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TOWARDS THE SUSTAINABILITY OF ISLAMIC TEACHER EDUCATION IN THE SOUTH-WESTERN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES

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Islamic Teacher Education in the Nigeria universities situated in the South-Western Nigeria remains one of the educational fields that need sustainable development in the recent educational reform going on in the country. As a Nigerian from the South-Western part of the country and a researcher in Islamic Studies, it is in my opinion that there is an obvious lack of interest in the Islamic discipline in the western oriented universities in Nigeria as a whole, most especially from the South-Western Nigeria. This problem featured out from the content of educational policy on Islamic Studies. It is on this line that this paper attempts to examine the need for the sustainable and innovative development in the Islamic Teacher Education in the South-Western Nigerian universities and makes a trial in providing the way forward towards the successful sustainable and innovative development in the discipline. The paper opens up with a historical analysis of the advent of Islamic Teacher Education in South-Western Nigerian environs and how it found its way into the western oriented universities in the area. It then moves on to discuss the various innovative and sustainable trials embarked upon by some of these universities towards the successful sustainability of Islamic Teacher Education in the Nigerian universities. It also examines the challenges and obstacle facing the survival of the discipline in the educational field and suggests the way forward.

INTRODUCTION

Islamic Teacher Education as one of the academic discipline in the Faculty of Arts and Faculty of Education in some of the South-Western Nigerian universities in the twenty-first century should be made to gear its focus towards an innovative and sustainable development in Nigerian educational system. The discipline is designed to equip the students in the character and mental power for the purpose of leading the best way of life in the Nigerian society and outside. Islamic Teacher Education in the Nigeria universities situated in the South-Western Nigeria remains one of the educational fields that need sustainable development in the recent educational reform going on in the country. As a Nigerian from the South-Western part of the country and a researcher in Islamic Studies, it is in my opinion that there is an obvious lack of interest in the Islamic discipline in the western oriented

universities in Nigeria as a whole, most especially from the South-Western Nigeria. This problem featured out from the content of educational policy on Islamic Studies. This study is not shy away from the fact that the recent educational reform and quality assurance embarked upon by the Federal Ministry of Education in Nigerian universities is making a frantic effort and attempt to redesign teacher education in Nigerian schools. In this educational reform and quality assurance exercise, Islamic Teacher Education is not an exception as it is expected the discipline should fulfil the aim and objective of the National Policy of Education of Nigeria which goes as 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.

It is on this line that this paper attempts to examine the need for the sustainable and innovative development in the Islamic Teacher Education in the South-Western Nigerian universities and makes a trial in providing the way forward towards the successful sustainable and innovative development in the discipline in the South-Western Nigerian universities. The purpose is to see what element of threat that the neglect of this sustainable and innovative development in the Islamic Teacher Education in the South-Western Nigerian universities can cause the discipline and the necessary step to be taken so as to sustain the discipline.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

The term education is coined out of two Latin words, *educare and educere*. Educare means to nourish, to bring out, to raise, while educere means to draw out, to lead out. Adesina (1985:2) defines education as the tool for the integration of the individual effectively into a society so that the individual can achieve self-realization, develops 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 or 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.

GENESIS OF ISLAMIC TEACHER EDUCATION IN THE SOUTH-WESTERN NIGERIA

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. (Olatunbosun, 1981: 55). It was from these Northerners that Islam and Islamic Teacher Education got to the today South-Western Nigeria in seventeenth century. The Qur'anic or *Islamiyyah* schools started in the South-Western part of Nigeria (Yoruba land) in the early seventeenth Century of Christian era and it was pioneered by the graduates of the Northern Nigeria Qur'anic or *Islamiyyah* schools who came to Yoruba land for the expansion of Islam. These graduates were itinerant scholars who used to move from one town to others in order to spread Islam and its system of teacher education. They tutored and trained some Yoruba students who in turn established their own Qur'anic schools in the Yoruba environs. At the initial stage, centres and institutes of Islamic Teacher Education known as Qur'anic or *Islamiyyah* schools used to take place in semi-organized structures similar to non-formal education. Different places used for teaching-learning process of Islamic Teacher Education at this initial stage were either *Mu'alim/Alfa's* residential home, community mosques or under the shades of trees in an open space in the community. (Lawal, 2002: 15).

