A. H. Md. Sadeq, Ethics in Business and Management by Abul Hasan M. Sadeq, Khaliq Ahmad, Science and Revelation by Dewan Muhammad Azraf, Scientific Indication in the Holy Quran, Islam and Cosmological Science by Dr. M. Abdul Jalil Miah, The Origin and Development of Muslim Historiography by Dr. Md. Golam Rasul, History of the Muslim of Bangal by Dr. Mohammad Mohar Ali, History of the *Faraidi* Movement by Dr. Muinuddin Ahmed khan etc. IF also published 189 titles of book on Qur'an and *Tafsir*, 107 titles of book on Hadith, 119 titles of book on *Seerah* of Prophet, Islamic Encyclopedia in 26 volumes, *Seerah* Encyclopedia in 14 volumes etc. (visit for details: http://www.islamicfoundation.org.bd/pages/about_ifb.html)

c. International Islamic University Chittagong (IIUC):

We have come to know from its official website that International Islamic University Chittagong (IIUC) is established with a view to following a policy of continued Islamization of Knowledge and academic curricular in different branches of knowledge so that its students can imbibe the true spirit of Islam as an effective guiding principle in their profession and daily life. To promote IOK, the university incorporated some courses in the Business Faculty, like Islamic Financial System, Islamic Management and Business, Islamic Economics, Islamic Ethics, Islamic Insurance Principles and *Takaful* Business, Comparative Banking System, Tax and *Zakat* Accounting etc. as well as some courses have been introduced in the faculty of Laws like Introduction to Islamic Law and its Philosophy, Islamic Law of Transaction, Islamic Constitution, Islamic Family Law, Islamic Law of banking and Insurance, Islamic Jurisprudence, Human Rights of Islam, Islamic Legal Maxims, Islamic Law of Evidence, *Qur'an* and *Hadith* on Law etc. IIUC founded the Center for Research and Publication (CRP) to take initiatives for Islamization of knowledge. The University Requirement Courses (URC) constitute the main and most important characteristics of International Islamic University Chittagong (IIUC) as they are playing a vital role to promote and provide facilities for Islamization of Knowledge and ensure conducive environment at IIUC. The center provides different courses such as Arabic Language, Islamic '*Aqidah*', Introduction to '*Ibadah*', Introduction to Qur'an and *Sunnah*, Islamic *Mu'amalah*, Islamic Political System, Biography of Prophet (*s.a.w.*), Survey of Islamic History, History of *Khilafa*, Qur'anic Textual Studies and *Hadith* Textual Studies to achieve to promote IOK agenda.

However, in spite of having great opportunity, IIUC has not played its perfect role in IOK and it did not clarify IOK with view to remove its methodological and epistemological complexity. Besides, it also did not produce any mentionable major writings on the methodology of IOK, nor on Islamization of Academic Disciplines or any university level text books on IOK as made by IIUM (International Islamic University Malaysia).

d. *Sayed Ali Ashraf*

Sayed Ali Ashraf (1984, 88, 89) as one of the pioneer contributors involved in conferences and discussions concerning reforms on contemporary Islamic education, argued that secularism is seen as the biggest problem for Muslims and reforms cannot just involve modifying, adding to or modernizing *madrasah* education. To implement his thought with view to provide meaningful linkage between, “Revealed Knowledge” and “Acquired Knowledge”, he founded Darul Ihsan University in 1986. This University contributed to IOE (Islamization of Education) in a great extent from its beginning but after his death the total system was collapsed by dispute of its trusty members who are not Islamically oriented.

5.3: The problems hindering IOK in Bangladesh perspective:

It needs to be mentioned that there are appreciable efforts towards implementing the theories of Islamization at various level of education in some private Islamic universities like International Islamic University Chittagong (IIUC), Bangladesh Islamic University, Dhaka etc. That notwithstanding, the theoretical framework of Islamization of knowledge has not been properly transformed into the expected practical level. What we are trying to emphasize here is that the entrenchment of the Islamized disciplines in the conventional education system of Muslim *ummah* has remained a myth to a large extent. The program is still wobbling in the face of numerous efforts of its protagonists. Some factors militating against the practicability of the program are now considered.

