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Teaching and Learning Trends of Islamic Studies at Nigerian Universities: “Sufism as a case study”

Abdur-Razaq Mustaphaⁱ

Abstract

The history of university level of education in Nigeria can be traced to 18th January 1948 when University College of Ibadan was established. Later followed by other universities which were established at different time and locations in Nigeria. These include the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Ahmadu Bello University Zaria, the University of Lagos. The University Ife Ile – Ife among many others. Islamic Studies is one of the courses introduced in some of the Nigerian University. It is a wide academic course that comprises multivarious aspects. One of such aspects is Sufism. Hardly would one find an academic institution especially at university level where Sufism not taught as an aspect in the discipline of Islamic Studies. This is the focus of this paper. The objective of this research paper is to examine the teaching and learning trends of this aspect of Islamic Studies – Sufism – in the Nigerian Universities. The method adopted in the research is interpretative approach based on the disciplines of Sufism and history. By consulting works written on the history of Education in Nigeria, Islamic Education, Syllabus of Islamic Studies in Nigerian Universities as well as materials on Sufism. The end-result reveals that the discipline is taught by lecturers of different specialization a situation that need to the re-visit the current trend whereby the course is taught and learnt theoretically whereby it ought to be both theoretical and semi-practical. As a recommendation, one will advocate those specialists in the field of Sufism be to be made to teach the course and to embark on research on local matters which have not received adequate attention from Academia.

Keywords: *Islamic Studies, Learning, Nigerian Universities, Sufism, Teaching and Trends.*

ⁱ Chief Lecturer Department of Islamic Studies, Kwara State College of Arabic and Islamic Legal Studies, Ilorin, Nigeria

Introduction

Nigeria is one of the countries in West Africa region which is believed to be the most populous country in Africa. The country has a long history as is made up of different kingdoms, various empires and what is called city – states and a host of others. It was 1914 Amalgamation of both Northern and Southern protectorates that resulted into Nigeria as a country and was placed under the governorship of Sir Frederick Lugard. The name of the country Nigeria was suggested in 1902 by Flora Shaw, a then proposed wife of Lugard.¹ Since then, Nigeria continues to progress politically and educationally. Eventually became an independent nation and in the field of education, it continues to progress as many institutions of learning were established. Many academic researches have been conducted on various educational aspects in Nigeria. However, this present topic stands unique as it has not attracted the attention of researchers. It is therefore hoped that the research will put the matters relating to teaching and learning trends of Sufism into lime light with the hope of finding solutions to any problem associating with the subject – matter.

Education in Nigeria

The history of education in Nigeria has to be discussed from three systems of education. These are Traditional or Indigenous education, Islamic Education and Christian education. The Indigenous Traditional Education proceeded both Islamic and Christian forms of education. It is as old as man himself on earth². As every society has its own peculiar means of educating its citizens, which differ from one community to another and one age to another³.

Traditional/Indigenous Education

In the traditional system, education is geared toward preparing the individual physically, morally, intellectually, socially and vocationally with the aim of assisting him to shoulder the responsibilities of life⁴. Considering the fact that Nigeria is made up of many ethnic groups and societies each with its own culture and tradition, yet they have common educational aims and objectives. However, methods adopted by the individual differ on the basis of space and time⁵.

Islamic Education

Islamic form of Education in Nigeria is dated back to Eleventh Century of Christian Era when in 1086CE Mai (King) of Kanem called Umme Jilmi embraced Islam through an Itinerant Islamic Scholar named Muhammad *Ibn* Mani⁶. Islam as a great mover of education, immediately it was introduced to Nigeria, institutionalized Education, on the basis of the fact that, hardly could Islam reach a place without establishing schools for its adherents. This would be understood if one considers the fact that certain obligatory rites of Islam cannot be observed without acquiring knowledge on them. Typical example is the obligatory ritual prayer (*as-Salat*). Its performance requires knowledge of some Qur'anic verses, *at-tashahud*, *adhân*, *Iqâmah* and a host of many others⁷. Added to that, the first