These *Mu'alim/Alfas* (Teachers) operate freer Curricular in terms of the subject matter, time table, class size and duration of the studies. According to Osokoya (1992 :12), 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 graduates to tertiary institutions in the Arabic and Islamic nations. Some of these Yoruba Islamic students went as far as Ilorin and some towns in the Northern Nigeria to acquire more knowledge

in Islamic Teacher Education. They came back to Yoruba towns to establish their own formal Islamic 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). (Adegoke, 2004: 248) Such Islamic schools could be found in Ibadan, Lagos, Iwo, Ikirun, Osogbo, Ede, Oyo, Ogbomoso, Abeokuta and some other Yoruba towns in the South-Western part of the country. By this development, it could be rightly pointed out that Islamic Teacher Education began in South-Western Nigeria long before the advent of western education which was introduced in Nigeria in the middle part of nineteenth century of Christian era, 1842 to be precise. (Raji, 1991:48) Islamic Teacher Education had already developed well-formulated curriculum and methodology as far back as seventh century of Christian era in the Arabian peninsula. By eighteenth century of Christian era, Islamic Teacher Education in South-Western Nigeria had flourished and matured into a remarkable standard at the individual private management. (Osokoya, 1992 :12).

The curriculum of Islamic Teacher Education in Nigeria was not only adequate but viable as it transforms the Nigerians to be literate in oriental languages (Arabic), culture and religion (Islam). It should be noted in this structure that prior to the advent of Latin script in Nigeria, the Nigerians could write and read their indigenous languages in Arabic language. Their curriculum consists of various foreign sciences in Arabic studies and Islamic studies so as to enable the products furthering their studies in the two twin disciplines in any university within or outside the country. (Adegoke, 2004: 248)

INNOVATIVE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF ISLAMIC TEACHER EDUCATION IN THE SOUTH-WESTERN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES

Islamic Teacher Education emerged in the South-Western Nigerian Universities when the University of Ibadan established Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies in 1961. This department designed the certificate and diploma programme so as to incorporate the graduates of the non-governmental and private Islamic schools into western form of teacher education in a western oriented university. By this development, it became possible for the graduates from those non-governmental and private Islamic schools to obtain various Degrees such as B.A, B.Ed, M.A, M.Ed, PGDE and Ph.D in

Islamic Teacher Education without necessarily moving out of the country for the programme. It can be rightly said at this juncture that it were the products of this University of Ibadan that went ahead to pioneer the establishment of the Department of Islamic Teacher Education in some universities in the South-Western Nigeria. Some of these universities are Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile Ife in 1963 and University of Benin in 1975, Ogun State University (now Olabisi Onabanjo University), and Ondo State University (now Adekunle Ajasin University) in 1982, Lagos State University in 1984, University of Lagos in 1981, University of Ado-Ekiti (now Ekiti State University, Ado Ekiti) in 1997, Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijebu-Ode in 2005 and Adeyemi College of Education, Ondo in 2007. All of these institutions with the exception of Lagos State University and University of Lagos run Islamic Teacher Education as a unit under the Department of Religions Studies. (Adegoke, 2013:6).