a. *Aggressive Trend of Secularization in Bangladesh:*

More than 85% of Bangladesh’s 150 million people are Muslims. Bangladesh earns its title as “the third largest Muslim country of the world”. Their religion, Islam, is however becoming a “minority” day by day. While Muslims in the West – in spite of being a minority – are enjoying their basic religious freedom, this basic right is increasingly being denied to the Muslim in Bangladesh while it continues to aspire to become a “uniquely secular” society”. The current regime in Bangladesh has taken on a comprehensive policy of secularization with aim to emasculate Islamic influence from political and social landscape of Bangladesh. Apart from undermining basic religious freedom of Muslims, the policy – which turns out to be both aggressive and violent – is increasingly becoming hostile to democratic principles, rule of law, freedom of movement, and political pluralism. On the other hand, Bangladesh Supreme Court Appellate Division’s decision upholding the High Court’s landmark verdict of 29 August 2005 that declared the Constitution’s Fifth Amendment (1979) illegal, the ban on formation of political organizations based on religion was restored. The verdict also paved the way for ensuring secularism as the “cornerstone” of the Constitution. The government immediately has done amendment of the Constitution incorporating secularity, nationalism,

democracy and socialism as the basic principles removing from it “Absolute trust and faith in the Almighty Allah shall be the basis of all actions”. [Saidul Islam, MD (2011), pp. 125-141] This aggressive trend of secularization threatens the Islamic scholars to arrange publicly their programs in order to promote IOK agenda.

b. Political Instability:

It is imperative to realize that the political landscape of Bangladesh is defined by feudal politics involving the confronting political parties. It is also imperative to realize that feudal politics is reminiscent of tribalism except that it is fought politically to portray a bit of civility. However, the barbarism is still there as we can see what is happening in the streets of Bangladesh as well as in the cities of other countries involved in feudal politics such as Pakistan, Iraq and Syria etc. The feudal nature of Bangladesh’s politics have cost the nation immensely as party and power interests precede the interests of a national strife with poverty. The political parties have utilized corruption to garner support from the largely uneducated masses. This has been done by abusing their power by using national resources to finance pro party gangs and to infiltrate key national institutions. For every feudal political party or alliance in the world that has come to power including the ones in Bangladesh, the idea has always been to “crush” the opposition and the only way that could be done is to whitewash their deeds in front of the international community. It seems there is no law and order. We see everywhere human rights violation. This political crisis is a great threat for democracy, peace and security of the country as well as for IOK project.

c. Ignorance and Intolerant Attitude of some Islamic Groups:

Some Islamic groups have no comprehensive idea about Islam as they denied economics and political agenda of Islam. They continuously give *fatwa* against Islamization of economics and politics. On the other hand some extremist groups who create a great violation in the country in the name of Islam. Besides, the *Ulema* (Islamic scholars) have been divided into multi philosophical sects and political groups. For these reasons, Muslims are handicapped as they remain unenthusiastic about any Islamization program, not because they do not appreciate its importance, but because they want to avoid being accused of religious fanaticism.

d. Government Policy on Education and Curriculum Development

The educational system in Bangladesh managed by two separate complementary ministries – The Ministry of Primary Education and Mass Literacy and The Ministry of Education - with educational boards, directorates and institutes under them is still a legacy of the colonizing British reflecting Lord Macaulay’s plan of education in this area: ‘*we must at present do our*

best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the million whom we govern, a class of persons Indian in blood and color but English in taste, in opinions, in morals and in intellect. [Macaulay, (1835)]

Many educational reform commissions during Pakistan and Bangladesh periods failed to bring about tangible changes in the educational process. The latest step by Bangladesh Government, the National Education Policy, 2010, for unified education policy has also failed to fulfill the aspirations of the mass because of its calculated negligence towards religious education as the NEP has lowered the level of teaching religion from Class X to Class VIII.

Thus, this prevailing educational system is the main obstacle to the IOK process of education. Some of the contributory factors to these obstacles may be traced out as follow:

