

Similarities and Differences between the Current Education System and Education System in the Life of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ)

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ABSTRACT:

This study expounds upon the “Similarities and Differences between Current Education System at the Time of Prophet S.A.W.” This research signifies the relevance of the preaching is of our Holy Prophet S.A.W in relation to the contemporary education system. This study aims at exploring the parallels and contrasts between the early Islamic era and the postmodern era to excavate the practical value and fruitfulness of both the teaching systems. It focuses upon the teaching methods, which were adopted by the last Prophet S.A.W like stimulation, persuasion, appreciation, role modeling, focusing the individual differences, avoiding punishments etc. It also points to the current Education system dealing with E. Learning, co-education, scientific analysis, gradation etc. The pivotal focus of this study is to observe the continuation of the teaching techniques of Holy Prophet S.A.W. in the present age and the variations that the present day education system has incorporated to teach in the postmodern times. It is a qualitative research. The method of content analysis will be used to carry out this research. This study has further implications for the future researchers exploring the latest education system borrowing the teaching structures of the Holy Prophet S.A.W.

Keyword:

Education, Islamic, Postmodern, System, Teachings.

1. Introduction

The Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H) enlightens the world with heavenly guidance and transforms this world from the clutches of immoralities into right path. He brought revolutionary change initially in the people of Arab and soon his message spread all over the world. He devoted his life to educate people setting their lives according to the Islamic doctrine by signifying education in every walk of life. There was no educational institute in pre Islamic society as compared to today. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) constructed the first Islamic institute called Suffah inside Masjid e Nabvi to overcome the thirst for knowledge. Islam takes a very broader view of education and made education obligatory for all Muslims. Prophet (S.A.W.) was a teacher of religion and introduced knowledge to the entire world.

1.1 Problem Statement:

The teachings methods of post Islamic era are somehow different and a little similar to the modern teaching patterns. The incorporation of both the teaching principles can contribute to a better teaching strategy for the postmodern era. The observance of only the modern teaching standards cannot help the learners to absorb the accurate knowledge. Rather the incorporation of both the teaching styles can be more fruitful in the contemporary age.

1.2 Research Questions:

The proposed research questions are:

1. What is Education and its real essence?
2. What are the benefits of education?
3. What is currents and education system in the life of the Holy Prophet PBUH?
4. What are the similarities and differences in both systems?
5. How the implementations of both education systems can be beneficial for the character development?

1.3 Objectives:

1. To explore the actual meaning of education.
2. To identify the benefits of education on develop human personality.
3. To find out the role of both educational systems on personal & societal progress.

2. Literature Review

The previous studies have focused on the generally current education system or either education system in the life of prophet PBUH. However, this paper shell mainly concentrate on the implementations of both systems of education at the same time for the character development. Therefore, that individual can bring change in society and do something for the mental peace of society.

Hilda Taba and Freeman Elzey denote in their research entitled as Teaching Strategies and Thought Process that “the proper business of the schools, it has long been urged, is that of teaching students “to think”. They are of the opinion that the learners must “acquire both the conceptual and the methodological tools necessary to extend knowledge of thinking process and to permit our investigation of how teaching procedures may affect its development”.¹

Edward Kameenui and Douglas Carnine externalize in their book entitled as Effective Teaching Strategies that Accommodate Diverse Learners that the teaching “guidelines [should be] offered for determining the curricular and instructional priorities in teaching diverse learners who are typically behind their school age peers in academic performance and content coverage”.²

3. Methodology

This research is analytical and descriptive in nature. This research mainly focuses on current education system and the education system in the life of the beloved prophet PBUH. An in-depth descriptive analysis will be conducted using literature reviews and content analysis.

