

# The Experimentation of the Islamization of Knowledge Program in Nigerian

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## Abstract

*The 1977 World Conference of Muslim Education seemed to have opened the eyes of the Ummah to the evils inherent in the nature of education bequeathed to it by the colonial masters, and so decided to champion a course of bailing itself out of its educational backwardness through the programme of Islamization of knowledge. Interestingly, few Nigerian Muslim scholars who attended some of the subsequent similar conferences have made their impact felt not only by implementing some major decisions at the conferences, but also by exposing others to them. The programme seems to have been a white elephant project in a multi-religious society like Nigeria; yet, it has reached an appreciable level of acceptance and development. Some latest developments in the nation provide a soft ground for the programme to survive, while one cannot lose sight of some cogs in the wheel of its development.*

**Keywords :** Islamization, knowledge, programme and Nigeria.

## Introduction

The term “Islamization of Knowledge” which has been expressed under different nomenclatures by different scholars could not be said to be a new concept entirely.<sup>1</sup> It could be used to characterize the efforts of the Prophet (SAW) to bring the entire domain of knowledge under an Islamic axis. The intellectual contributions of such scholars as Ibn Taymiyyah, Abu Hamid al-Ghazali, Muhammad ibn Abdul -Wahhab, Muhammad Iqbal and many others equally followed the trend of awakening the spiritual and intellectual consciousness of many Muslim communities through recasting and reorientating knowledge to conform to the Islamic belief system and worldview. These efforts pave the way

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<sup>1</sup> For instance, Lernu Aisha sees the term “Conceptual Transformation of Knowledge” as a better substitute for Islamization of knowledge. Anis Ahmad prefers “Value Centered Education system,” while Omar Kasule refers to it as “Reform of Disciplines.”

for the current Islamization of knowledge Programme which is geared towards confronting the challenges of Western materialistic knowledge.

The alarming rate at which Knowledge is being dichotomized, bifurcated and distorted as well as the wide gap between the revealed and the acquired knowledge is a matter of great concern to the Muslim world, hence the need for it to revamp knowledge so as to integrate the belief system, the knowledge system and the value system based on the Islamic episteme. In the words of Oloyede, the belief system incorporates the nature of man as an embodiment of matter, intellect and soul; the knowledge system gives due recognition to *Wahy* as the highest source of knowledge; while the value system gives prominence to ethics of the belief system and the products of the knowledge system.<sup>2</sup> It is on the basis of this that a balanced system of education could be realized based on the resolution of the First World Conference on Muslim Education that :

Education should aim at the balanced growth of the total personality of man through the training of man's spirit, intellect, his rational self, feelings and bodily senses. Education should cater therefore for the growth of man in all its aspects: spiritual, intellectual, imaginative, physical, scientific, linguistic, both individually and collectively and motivate all aspects towards goodness and the attainment of perfection. The ultimate aim of Muslim education lies in the realization of complete submission to Allah on the level of individual, the community and humanity at large.<sup>3</sup>

As a means of checking the menacing effects of the Western system of education, which serves as a stumbling block for the achievement of the aim of education from the Islamic perspective, al-Faruqi did not mince words when he declared:

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<sup>2</sup> I.O. Oloyede, "The Imperative for Reshaping and Re-Orientating the Modern Disciplines in the Islamic Perspective." Being a paper presented at a Two-Day National Workshop on Islamization of Knowledge organized by IIIT Nigeria office and Usmanu Dan Fodiyo University, Sokoto, between 11<sup>th</sup> -12<sup>th</sup> Safar. 1421AH 5<sup>th</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> May, 2000CE) at Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto. P. 3.

<sup>3</sup> S.A. Ashraf, *New Horizons in Muslim Education*, Hodder and Stoughton & The Islamic -Academy, Cambridge, 1985, p. 4.