1. *Secular basis:* Bangladeshi educational system has been bearing a western secularist legacy from the very beginning. Text book composition accompanied by syllabus and curriculum design is almost contributed to by the West incorporating the secularist, materialistic and anti-religious outlooks in all the academic disciplines. Even the Islamic history and culture is distorted through presenting the enlightened heroes of Islam as the most backdated, barbaric and savage, and glorifying the derailed Muslim rulers.
2. *Lack of idealistic trend:* One of the most important problems of the existing education system in Bangladesh is definitely its anti-religious orientation and non-idealistic trend. Our education system has become a factory without any religious and ethical guidance. As a result we try to inspire our students inscribing good words at the school gate such as “Enter to learn, go out to serve” but they follow the sarcastic comment of one of the great cartoonists *Enter as man, go out as goats*.
3. *Lack of moral training:* Our present education system lacks any sort of moral training. Its syllabus contains some stories where a child learns how people are hiding after inviting them, how to make more money through interest, how to make profit out of forgery, they also learn wrong history of humankind. Thus this system produces a class of people-selfish in character, reckless in words, shameless in nature.
4. *Misconceptions about Islam:* Existing education systems speak nothing against the propaganda that is created by the one-eyed Western world making a similarity of Islam with Christianity, which played a negative role against science long ago. Our education system does not teach us what great contributions were made by Muslim scholars in the development of Science, Sociology, Medical science, Geography etc.
5. *Violence in the campus:* One of the great problems of our education is ‘violence’ and ‘terrorism’ in the name of so-called student politics. This very characteristic of our education system leads the whole community to distrust and frustration about the future of the nation. As a result, lacs of Bangladeshi students are rushing towards India through

which it is getting some hundred crores a year. This is increasing in an incremental, alarming and threatening rate from the male students to girl students.

6. *Identity crisis:* Our education system is completely failure to present our national identity. The students are completely confused about their identity. Sometimes they feel hesitant to introduce themselves as Muslims because of the existing education system.
7. *Lack of good teachers:* Present day education system lacks teachers with good and desired qualities. Teachers who were supposed to be the friends, philosophers and guides to students are not up to the mark. Many of them became merely education-laborers, or education dealers. They are running after money, education has become just a commodity for sale. Teachers are indifferent about their Islamic values and norms where 85% of the total population is Muslim. As a result students are not motivated, inspired or somehow linked to Islam. Surprisingly some of our teachers work as delinking force between force between Islam and the students.

e. Influence of Western Culture

Apart from the above, one cannot rule out the fact that most of the Muslim scholars have grossly been influenced by the Western culture that they come to see the program of Islamization as an effort in futility. Not this alone many of the personnel are products of the Western education system which directly or indirectly means that they are likely to be Western in their outlook, orientation and attitude. The Western epistemology has so influenced many Muslim scholars that they prefer to view some Islamic concepts from Western worldview. Through the influence of Western education, some alien concepts crept into Islamic thought. Abu-Sulayman identifies some un-Islamic concepts and terminology in political science that are wrongly attributed to Islamic political thought. Such include the concepts of democracy, sovereignty, and separation of Church and State. Even some of them are attempting to root out Islamic norms from education and they are engaged to secularize education.

f. Promoting anti-Islamic propaganda:

There are propaganda against Islam that it is old patterned, anti science and modern, a hurdle towards social development and civilization. Its laws are medieval and barbaric.

The massive propaganda is being launched continuously by a few government officials, media portals, secularist intellectuals, some human rights organizations, and some cultural activists at home and abroad to brand Islam and Islamic politics as the *jongi* (militants) and extremism.

g. Lack of Model Institutions on the Program

One of the problems militating against the effective implementation of the program is lack of model institutions on the Program. Although the Islamic University Kustia was established with the objective of Islamizing modern knowledge, yet instead of doing this, it has the same old courses in political science, commerce, Islamic history and some others. However, in this regard some private universities like International Islamic University Chittagong and Bangladesh Islamy University, Dhaka are attempting to present an exemplary role model for Islamization of knowledge, with their many shortcomings. The non-availability of a model Islamic institution on Islamization of knowledge has resulted in the design of different curricula to suit individual environments. It has also created lack of vision and clarity about the concept of Islamic education. In some instances, instruction in the fundamentals of religion has been erroneously taken to mean Islamization of knowledge. This obstacle to Islamization of knowledge program is observed by Al-Faruqi, who states: It is most regrettable that the Muslim world is still devoid of a center where thinking on this high level takes place. What is needed is a university, which acts as headquarters for Islamic thought, where the disciplines undergo Islamization and the process gets tested in the class and seminar rooms of the undergraduate and graduate programs of study... .. And yet, everywhere in the Muslim world one hears of the need to Islamize education, its men and institutions, its curricula and textbooks. On the official level where the power to decide rests, one finds little more than lip-service, either made by the ignorant or designed otherwise to mislead the masses. (1982, p.31)

