

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **THE WAY FORWARD**

#### **6.1 Sensitizing Muslim Academics**

Muslim academics are made up of Muslim scholars trained in Islamic and/or Western disciplines and are capable of making novel contributions to knowledge. The contributions can be in terms of conducting researches, writing academic papers and books, making a critique of existing norms or theories and analysing or commenting on current issues through any appropriate media. These people are found in various works of life such as business, civil service and military, but majority of them are in academic and research institutions. They also exist among the traditional ulama of the informal and semi-formal institutions of learning.

Muslim academics, being the only people who can understand the need to Islamize knowledge, need to be sensitized through lectures, distribution of literature and the use of the media about this important undertaking. They can be reached at various settings like schools, university campuses, professional bodies and unions.

They should be reminded or made to understand that on the Day of Resurrection they must account for what they did with the knowledge they were endowed with, among other things. The Prophet (S.A.W), as narrated by Ibn Mas'ud, had said that:

A man shall be asked concerning five things on the Day of Resurrection: concerning his life, how he spent it; concerning his youth, how he grew old; concerning his wealth, whence he

acquired it and in what way he spent it; and what was it that he did with the knowledge that he had. (Transmitted by Tirmidhi).

The sensitization should also be directed to heads of institutions and political office holders whose understanding and co-operation are necessary for the implementation of the Islamization of knowledge programme. Advocacy meetings can be arranged with these people and they can be provided with the relevant literature that will enable them to have a clear understanding of the Islamization of knowledge programme.

Identification of contemporary problems requiring academic attention and discussing same with Muslim academics should form part of the sensitization programme. With this, it is hoped, Muslim intellectual lethargy can be replaced with intellectual enthusiasm and vibrancy.

## **6.2 Capacity Building**

Capable and promising Muslim intellectuals can be identified and made to contribute to the Islamization of knowledge programme. Their capacity to make the academic contributions mentioned in Section 6.1 above can be enhanced in the following ways:

- a) Workshops aimed at providing them with the skills for writing books or papers and the procedures of carrying out independent researches can be organised. Training workshops on the use of computers can also be very useful especially in terms of enabling the participants to have access to data contained in diskettes and CD-ROMs or available on the Internet.

- b) Translation, publishing and distribution of enabling literature which includes the Holy Qur'an, Hadith collections, books on Usul Al-Fiqh and the works of prominent Muslim Scholars like Al-Ghazali and Ibn Taimiyah to mention a few, are also very essential. Without this enabling literature one cannot master the Islamic legacy.
- c) Provision of current literature to enable the Muslim academics to know the level of development and the trend of thoughts in the Western disciplines and other fields of human endeavour. Copies of essential but scarce or costly books can be made available and placed in libraries or in secretariats of Muslim organisations in institutions of higher learning.
- d) Procurement of computers and CD-ROMs and placing them in resource rooms or libraries for use by Muslim academics.
- e) Provision of financial support for conducting researches, attending conferences and publishing books and journal papers.

The capacity building can be financed by organisations and wealthy Muslims committed to the Islamization of knowledge programme and to academic excellence in general.

### **6.3 Recipes for Sustainability and Progress**

A Muslim forum established in an institution of learning or a place of work and any other organisation interested in the Islamization of knowledge undertaking requires the following for the sustenance and progress of the undertaking.

- 1 **Activities:** The organization needs to engage itself in a series of activities so that it can make impact on and have the support and sympathy of individuals, other organisations and even governments. The activities should include a) researches b) publications and distribution or sale of books, journals and tracts c) inhouse training of members and d) organizing discussion sessions, seminars and conferences. Visits to important people and places of relevance to the Islamization of knowledge programme is also required from time to time. Documentation of these activities will be useful for the purpose of accountability and for the continuity of the activities.
  
- 2 **Goodwill and Understanding:** The goodwill and understanding of constituted authorities, work mates and other individuals and organisations are also very essential to the sustainability of the Islamization of knowledge programme. This can be achieved by employing the following measures.
  - (a) Avoiding confrontation with people that do not belong to the Islamic faith. These people can be allowed to attend seminars and conferences if they so wish because the Islamization of knowledge undertaking is purely an intellectual pursuit open to all academics. Its subject matter differs from that of comparative religion. Al-Alwani (1995:6) who is the international president of the IIIT, explains that Islamization of knowledge is not an ideological discourse for attaining political power; it simply “represents the intellectual and epistemological side of Islam...”.

- (b) Seeking the permission of constituted authorities like heads of academic institutions and other establishments before staging Islamization of knowledge activities.
  - (c) Avoiding sectarian issues which divide the Muslims: Sects subsist on the crisis of thought and/or the pursuance of selfish goals. Islamization of knowledge is not about sects; it is rather a measure aimed at liberating the Muslim mind from blind imitation, dogma and other manifestations of the crisis of thought. This liberation is itself a remedy for the problems of sects and divisions.
  - (d) Establishing sound public relations: Muslim intellectuals in formal and non-formal settings need to be respected and recognised. Their efforts need to be acknowledged. A good working relationship should also be established with other Islamic organisations concerned with other undertakings. They should be made to understand that their undertakings are also very important and they complement the Islamization of knowledge undertaking in one way or another. There has to be a division of labour or specialization. Some organisations are converting people to Islam, some are providing education and medical services, some are fighting moral laxity among Muslims while others like the IIIT are dealing with epistemological and methodological issues.
3. **Income Generation:** Income generation is also a prerequisite for the sustainability of the Islamization of knowledge programme. There are several ways of doing this and they include the following:
- (a) Fund raising activities such as book launch and exhibitions.

- (b) Provision of consultancy services.
- (c) Purchase of shares of companies undertaking lawful businesses.
- (d) Contributions from individuals and organisations.
- (e) Making other investments like the publication and sale of books and journals, sale of essential commodities and establishment of schools, clinics, business centres, etc.

#### **4. Monitoring and Evaluation:**

The sustainability and progress of organisations concerned with the Islamization of knowledge undertaking also hinge upon the monitoring and evaluation of their activities. Tasks assigned to people need to be monitored, and money given to people for a given purpose need to be accounted for.

Officials running the organisation or implementing the Islamization of knowledge programme need to make a periodic evaluation of their activities through the following:

- a) Self-criticism.
- b) Evaluative studies by people within or outside the organisation depending on issues at stake.
- c) Appraisal of annual or quarterly performances by making reference to plans, budgets, goals and standards set.

## CONCLUSION

What people generally regard as knowledge can be divided into three categories: fact, polluted or biased knowledge and methodologies. It is only the first category which does not require Islamization. The other two have been made targets of the Islamization process since the coming of Islam.

While the teachings of Islam remain relevant for all times, the factors which lead to the pollution of knowledge and the invention and propagation of methodologies have kept on changing. Present day Muslim scholars therefore, need to keep their eyes open and to study and explain new phenomena and contemporary issues from the Islamic viewpoint.

Each of the models discussed in this book could be seen as different approaches toward the realisation of the Islamization of knowledge goals. For this reason, each of the models can be useful in one way or another despite their differences in terms of strengths, weaknesses and area of emphasis.

The sustainability and progress of the Islamization of knowledge programme require a lot of wisdom when it comes to the sensitization of Muslim academics and soliciting the support of the general public and the constituted authorities. In addition, income generation, capacity building for potential contributors to the Islamization programme and the monitoring of completed ones, all need to be pursued with vigour.