

EDUCATION:

A Communication Channel For National Development

A Book of Readings in Honour of

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for National Development**

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EDUCATION: A Communication Channel for National Development

Table of Contents

<i>Title</i>	<i>Page</i>
Title page	i
Copyright	ii
Prof's Picture	iii
Professor Bashir Babatunde Oderinde's Biography	iv
Table of Contents	vii
Chapter 1: Education, Development and the issue of impediments	1-15
Chapter 2: Language: a vehicle for imparting religious values	16-19
Chapter 3: Teachers' competence in the language of instruction	20-29
Chapter 4: Harnessing the benefits of media in preservation of cultural and social Roles of names among Yoruba speaking group in Nigeria.	30-36
Chapter 5: The general studies English programme and its impact on preservice teachers of UBE	37-47
Chapter 6: Value re-orientation of youth for sustainable national development	48-52
Chapter 7: Reading preference, interest and character development among students In Lagos State secondary schools	53-60
Chapter 8: Islamic teacher education curriculum in Nigeria: challenges in the 21 st century	61-68
Chapter 9: Exploring training in positive self concept in reducing students' involvement in examination malpractices in schools	69-76
Chapter 10: Mother - tongue education as impetus for nation building	77-80
Chapter 11: Assessment of reading interest of primary school teachers in Ojo area of Lagos State	81-87
Chapter 12: The role of post primary teachers in the effective implementation of the new universal basic education programme for national development	88-97
Chapter 13: The role of post primary teachers in the effective implementation of the New Universal Basic Education programme for national development	98-106
Chapter 14: A discourse on managing teaching and learning in nigerian schools	107-118
Chapter 15: Early childhood care and education programme in Lagos State: The role of stakeholders	119-124
Chapter 16: Play way method: an effective strategy in early childhood education	125-129
Chapter 17: Managing conflicts in nigerian tertiary institutions	130-136
Chapter 18: Mentoring: an endangered academic culture?	137-143
Chapter 19: Methods for social studies teaching in Lagos State	144-149
Chapter 20: Effect of classroom management as a correlate to enhance student learning performance in Adeniran Ogunsanya college of education	150-154
Chapter 21: Analysis of environmental education concepts infused in basic 7-9 Curricula	155-167
Chapter 22: Analysis of mathematics questions 'set' from 1988-2008 of the West African School Certificate Examination	168-177
Chapter 23: Contemporary issues in environmental education	178-190
Chapter 24: Expanding functions of instructional materials and media at primary school level: major considerations	191-194

Chapter 25: Improved teachers' task practices: a panacea for improved learning achievement in mathematics	195-208
Chapter 26: Improvisation in science classroom: needs, impediments and glossary of local sources of materials	209-214
Chapter 27: Problem solving: an effective strategy in developing students' skills in physics education	215-222
Chapter 28: Science education for all nigerians: challenges of the 21 st century	223-227
Chapter 29: Teacher's classroom language in biology	228-235
Chapter 30: Teaching and learning school geometry: some insight from research	236-244
Chapter 31: Influence of cognitive style and study habit on student's performance in chemistry.	245-250
Chapter 32: Information and communication technology resource support availability, utilisation and proficiency skills among university libraries: the Lagos State University experience	251-261
Chapter 33: Quality assurance in ICTs production and application in Nigerian schools	262-266
Chapter 34: Recommending textbooks in a digital age: some considerations	267-270
Chapter 35: The new trends in educational technology with particular reference to internet technologies	271-277
Chapter 36: The role of information and communication technology (ICT in enhancing the teaching and learning of biology in secondary schools	278-285
Chapter 37: Towards qualitative and functional learning modality: the challenge of curriculum theory based on multiple communication pathways	286-292
Chapter 38: E-books: A corner stone to development of distance learning in Nigeria	293-297
Chapter 39: Anti-corruption crusade in nigerian society: education as a panacea	298-306
Chapter 40: Managing teachers' stress with exercise and other strategies	307-315
Chapter 41: Motivational strategies and athletes performance in competitive sports settings	316-319
Chapter 42: Physical education and sport in promoting leadership and life skills	320-323
Chapter 43: Sport and social exclusion: The challenge of adapted physical education	324-330
Chapter 44: The impact of Napep on poverty alleviation in Nigeria	331-339
Chapter 45: A political economy of Basil Bernstein	340-349
Chapter 46: Education and development: A philosophical exploration of possible link	350-355