Qur'anic verses i.e. Quran 96 verses 1 – 5 revealed to Prophet Muhammad (SAW) during his annual meditation at the Cave of Hirah in the year 610CE was on education. The Prophet Muhammad (SAW) demonstrated his zeal for learning by establishing class – room behind his mosque at Madinah. He also directed each of the war captives during the battle of Badr in 623CE to redeem himself by teaching ten muslims, the art of reading and writing⁸. The companions of the Prophet followed his footsteps by constructing schools in most of the Islamic cities. A typical example was 'Umar *Ibn* Khattab, the second *Khalifah* of the Prophet between 634 and 643CE who constructed a school called *Maktabah* behind Prophetic mosque and directed all Muslim governors to that effect. The later generation of Muslim leaders such as al-Mamun *Ibn* Harûn ar-Rashîd founded a famous Academic Foundation called *Dar al. Hikmah* (House of Wisdom) in Baghdad in 830CE where Muslims were exposed to different aspects of learning⁹. Perhaps, based on the above facts, it is observed that by the time Islam reached Nigeria, it had already made great contribution to philosophy, medicine, mathematics, astronomy, and chemistry, as well as to art, literature and architecture among many others¹⁰. It has to be added that Islamic Schools or *Madrasah* as it used to be called is the venue where Islamic learning takes place. The *Madrasah* is located in the mosque, or in private premises or in special buildings¹¹. In Nigeria, it is known as Qur'anic School which developed rapidly in the region.

History had it that in the nineteenth century C.E, when the Colonial/missionaries came up with their education system, they found a well established system of education in the caliphates of Borno and Sokoto as well as Southern Muslim strongholds such as Oyo, Ibadan, and Lagos. Added to that, even by 1914 when Nigeria was amalgamated, Sir Fredrick Lugard estimate conceded the existence of twenty – five thousand Qur'anic Schools in Northern Nigeria with an enrolment of nearly a quarter of a million students¹².

Western Education

The Western form of Education in the country can be better called Colonial/Christian mission education. It is dated back to 1842 when the Christian missions started coming to Nigeria. Wesleyan Methodist mission was first to come to the country and followed by other Christian missions. The first assignment they carried out was establishment of schools at different locations of Southern Nigeria¹³. Their main objective of establishing schools was to convert people to Christianity. Perhaps they believed that through schools, conversion would be easier. By the time the schools were established, religious studies formed the main course of study. It was later that subjects like reading, writing and arithmetic (known as 3RS) among many others were added¹⁴. The Colonial Government initially did not show much interest in Education until 1870 when they began to release what is described as small and irregular grants to the Christian missions. It lasted for almost eleven years i.e from 1870 to 1881¹⁵. In 1882 there was change of attitude on the part of the colonial government when an educational ordinance was passed, whereby legal provision was approved for grants – in – aid to the missions engaged in education. The grants were known as “payment by results.” Part of the ordinance stipulates provisions

“the establishment of a board of Education.”¹⁶ With the provisions, missions became partners in education with the government. Yet the government started to become the more powerful partner in terms of control due to the fact that the missions who were collecting grants, were not permitted to refuse entry to children on the account of their religious belief¹⁷. Despite the provisions of the ordinance, it can be observed that the missions remained much more active than the government in providing schools especially during the nineteenth century. Furthermore, they were responsible for laying the foundations of western education which was the stepping-stone to secure better jobs¹⁸. At a later time, higher form of education was introduced.

University Level of Education

In the National Policy on Education, it is stipulated that university like other higher educational institutions, have an important role to play in national development especially in the development of high level manpower, specifically considering universities as one of the best means for developing national consciousness and it is perceived as a storehouse of knowledge¹⁹. The history of university level of education in Nigeria is effectively traced to 1948 when University College was established in Nigeria. Prior to that period was the establishment of Yaba Higher College in 1932 which was not acceptable to the Nigerian nationalists, who had clamoured off and on for a university. They even considered the college as being inferior to a university²⁰. That notwithstanding, the Yaba Higher College continued to function. However, the Second World War (1939 – 45) had adverse effect on the college as it caused the college what could be considered as a serious setback. Its slender staff was reduced by the call-up of some lecturers; the provision of funds was drastically reduced. Added to that, the army took over its building as well as its premises and even converted them into military hospital²¹. The agitation for establishment of university continued. This resulted into setting up of various committees on the possibilities to have universities in West Africa region. Eventually a recommendation of Walter Elliot Commission, was adopted even there were both majority and minority reports. Whatever might have been the case, the Elliot recommendation submitted on 13th June, 1943 paved way for University College located at Ibadan on 18th January, 1948 ²². The University College in Ibadan seemed not to have satisfied the yearning of the people who were clamouring for establishment of University. Despite that, no university was established in the country till Nigeria became an independent nation in 1960. After then, the Regional Governments established various universities at their respective regions.