h. Conceptual and Methodological Complexity of IOK

The subject of IOK is being extensively debated intellectually and epistemologically. Numerous writers have elaborated, at different levels of scholarship, on the IOK. Proponents, some critical of certain aspects of the IOK project have developed further the seminal ideas of the major writers, and many have also added their own contributions to the ideas of the major writers. Therefore, we can find the contributions of Abdul Hamid A. Sulayman, Taha Jabir al-Alwani, ‘Imad al Din Khalil, Louay Safi, Ibrahim Ragab and Mna Abul Fadl who have all elaborated on the views of Faruqi and the IIIT School with some differences while Wan Mohd. Nor has focused on al-Attas. On the other hand, one can also find the writings of early contributions like Ja‘far Sheik Idris, Syed Ali Ashraf, and A.K. Brohi, who did present slightly varied approaches to the IOK. On the other hand, there are other many works those are critical of the IOK project as a whole or approaches of IOK. In the former group, we can find the writers such as Fazlur Rahman, Ziauddin Sardar, Yasien Mohammad, Seyyed Vali Nasr and Hadi Sharifi who are critical of the IOK project, especially its IIIT variant. One could like to say that Islamization of Knowledge the term should be changed into Islamic worldview as used by Sayeed Hossain Nasr and Zahra al Zeera. Because most of debates were occurred for the word “Islamization of Knowledge” what is seemed as a fight without

preparation. The term has been used in many “confusing ways”. In this case, Ibrahim A Ragab’s suggestion is the most logical and secured that the term of Islamization should be used in particular area like Islamization of Specific Disciplines or Islamization of Social Sciences not as a comprehensive phenomenon. Following the arguments of Rahman and Sardar, Yassien sees the need to disengage with the West, to turn to our legacy in order to build Islamic disciplines first, before we try to evaluate modern disciplines. [Haneef, Mohamed Aslam (2005)] Therefore, we can say that no creative synthesis or unified work-plan has been made to promote IOK agenda. This conceptual and methodological complexity makes the researchers confused to do start their research work in IOK field with their great enthusiasm.

i. Insufficient Fund

One of the major factors that can hinder the program is finance. Education is an expensive social service and requires adequate financial provision from all tiers of government for successful implementation of the educational program. However, the program of the Islamization has been suffering a great setback due to inadequate funds. Most of Islamic institutions only depend mostly on foreign assistance. received from their headquarters. Many institutions which could have implemented the program found it difficult to embark on it for economic reasons among others. Many research works are yet to see the light of the day for the same reason. This, to a very large extent, has been hampering effective execution of the program in the country.

5.4: Probable solutions to the problems:

For some of the above problems to be solved, we propose the following agenda:

Establishment of Tolerance in all political arena of Bangladesh

To establish a peaceful society, the both secular and Islamic political parties must refrain from their violent, aggressive and intolerant tendencies in all aspects of their political activities. Islamic political activists must show love, sympathy and positive approach to the mass people glorifying themselves with Islamic spirituality. Islamic scholars should be united forgetting their sectarian minor differences. Political stability and social justice are the must for peaceful co-existence and progress of Islamization.

Reshuffle Education System of Bangladesh

The Muslims of the world including Bangladesh should take proper steps to reshuffle existing education system with view to solving the identity crisis. That means they should try to regain their lost national identity by making themselves fully practicing Muslims both in mind as well as in action. The students at all levels should be given religious as well as idealistic orientation. The students should possess high ethical values with conservative attitudes. Anti

Islamic propaganda needs to be countered as early as possible in order to strengthen the existing education systems in Bangladesh. In this respect, Islamic teachings and contribution of Muslims scholars need to be properly circulated among the students. Arrangements must be made for giving moral training to the students keeping in mind the virtues of Islam and religion. Violence and terrorism in the name of so called student's politics must be removed from the campuses so that students can remain busy in their education and other co-curricular activities.

An Agenda for Teacher Education

The teachers who were the friends, philosophers and guide to the students must to follow Islamic norms and values so that students are motivated and imposed toward Islam. 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.

Establishing Private Islamic Universities for IOK Model

It is badly needed to establish more private Islamic universities to promote IOK agenda in the country. It is not enough to establish the institutions but also needed to present them the exemplary model for effective implementation of the program. In this regard, we may say lack of financial resources and resistance from the government are not the problems but the fault lies in the neglect and inability to develop coherent epistemological and methodological bases. Therefore if the authority will take step to present a private Islamic university as a model for IOK then it will be easier to promote IOK in our country.