As a result of this development, some of these South-Western universities still went ahead to establish the Bridge Programme in Islamic Teacher Education so as to bridge the difference between the products of private and public schools in the area of Islamic Teacher Education. Such a bridge programme is to create avenue for the products of private and local Islamic schools to join the western oriented public institutions in order to acquire the acceptable certificate and secure the white collar job in government owned schools. In order to successfully do this, University of Ibadan introduced an intensive course for the product of private Arabic schools leading to the University's Certificate in Arabic in 1963/1964 academic session. Two years later, this one-year programme was expanded to Islamic Teacher Education with the aim of meeting the growing need and desire of Nigerian students to study Islam as a teaching discipline in western oriented schools. A candidate with this certificate would be qualified for university admission only after he must have sat for and passed General Certificate Examination (GCE.). (Abdul, 1983: 49). This programme qualified the product for employment as tutor of Islamic Teacher Education in primary and secondary schools and it inspired the products to obtain General Certificate Examination (GCE) Ordinary Level in English language and any other two subjects apart from Arabic and Islamic Studies. This one-year Certificate programme was in progress till 19775/1976 academic session when the

University of Ibadan introduce a two-year Diploma course in Islamic Teacher Education. Holders of the West African School Certificate (WASC) or General Certificate Examination (GCE) Ordinary Level with at least five Credits as well as Grade Two Certified Teachers who had taken Islamic Studies as one of their subjects at the Teachers' Certificate Examination were qualified for admission for this programme (Oloyede, 2012: 51-52).

In the same way, the Lagos State University also introduced a sub-Degree and Diploma programmes in Arabic and Islamic Studies in 1997 for some of the privately owned Arabic institutes in Lagos and its environs in order to incorporate the candidates whose educational background was in Arabic language to the conventional western education system and to prepare them for higher studies in Islamic Teacher Education. The entry requirements for this programme as approved by the Senate are Merit/Credit Level of Pass at the *Thanawiyyah* (Secondary) Level of standard *Ilmiyyah* (local) schools or the *Idadiyyah* Certificate of standard *Ilmiyyah* (local) schools with credit passes or Credit passes in three subjects including Arabic and Islamic Studies at the West African School Certificate (WASC) or General Certificate Examination (GCE) Level examination or a good pass in the entrance examination. (LASU Diploma Brochure, 1997:52). Ekiti State University and Adekunle Ajasin University in Ekiti and Ondo States respectively also follow the same suit. University of Ibadan again embarked on another bridge programme known as Affiliation Method Programme through which some privately-owned colleges of Arabic and Islamic Studies could get their certificate recognized by affiliating their colleges to the public university. Such colleges are Mufutau 'Lanihun College of Arabic and Islamic Studies, Ibadan, Oyo State, Arabic Institute of Nigeria, Ibadan, Oyo State, Sulaiman College of Arabic and Islamic Studies, Ososa, Ogun State and Ansaru-Deen Institute of Arabic and Islamic Studies, Isolo, Lagos State. Lagos State University equally has several private Arabic Centres (*Marakiz*) Arabic schools (*Madaris*) in Lagos State as Affiliated Diploma Institutions under their External Studies Programme. Also in 1996, Lagos State University introduced postgraduate programmes (M.A, M.Phil, Ph.D) in Islamic Teacher Education. (Oloyede, 2012: 52).

Recent Innovative and Sustainable Development in Islamic Teacher Education in the South-Western Nigerian Universities.

Some Nigerian universities in the Northern part of the country introduced Islamization of Knowledge programme which they borrowed from International Institute for Islamic Thought (IIIT) in United States of America. Through this programme, they introduced some Islamic-related contemporary courses such as Islamic Art and Architecture, Islam and Non-Muslim World and some other Islamic-related courses run in different departments in Law, Social Sciences and Management Sciences. Such universities are Bayero University, Kano, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria and Usmanu Danfodiyyo University, Sokoto.²³ These Northern universities extended this programme to the South-Western universities which later added it to their curriculum in Islamic Teacher Education. By this, these universities were able to introduce some Islamic-related courses such as Islamic Economics, Islamic Commerce, Islamic Banking and Finance, Islam and Social Change, Islamic Political Thought, Islamic Political Institution, Islamic Philosophy, Islamic Psychology, Islamic Anti-Crime Formula, Islamic Law of Inheritance, Islam and Modern Science, Modern Development in Islamic Law, Islamic Law and Modern World, Islam and the World, Islam and Orientalism *et.cetera*. In 2011, Lagos State University also introduced one year professional postgraduate Islamic Studies for the candidates who have no background in Islamic Studies in their previous higher certificate, those who have interest and love for the knowledge of Islamic Studies and those Muslims who want to increase their Islamic knowledge. The entry requirement for this programme is Bachelor Degree in Arts, Law, Sciences, Social Sciences, Management, Education and Higher National Diploma (HND.) (Adegoke, 2013: 8).