The first University to be established after the independence is University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Its establishment came to effect after the Eastern Regional House of Assembly passed the bill to establish a university in the Eastern Region of Nigeria, and to provide for the guarantee thereof in 1955, and the university took effect on 7th October, 1960 ²³.

The second University established in Nigeria after the Independence is Ahmad Bello University, Zaria which came into existence on 10th October, 1962. The

establishment of the University was based on the recommendations of the Ashby Commission in 1961 to the National Universities Commission (N.H.C) that consultations should be arranged with both Federal and Northern Regional Governments with a view of establishing a University in the Northern Region, with its headquarters in Zaria²⁴.

Another outcome of the Ashby Commission's recommendation was the establishment of the University of Lagos. The bill for its existence known as the University of Lagos Act 1962 was passed by the Federal Parliament in April 1962. Sequel to that, and in October, 1962, the University academic session commenced.²⁵

University of Ife now known as Obafemi Awolowo University, was the reality of the dream of Western Regional Government, who proposed to build a university somewhere in the Region. In 1958, the ruling party in Western Region, Action Group (A.G) published its policy paper on Higher Education in Nigeria. As a result of that, on 23rd March, 1961, the university of Ife i.e Provisional Council Bill was introduced in the House of Assembly and subsequently passed and on 24th October, 1962 University took off.²⁶ The University College Ibadan, later became a full University on the basis of 1960 Ashby Report.²⁷ The University education continued to attract the attention of the various governments at both Federal and States levels, where universities are established at almost all states of Federation. The current trend is that universities are now proliferated all over the country to the extent that there were many private universities established by individuals, where various academic courses are offered, one of the courses being taught in the Nigeria Universities is Islamic Studies.

Islamic Studies

Islamic Studies refers to academic field of studies that relates to rules and regulation of Islam as well as the general teachings of the religion. It comprises the history of all civilizations of Islam generally. It is a wide academic subject as Islam itself is a complete and comprehensive way of life. It has a long history. However, it can effectively traced to 610 CE when Prophet Muhammad (SAW) received the first Divine revelation during his annual meditation at the cave of Hira.²⁸ The revelation is contained in the first five verses of *Surah* 96 of the Glorious Qur'an. Various part of learning emanated from the revealed verses, like *'Ulûm al-Quran* which include Reading i.e *Qirâ'at*, *Tajwid* and writing i.e *Kitâbah*. Other aspect of learning which were developed under *'Ulûm al-Qur'an* is a studies of Prophet Tradition (*'Ulûm al-Hadith*), Shari'ah and Fiqh – Islamic law and jurisprudence.²⁹ Its other aspects include knowledge of Arabic language and literature which are service subject to Islamic Studies. Others are *Tarikh* and *Sirah* (history and biography of the Prophet), philosophy and theology, *Tafsir*, Qur'anic (Exegesis), calligraphy, *Tasawwuf* (Sufism) and a host of many others. In fact, the course of Islamic Studies continues to develop till it reaches its peak as it covers all aspects of human endeavour. Different trends are adopted in the teaching and learning of the subject.

Teaching and Learning Trends of Islamic Studies in Nigeria

This section covers the teaching and learning trends of Islamic Studies in Nigeria during three different periods. The periods are: (i) Pre – Colonial Period (ii) During the Colonial Period and (iii) Post Colonial Period.

Teaching of Islamic Studies before the Colonial Period: -

The history of teaching and learning of Islamic Studies in Nigeria could be dated back to eleventh century C.E when Islam was believed to have reached part of what is now called Nigeria. Since then, the teaching and learning of Islamic Studies have continued to occupy important position in the educational career of the Muslims. It witnessed some improvement from time to time.