4. What is Education?

The Arabic language has three terms for education. The most widely used words are ta'līm, Tarbiyah and Ta'dīb. Ta'līm, from the root 'alima (to know, to be aware, to perceive, to learn), which is used to denote knowledge through instruction and teaching. Tarbiyah, from the root raba (to increase, to grow, to rear), implies a state of spiritual and ethical training in accordance with the will of God. Ta'dīb, from the root aduba (to be cultured, refined, well- mannered), suggests a person's development of sound social behavior.³

Education is a process of imparting general knowledge, developing the powers of reasoning and preparing oneself or others intellectually for mature life. According to John Davy (1859-1956), it is “the development of all those capacities in the individual which will enable him to control his environment and fulfill his possibilities”.⁴ Plato says, “Education develops in the body and in the soul (of the pupil), all the beauty and all the perfection of which he is capable of.”⁵

Imam Abu Hanifah says on education: “it means understanding of what makes or mars a soul: and learning something without putting it into practice is meaningless, one should therefore, know how to distinguish between right and wrong in regard to both this world and the hereafter and should choose the right conduct, so that his misguided intellect may not lead him astray and consequently Allah’s wrath may not fall on him.”⁶

5. What is the Function and Objective of Education?

The best source to protect any nation and its people is its education. Education is a sophisticated and dynamic process. The fundamental aim of Islamic education is to give Muslims guidance on the Islamic lifestyle i-e pray, fast, eat, and sleep. Education is mean to development of the personality of a man. Educational system may be in different forms like informal, non-formal and formal. The ultimate goal of any of these modes of educational set-ups is to shape the personality of a man to promote personal and societal progress.

6. Relationship of Education with Character Building and Personality Grooming

The Islamic education is not merely concerned with the present but also keeps in view everlasting existence of the soul. This long- range view of life suggests through analysis of what is good for the individual at all stages of his growth. Islam provides complete direction to a man at every stage of man’s life. Allah Almighty demands a man to strive to know the purpose of his creation. Oneness of Allah provides a spiritual basis for educating the whole life of the individual and the society. This concept of Allah should be represented so beautifully and attractively to the child, so reasonably to the young and so alluringly and intelligently to the adults that they all realize it as their goal and work for it willingly and lovingly.

Education is to provide guidance to the individual in terms of what he is, at a given time and then equip him to march forward with confidence. Institutions should concentrate on such educational design that motivates the students to develop a bond between knowledge and their actions or behaviors. In this way, 'the educated people who have the knowledge that cleanliness is 'half of the faith' and would not through the garbage anywhere. The present education system is producing Babooz (boss) who are highly literate but have nothing to do with professional ethics and accountability concern. As a result, so-called 'educated people' are rapidly increasing but society is declining morally and ethically.

7. Outcomes of Practical Implementation of Islamic Education

Islamic education system as based on the Quran and focuses on the development of individuals. It also concentrates on the development of good man and servant of creator. Following are the benefits:-

7.1 To Know the Purpose of Life and its Creation:

The first very most benefit of the implementation of Islamic education on man is that man can know the purpose of his creation. As Allah Almighty said in the Holy Quran:

“And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me”.⁷

In another place Allah Almighty is going to concentrate on education by telling a man to know way of creation.

“Recite in the name of your Lord Who created. Created man from a clinging substance Recite, and your Lord is that the most beneficent. Who schooled via the pen -Taught man that that he knew now not”.⁸

7.2 Promotes Accountability and Responsibility:

Ihtisab-e-Nafs (self-accountability) has been regarded as a tool for a believer against insinuations caused by Satan. The Holy Qur'an repeatedly warns and reminds us that one day we shall be standing in front of Allah for our accountability. In the Islamic education, each individual feels a sense of communal responsibility, and the notion of individuality does not exist. This system imposes on each individual the duty of Amr bil-Ma'ruf wa nahy an-il-Munkar (Commanding good and forbidding evil). Allah has ordained the believers, for example: (And advocate the righteousness, and forbid the evil). ⁹

7.3 Encourages Lawful Earning:

The Islamic education system is going to encourage people to earn riba free. Islam emphasizes greatly on struggle and hard work for attaining one's livelihood. Allah says:

“O you who believe! Eat the good things we have provided for you. And be grateful to Allah if it is Him ye worship” 10 If we can imply Islamic education system then automatically child can come out from the materialistic approach towards this life. A child may be free from the bonds of the desires of his own self and attain a pious tranquil soul.