In 2005, two private Islamic universities were established in the Ogun and Osun states in the South-Western Nigeria namely Crescent University, Abeokuta and Fountain University, Osogbo. Crescent University and Fountain University were established by the Islamic Movement for Africa of Retired Justice Bola Ajibola and Nasrullah-l-Fathi Society of Nigeria (NASFAT) respectively. Each of these universities designed some Islamic-related courses at each level of study which must be compulsorily offered and passed by the students irrespective of their areas of discipline and their religious affiliation. This method afford the students who have never had any contact with Islam, the opportunity of acquiring a working

knowledge of Islamic Teacher Education. (Oloyede, 2012 :52).

CHALLENGES OF ISLAMIC TEACHER EDUCATION IN THE SOUTH-WESTERN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES

Despite this of Islamization of Knowledge embarked upon by these South-Western Nigerian universities, Islamic Teacher Education is still among the low-intake courses in the Faculties of Arts and Education due to several challenges facing the successful application of innovative and sustainable development of Islamic Teacher Education in these universities. Some of these challenges are as follows:

LOCATION OF DEPARTMENT

In some of the South-Western universities, Islamic Teacher Education does not obtain the department of its own. For instance, in the University of Ibadan, Islamic Teacher Education shares the same department with Arabic Language and Literature. In the Lagos State University, Islamic Teacher Education domiciles in the Department of Religions where it co-shares the department with Christian Religious Studies (CRS). It is run in the University of Lagos as a course in Religious Studies unit in Department of Arts and Social Sciences Education. In Obafemi Awolowo University, Islamic Teacher Education serves as a unit and service course in the Department of Religious Studies where it co-shares the department with Christian Religious Studies. The same applies to Ekiti State University, Adekunle Ajasin University, Tai Solarin University of Education and Olabisi Onabanjo. The programme is run at Crescent University, Abeokuta and Mountain University, Osogbo as a unit course in the Department of General Studies. With this development, work load limit may not permit the situation where the enough course work would be taught in Islamic Teacher Education for the candidate who would be made to offer some courses in Christian Religious Studies and Teacher Education as subsidiary courses. This situation can hardly make room for the kind of efficacy and thoroughness one would expect in a university for Teacher Educator.

LACK OF UNIFORMITY IN THE SYLLABUS

The syllabus in operation in some of these South-Western universities varies from one university to

another. What we are saying is that there is no co-ordination between one university and other in these South-Western universities. According to Abdul (1983:47), a reason for this may be the gravity of devotion that each South-Western university projects for Islamic Teacher Education. Another reason may be that there has been any effort on the part of each of this South-Western university to interact with one another in the harmonization of the syllabus. In a situation like this, the products of Islamic Teacher Education who were not made to undergo the same form of training may not be able to give expected performance in the teaching-learning classroom and this may have negative impacts on the thoroughness of Islamic Teacher Education.