As a starting point, Qur'anic Studies as a backbone of Islamic Studies is accorded great attention in Nigeria like any other Muslim Countries. A graduate of Qur'anic Studies is offered opportunity to further his educational career by enrolling himself in *al-Īlm* (Advanced) School, where further advanced aspects of Islamic Studies are learnt. They include: -

- i. The study of al – Qur'an
- ii. Hadith (Prophetic Tradition)
- iii. *Tafsir* (Qur'anic Exegesis)
- iv. *Tawhid* (Islamic Theology)
- v. *Târikh* (Islamic History)
- vi. *Nahw was – Sarf* (Arabic syntax and grammatic inflexions), *Mantiq* (logic) and a host of others.³⁰

Meanwhile, the teaching of Islamic Studies received more attention in the 15th Century when Shaykh Muhammad *Ibn Abd Karim al-Maghili* (d. 1504 CE) visited Kano and Katsina, and left behind a legacy which served as a sustainable effort toward the continuation and development of Islamic Studies. Added to that was the booster received by Islamic Studies during the 18th and 19th Century, though the establishment of Islamic Caliphate known as Sokoto Caliphate by Shaykh ^cUthman *Ibn Fodio* (d. 1817 CE) in the present Northern Nigeria, where teaching and learning Islamic Studies were accorded greater respect.³¹ During the period, the teaching as well as learning occupied a frontline position in the scheme of things. Almost all the major cities in the Northern part of the country such as Sokoto, Kano, Katsina, Bida, Maiduguri, Ilorin, Bauchi and a host of many others could be described as Islamic Centres of learning.³² Also is the Southern part of Nigeria, cities like Ibadan is also rated as an Islamic Centre of learning.³³

The common places where both the teaching and learning took place by then were the followings.

- i. Under the shade of a tree
- ii. At the Corridor/Passage or Veranda of the *Mu'alim* (teacher's house)
- iii. The community/local mosque.³⁴

The medium of instruction varied from one locality to another, but basically based on the convenience of both the teachers and learners. That was the trend of learning and teaching Islamic Studies in the country before the advent of Colonial rule.

Teaching and Learning Trend of Islamic Studies during the Colonial Rule

By the time the Colonial rulers fully occupied what is now known as Nigeria and the amalgamation of 1914, the teaching and learning trends of Islamic Studies continued as it was before. However, with modernism, there emerged a new trend in the teaching and learning of Islamic Studies in the country. As a starting point, reference has to be made to Late Emir of Kano, Al-hajj Abdullahi Bayero (d. 1953) who on his return from his pilgrimage to Makkah in 1934 introduced new ideas which he witnessed in the Middle East and Arabia. He therefore master-minded the setting up of a school in Kano to be jointly maintained by all native authorities for the training of judges (*Al – Qâdi* or *Alkalis*). It was named “Northern Privities Law School.” It later metamorphosed into School for Arabic Studies³⁵. On the part of Individuals, Shaykh Muhammad Kamaldeen al – Adabi (1907 – 2005) in 1940s initiated a new trend in the teaching and learning Islamic Studies by introducing the use of chalkboard, benches and tables among many other things into his school in Ilorin. Similarly Shaykh Adam Abdullahi al – Ilori (1917 – 1992) also adopted the new trend in his Arabic Training Centre initially established in Abeokuta in the present Ogun State in 1952 and later relocated it to Agege in Lagos all in Nigeria in 1955.³⁶

Furthermore, it is on record that in the Southern part of Nigeria, Muslims formed various religious associations and societies with the sole aim of improving the education of their children. Sequel to that, schools were established for the Muslim Youth. Typical references are to be made to *Ahmadiyyah* which was founded in 1916 and *Ansârul-Deen* which was also founded in Lagos in 1923. Each of these associations together with other associations such as *Nawar – deen*, *Ijebu – Muslim Society*, *An – wârul Islam* and *Ansârul – Islam* established formal schools along Western System of Education and incorporated Islamic Studies into its curriculum. As a result of that, Muslim youth in such schools had the opportunity of learning Islamic Studies in schools.³⁷ That does not suggest that both Arabic and Islamic Studies were fully recognized as subjects in which students were examined in the Nigeria Secondary School System.³⁸ All the efforts made by Concerned Muslims on the need to make Islamic Studies an examined subject in Nigeria Secondary School System proved abortive. As a result of that, efforts were further made by Prominent Concerned Muslim Elites in the Country on the same issue, eventually they met with the Northern Region, Ministry of Education in 1953 at Kaduna on the possibility of including Arabic Certificate Examination. The request, after a long deliberation was granted.³⁹ Meanwhile, additional function was assigned to school for Arabic Studies, Kano, which was to train teachers with reference to Arabic and Islamic Studies with minor emphasis on English and Arithmetic. And in 1954 a special educational scheme of bridged courses in Arabic and Islamic Studies was introduced for the untrained junior primary school teachers,