7.4 Impart concept of Equality between Students:

In an Islamic educational system, equality between students is given particular importance. There is no distinction between the rich, poor, villager or city-dweller; all are taught the same syllabus, in the same manner, providing equal opportunities for all. If we practice our Islamic education system then it would be very easy to break the wall of religion and secularization.

7.5 Helps to get Right Version of Islam:

Islamic education enables a child to learn about Islam from properly trained teachers and from reliable resources provided for them. Both knowledge and upbringing are included in Islamic education, through which education is not simply a means to gain information but also to instill in the students ethical mannerisms.

7.6 Positive Citizenship:

Through Islamic Education system students from different religious, ethnic, or cultural background can learn how tolerance leads to positive citizenship, students will be able to foster better relationships with different members of society.

7.7 Practice of Prayer:

In general, type school, children often miss the prayer time due to time conflict or other problems. However, Islamic schools strictly follow the Salah time. This regular practice also influences students never to miss their prayer in the future.

7.8 Promotes good Companionship:

There is a saying that school friends are the best things in our life, their influence stays in our life forever. While a child reads in an Islamic

institute, they can meet with other kids who possess the same religious ethics.

7.9 Motivates Exploration to Learn Knowledge and Modern Science:

The main aim of every education system is to motivate individuals to explore new things. Islamic education is also not any different. Islam encourages in knowing the materialistic world from the pre-Muslim era. It influences students to come up with new ideas and take their steps in the world of science.

7.10 Establishes a Positive and Healthy Society:

Islamic studies also play a powerful role in social changes like all the education mediums. As Islam is a dynamic religion, the rules change since a society does not remain the same. Therefore, Islamic studies come forward to remove outdated values and develop a solution for the changes.

7.11 Inspire to Lead a Simple Life:

As mentioned earlier, Islamic education creates the foundation of Islam, and it teaches how to balance life. These things are very important for an individual to be motivated to maintain a simple lifestyle and avoid luxury. Holy Quran says: Behold! in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the alternation of night and day,- there are indeed Signs for men of understanding, Men who remember Allah, standing, sitting, and lying down on their sides, and contemplate the (wonders of) creation in the heavens and the earth, (With the thought): “Our Lord! Not for naught Hast Thou created (all) this! Glory to Thee! Give us salvation from the penalty of the Fire”¹¹

7.12 Grow up with Islamic Environment:

In Islamic schools, kids are surrounded by a religious atmosphere & Islamic culture. So, kids who studied in this type of institution tend to have more profound Islamic beliefs and values.

8. Education System in the time of Holy Prophet (PBUH)

Arab, during the pre-Islamic era was the center of pagan practices and illogical socio political deterioration. They were at wars with each other for petty reasons. They were in dire need of a moralist and a preacher who could train their savage selves and could inculcate the true moral and humane values in them. Holy Prophet (PBUH). In the words of Holy

Prophet (PBUH), “Verily! I have been sent as a teacher”. So, accordingly, Allah has divinely blessed him with all the sublime methods of teaching which could penetrate into the hearts and minds of the Arab Bedouins. In order to understand the similarities and differences between the education system in the time of Holy Prophet (PBUH) and the current education system, the features of both the systems must be enumerated. The prime features of the teaching methods of the holy Prophet (PBUH) are as follows:

8.1 Stimulation:

Stimulation is an act of encouraging someone to make him more efficient, developed and active. 12Holy prophet (PBUH) adopted four basic aspects of stimulating his learners. Firstly, he himself was a great “Role Model” for the Muslims. They learnt from their observations of the speech and actions of Rasool ullah (S.A.W). In order to teach virtue, he exhibited the same virtue through both his actions and words. Secondly, the Holy Prophet (PBUH) was in practice of praising and appreciating his learners in order to boost and stimulate them towards more and more knowledge. Thirdly, another important teaching method of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) was to pay tribute to the famous persons. While acknowledging the positive attributes of the famous people, the average learners learn new knowledge and the talented learners get enhancement in their acquired knowledge. After conquering Taii kingdom, the holy prophet referred to his generosity to advise them about generosity.