1. LANGUAGE, RELIGIOUS, CULTURAL AND MORAL EDUCATION

Functional literacy education as a determinant of rural women empowerment in Lagos State. *Ogunbiyi, O. and Setonji, N.A.*

Language: a vehicle for impacting religious values. *Olaniyan, K.O.*

Divine Islamic educational order: Panacea to self realization of women's contributions to societal growth and development. *Liman, S.H.*

Harnessing the benefits of media in preservation of cultural and social roles of names among Yoruba speaking group in Nigeria. *Makinde, S.O. and Egbowon, S.E.*

Islamic education as a dynamic agent of development. *Raheemson, M.O.*

Sociolinguistic realities in multilingual and multicultural settings. *Okebukola, F.O.*

Teachers' competence in the language of instruction. *Adejare, R.A.*

Value re-orientation of youth for sustainable national development. *Bolarin, T.A.;*

Badejo, A.O.; Obadofin, Bisi and Sadiku, S.O.

Attitude of people towards Yoruba's facial marks. *Sanni, R.O.*

Students' reading preference, interest and character development among lagos state secondary schools. *Adebule, O.I.*

Islamic teacher education curriculum in Nigeria: Challenges in the 21st century.

Adegoke, K.A.

Exploring training in positive self concept in reducing students' involvement in

Examination malpractices in schools. *Olaogun, G.O.; Abegunrin, E.O. And*

Babarinde, O.T.

Mother-tongue education as impetus for nation building. *Dom-Anyanwu, N.*

2. TEACHERS AND RELATED ISSUES

Assessment of reading interest of primary school teachers in ojo area of Lagos State.

Makinde, S.O., Pemedede, O., Amosu, O.A. and Okereke, P.C.

The role of post primary teachers in the effective implementation of the new Universal Basic Education Programme for national development. *Odofin, B.O.*

3. HIGHER EDUCATION AND EDUCATION QUALITY ISSUES

Planning for quality graduates by Nigerian public universities: a basis for national development. *Olaniyonu, S.O.A. and Gbenu, J.P.*

A discourse on managing teaching and learning in Nigerian schools. *Braimoh, D.S.;*

Ige, N.A. and Odunayo, H.A.

- Early childhood care and education programme in Lagos State: The role of government, school owners, parents and teacher trainers. *Fowowe, S.S. and Akinkuotu, F.A.*
- Managing conflicts in Nigerian tertiary institutions. *Aina, O.; Potokri, C. and Akejelu, M.*
- Mentoring: an endangered academic culture? *Akinade, E.A.*
- Methods for social studies teaching in Lagos State. *Ibhafidon, H.E. and Jimoh, A.S.*
- Effect of classroom management as a correlate to enhance student learning performance in Adeniran Ogunsanya College Of Education. *Olujuwon, T. and Lapite, A.*

4. SCIENCE AND MATHEMATICS EDUCATION ISSUES

Improving students' performance through appropriate Biology teacher's science teaching orientations. Odubunmi, E.O.

Analysis of environmental education concepts infused in basic 7-9 curricula
Ahove, M.