which between 1954 and 1961 afforded opportunity to almost two – thirds of all primary school teachers, not only to receive the training but also assisted them to enhance their positions and secure higher standard of Education.⁴⁰ The efforts of the Muslim Elites continued till the time, Nigeria attained Independence in 1960 and even beyond.

Teaching and Learning of Islamic Studies After the National Independence

Most of the efforts put on by the Concerned Prominent Muslim Elites during the Colonial period started to yield positive results. For instance, in 1968 Islamic Studies was accorded recognition as one of the examinable subjects under West Africa Examination Council (WAEC), while the Advance level in Islamic Studies was also approved in 1975.⁴¹

Prior to that, in 1960, the authority of school for Arabic Studies Organised a Post – Secondary Course in Arabic and Islamic Studies as a preliminary to the establishment of the Abdullahi Bayero College, (now Bayero University Kano). Concerted efforts were further made by directing products of *Ilm* Schools and Higher Muslim Insitutions towards University and Post – Secondary modern education.⁴² Added to that, the then Northern Region Ministry of Education together with Abdullahi Bayero College (a branch of Ahmadu Bello University) worked out how the additional system of learning Arabic and Islamic Studies would be channeled toward the Westernised System, whereby general uniformity at the pre – University level would be attained.⁴³ Similarly in the Southern part of the Country, an attempt was made to raise the status and standard of Arabic and Islamic teachers by introducing a Diploma course in the Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies, University of Ibadan. The course targeted products of Advanced Qur’anic Schools known as *Ma^chad* (institute) or *Kulliyah* (college).⁴⁴ Considering what had so far initiated in terms of learning and teaching of Islamic Studies it has to be stated that it has paved way from products of Arabic and Islamic Studies to secure admission into University to study Islamic Studies or any course relevant to it.

Learning and Teaching Trends in Nigerian Universities

Sequel to the establishment of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria in 1961. A Faculty of Arabic and Islamic Studies was established and located at Ahmadu Bello College Kano, which later changed to Abdullahi Bayero College and now called Bayero University Kano. The preliminary courses initially situated at the school for Arabic Studies. Kano which had conducted courses in Higher Islamic Studies, Shari^cah, Law and Teachers’ Training were transferred from school for Arabic studies to the faculty. The Faculty admitted its first students in 1963 for 1963/64 session. The Faculty remained Faculty of Arabic and Islamic Studies till November, 1966 when it changed to Faculty of Arts and Islamic Studies and offers courses in Arabic, Islamic Studies Hausa History, Education and French.⁴⁵ Many other Universities emerged throughout the country where Islamic Studies is being offered. The course contents of Islamic Studies in the Faculty of Arabic and Islamic Studies, Ahmadu Bello University Zaria at its branch in Abdullahi Bayero College is as follow:

- (a) The Social, Political and Religious Institutions of the Muslim People with special reference to Arabia, the Mediterranean area and West Africa
- (b) The process of Islamization inside and outside Muslim domain with special reference to North and West African
- (c) Muslim Law, its growth, development and its position in present day society.
- (d) Qur'anic and Hadith Studies, including the development of exegesis and the role of Hadith in legal, social and theological thinking
- (e) Muslim theology, philosophy and religious movements including the Sûfi orders and the modern Islamic Political movements.⁴⁶

