

Education of Disabled in the Light of Sura Al-Abasa

*Ashiq Hussain Mir**

Abstract

This paper aims to provide an overview of the inclusive concept of education in Islam in the light of Sura al-abasa. It will highlight the formal and informal ways of educating disabled people. How and why Islam emphasises the education of these people. Its significance is also to be highlighted in the present educational system around the Globe. Islamic inclusive education is to eliminate discrimination based upon race, colour, sex, region, religion, mental retardness, socio-economic status etc. As mentioned in Sura al-abasa on one side the Prophet ^(PBUH) gave dawah to a Non-Muslim and on the other hand, was a specially disabled Muslim.

Key words: *Al-abasa, Islam, Inclusive education, Disability, blind person etc*

Introduction:

The first and foremost thing on which Quran stresses is the dignity of the children of Adam and Hawa (A.S). Quran provides a vast concept of education that enlightened the whole humanity. The God of Quran is not only the God of Muslim community; but the God of all the humanity. Education as a right has been enshrined for children's in the numerous international declarations, since the 1948 declaration of human rights, inclusive education is one dimension of human rights based quality education which emphasis equity in access, participation and respond positively to the individual learning needs and competencies of all children. Inclusive education is pupil centred and places the responsibility of adaptation on the education rather than the child. It actually works to ensure that every child irrespective of gender, language, ability, religion, nationality or other characteristics is supported to meaningfully participate and learn alongside his or her peers and develop full potential. Whenever we talk about the Islamic concept of education, it should be keep in mind that Islam does not confine education to religious or spiritual, but encompasses the entire scientific, modern and secular education. Islamic civilization bears testimony to that laying the foundations of scientific knowledge, the Muslim scientists carried out the Prophetic injunctions contained in this tradition." Seek knowledge (education) even (you have to go) to China. This aspect takes us to the inference that Islam doesn't confine knowledge seeking ventures only to the Quran and Sunnah, etc it also includes all the modern sciences and technologies in the quest of knowledge.

*Research Scholar, Shaikh ul Aalam Centre for Multidisciplinary Studies

According to the Quranic injunctions, there is a strong basis of inclusive education in Islam. Quran provides a strong model for ensuring that education is inclusive and responsive. In Sura al-abasa (He frowned), there is an elaborated concept of inclusiveness of education to all irrespective of caste, creed, colour, designation, intellectuality, religion, region, ethnicity etc. Quran says:

“A feeling of uneasiness came upon his (holy) face, and he turned aside his (radiant) face. Because a blind man approaches him (who interrupted his discourse) and what do you know? Perhaps he would be purified (further owing to you attending him) or would accept your advice which would provide him benefit (more and more) but the one who disregards (the Din {Religion}). You administer great care (for his acceptance of Islam). Whereas there is no (burden of) responsibility on you, even if he does not adopt purification (i.e., faith) and as for him who has himself) come to you exerting (in pursuit of piousness), and he fears (his Lord) as well, But you are not focussing attention on him. (O My Esteemed Beloved! Not so indeed! These (Verses of the Holy Quran) are but advice.”¹

This verse states that we have to develop a positivistic attitude towards those people, who are being ignored by society. We have to look at their needs; social, educational, economical and other etc. Why the Prophet ^(PBUH) turned his radiant face, from a blind person during dawah, needs due consideration. Almighty said: Disabled will be given preference in knowledge and education. So Islam emphasizes on the inclusiveness of education of especially abled people. The purpose of his education was to sanctify his self in the companionship of the Prophet ^(PBUH). This sanctification is what we call Sufism. Second more things are to receive advice and guidance from the Prophet, which would benefit him here and hereafter. These verses explicate the inner of blind person. From verse five Allah talks about the person from Non-Muslims, who have a social prestige, but Islam neglects that prestige and stressed on the urge of seeking knowledge of blind person. Non-Muslim neither accepts, nor do you have a burden of his responsibility. And the one who came with the intention to seek knowledge of purification and wisdom from, make a rapport with him and quell his thirst of knowledge, He is a God feared person also, and you are neglecting him. O My beloved, I have revealed this Quran on you, for advice of humanity only. So, it depends upon the seeker how much thirst he has for advice.