Analysis of mathematics questions 'set' from 1988-2008 of the west African school certificate examination. *Olaoye, A.A.*

Contemporary issues in environmental education. *Adigun, N.A.*

Expanding functions of instructional materials and media at primary school level: major considerations. *Akinpelu, A.O. and Alabi, B.O.*

Improved teachers' task practices: A panacea for improved learning achievement in mathematics. *Sanni, R.I.*

Improvisation in science classroom: Needs, impediments and glossary of local sources of materials. *Owolabi, O.L.*

Problem solving: an effective strategy in developing students' skills in physics Education. *Akintoye, O.H. and Avoseh, O.J.*

Science education for all Nigerians: Challenges of the 21st century. *Onifade, A.*

Teacher's classroom language in biology. *Danmole, B.T.*

Teaching and learning school geometry: Some insight from research. *Atebe, H.U. And Schafer, M.*

Influence of cognitive style and study habit on student's performance in chemistry.
Oludipe, O.

5. INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS AND INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY ISSUES

Information and communication technology resource support availability, utilisation and proficiency skills among university libraries: the Lagos State University experience.
Idowu, O.A., Adigun, J.A. and Aina, A.J.

Quality assurance in ICTs production and application in Nigerian schools
Babayyo, S.

Recommending textbooks in a digital age: Some considerations. *Abifarin, M.S.*
The new trends in educational technology with particular reference to internet technologies. *Amoo, B.O.*

The role of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in enhancing the teaching and learning of biology in secondary schools. *Fabinu, E.O.*

Towards qualitative and functional learning modality: The challenge of curriculum theory based on multiple communication pathways. *Ola-Gbadamosi, I.O.*

E-books: A corner stone to development of distance learning in Nigeria. *Abifarin, M.S. and Adeseke, M.O.*

6. HEALTH EDUCATION, SPORTS AND SOCIOLOGICAL ISSUES

Anti-corruption crusade in Nigerian society: education as a panacea. *Dosunmu, S.A. and Sulaiman, A.A.*

Managing teachers stress with exercise and other strategies. *Akeredolu, O.A.*

Motivational strategies and athletes performance in competitive sports settings
Morounfolu, R.A.; Oladipupo-Okorie, B.O.; Williams, J. and Agbor, E.A.

Physical education and sport in promoting leadership and life skills. *Adesanya, A. And Sunmonu, M.S.*

Sport and social exclusion: the challenge of adapted physical education. *Fasan, O.O. and Oyewunmi, I.A.*

The impact of NAPEP on poverty alleviation in Nigeria. *Akeusola, B.N.; Shittu, S.G.; Badru, G.S. and SOAGA, A.O.*

7. Philosophical issues

A political economy of Basil Bernstein. *Noah, A.O.K.*

Education and development: a philosophical exploration. *Akinkuotu, Y.A. And Olufowobi, O.O.*



ISLAMIC TEACHER EDUCATION CURRICULUM IN NIGERIA: CHALLENGES IN THE 21ST CENTURY

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Abstract

Islamic teacher education's curriculum in Nigerian schools has been facing a lot of challenges which are adversely affecting the successful handling of the teaching-learning exercise of the subject in Nigerian schools. This study examined the Islamic teacher education curriculum in Nigerian schools and some challenges in the 21st century. This study gives us conceptual definition of some keywords featuring in the paper. It also discusses the historical development of Islamic teacher education curriculum in Nigeria and its aims and objectives. This is followed by the challenges facing the effective teaching-learning exercise of the subject in Nigerian schools and the way forward in form of suggestion and recommendation for the gearing up of Islamic teacher education in the country.

Keywords: Education, Teacher Education, Islamic Teacher Education, Curriculum, Challenge.

Introduction

The recent educational reform programme embarked upon by the Ministry of Education has made the redesigning of teacher and the teaching profession imperative in Nigerian schools. Gbadamosi (2005:52) points out that the need for the re-designing is because of the fact that teacher education is fundamental in the foundation of quality in the educational system which serves as the key that unlocks all aspects of development. However, the 2004 National Policy of Education of Nigeria analyses the objective of teacher education in the country which goes thus:

- To produce highly motivated, contentious and efficient classroom teachers for all levels of our educational system.
- To further encourage the spirit of enquiry and creativity in teachers.
- To help teachers fit into the social life of the community and the society at large and to enhance their commitment to national goals.
- To provide teachers, with the intellectual and professional background adequate for the assignment and to make them adaptable to changing conditions.
- To change teacher commitment to the teaching profession.