How long are we going to content ourselves with the crumbs that the West is throwing at us? It is about time that we make our own original contribution. As social scientists, we have to look back at our training and reshape it in the light of the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*. This is how our forefathers made their own original contributions to the study of history, law and culture. The West borrowed their heritage and put it in a secular mould. Is it asking for too much that we take this knowledge and Islamize it?<sup>4</sup>

Yielding to the above call and similar calls from other scholars, efforts are being made at individual, organizational and universal levels towards reforming education in the Muslim world to conform with the Islamic worldview through the current Islamization of knowledge programme. The thrust of this paper therefore is to consider these efforts in Nigeria. The paper debunks the speculations that the programme is a myth in a multi-religious society like Nigeria, as it exposes various efforts and achievements of the programme in some institutions. It then discusses the factors motivating taking the Islamization programme as a serious and worthwhile venture. It also identifies some cogs in the wheel of the progress of the programme with a view to proffering solution to them.

### **Islamization of Knowledge in Nigeria : The Journey So Far**

Ever before the 1977 International Conference on Muslim Education in Makkah, Nigeria had made a giant stride by hosting an International Islamic Seminar on Education in Kano in 1976 where many scholars from different parts of the world gathered to discuss “the critical problems facing education in Muslim countries and offer solid recommendations.”<sup>5</sup> According to Shehu, the seminar which was held at Bayero University College between 30<sup>th</sup> December 1976 and 7<sup>th</sup> January

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<sup>4</sup> I. Ba-Yunus, “Al-Faruqi and Beyond: Future Directions in Islamization of Knowledge,” *The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* (AJISS); Herndon, AMSS & IIIT; Vol. 5, No. 1. 1988, p. 16.

<sup>5</sup> B.S. Galadanci, “Islamization of Knowledge as a Model For Muslim Educational Reform,” A paper presented at the International Workshop on Educational Reforms in the Muslim World, organized by IIITN and Faculty of Education, Bayero University, Kano, between 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2002, p. 4.

1977 was the first Muslim reform activity from the intellectual perspective.<sup>6</sup> He made a particular reference to the paper presented by Mallam Zubair Jibril titled “A Strategy for Islamic Education,” where the author frowned at the materialistic overdependence of the present system of education, its unholy separation between religion and other human affairs, and the excessive emphasis on paper qualification. The paper further recommended the establishment of National Council for Islamic Education, restructuring the educational system for Muslims, production of suitable textbooks, drawing up new syllabus for all subjects, organizing courses for teachers and embarking on organizing adult education classes.<sup>7</sup>

As a mark of demonstration of the active involvement of Nigerian Muslim scholars in the current Islamization of knowledge programme, some Muslims have been actively involved in some of the world conferences on Muslim education. To be specific, both Sheikh Ahmad Lemu and Aisha Lemu of Islamic Education Trust, Minna, attended the Fifth World Conference on Muslim Education held in Cairo and presented papers entitled “The Approach to Islamization of Knowledge in Nigeria” and “Islamization of Education: A Primary Level Experiment in Nigeria,” respectively. Both scholars are also members of the International Board of Educational Research and Resources.<sup>8</sup> In order to implement the various ideas put together in the various world conferences, the Islamic Education Trust which was founded by this couple established a Model Islamic Senior Primary School in September 1984 at Minna with a view to teaching the secular subjects from the Islamic point of view. In the school, a critical examination of the syllabi of Health Science, General Science, Agricultural Science and Social Studies was made and these subjects were subjected to rigorous Islamic revision. The school has since adopted the revised syllabi, while many

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<sup>6</sup> S. Shehu, “Muslim Educational Reform Activities in Nigeria: Trends, Issues and Future Directions,” A Lead Paper presented at a Two-Day International Workshop on Educational Reforms in the Muslim World, p. 17.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.