There is no much difference in the course contents of Islamic Studies among the Universities in the Country. Although learning and teaching trends vary from one University to another. In some university there is a specific department for Islamic Studies. A typical reference is the Case of Bayero University Kano, and Usman Dan Fodio University Sokoto where they have Department of Islamic Studies. In University of Ibadan, it is Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies, while in the University of Ilorin, it is Department of Religions where Arabic, Islamic Studies and African Traditional Religions were offered in the faculty till recently when Arabic Department was created out of the Department of Religion. In Universities like Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile – Ife, it is Department of Religious Studies and Philosophy while in the University of Nigeria Nsukka, there is no department of Islamic Studies, but Islamic Studies is been taught along with other religions such as Christianity, Judaism and African Traditional Thought. Aspects of Islamic Studies in the Course are as follow:-

- (i) Introduction to the Study of Religion
- (ii) Introduction to Arabic
- (iii) Qur'anic Arabic
- (iv) Introduction to the Qur'an
- (v) Islamic Theology – I
- (vi) Advanced Qur'anic Arabic
- (vii) Qur'anic Exegesis – I
- (viii) Islamic Theology – II
- (ix) History of Islam – I
- (x) History of Islam – II
- (xi) Qur'anic Exegesis – II
- (xii) Muslim Philosophical and Mystical Theology
- (xiii) Islam Ethnics
- (xiv) History of Islam in West Africa.⁴⁷

In the University of Port Harcourt, River State, it is Department of Religious and Cultural Studies, while at Kwara State University, Malete, it is Department of Islamic, Christian and Comparative Religious Studies. As the names of the departments vary from one Institution to another so also is the emphasis on certain aspects of the courses. Typical

example is Sufism, the way it is being presented to the students varies from one university to another.

Teaching and Learning Trends of Sufism (*Tasawwuf*) in Nigerian Universities

Sufism or *Tasawwuf* is the esoteric aspect of Islam. It is also known as mysticism or mystical thought of Islam or inner dimension of Islam. It is an aspect of Islam developed by the Muslims since the Seventh Century, it is considered as one of the principal sources from which Muslim philosophic thought can be gleaned. It is made up of both a practical and theoretical aspect.⁴⁸ While viewing it from its practical point of view, it is a series of spiritual exercise geared toward achieving the ultimate goal of life, such as absorption in the divine source and gaining a perfect vision of Allah. On the other hand, theoretical aspect of Sufism bases on creation a kind of relation between Soul and Allah whereby a various degrees of spiritual perfection on the Divine Path is attained.⁴⁹

There is another division of Sufism while considering its evolution and development. It is Sufism as a way of life and Sufism as a science of study as academic sufism. This has to be explained by drawing a line of demarcation between the two. Sufism as a way of life can also be called Practical Sufism. It is based on worship and devotion. This kind of Sufism is as old as human existence in the universe.⁵⁰ The other one, i.e. Sufism as a science of study, emerged during the Second Century of Hijrah when Sufism was considered as an aspect of knowledge, i.e. science of knowledge which was to be learnt and taught. Since then, it has been treated like any other academic subject.⁵¹ And when Islamic studies was introduced into Nigerian Universities, sufism forms part of the courses to be learnt and taught.

The trend in the teaching and learning Sufism in Nigerian Universities varies from one institution to another. For instance, Bayero University Kano in its department of Islamic Studies has one major course on Sufism for its undergraduate students and named. Sufism (*tasawwuf*) with the code number ISL3207. The breakdown of the course goes thus:-

- (i) A survey of the origin, the Development and the Doctrine of Sufism up to the 10th Century.
- (ii) Studies of the concepts of the Sunni and the Philosophical Tasawwuf and their exponents.
- (iii) The Sûfi Orders with special reference to the *Qadiriyyah* and *Tijaniyyah* in West Africa.
- (iv) The current anti – Sufi trend and its Implications in Nigeria.⁵²

However, in addition to the *Sufi* aspects taught under the major course, aspects of Sufism are also taught in some other courses such as ISL 3318 *Moral Philosophy in Islam*, where an aspect of “The Sufi Ethnics with special reference to al – Ghazâlî’s thought”, is taught.⁵³ Similarly, in a course ISL 3315: *The Contributions of West African Scholars to the Study of Islam*. Some selected Sûfi masters are listed among those to be studied. They include al-Maghili and the Kunta ‘*Ulâm*, Abdullahi Suka, Dan Marina, Dan Masani, Shaykh ‘Uthman Ibn Fudi and his school, Shaykh ‘Umar al. Fûti and al-Bakka’I, Shaykh Muhammad Salga, Abubakar Mijinyawa among many others. Added to that, is a course ISL 3313 titled: *The Research Methods of Muslim Scholars* where an aspect of Sufism

tagged “The Sufi method based on insight and intuitions (*Basira and Hads*),⁵⁴ is also considered worthy of mentioning together with other research methods.