According to Fafunwa (1974), teacher education should be basically related to every phase of development, for wherever one turns, be it in the social, economic or a political sphere of activities, one is faced with the ever recurring problem of the need for trained manpower. No adequate training can take place without competent teachers to handle the related programmes. It could be rightly said at this juncture that Islamic teacher education in the Nigerian school curriculum in the twentieth century is a meaningful development in the Nigerian history of Education based on its relevance to Nigerian community as a whole. Apart from being one of the subject that fall under religious-moral education in the curriculum. Islamic teacher education is designed to equip the students in the character and

mental power for the purpose of leading the best way of life in the society. Thus, it is not gainsaying to lay emphasis on the fact that low quality of teachers and un-co-operative attitude of the government lead to low quality educational development in the country. For any country to be relevant in the global stream of educational development in 21st century, its teacher education system needs to be well formulated and designed. (Adesina, 2008:59) It is in the light of this development that this study would like to venture into the curriculum development of Islamic teacher education in Nigerian schools. The purpose is to see what element of threat that the facing challenges have caused the Islamic teacher education in Nigeria. The historical account of the Islamic teacher education curriculum and way forward to these problems would assist us in determining the importance and the need for the enlistment and enhancement of Islamic teacher education in the country.

Definition of Some Keywords

The term education is coined out of two Latin words, *educare* and *educare* means to nourish, to bring out, to raise, while *educare* means to draw out, to lead out. Adesina (1985:2) defines education as the tool for the integration of the individual effectively into society so that the individual can achieve self-realization, develop national consciousness, promote, unity and strive for social, economic, political, scientific, cultural and technological process. Lassa (1996:2) defines teacher education as the training and product process of would-be teacher which encompasses production of pre-primary, primary and post primary school teachers. By this definition, Islamic teacher education could be rightly defined as educational process which is properly designed, planned and systematically tailored towards the training of those who would teach Islamic Studies in pre-primary, primary, post primary and tertiary institutions. Curriculum is an educational instrument designed by specialists and experts for the purpose of attaining desired learning objective or outcome. According to Falade (1999:43), curriculum is the total sum of all the contents of learning experience of the school subject which is designed in suitability to the culture and laws that govern the conduct of people in the society.

According to Hornby, challenge means a new or difficult task that tests somebody's ability and skill (Hornby, 2001:178).

Historical Development of Curriculum of Islamic Teacher Education in Nigeria

Curriculum development of Islamic teacher Education in Nigeria began as soon as the religion of Islam was introduced to the Nigerian environ of Kanem-Borno empire in the later part of the eleventh century of the Christian era through the efforts of North African Berber merchants who came to Northern Nigerian for commercial purposes. Therefore, it is not a gainsaying that Islamic teacher education was introduced into Nigeria long before the advent of missionary cum western education which was introduced in Nigeria in the middle part of nineteenth century of Christian era, 1842 to be precise. (Osokoya, 1992:12) Islamic teacher education had already developed well-formulated curriculum and methodology as far back as seventh century of Christian era. By seventeenth century of Christian era, the teaching of Islamic studies in Nigeria flourished and matured into a remarkable standard at the individual private management. (Adegoke, 2001:3).

Centres of Islamic Studies popularly known as Qur'anic or *Islamiyyah* schools used to take place in semi-organized structures similar to non-formal education. Three different places were used for teaching-learning process of Islamic Studies at the initial stages. Those places are as follows: (Lawal, 2002:15).

- (i) *Mu'alim* or *Alfa's* Residential home.
- (ii) Community Mosques.
- (iii) Under the shades of trees in an open space in the community.