<sup>8</sup> See *IBERR's Manual for Muslim Schools*, an IBERR publication, Cape Town, 2001, p. 9.

other private Islamic schools have been borrowing a leaf from it.<sup>9</sup> The idea to sell the knowledge from the various conferences attended by the couple to other Muslim schools culminated in the establishment of the Nigerian Association of Model Islamic Schools (NAMIS), which is an umbrella body of all private Muslim institutions in the country.<sup>10</sup>

The establishment of the New Horizons College by the I.E.T. in 1995 marked the extension of Islamization of knowledge to the secondary school level. Though teaching and learning are going on in a strict Islamic environment, the College is yet to Islamize fully its academic syllabus as it still follows the secular Government approved curricula, but with additional Islam-based subjects to supplement secular subjects. Other primary schools established under the same principle as identified by Shehu are Model Primary School in Zaria established by the Islamic Trust of Nigeria (ITN), Aliyu ibn Abi-Talib Primary School in Kano, established by the Islamic Foundation, Da'awah Primary School, Kano, established by the Da'awah Group of Nigeria and the Hudaibiyah Foundation which has a Model School in Kano, Kano State.<sup>11</sup>

The establishment of the Nigeria office of the IIIT is a great blessing for the promotion and consolidation of the Islamization of knowledge programme in the country. The Nigeria office of the body was established with the objectives of developing and presenting to the world an alternative system of knowledge that is in accord with the Islamic worldview, evolving a new system of education that will serve as a means of imparting and transmitting the Islamic system of 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. Through the outreach activities of the organization, quite a good number of seminars, conferences, workshops and discussions have been organized with the aim of taking the programme of Islamization to all

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<sup>9</sup> The Revised Syllabi were made available to this author during his research visit to the school on 18th January 2000.

<sup>10</sup> I personally attended the inaugural meeting of the NAMIS and also served as the Assistant Secretary-General of the Association between 1997 and 2000. The body had registered with the Corporate Affairs Commission with the name Association of Model Islamic Schools (AMIS).

<sup>11</sup> S. Shehu, "Muslim Educational reform Activities in Nigeria...." p. 23.

academic staff and students on campuses of higher institutions and primary and post-primary institutions across the country. More than three hundred seminars on the relevance of the programme to various disciplines have been organized in various universities, colleges of Education, polytechnics and secondary schools.

Another significant trend in the Islamization of knowledge programme as championed by the IIIT Nigeria office is in the aspect of book publication and free distribution of such to institutions, organizations and individuals. This has been confirmed by Sulaiman who, in his research, submitted that by the end of the third quarter of 1999, forty-two organizations and twenty-five distinguished individual scholars, Imams and Islamic workers had benefited from the literature distribution scheme of the Institute.<sup>12</sup> The Education Department of the Institute has taken a step at reviewing the prescribed textbooks on various subjects both at the primary and post primary levels for the purpose of exposing the un-Islamic aspects of them and for future curriculum planning and development.<sup>13</sup> The Institute is equally floating a journal called *Al-Ijtihad: The Journal of Islamization of Knowledge and Contemporary Issues*. This journal, like AJISS of the mother Institute, contributes to Muslim manpower development especially in academic institutions.

Another trend of the demonstration of the practical viability of the Islamization of knowledge programme in Nigeria is the step taken by some northern universities to introduce some Islam-based courses into some of their Departments. It suffices to mention the Usman Danfodiyo University, Sokoto, which has several Islam-based courses in the Departments of Economics, Management Studies, Sociology, Political Science, History and Education. The university has successfully organized and hosted some national and international workshops on Islamization of Knowledge. The Special Staff Training Programme of the institution has resulted in the production of many research works

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<sup>12</sup> S. Sulaiman, "An Appraisal of the Islamization of Knowledge Programme in Nigeria," *Al-Ijtihad: The Journal of Islamization of Knowledge and Contemporary Issues*, Kano, IIIT Nigeria office, Vol. 2, No. 1, January 2001, p. 11.