8.2 Practical Demonstration:

Holy Prophet (PBUH) believed in the practical application of knowledge. He gave his Muslim learners the message of monotheism and started performing all the obligatory worships himself to raise the Sahaba close to Allah Almighty. In order to preach the five times prayers to the newly embraced Muslims, he directed them to offer prayers five times for two days to learn the method and timings of the prayers. He practically demonstrated the prayers and made the Muslims learn through this practical application method.

8.3 Teaching through a Learner in the Presence of the Prophet PBUH):

Another unique method of teaching by Rasool ullah is to assign a talented student the task of sharing his knowledge to his fellows in the presence of

the teacher. This not only makes the talented student more responsible towards understanding the knowledge more keenly to impart upon the others but also makes the other learners become more efficient and vigilant in their learnings so that the next time they would teach their fellow learners. A teaching method psychologically makes the students more engaged in their learning tasks.

8.4 Liberty to Learn about the Foreign Nations:

Our Holy Prophet (PBUH) revealed an openness to learn about the language and lifestyle of the other nations and communities. He directed the Muslims to learn Hebrew in order to be His translator to communicate with the Jews. Similarly, on the suggestion of Salman Alfarsi, Holy Prophet (PBUH) decided to dig a trench to stop invasion from the Non-believers as the Persian people did to avoid the horses' invasion in their land. Therefore, the Holy Prophet (PBUH) exhibited a welcoming gesture to the practices and experiences of the other tribes and nations.

8.5 Significance of Persuading the Learners:

Another key teaching method of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) was to persuade his learners to think over the questions from multiple perspectives. He focused on inviting his learners to understand the question and then to adopt the new Islamic ways of life.¹³ The pre Islamic people were rigid on the ways of their ancestors. Our Holy Prophet (PBUH) persuaded him to apply the five pillars of Islam into their practical life. His kind persuasion unveiled the human love and care to his learners that only Islam had compassion for his people and a justice in the world next hereafter. In this way, persuasion is another successful teaching method adopted by our Holy Prophet (PBUH).

8.6 Focus on the Collective Involvement of the Learners:

While sitting along with the group of his learners, Our Prophet (PBUH) did never target any learner individually. Rather it was his very common practice to throw a question for the whole of the group and let them decide upon the right answer. He never directed a query on any individual learner to sustain his self-respect and to keep him engaged with the learning process.¹⁴ Once, He inquired the Muslims about a tree that does not shed its leaves and looks like a Muslim. To save the learners from embarrassment, he did not specify anyone rather let them think

collectively and then answered that it is a Palm tree (to suggest that virtues are never unrewarded).

8.7 Quoting Proverbs and Narrating Parables:

The pre Islamic Arab was famous for its lingual expressions and rich literary traditions. They labelled themselves as the men of letters and the rest of the world as dumb: lacking the potential of speech. Among them, the Holy Teacher of the mankind always used metaphoric and rhetoric expressions in his speech especially during the Friday Sermons to satisfy their aesthetic sense even while learning about a new religion.

8.8 Competitions:

Assessments and competitions have a great role to play in the process of learning. Our Holy Prophet (PBUH) wanted his followers to compete with each other in nobility and virtue. He announces the reward of joining prayer during the first takbeer and then reinforced the reward for those who would offer the morning and night prayer even to reach by crawling upon their knees. So he tried to develop a healthy positive competition among his learners to practically impose their knowledge into their day to day common life.

8.9 Imparting Knowledge Step by Step:

Holy Prophet (PBUH) observed the psychological absorption stamina of his learners while teaching them about the religious obligations. Once he sent a group of Muslims to Yemen to preach Islam. He directed his followers to invite those people towards monotheism and added that if they would obey you then preach them about prayers. Then again, if they would obey, you then direct them about Fasting and yet if they would obey you then teach them about paying alms. So there was no bombardment of the commandments over the newly converts. Rather they were being gradually attracted towards the teachings of Islam.¹⁵ It could save the newly embraced Muslims from the weight of the Islamic principle initially that, with the passage of time would become an integral part of their daily lives.

