

The Empowerment of Muslim Communities in Private Higher Education

An Ummatic Agenda

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2nd International Conference on Islam and Higher Education (2nd ICIHE)
The Pahang State Foundation Complex,
Kuantan, Pahang

Overview

- ❖ Introduction: Explaining the Meaning of Ummatic Agenda
- ❖ Investment in Education as Key to Success in National Development
- ❖ Educational Nationalism and Its Impact on Private Muslim Higher Education
- ❖ Reviving Private Muslim Higher Education: the Institutional Dimension
- ❖ Reviving Private Muslim Higher Education: the Curricular Dimension
- ❖ Conclusion: Empowering the Ummatic Agenda

Introduction

- ❖ The main aims of my presentation
 - ❖ To emphasize the strategic importance of private higher education to the global umma's competitive position in knowledge power in relation to the rest of the world
 - ❖ To argue for the superiority of the ummatic approach to societal problems – in particular private higher education – over other approaches; the ummatic approach exists at several levels (national, regional, and global)
 - ❖ To argue for the strengthening of the ummatic agenda in private higher education

- ❖ The perennial dimension of the ummatic agenda
 - ❖ The perennial idea of the umma
 - ❖ The perennial concern of the umma: the preservation of its identity and unity

- ❖ The changing contexts of the ummatic agenda
 - ❖ The ummatic identity: its ups and downs; its fortunes and misfortunes
 - ❖ The pre-colonial context; the colonial context; the post-colonial context (up to the time of establishment of the OIC); the OIC era

- ❖ The post-colonial context of the ummatic agenda with specific reference to the field of private higher education in the OIC era
 - ❖ The OIC can and should provide opportunities for the expansion and strengthening of the ummatic agenda particularly in higher education

Investment in Education as Key to Success in National Development

- ❖ The more successful among the Muslim nations in nation building in the post-colonial era have become what they are today thanks to the singularly large investment in education at all levels: primary, secondary, and tertiary
- ❖ Investment in education brings good returns in terms of developed human resources and human capital for societal progress
- ❖ If we want to create a knowledge-society then there is no better way than through education
- ❖ The transition to full and real independence can be shortened and made more meaningful through educational progress

Educational Nationalism and Its Impact on Private Muslim Higher Education

- ❖ The ideological nature of the National Education Policy of most Muslim countries in the post-colonial era
 - ❖ The political dimension of the national ideology: state monopoly of education including higher education
 - ❖ Education is generally seen as the most effective means of attaining the goals of national development and national unity
 - ❖ The state must control education if these national goals are to be achieved
 - ❖ The epistemological dimension of it: the secular thrust of the dominant knowledge and learning culture

Educational Nationalism and Its Impact on Private Muslim Higher Education (continued)

- ❖ The impact of educational nationalism on Muslim higher education
 - ❖ Impact of state control/monopoly on higher education: the institutional development of private (both traditional and modern) higher education suffers
 - ❖ Impact of the state-controlled secular knowledge and learning culture: curriculum quality suffers
 - ❖ The specific impact: the rich Islamic traditional resources for educational development such as the *awqaf* left “idle” or untapped

Reviving Private Muslim Higher Education: the Institutional Dimension

- ❖ Traditionally, in Islamic culture, private higher education played a pivotal role in the development of knowledge culture
 - ❖ According to the Pakistani-American scholar Fazlur Rahman, the majority of the best Muslim brains over the centuries were products of private higher educational institutions
 - ❖ The Islamic culture related to the institution of private higher education needs to be revived: the need to conceptualize the Islamic idea of the private university and college; in what way it is the same as and different from the modern Western private university and college?
 - ❖ There is a need to study the present state of private Muslim higher education among the umma; organizations like FUIW and Association of Arab Universities and the OIC in general can fund this study and its follow-ups for concrete practical implementations

Reviving Private Muslim Higher Education: the Institutional Dimension (Continued)

- ❖ The present context of revival of private Muslim higher education
 - ❖ Revival of traditional institutions in higher education
 - ❖ Growth of private higher educational institutions modeled on the modern Western species
 - ❖ Growing number but still few of private higher educational institutions aimed at synthesizing the traditional Islamic model with the modern Western model

Reviving Private Muslim Higher Education: the Institutional Dimension (Continued)

- ❖ The new partnerships for revival
 - ❖ For the ummatic approach to work and for the ummatic agenda to bear fruits a partnership involving the following must prevail:
 - [1] the state and its government
 - [2] the business community
 - [3] the religious establishment and its various institutions
 - [4] non-governmental developers of higher educational institutions
 - ❖ The modern distinction between the “public” and the “private” needs to be re-examined in the light of Islamic social teachings
 - ❖ In the light of this re-examination we may entertain the idea of another species of higher educational institutions: neither public nor private but with an “in-between” characteristic; an equivalent of GLUC (government-linked university or college)?

Reviving Private Muslim Higher Education: the Curricular Dimension

- ❖ Reviving the Islamic character of the private Muslim higher educational institutions
- ❖ The core content of the Islamic character in question is its epistemological foundation and framework
 - ❖ its tawhidic or holistic and balanced curricular architecture and knowledge content;
 - ❖ giving importance to Islamic ethics of knowledge
- ❖ Efforts towards the synthesis of knowledge taught in the traditional religious educational institutions and knowledge taught in the modern secular higher educational institutions

Conclusion: Empowerment of the Ummatic Agenda

- ❖ There should be a greater intra-Islamic understanding at all levels of the umma of the common issues and challenges confronting the umma in the field of education in general and private higher education in particular.
- ❖ The place and role of private higher educational institutions in Islamic culture needs to be better understood by contemporary Muslims.
- ❖ More opportunities should be provided for the various sectors of Muslim societies concerned with issues of private higher education to discuss them at common platforms with the view of finding concrete solutions to their problems.

Conclusion: Empowerment of the Ummatic Agenda (Continued)

- ❖ OIC and its organizational arms such as IDB, ISESCO, and FUIW should provide concrete help, financially or otherwise, particularly to ummatic initiatives for the advancement of Muslim private higher education.
- ❖ On its part, IAIS Malaysia will try its level best to help sustain the series of ICIHE that are now in place; the main function of ICIHE is to generate ideas for the consumption of the umma in the field of higher education and to promote the idea of the ummatic approach to the solution of the umma's problems.

Thank you.

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