Unlike University of Ilorin where three major courses are made available for undergraduate students in Islamic Studies. They are (i) RIS 323 *Introduction to Islamic Mysticism (Sufism)*. Its breakdown goes thus: Asceticism of early Muslims. Asceticism developed into mysticism. Internal and external causes. Conflicts of ideas and practices between the Sûfis and scholastic theologians. The Sufi way and their esoteric interpretation of the Qur'an. Al. Ghazali is Impact on Sufism.⁵⁵

(ii) RIS 412 *Qadiriyyah and Tijaniyyah Sufi Orders*: It contains the followings: Sufi Orders and their contributions to the development of Islam. Impact of the *Qadiriyyah* and the *Tijaniyyah* Sufi Orders on West African and Nigeria in particular.⁵⁶

(iii) RIS 422 *Simple Text on Tasawwuf*: It comprises of the following aspects: Selected Arabic Texts from the writings of the renowned Sufis for special study: al-Ghazali, Ibn 'Arabi, Suhrawardi, Abdul Qadir al. Jilâni and Ahmadu 't-Tijani.⁵⁷

In identical with Bayero University Kano, University of Ilorin, in addition to the three major courses, some aspects of Sufism are taught in some other courses of the department, this includes (i) RIS 426 *Contributions of West African Scholars to Islamic Thoughts*, where some *Sufi* scholars are listed among those to be studied, they include Shyakh 'Uthman b. Fudi, al-Hajj Umar al.Fûti, Abdullah b. Fudi, Abdu'l – Karim al. Maghili and Adam Abdullah al-Ilori⁵⁸. Another Course is RIS 388: *The Research Methods of Muslim Scholars* An aspect of *Sufi* thought i.e The Sûfî methods based on insight and intuition (*Basira and Hads*)⁵⁹ is recognized as one of the Research methods to be learnt in the Univeristy. Related to that is RIS446 *Islamic Education* where academic activities of some Sûfî masters such as al-Muhâsibi, al.Ghazali⁶⁰ among others are appreciated and considered to be taught and learnt. The essence of making reference to all these aspects is to point out that learning and teaching of Sufism are given attention in the courses of Nigeria Universities. Meanwhile having explained the historical development of teaching and learning Islamic Studies and its trends in Nigerian University, one aspect which is also relevant is the mode of conducting both teaching and learning.

Mode of Teaching and learning Sufism

Qur'an being the basic source of Islamic Studies generally has exposed the Muslims especially those involved in either teaching or learning to various methods of imparting knowledge. For instance, when the Prophet Muhammad first received the first revelation of Qur'an 96 verses 1 – 5. The conversation that took place between the Prophet and Angel Jibril makes reference to what is known as educational system as rote learning”, from there many different modes of teachings are pointed to. They include: Lecture method, Discussion method, Note Taking, Questioning method and a host of others.⁶¹ Of all the modes of teaching, the commonest ones in Nigerian Universities include the followings:-

(i) *Lecture Method*: This is a method whereby the knowledge is prepared and delivered to the students with little or no interruption by the students. The method is adopted in tertiary institutions because the students are both physically and intellectually mature.⁶²

(ii) *Note-Taking Method*: This is another mode of teaching, common in the Universities and known as “Note Taking” whereby the teachers introduce the topic of discussion to his students with full explanation through dictation while the students will be writing it. Also to be mentioned is.

(iii) *Discussion Method*: It is a method of teaching whereby a topic of discussion will be examined through interaction between the teacher and the students. During the discussion almost every student is given opportunity to make his own contribution to the topic. This is similar to what is called tutorial class. In that case, students are to select topics within the course contents, write on it and present such in the presence of his colleagues who will contribute to the presentation either by making comment or asking questions, under the supervision of the lecturer. The tutorial class is generally based on the taught subject whereas it can be per course especially Sufism.