8.10 Individual Differences:

Our Holy Prophet (S.A.W) always focused on the individual differences of his learners. His address to the emperors to invite them to monotheism was different from his invite to the local Bedouins of the Arabs.¹⁶ Likewise once Allah has revealed the verse 95 of chapter 4 that “Not equal all the

inactive among the believers”. On listening to this verse, a blind man approached the prophet and said that my physical impairment has become a hurdle in my categorization in the high believers. Then, the complete verse was revealed adding the words “except the disabled and the strivers in the cause of Allah” The individual differences are keenly observed in the teachings of Islam

8.11 Avoid Physical Punishments:

Islam, peace does not allow any type of physical or verbal punishment for the learners. He always directed the Muslims to avoid harming the others. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) said that there should neither be harming nor reciprocating harm. He remarked that the Muslim is the one from whose hands and tongue, the other Muslims are safe. There is no concept of the physical beating or even the psychological or emotional violence in Islam.

9. Current Education System

The contemporary education system is about fourteen hundred years later than the education system in the time of the Holy Prophet (PBUH). The followings are a few significant features of the current education system that are quite at loggerheads with the characteristics of the teaching system of the time of holy prophet (PBUH).

9.1 Neo Colonized Education System:

The contemporary education system in most of the countries of the world is neo colonized. This term neo colonized refers to the state of being subjugated indirectly by the past colonizers after attaining independence. The culture, language and constitutions are borrowing the colors of the dominant nations. Likewise, education system is equally absorbing the shades of the other advanced nations, their culture, their religion and other aspects of life. The contemporary education system is blindly following the Christian and Jewish traditions, which does not incorporate the ideology of the native lands.

9.2 E. Learning:

The current education system is largely dependent upon the E learning. E. learning refers to the educational system that is conducted via electronic media. It is dependent on internet. Now days the modern classrooms are well equipped with the modern gadgets like tabs, laptops, smart white boards etc. LEDs have been installed in higher education institutes to

convey the lessons in smart ways. It also helps the learners to keep a record of a very huge learning material and to utilize it according to the need.

9.3 Learning in Foreign Language:

Another important feature of the modern day teaching method is imparting knowledge in secondary language. Today, the English language has become the prime medium of learning and teaching process. The English language has standardized itself to this much extent that no country can think of prospering and advancing without this language in this age of globalization. The mother tongue is no more of any significance in this postmodern era.

9.4 Scientific Reasoning:

The present day education system is based on the scientific analysis. The scientific analysis is considered as the touchstone of the learning material. The subjects like physics, chemistry biology explain their principles on the rules of scientific scrutiny.¹⁷ The teachers adopt the scientific material to inquire and experiments the new up-to-date knowledge.

9.5 Gradation System:

The current education system aims at gradations. The assessments of the learners are gauged on the grade system. In some educational institutions, they are awarded with percentage gradation whereas in a few institutions they are tagged with GPA & CGPA. The hard and fast categorization of the results is established and these grades are the proof of the scholarly learnings of a student.

9.6 Co-Education:

It is a very common practice of the contemporary education system that it encourages co-education. The learning of the both genders together at one place is called co-education. The male and female learn at the same time from the same instructor on the same topic is considered a modern teaching approach. Most of the schools, colleges and Universities offer co-education in most of the countries of the world.

9.7 Public VS. Private Institute:

In the modern age, the teaching institutes have been divided in public and private spheres. In every country, the Government patronizes some institutes whereas a large number of institutes are run by the private sector.

The private sector autonomously run their institutions according to their own fee structures curricula and activities. The public sector institutions mostly incorporate the socio cultural values into the curricula and to conduct the school activities.