The *Mu'alim* (Teachers) operate freer curricular in terms of the subject matter, time table, class size and duration of the studies. According to Osokoya (1992:13), there are four stages of learning in the Islamic Studies in the *Islamiyyah* schools. The Primary level popularly known as Qur'anic stage starts as early as three years of age. Emphasis is laid on rote-learning and choral recitation of chapter from the Qur'an. Curriculum at this stage is choral recitation of the Qur'an so as to sharpen the memory sense of the pupils. The second stage starts immediately after the first stage; its curriculum covers reading and writing of the Arabic alphabets and the formation of Arabic syllables. The third stage can be referred to as secondary level. Here, curriculum would now become wider as it includes Arabic language, Qur'an commentary, syntax, logic, arithmetic, hadith, algebra, poetry and medicine. The fourth stage is the post secondary stage which leads the graduands to tertiary institutions in the Arabic and Islamic nations. The curriculum of Islamic Studies in Nigeria was not only adequate but viable as it transforms the Nigerians to be literate in Arabic language. It should be noted in this structure that prior to the advent of Latin script in Nigeria, the Nigerians could write their indigenous languages with Arabic letters (Raji, 1991:48).

The Qur'anic or *Islamiyyah* schools started late in the South-Western part of Nigeria (Yoruba land) in the early seventeenth century of Christian era and it was pioneered by the graduands of the Northern Nigeria Qur'anic or *Islamiyyah* schools who came to Yoruba land for the expansion of Islam. These graduands are itinerant scholar who were moving from one town to others in order to spread Islam and its knowledge. The students of this itinerant scholars who happened to be the Yoruba indigenes set up the formal and standard Arabic schools on the prototype of the one running in the Arabic and Islamic nations popularly called *Madrasah* (school), *Markaz* (Centre of Learning) and *Ma'ad* (Institute). Such schools could be found in Ibadan, Lagos, Iwo, Ikirun, Osogbo and some Yoruba towns in the south-western part of the country. Their curriculum consists of various foreign sciences of Arabic studies and Islamic studies so as to enable the products to further their studies in any university within or outside the country.

The teaching of Islamic Studies got into the Western school in 1922 when various non-governmental Islamic organizations started their own private primary and post-primary school in Lagos. Such non-governmental Islamic organizations were Ahmadiyyah, Ansar-ud-Deen, Nawairud-Deen, Isabatudeen, Zumuratu'l'Hujaji, Anwarul-Islam, Ansaru'l-Islam, Islamic Missionary Society *et-cetera*. Both Ahmadiyyah and Ansar-ud-Deen started their schools in 1922 and 1929 respectively, and within three decades, other Islamic organizations mentioned above followed the same suit. (Nasiru, 1995:79-80). Islamic teacher education emerged in the western Nigerian Universities when the University of Ibadan established a Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies in 1961, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria in 1963, University of Ilorin, University of Jos and Bayero University, Kano in 1975.

Other tertiary institutions of learning such as Diploma awarding institutes and Teachers' College also followed the same suit by running certificate courses in Arabic and Islamic Studies with well formulated curricular. By this, it became a reality for the students of Islamic Studies to obtain a Diploma and College Certificates and Degrees in the Nigerian Western-oriented tertiary institutions. The last but not the least in the curriculum development of Islamic Studies is the taking over of the schools established by the non-governmental Islamic organizations by the federal and state government in 1975. The teaching of Islamic Studies is not phased out of the government schools and these paved way to the designing of the standard curriculum for the effective and proper teaching of Islamic Studies in primary and post-primary schools in Nigeria in 1985 (Adegoke, 2001:4-5).