<sup>13</sup> A. Gambo, "IIIT Education Department: Aims and Objectives," A paper presented at a Workshop For Resource Persons organized by IIIT Nigeria office between 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> June, 2001, at Bayero University, Kano, p. 4.

submitted to the university.<sup>14</sup> These research projects are related to the conventional disciplines examined from the Islamic perspective. Some textbooks related to the programme have also been published by the institution to ease the problem of literature.<sup>15</sup> At Bayero University, Kano, the experimentation of the programme is equally commendable as various Departments have introduced Islam-related courses into their curricula as well. The establishment of the Nigeria office of the IIT and its office in the premises of the University has helped the institution in hosting many national and international conferences on the programme.

At this juncture, there is the need to mention some of the motivating factors for the success of the programme thus far on the one hand, and what must motivate them to rigorously pursue the programme further on the other.

### **Motivating Factors**

Lemu has identified some enabling factors for the programme of Islamization in Nigeria. Among the factors he mentioned are divine guidance, the growing widespread of Islamic awakening as well as appreciation of Islamic values among the Muslims; Government policy on religious instruction and some external factors like the inspirations and ideas from the proceedings of the World Conferences on Muslim Education and the establishment of Islamic universities, research institutions and academies.<sup>16</sup> In addition to this, some Muslim Governors in the northern part of the country have taken advantage of section 4(4)7 of the 1999 Nigerian Constitution, which states that “the House of Assembly of a State shall have power to make laws for the peace and good government of the state or any part thereof,” by introducing *Shari'ah* in their States. Governor Ahmad Sani Yerima, the Governor of Zamfara State would for long be remembered for being the first

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<sup>14</sup> Oral interview conducted with Dr. M.L.A. Bashar, the then Head of Department of Economics, Usmanu Dan Fodiyo University, Sokoto, on 26<sup>th</sup> January, 2000.

<sup>15</sup> C.U. Aliyu, “The Experience of Usmanu DanFodiyo University in Muslim Educational Reform,” a paper presented at the International Workshop on Muslim Educational Reforms in the Muslim World. p. 7-9.

<sup>16</sup> S.A. Lemu, “The Approach to Islamization of Knowledge in Nigeria,” *Muslim Education Quarterly*, Vo. 4, No. 4, 1987, pp. 6-8.

Governor to have taken this step. Amidst insinuation, condemnation and antagonism from various quarters, the Governor pursued his objectives on the *Shari'ah* to a point of implementation after which other States followed. This step, to a very large extent, should motivate rigorous pursuance of the Islamization of knowledge programme as a radical intellectual revolutionary exercise. In essence, the adoption of *Shari'ah* in these States calls for a clear understanding of what *Shari'ah* is really about. The implementation of the penal aspect of the law in these States is not only *Shari'ah*. Rather, it has to permeate all aspects of life of the people including what is inculcated in the pupils in schools. Hence, education in its entirety needs to be totally recast to make it be in line with Islamic vision of education, or else *Shariah* in these States will be mere political propaganda.

Another significant motivating factor is the rate of the establishment of model Islamic schools in the country. The National Policy on Education published in 1977 and revised in 1981 and 1998 stipulates that the first stage of education would be handled and manned by private individuals but monitored by the Government.<sup>17</sup> The same policy mentions that the Government welcomes the contributions of voluntary agencies, communities and private individuals in the establishment and management of secondary schools alongside those provided by the Federal and State Governments.<sup>18</sup> This opportunity has been grasped by Muslim individuals and organizations to use education as a means of transforming and preserving their religious culture and tenets as well as transmitting their religious values to the younger generations. Education, no doubt, is a product of a particular worldview and it is always tailored towards some particular socio-historical and civilizational contexts. Hence Muslims would be undoing their religious values should they feel unconcerned about Islamization programme. The proliferation of private pre-primary, primary and secondary schools must motivate furtherance of the programme in order to avoid teaching un-Islamic concepts and culture in Muslim schools. Failure to adopt this programme will render the schools into mere caricature of Islamic schools. In fact, the fertile land on which the seed of Islamization of knowledge programme could easily germinate and develop is the private Muslim schools.

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<sup>17</sup> See the National Policy on Education; 1998 Edition, pp. 11-12.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.