9.8 Status Oriented Teaching:

The modern day teaching system exhibits the lack of social equality rather; it depicts the class disparity as well. The rich class of the society prefers to send their children in private institutions. The mediocre class largely send their children in the public institutes that offer them economical fee structures. Thus, the education system in present day has been bifurcated into two monetary divisions.

10. Similarities and Differences

Though the contemporary education system incorporates many educational methods, which were prevalent during the time of our Holy Prophet (PBUH), yet one can easily observe the disparities between these two educational systems.

10.1 Similarities:

There are very few aspects of the modern education that practically adopt the teaching methods of the time of the Holy Prophet (PBUH). The similar aspects are as follows:

1. Both the systems focus upon the significance of stimulation in imparting the knowledge.
2. Both the systems attempt at persuading the learners to gain better outcome
3. Both the systems observe the individual differences of the learners.
4. Both the systems incorporate the proverbial style of teaching and use the narration of the parables for imparting information.

10.2 Differences:

There is a long list to enumerate the differences between the teaching system at the time of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) and the current time. The major differences between these two education systems are as follows:

4. In the modern education system, the basic emphasis is laid upon the internet demonstrations. There is no scope of practical demonstrations like the education system at the time of holy prophet (PBUH). The teacher comes out of the class after delivering a lecture on the harms of

junk food and right after that order a cold drink and pizza from the canteen.

5. The education system during the time of our Holy Prophet (PBUH) created a healthy competition among the learners so that they could exceed in nobility. Ironically, the present day competitions are like a cutthroat competition where the low grades sometimes result in suicide and sometimes result in the form of life treats and even murder of the high achiever.
6. The contemporary education system relies on the grade system. The talent of a learner is gauged through the grades he secures. The piece of paper decides the capabilities of a scholar. Whereas, contrary to this, the education system during the time of our Holy Prophet (S.A.W) awards the learners with their life long titles. For example, Khalid bin Waleed was titled as Saif ullah, Abu Obaida bin Jarrah was titled as Amin-ul -ummat etc.
7. The contemporary education system approaches the foreign language to impart their learners the due knowledge. Contrary to that the education system in the time of Holy Prophet (S.A.W) adopted the native language as a medium of instructions and imparting information. In this method the learners focuses upon the knowledge learning unlike the modern system where the students stay involved in comprehending the language and vocabulary only.
8. The current education system targets the E. learning. Whereas our Holy Prophet (S.A.W) instructed his followers without internet, mere through role modelling and practical demonstrations and yet His preaching is long lasting.
9. The current education system exhibits physical and emotional violence as well. But our Holy Prophet (S.A.W) refrained the Muslims from harming the others.

11. Conclusion

The pith and marrow of the whole discussion is that there are a few similarities and a large number of differences between the education system of the time of our Holy Prophet (PBUH) and the current time. In order to establish a well-learned scholarly nationhood, one must incorporate the Islamic methods of teaching into the contemporary

teaching system. The high ups must revise the aims and objectives of education to imbibe the moral and economic needs of the learners. The new updated curricula should be designed by keeping in view the aptitude of the learners. The learning is a perpetual process in the life of a Muslim. By implementing both the education systems appropriately, the scholars not only can become a liable citizen but also the attainment of worldly and the next worldly Falāh becomes easeful for the learners.¹⁸

12. Recommendations

1. The contemporary education system must incorporate the teaching methods of the time of our Holy Prophet (S.A.W) to inculcate modern and Islamic qualities into our learners.
2. The goal oriented teaching methods should be adopted instead of the grade oriented teaching methods.
3. In order to enhance the learning faculties of the learners, their informal and formal both types of education must be imparted for the practical good of the learner for both the worlds.
4. The students must become able to obtain a good employment in order to earn Halal income.
5. The education system must update its curricula to meet the requirements of the current era.
6. Physical and psychological punishments should be banned and reported to the concerned authorities to make the learning atmosphere healthy and comfortable.
7. Research oriented education system must be flourished in the institutions.
8. The scholarships should be awarded to the talented and deserving students to excel in their concerned field.

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