What was the reasons behind that Prophet of Islam ^(PBUH) did not paid kind and due attention to a disabled (blind) person? Despite being a Muslim he did not provide positive

response to an especially abled person. At that time, a feeling of uneasiness came upon the radiant face of the Prophet ^(PBUH) and he turned his face to other side. This unusual response hurts him and the mentioned verses got revealed. By taking a holistic approach of the actual event, the Prophet as a teacher of mankind was addressing to Non- Muslims of Mecca and on the other hand blind man was a Muslim. Thus inclusive education, does not considers religion, region, colour, sex, but emphasis upon the participation, equity in access and provides a positive response to a recipient of education. Imam Suyuti in his master piece *Durr al-manthur* that IbnMardudia quotes from Hazrat Ayesha about this very verse:

“This verse revealed about a blind man UmmiMaktoom, he asked “O Prophet of Islam ^(PBUH), educate me by your knowledge which Almighty have taught to you”. He uttered the same many times, he was not aware that the Prophet ^(PBUH) is giving dawah of Islam to people of Mecca (Rabiah and Utbah). “There was uneasiness in the radiant face of Prophet ^(PBUH) and he turned his face from the Muslim (UmmiMaktoom) because he was inviting the Non-Muslims of Mecca towards Islam, the Prophet ^(PBUH) said these words, “Do you have any difficulty about my dawah, he replied no”! Allah revealed these verses in the meantime.”²

Imam Suyuti quotes another tradition:

“The Prophet ^(PBUH) slightly turned his face from a blind person, without uttering any word to him, and replied to Ummaya bin Khalaf.”³

This is the Prophet ^(PBUH) wisdom that he does not speak words because he will not hear it. The Prophet ^(PBUH) provided a negative reinforcement so that the irrelevant behaviour of the blind person can be shaped. Hence, it is clear that the concept of inclusiveness of education gave the Prophet of Islam ^(PBUH) to mankind by paying positive response to infidels of Mecca, even the blind was Muslim before 1450 years. The prophet does not discriminate between them on any socio-economic, religious and other basis, but provides opportunity of access to all people. The following features of inclusive education can be inferred from the verses:

1. There is enough scope in Islamic traditions that infidels can be provided access to get advice, knowledge and education for their worldly and hereafter benefits.
2. There is a positive approach towards disabled; so that they may they may receive educational guidance. By imparting education of good and virtue, these people can prosper in life.

3. The above verse emphasises upon the psychological phenomenon interests, motive, action, readiness of a learner for the seeking of knowledge, to purify his soul and heart.

4. These verses have sociological relevance aspect that poor and needy people should be fairly treated, because the Quraysh of Mecca were rich and the disabled was from poor background. This is an apex of inclusive education.

5. The words when UmmiMaktoom came to you, emphasises upon the provision of equal educational opportunity of education and positive response to the pupil, it elaborated the concept of universalisation of education; universal access, to education equal treatment and universal retention etc. Quran again talks about their exceptionality in day today life:

“There is no restriction on the blind , nor any blame on the lame, nor is there any sin on the sick, nor (any harm) for you ,if you eat (food) from your houses or from the houses of your fathers, or the houses of your mothers, or the houses of your brothers, or the houses of your sisters, or the houses of your father brothers, or the houses of your father sisters, or the houses of your brothers, or the houses of your mothers sisters or the houses whose keys are in your charge (i.e., whose owners have permitted you for any use. Nor is there any harm to eat food) from your friends houses. There is no sin on you whether you all eat together or separately. Then, when you enter the houses, greet (the members of) your (family) with the greeting of peace and security. (This) is a blissful and pure greeting from Allah. Thus Allah makes His verses clear for you so that you may understand (the commands of the shariah and the manners of life).”⁴

There is exceptionality, while dealing with rights and duties or obligations of disabled person. When we talk of right to educate or inclusive education There will be no discrimination in preaching education of Islam on the basis of simplicity of work, rich and poor, servant and free slave, men and women, elder and younger. Everyone is equal and equality of educational opportunities should be provided to all. Everyone should be advised equally, it is inclusive education. Quran emphasises upon the provision of equal opportunities and positive response to disabled person as mentioned in Sura al-Abasa. On the other hand, when there is an obligation or duty of disabled, they are made exceptions by performing war fight.

Conclusion:

Thus, it is the Quranic teachings that provides equal rights of receiving education to all irrespective of intellectual capacity, knowledge, region, religion, ethnicity, rich and poor background, but rather stresses more attention and care of the disabled. After this event

the Prophet ^(PBUH) used to say these words to UmmiMaktoom: “welcome to you (you are one about whom Allah has counselled me)”. Even the Prophet ^(PBUH) used to put his blanket for UmmmiMaktoom. In short, the Prophet ^(PBUH) used to pay attention to him; do you want to say something? Do you have any need? Do you seek anything etc? This is a respect and veneration of disabled in the Prophetic era. Allah addresses the Prophet ^(PBUH) by using third person pronoun, besides second (He frowned). So that the Prophet ^(PBUH) does not get hurt this is belovedness, veneration, of the Prophet ^(PBUH) which is obvious in this verse. Another thing neither he saw uneasiness, nor turning of face, it was just for creating a situation that the verses of inclusiveness education got revealed to mankind.

References:

1. Quran 80:1-11
2. Suyuti, Imam Jalal ud din. *TafsīrDurr al-Manthūr*, Trans. By PīrKaram Shah Azharī. Vol. 6, Delhi: AdabiDunyā, 2009. P. 874
3. Ibid., p.875
4. Quran 24:61