LOW ADMISSION AND RECRUITMENT OF STUDENTS

This is one of the major problems confronting the Islamic Teacher Education in the South-Western universities. It is two faceted problems namely the source of recruitment and the quota number of those students admissible to the university. The university admission requirement as demanded by the Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB) guidelines for admission to first Degree courses in universities and other Degree Awarding Institution in Nigeria requires five Ordinary Level credit passes at one sitting or six credit passes at two sittings to include Islamic Studies or Arabic Studies, English language and other three or four subjects as the case may be, from Arts or Social Science subjects for the candidates coming for the four-year Degree programme through the University Matriculation Examination (UME), and Diploma or National Certificate in Education (NCE) in Islamic Studies or Arabic Studies in combination with other Arts or Social Science courses for the candidates coming for the three-year Degree programme through the University Direct Entry. (JAMB Brochure, 2010: 119 & 172) With this admission requirement, there are some arisen problems emerging as an obstacle facing the sustainable development of Islamic Teacher Education in the university. In the firstly instance, there are very few secondary schools in the South-Western Nigeria that offer Islamic Studies or Arabic Studies at Junior and Senior classes. Though, there are several private Islamic schools offering Arabic and Islamic Studies but their certificate are not given recognition by the South-Western universities in lieu of Ordinary Level certificate. Apart from this,

some South-Western universities do not always fill the specified recruitment quota for Islamic Teacher Education, a recruitment quota which in itself is quite inadequate. Last but not the least is the eradication of some of the bridge programme in some of these South-Western universities.

WAY FORWARD

The previous bridge programmes in some South-Western Nigerian universities should be made to re-surfaced again so as to boost the number of candidate coming in for Islamic Teacher Education in the university. It is obvious from the experience that introduction of the bridge programmes in the early inception of the Islamic Teacher Education did a lot in the sustenance of the discipline. Majority of the candidate that came into Islamic Teacher Education through this route of this bridge programmes are today the learned professional in the field. In the opinion of Oloyede (2012:59), this is the only route through which this discipline renders conventional service in western oriented public life. It is highly advisable that these bridge programmes which has been cancelled by all of the South-Western Nigerian universities, especially a year Certification programme of the University of Ibadan which has served, more than any other bridge programmes, in the provision of competent and balanced Islamic Teacher Educators for all levels of educational institution in Nigeria every part of the country. To the best of my knowledge, Islamic Teacher Education would survive and successfully compete with other Arts, Science and Social Sciences courses in the South-Western universities if the previous Bridge programmes are resuscitated again.

Apart from University of Ibadan and University of Lagos, other universities in the South-Western Nigeria have not embarked on the Islamization of Knowledge programme. It is advisable that other universities in the South-Western Nigeria who have not commenced this programme should liase with Universities of Ibadan and Lagos concerning the Islamization of Knowledge programme.

Government should ensure that Islamic Teacher Education is taught in all levels of institution in the country as there are very few secondary schools in the South-Western Nigeria that offer Islamic Teacher Education at Junior and Senior classes. Recently, Federal Ministry of Education's new curriculum has made Islamic Studies one of the compulsory subjects in the secondary schools. To sustain this new

development, more Islamic Teacher Educators have to be employed in the South-Western states of federation.

Some South-Western universities' admission office does not always fill the specified recruitment quota for Islamic Teacher Education, a recruitment quota which in itself is quite meager and inadequate. One of the ways towards the innovative and sustainable development of Islamic Teacher education in the South-Western universities is that they should gear themselves up to meet the demand of the admission and recruitment quota through the increment of the number of candidate admitted for Islamic Teacher Education.

National University Commission (NUC) in Nigeria should gear themselves up on the enlistment of the Islamic teacher education in the country during this on-going educational reform. The Commission should assist the Islamic teacher education by giving the discipline moral support through the procurement of relevant Islamic instructional materials to the schools, organizing and sponsoring Islamic educational seminars, conferences and workshops for Islamic educators and providing current Islamic materials to the schools.

Islamic Educators in Nigeria should make an attempt to translate, write and publish current Islamic textbooks for the benefit of the Islamic students in the country. This study does not shy away from the fact that there some Islamic Educators who have it in mind to publish relevant textbooks in the discipline of Islamic Teacher Education but they could not go to press due to financial constraint and they are not morally and financially encouraged by the government of Nigeria.

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