In addition to the above, it seems the great educational role being played by the Muslims at both primary and post-primary levels of education since 1920s is being jeopardized by their attitude towards establishment of private universities in the country. This observation is equally made by Okunu, as cited by Salisu when he writes:

A very important issue has arisen in our political educational landscape, the issue of Private Universities. When the Christian Missions, notably, the Baptists and Catholics, already have permission to establish their Universities and are making efforts to do so, the Muslim *Ummah* appears not to be aware of the issue. And unless the Muslim *Ummah* rises to the occasion and act positively, all the gains of the past 80 years in their search for knowledge will be lost. And we will enter the new Christian Millennium trying once again to catch up educationally with our Christian brethren as we did in the early 1920s.<sup>19</sup>

In recent times, Muslims are waking from their slumber, as efforts are being made by Muslim individuals and organizations to establish Islamic universities. Among such universities that have been established by Muslim individuals and organizations are al-Hikmah University, Ilorin, by Alhaji Abdur-Raheem Oladimeji Igbaja; the Crescent University by Prince Bola Ajibola's Islamic Movement for Africa (IMA) in Abeokuta; Fountain University, Osogbo, by the Nasrullahil-Fatih Society (NASFAT), and Katsina University, in Katsina State. The big questions then are: should these universities eventually take-off, are they to teach conventional courses from secular perspective like other conventional secular universities? What kind of graduates are they going to produce? How would these institutions get adequate manpower to cater for Islamized courses to be taught? With this, there is hope of employment opportunity for the graduates who specialize in any Islam-related disciplines in these universities. The programme therefore needs to be pursued to the point of production of more personnel and other necessary materials so that these universities would not be mere replica of the western-oriented institutions.

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<sup>19</sup> T.M. Salisu, "Muslims and The Challenges of Higher Education in Nigeria," Religious Forum Academia, A publication of the Nigerian Association of Religious Scholars, Vol. 2, No. 2. n.d., p. 109.

A section of the 1979 constitution stipulates that “no religious community or denomination shall be prevented from providing religious instruction for pupils of that community or denomination in any place of education maintained wholly by that community.”<sup>20</sup> This provision of the Constitution is enough evidence to show that private institutions are the best places for the successful implementation of the Islamization of knowledge programme. As for public universities, it is hoped that the current agitation for university autonomy if fully granted, will assist in no small measure in introducing Islam-based courses across Departments. After all, the little opportunity granted by the National Universities Commission (NUC) has been grasped by Usman Dan Fodiyo University, Sokoto, and Bayero University, Kano.

Another important factor that must motivate Muslims to gear up to the programme of Islamization is the awareness of Muslims on the Islamic stand on usury, bank interest and other economic practices and their yearning for interest-free banking system. To a large extent the country is witnessing a green light in this direction, as the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) has approved the operation of interest-free banking while Jaiz Bank has started operation in some cities in the country. The emergence of interest-free banks like in Nigeria is a pointer to the fact that graduates of Islamic economics will be needed for effective performance. However, it has been observed that the operation of the Islamic financial institutions shows that professionals and graduates of Islamic economics are seriously needed to bail out such institutions from following the western mode of operation. This is observed by Choudhury, when he says :

Islamic financial institutions have continued to operate in identically western modes of transactions while doing lip-service to Islamically-prescribed modes of financing, economic and social activities that bring about integrated transformation and create vibrant consciousness in the *Ummah*.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> See Section 35 (3) of the 1979 Nigeria Constitution.

<sup>21</sup> M.A. Choudhury, “A Critical Examination of the Concept of Islamization of Knowledge in Contemporary Time,” *Muslim Educational Quarterly*, Vol. 10, No. 4, 1993. P. 28.