Aims and objectives of Islamic Teacher Education in Nigerian Schools

National Policy of Education which was formulated in 1984 by the then Federal Ministry of Education spelt out the four national aims and objectives of education which goes as follows:

- (i) the inculcation of national consciousness and national unity;
- (ii) the inculcation of the right type of values and attitudes for the survival of the individual and the Nigerian society;
- (iii) the training of the mind in the understanding of the world around; and
- (iv) the acquisition of appropriate skills, abilities, and competence, both mental and physical as equipments for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of his society.

As a result of this development, the national aims and objectives of Islamic studies was derived from the blue print of this National Policy of Education of 1984 stated above. From it, the following aims and objectives of the Islamic Teacher Education are arrived at to:

- (i) develop spiritually both body and soul of students;
- (ii) create an awareness about the existence of Allah in students;
- (iii) acquaint the students with the outlines of Islam;
- (iv) prepare the students to understand Islam as a culture and civilization;
- (v) instill in the students the spirit of God consciousness;
- (vi) appreciate and uphold the values of and teachings of Islam, and to live by it.
- (vii) give the students adequate intellectual exposure that will enable them pursue further education in Islamic studies in tertiary institution within or outside the country;
- (viii) enable the students know their responsibilities duties towards Allah, other human beings and themselves, and carry those responsibilities and duties as expected of him;
- (ix) give moral and religious training to the students so that he would be useful not only to himself but also to his community at large;
- (x) introduce the students to the role of Arabic language as an official language of Islam as well as language of scholarship in Islam.

Lemu (1980:1) stated the aims of teaching Islamic studies in the primary school as follows:

- (i) to awaken in the child a consciousness of Allah as the foundation of his intellectual, emotional and spiritual growth and to provide a sound Islamic basis for rational and reflective understanding of the world around him;
- (ii) to teach the child to be conscious of his responsibility to Allah, serving Him with all the talents and resources He has given him;
- (iii) to enable the child to know how to worship Allah in the manner He has prescribed;
- (iv) to train the child's personality towards the best moral and social conduct, healthy attitudes and self-discipline, in accordance with the guidance of the Qur'an and *Sunnah* and to encourage him through this training to grow up as a good and law abiding citizens, who will contribute to the well being of society and of humanity in general.

Nigerian Education Research Council (1984:3-4) highlighted the aims of teaching Islamic Studies in Junior Secondary School as follows in the Islamic studies curriculum:

- (i) recognition of Allah as the Creator and Sustainer of the Universe and the sole source of values;
- (ii) cultivation of the sense of gratitude to Allah and submission to his guidance and moral law, both in air worship of Him and in our behaviour towards our fellow-man;
- (iii) awakening of the faculty of intellect and reasoning in accordance with the Qur'anic injunctions which sav

“Will you not use your reason”

“Will you not ponder and reflect”

- (iv) encouragement of the pursuit of useful knowledge and the application of such knowledge for the benefit of humanity in the fields of science, technology, medicine etc.
- (v) attainment of balanced development of the individual and community by giving due weight to the physical, social, intellectual, moral and spiritual needs of man;
- (vi) realization of human rights, equality and brotherhood, with emphasis on practical means of achieving social solidarity and ethnic harmony in place of greed and selfishness;
- (vii) awakening in the heart, the consciousness of the presence of Allah in thought and in behaviour, as a witness to all our actions, thoughts and behaviour, acting as a restraint on wrongdoing, whether public or private and as an incentive to good behaviour;
- (viii) to produce a cultured, well-behaved, considerate, reasonable and God-fearing man or woman;
- (ix) to teach one to be conscious of his responsibility to Allah and to his fellow being.

Challenges of Islamic Teacher Education in Nigeria in 21st Century

There are several problems facing the successful teaching-learning exercise of Islamic Studies in the Primary and post-primary schools in Nigeria. As a result of this negative development, instructional object and target could not be achieved up to the recognizable standard in the educational system. Some of the problems are examined below.