Other methods are:

(iv) *Questioning Method*: This method is a technique dominated by questions and answers. It is contrary to a situation whereby the lecturer comes to the class with a prepared body of knowledge which is to be read, written and copied out. The method is employed to enable both the students and lecturer arrive at a conclusion by making their own inputs. It is suitable for topics in which reasoning is required.

(v) *Rote Learning Method*: This is a method is an act of presenting a quotation or an excerpt to students who are requested to follow the lecturer’s rendering. The quotation or excerpt are later committed to memory. In this type of method, the lecturer might have given the students a model of reading which he repeated in emulation and finally learnt by heart. Although, this method is controversial because some educationists consider it as irrelevant. That notwithstanding, there are some topics in which rote learning method is very suitable. Example of such is study of Qur’anic texts and Hadith of Prophet Muhammad (SAW).

(vi) *Project Method*: This is a method in which the lecturer is assigned with the responsibility of guiding his students, a means through which they would be able to conduct simple research. The teacher or lecturer would introduce a topic to the class, and direct the students to where to get relevant materials and submit to the lecturer on the expiry of the stipulated period. The project exercise is to be presented to the instructor/lecturer in a written form, be it individually or collectively.⁶³

Considering the facts mentioned above, i.e. the current trend of teaching and learning Islamic Studies, one can perceive teaching and learning of Islamic Studies especially Sufism as purely theoretically. As a matter of fact, some universities lecturers used to mandate their students to visit some areas of interest, but Sufism in a matter of principle, it ought to be both theoretical as well as semi-practical. Semi-practical in the

sense that, excursion will be arranged for students to visit notable *Sûfi* scholars in the locality, to watch *Sûfi* festivals, conduct visit to *Sûfi Zawiya* during the week-end and submit report on it. However, during the vacation, before the students would go home, they would be made to embark on excursion to *Sûfi* masters in the country as well as attending their national festivals. Such as *Mawlid* or *Babandare* (mighty – night) as the case may be. Such activities will expose the students to all what the Sufism is all about. Even in the area of criticism, with their exposure, they would be equipped with fact and figure on the Sufi activities whereby they would be in a better position to make an academic criticism, devoid of sentiment. All these could be possible if the lecturer who handles the course is an expert.

Another issue that relates to the teaching and learning trends in Sufism is the quality of text books. In a point of fact, there are many available books on Sufism, yet there are some local or national issues which are yet to receive adequate attention from the academia, the lecturers handling the course can take such topics up by conducting research on them and make their findings available for the interest of all.

Added to that, a kind of micro – research be introduced, whereby students will be mandated to conduct research on some aspect of Sufism, such as its doctrines, personalities and any other things which have bearing on Sufism. It may be special assignments to be presented during the tutorial class. This would be meaningful and achievable if it is stipulated and included in the course contents. This will be a departure from the existing teaching and learning trends of sufism in Nigeria Universities, where teaching and learning trends are mostly theoretical.

Conclusion

Having discussed the historical background of University education in Nigeria whereby, the country that had been operating under different empires was amalgamated in 1914, and has its first university college in Ibadan in 1947 and after the nation had secured its Independence in 1960, started to have many full universities. Prior to the establishment of universities, the country passed through many different systems of education. These are Traditional Educational system, Islamic system of Education and Missional/Western System of Education. As for Islamic Studies which had been in the country since Eleventh Century was not given adequate attention till 1934 when School for Arabic was established at the instance of Emir of Kano, Al-hajj Abdullahi Bayero (1953), the school that contributed to the upgrading the status of Arabic and Islamic teachers in Nigeria. Sufism as a course which has been taught and learnt by students of Higher Institutions especially in the universities, has a trend in which the course has been taught and learnt. However, one may recommend that there is need to re-visit the teaching and learning trends of the course by making it both theoretical and semi – practical. Through that, the course should be handled by experts in the field. It is believed that by so doing certain improvement will be on the current trends of teaching and learning Sufism in Nigerian Universities.

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