Thus, there is the need to speed up action on the Islamization of knowledge programme so that adequate personnel could be provided for these financial institutions. With the introduction of Islam-based disciplines into our institutions, new opportunities are opened for graduates of such disciplines to easily secure job in these institutions

Finally in this aspect, one observes that the country is blessed with different Islamic bodies championing the Islamization of knowledge programme. Prominent among them are the Nigeria office of the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIITN), and the Islamic Education Trust (IET). These organizations have been assisting candidates who are well-disposed to the programme and are ready to pursue it academically. For instance, the IIITN has awarded not less than seventy research grants to postgraduate and undergraduate students whose topics of research speak the mind of the Islamization of knowledge programme.<sup>22</sup> In the same vein, more than one hundred and twenty-two candidates have benefited from the IET's High Level Manpower Scholarships for Muslim Graduate Assistants in Nigerian universities.<sup>23</sup> The IET also introduces an Educational Revolving Fund Programme for students who indicate their willingness to undertake postgraduate studies in the field of Islamization of knowledge.<sup>24</sup> Also, these two bodies (IIITN and IET) donated a sum of money to cover the payment of salaries of the first forty-one graduate assistants recruited to service the Islamized courses of the Usman Dan Fodiyo University, Sokoto. This step was taken to motivate the universities and the candidates in the programme. As the programme is a continuous exercise, the bodies are not relenting in their motivational strategy for any candidate or institution that shows interest in the programme.

### **Challenges of Implementation**

In spite of the achievements made on the Islamization of knowledge programme in Nigeria, it is worth mentioning that the programme has not been fully accorded the expected recognition in the mainstream of

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<sup>22</sup> S. Shehu, "Muslim Educational Reform Activities in Nigeria ..." p. 27.

<sup>23</sup> Oral interview conducted with the IET Director General, Hajiya Aisha Lemu at the IET premises, Ilmi Avenue, Minna on 19th January 2000.

<sup>24</sup> Anonymous, *IET News* (30th Anniversary Edition) Vol. 1, Issue 2, Minna, IET; Nov. 1999, Sha'ban<sup>4</sup>, 420 A.H. p. 4.

education. One of the problems militating against the effective implementation of the programme is lack of model institutions on the Programme. Despite the fact that many institutions have sprung up for the purpose of Islamizing knowledge and the establishment of some Islamic universities for the implementation of the decisions reached in the various conferences on Islamic education, it is observed that most of the Muslim countries are yet to have a model curriculum based on the various conferences. For example, the Islamic University in Bangladesh 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.<sup>25</sup> This is also the case in Pakistan where the problem of bifurcation of education still persists.

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 programme is observed by Al-Faruqi, who laments:

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. Until the Islamic University of Islamabad entered into collaboration with the International Institute of Islamic Thought, not one educational institution in the Muslim world had moved a finger to Islamize knowledge, to produce Islamic textbooks for college use in the disciplines, or the tools of research necessary for the writing of these textbooks. 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

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<sup>25</sup> S.A. Naqi, "Implementation of the Recommendations of the Four World Conferences on Muslim Education in Bangladesh: Problems and Their Solutions," *Muslim Education Quarterly*, Vol. 4, No. 4.1987. p. 46.

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.<sup>26</sup>

Another problem facing the programme in Nigeria is that of dearth of personnel and challenge of mobility of staff from one university to another. The untiring efforts of Professor Molla and Dr. Omar Bello of Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto in the Islamization exercise helped in no small measure in the consolidation of the programme in the university. Their departure from the university system constituted a major setback to the programme.<sup>27</sup> Many of the Graduate Assistants recruited for the programme at its inception left the university system, and this has equally been affecting the sustainability of the programme.<sup>28</sup>

Apart from the above, one cannot rule out the fact that some of the Muslim scholars have grossly been influenced by the Western culture that they come to see the programme 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.<sup>29</sup> The result of this is mentioned by a scholar thus:

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<sup>26</sup> I.R. Faruqi, "Islamization of Knowledge, Problems, Principles and Prospects," in *Islam: Source and Purpose of Knowledge*, p.31.

<sup>27</sup> By the time this author visited the University in May 2000, Dr. Omar Bello had returned to the University's Centre for Islamic Studies, and he was the Chairman Local Organizing Committee of the National Workshop on Islamization of Knowledge held at UDUS between 15<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> May, 2000.