(a) *Poor Attitude of Nigerian Government Towards the Subject*

Nigerian government devoted little interest to the teaching-learning of Islamic Studies in the Primary and post-primary schools on the excuse that the country is a multi-religious nation and also secular constitutionally. As a result of this, they do little or nothing to promote and enhance the teaching-learning of Islamic studies as they do for other subjects in terms of positive motivation and re-inforcement. Nigerian government hardly remembers Islamic Studies when it comes to the matter of organizing academic workshops, seminars, conferences, field trip and induction for the students. (Lawal, 2002:48) also fails to give moral and financial supports for the teaching learning of Islamic Studies by not employing adequate number of teachers to handle the subject in the schools. In some schools, only one Islamic teacher is employed to take up the subjects for the whole primary school and secondary school students (both J.S.S. and S.S.S.) while there are no Islamic teachers in some schools. Also, there are some schools where the Islamic Studies teacher is a non-Muslim or a graduate of Religious Studies claiming to be a specialist in Islamic Studies. (Adegoke, 2007:92).

(b) *Poor Societal Attitude Towards the Subject*

Nigeria is a capitalist and materialistic society in which higher priority is given to money possessions and physical comfort above the educational and spiritual values. Thus, nothing is important and worth-while in Nigerian society if it would not bring materials to someone in the future. Success of man is solely based on the amount of material he or she is able to acquire from whatever he or she labours for since the Nigerian society sees any form of education as an investment. This poor societal attitude is extended to the teaching-learning exercise of Islamic Studies in primary and post-primary schools. They see Islamic Studies as a non-career-able subject that has no better and brighter future for the students. Consequently, the Nigerian society discourages students from offering Islamic Studies by looking down upon them and the subject, and seeing the subject as non-relevant to modern day Nigerian society that cherishes science and technology. (Adegoke, 2007:93-94).

(c) *Poor Attitude of some Islamic Studies Teachers*

Some Islamic Studies teachers maintain poor attitude towards the future career of Islamic Studies by erroneously believing that only available career for Islamic Studies is teaching. Thus, they are not proud of their area of specialization and may feel inferior among their colleagues in the school. Some of them would even opt to be teaching another subject in the school at the expense of Islamic Studies. As a result of their poor attitude towards their subject, they do not encourage the students to offer it in their qualifying examination. Some Islamic studies teachers are in the habit of being absent from school or class due to some other private and extra-curricular assignments within and outside the school. Some would not attend the class regularly until the examination is approaching when they would not attend the class and rush the syllabus for the students within short periods. Some would not even prepare and plan for the class before appearing to their students out of erroneous thinking that there is no big deal to Islamic Studies. There are also some Islamic issues as a result of their sectarian or school of thought's influence, thereby condemning and rejecting any opposite view without critical academic consideration. (Dangona, 1991:59).

(d) *Poor Attitude of Some Islamic Studies Students*

The number of students offering Islamic Studies in the primary and post-primary schools is very minimal in comparable with the students offering other subjects. As few as they are, some of them do not assign dedication and seriousness to the subject as they would not attend the class regularly out of erroneous thinking that Islamic Studies is simple. There are some Islamic students who do not have interest in the subject due to the fact they are offering it to make up their required credits in the ordinary level result or due to the pressure from their Muslim parents (Hameed, 2002:22). Such students would be shying of portraying themselves as Islamic students amidst their co-students in the school environment. Some Islamic students also maintain erroneous thinking that Islamic Studies is not a better and brighter career-able subject. Some of Islamic Students do not give full dedication to the subject as a result of curriculum status of Islamic Studies as an optional subject, which means that students could offer it or leave it for other alternative subjects in the school. (Lawal, 2002:47).

(e) *Lack of Adequate Instructional Materials*

Most of the instructional materials for proper handling of Islamic Studies in primary and post-primary schools are not available for use. Most of these materials are foreign materials imported from Western and Middle Eastern countries. Their importation to the country would gulp a large sum of money from the government or individual pulse as they are highly expensive. The cost of providing these expensive and imported instructional materials for all primary and post-primary would be suicidal on the government treasury. The inability of the government or private individual to provide these instructional materials for the effective teaching-learning of Islamic Studies has adverse effect on the subject. (Adegoke, 2004:253).