Developing A Comprehensive Research in IOK field

The subject of IOK, in spite of being extensively debated intellectually and epistemologically, what leads to its conceptual and methodological complexity, the IOK project has played a prominent role in contemporary scholarship and literature, both in theory and its practice. So we should take the IOK is a continuous process of "moving towards a moving target," and most probably would change its dimensions through proper *Ijtihad* and deep research. There is a need for serious evaluation (implying criteria, standards) before accepting, rejecting, assimilating or synthesizing can be done in developing contemporary Islamic knowledge. The effort needed can be exacting, because it requires the comprehensive and systematic analysis of the legacy of Islam in all its primary and secondary sources. A great deal of editing will be needed. Subjects will have to be categorized; terms will have to be coined, modified, or defined anew. A total renovation will be required. Armed with deep insight, critical understanding and systematic analysis, we should not refrain ourselves from investigating knowledge discovered by non-Muslims or adopting new experimental methods, provided that we remain

conscious of the differences in background, motivation and purpose. To actualize the comprehensive research we may establish different research institutes. The Bangladesh office of the IIIT did realize the necessity of this, and it enhanced its different branches in Chittagong, Rajshahi and Kustia. It is hoped that several other bodies will rise to the task of establishing research institutes so as to explore the society for its betterment and to have within the immediate environment necessary information needed for the program. Centers for Islamization of knowledge also may be set up in different universities for the purpose of studying the Islamic and Muslim legacies. The centers should be saddled with the responsibility of collecting works on various disciplines for the purpose of rendering them to Islamic taste, as well as organizing various programs within the Islamic paradigm. The research institutes and centers may also arrange the seminars and workshops with view to training the scholars in IOK field.

Strategies for Generating Funds

Nothing progresses today without resources. So, for the Islamization of knowledge program to thrive, there is the need to source for funds for its effectiveness. The time is now ripe for the Muslims to rise to the task of standardizing the collection and distribution of *Zakat* as a means of fund generation for this program. Such funds are to be managed by committed, transparent and honest Muslims. Muslim philanthropists may also be ready to assist if they notice the commitment and dedication of a body that is ready to take up this responsibility.

Inauguration of Muslim Teachers Association

Muslim Teachers Association should be inaugurated in primary, secondary and higher educational institutions for the purpose of creating an avenue for the teachers to interact and see the need to come together to demand for their right. In this regard the *Adarsha Shikkhok Parishad* (Ideal Teachers Forum) is playing role though it is not enough. They should organize program that will assist in fostering intellectual interaction between members, for the purpose of discussing their respective areas of specialization from the Islamic perspective. For example, they can organize a monthly discussion program where Muslim scholars will critically examine some conventional concepts from Islamic worldview. The Muslim community of each institution should have databases of Muslim staff and students in the various Departments to facilitate effective planning of Islamization of knowledge program.

Encouraging Subject-based Muslim Students Society

The Muslim Students Society in our institutions must encourage such subject-based organizations like Association of Muslim Social Scientists, Association of Islamic Economic Thought and the like, with the aim of conceptualizing their areas of disciplines from the Islamic perspective rather than promoting unwarranted *'Aqidat* among themselves.

Providing scholarship in the field of IOK

Islamic organizations and institutes like Islami Bank Bangladesh Limited (IBBL), BIIT, IIUC or IF may provide scholarships to undergraduate and graduate students for preparing their Honors and Master's thesis in the IOK area. M Phil and PhD scholars interested in this field may be sponsored by the National and International organizations. IDB, Muslim Aid UK and Australia may be approached for sponsoring the research scholars in the field.

6.0: Conclusion

The study attempts at sketching the scenario of Islamization of Knowledge (IOK) in Bangladesh perspective highlighting the concept of IOK and its origin and development. Alongside this, it has also made an effort to identify the obstacles to promoting the IOK agenda and, thus, propose some solutions and recommendations to eventually overcome them. It is noted that most of the solutions to the hindrances towards the progress of IOK mainly depend on the constitutional, administrative and policy making bodies of the country as education system and policy are framed and contributed to by the policy makers in the government. We as the citizens of the third largest Muslim country may expect that the government will adopt necessary steps to eradicate the problems. As the change in the mindset of the government to Islamization takes long time, it won't be wise for us feel ourselves disburdened assigning the government all responsibilities. Yet positive campaign and demand targeting the government should be undertaken simultaneously. Islamic scholars, institutions should play role of a herald cautiously along with the common people who harbor a devotion to religion. It is our hope that these steps if taken, shall make the future of Islamization of knowledge program brighter in Bangladesh than it is today. Indeed, the *Ummah* will be toying with its future should it take the program of Islamization of knowledge with levity.

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