<sup>28</sup> Oral interview conducted with Dr. M.L.A. Bashar.

<sup>29</sup> A. A. Abu-Sulayman, "Islamization of Knowledge: A New Approach Toward Reform of Contemporary Knowledge," in *Islam Source and Purpose of Knowledge: IIIT*, Herndon, 1988, p. 113-115.

On the academic front, Western models and assumptions, particularly in social sciences, the utter absence of foundational Islamic works in the natural sciences, have all continued to reflect in learned conferences, journals and books. University textbooks in Islamic universities continue to follow mainstream thinking, with simple footnotes being devoted to peripheral Islamic treatment.<sup>30</sup>

Finally, a major factor that can hinder the programme is finance. As rightly spelt out in the National Policy on Education, “education is an expensive social service and requires adequate financial provision from all tiers of government for successful implementation of the educational programmes.<sup>31</sup> However, the programme of the Islamization has been suffering a great setback due to inadequate funds. Except for the bodies championing the course, there has been little or no patronage or assistance from the Government. Most of them only depend mostly on foreign assistance received from their headquarters. Many institutions which could have implemented the programme 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 programme in the country.

### **The Way Forward**

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

#### *An Agenda for Teacher Education*

Teachers, no doubt, are the interpreters and transmitters of the cultural values of a 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. 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.

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<sup>30</sup> M.A. Choudhury, p. 28.

<sup>31</sup> See Section 35(1) of the 1979 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

### *Establishing a Research Institute*

Research is the cornerstone of intellectual and scholarly advancement. The West today is still expanding the frontiers of knowledge through well-funded researches. Even in our local environments, Western institutions sponsor researches and get hold of data about us, which we are not even aware of and cannot therefore have. The Nigeria office of the IIT did realize the necessity of this; hence it has proposed to establish a research institute. The proposal has already been designed several years ago and has only been precluded from implementation because of lack of funds. 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 programme.

### *Strategies for Generating Funds*

Nothing progresses today without resources. So, for the Islamization of knowledge programme 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 programme. In addition to this, the suggestion of Sa'idu is relevant here. He recommends donations from rich individuals and that institutions of learning and research centres should engage themselves in fund raising activities, trade, farming and provision of consultancy services in order to generate funds for the implementing of the programme.<sup>32</sup> 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.

### *Establishment of Centre for Islamization of Knowledge*

Centres for Islamization of knowledge should be opened in our universities for the purpose of studying the Islamic and Muslim legacies. The centres should be saddled with the responsibility of collecting works

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<sup>32</sup> S. Sa'idu, "Funding and Sustainability of Muslim Educational Reform," a paper presented at a two-day international conference on Muslim Educational Reforms in the Muslim World, p.10.

on various disciplines for the purpose of rendering them to Islamic taste, as well as organizing various programmes within the Islamic paradigm. The centre, if inaugurated, should commission Muslim scholars to write books on different disciplines from the Islamic perspective.

#### *Inauguration of Muslim Teachers Association/ Muslim Community*

Muslim Teachers Association should be inaugurated in primary, and secondary 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. The forum will allow them to be intimated with the Islamization of knowledge programme and the roles to be played by them. The Muslim communities in our tertiary institutions must extend the horizon of their duties beyond protecting the interest of the Muslims in their institutions. They should organize programmes 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 programme 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 programme.

#### *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.

### **Conclusion**

This paper has attempted to give a general outlook of the programme of Islamization as it is being preached by some 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries Muslim scholars. A particular attention was paid to the Islamization of knowledge programme in Nigeria with a view to considering the extent of its acceptability in the country and some of the motivating factors that could enhance its adoption. Finally, some factors hampering the effective



performance of the programme are discussed, while some steps that could be taken for its further performance are suggested. It is our hope that these steps if taken, shall make the future of Islamization of knowledge programme brighter in Nigeria than it is today. Indeed, the *ummah* will be toying with its future should it take the programme of Islamization with levity.

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