(f) *Non-Availability and Inaccessibility of Adequate Textbooks on Islamic Studies*

Adequate textbooks for the effective teaching of Islamic Studies in Primary and post-primary schools are not available. Few of the available Islamic Studies textbooks are outdated which have been published several decades ago. Some of these available textbooks were written by non Muslims who are neither Islamic graduate nor Specialists in the field. In a situation where the recent and current Islamic textbooks are provided by the school, the accessibility of the students towards them is limited as most of these textbooks are written in Arabic Language and they have not been translated into English and Nigerian languages which are made of instruction in the post-primary and primary schools respectively (Salawu, 1991:42). Majority of the Islamic scholars in Nigeria do not make any attempt to translate, write and publish current Islamic textbooks for the benefit of the Islamic students in the country. Some of these Islamic scholars who make the attempt to

engage in this academic duty are not morally and financially encouraged by the government of Nigeria, while some prefer to use the Arabic medium of instruction in writing Islamic textbooks instead of Nigerian local Languages or officially recognized language in Nigeria. (Adegoke, 2004:253).

Way Forward

The Nigerian government should gear themselves up on the enlistment of the Islamic teacher education in the country during this time of educational reform. This could be done in two forms. Firstly, government should assist Islamic teacher education by rendering moral and financial assistance to this area of learning through the appointment of more Islamic teacher in all the primary and post-primary schools in the country, procuring more Islamic instructional materials to the schools, Organization and sponsoring Islamic educational seminars, conferences and workshops for Islamic educators and providing current Islamic textbooks to the schools. Secondly, Nigerian Federal Ministry of Education should make all religious teacher education compulsory for the respective religious adherents' children in the school. This could be done by making Christian Religious Studies (CRS) and Islamic Studies (ISS) compulsory for Christian and Muslim Students respectively. This step would serve as a means of enhancement of moral and ethical education among the students in Nigerian schools.

Islamic teacher educators should be dedicated to Islamic teacher education in the Nigerian schools by attending their classes regularly so as to cover the subject syllabus in time. Apart from this, they should continuously develop themselves from time to time by attending seminars, conferences and workshops even if they are not sponsored by the government. Islamic teacher educators should always go on research so as to write out various Islamic textbooks in line with the requirement of the curriculum in Nigerian educational system.

Nigerian society should correct their wrong impression about the prospects of the products of Islamic teacher educators in the country. People should realize that Islamic teacher educators can rise and shine to the peak level in their field just as other professionals and experts. It should be noted at this juncture that Islamic educators would be placed on the same cadre with the other professional equivalent certificate if they are employed in the government service. However, Islamic teacher education is not strictly restricted to the teaching profession only. They also fit into some professions such as journalism, banking, public administration, civil service and international relation *et. cetera*. There is a high need for the Nigerian society to be educated and well-informed on the importance and prospect of any educational subject in the schools of learning.

Conclusion

The study attempted to examine the curriculum development and challenges of Islamic teacher education in Nigeria in the 21st century. With the foregoing discussion, the need for the enlistment and enhancement of Islamic teacher education is justified. The next step is for the Nigerian government and academics to realize this need and make necessary effort to arrest the dying status of Islamic teacher education in Nigerian educational reform. The study now suggests that the Nigerian government should involve Islamic teacher education in the educational reform by putting all hands on deck on the subject. It also suggests that all ministries of education and parastatals in Nigeria should carry forward educational reform of Islamic teacher education and keep the momentum alive. These suggestions and earlier-mentioned way forward would hopefully lead to the transformation of Islamic teacher education in Nigerian schools and free Islamic teacher educators from the obstacles of learning subjugation and marginalization among the academics.

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