

BEDIUZZAMAN SAID NURSI'S VIEWS ON EDUCATION: THE BANGLADESH PERSPECTIVE

Ehsanul Haque*

Abstract

The Ottoman Caliphate collapsed in the last century due to lack of timely reforms. In contrast to the Islamic practice of dress and marginal thinking, today's Turks follow Islam within a constitutionally secular structure. Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, a leading Islamic scholar and visionary Muslim thinker, played a vital role as the main protagonist behind the scene. He adopted various methods and strategies to bring Turkey out of the-then status quo. Educational reform is one of the methods and strategies. Bangladesh is a Muslim-majority country, which faces various problems including the problem in education system. There are two streams of education. The general education represents secularism, while madrasa education represents Islamic education. The general education fails to build practicing Muslim, while the madrasa education can't cope up with the modern challenges. However, the madrasa education can't reduce the gap among religious groups. Nursi's thoughts on education combine religious education with modern scientific education. The main objective of this article is to find out solutions over educational problems in Bangladesh in light of Said Nursi and his thoughts revealed in Risale-i Nur. The article analyzed the educational model of the great Islamic scholar, his concept of integrated curriculum that promotes teaching of positive science in religious schools while religious subjects in secular schools, and their application in Bangladesh. The analytical and descriptive article highlighted Nursi's educational concept that combines quality, religion, science and morality. The article discussed the concept in Bangladesh perspective and its necessity in the South Asian country. Alongside adoption of Nursi's thoughts on education, his 'Risale-i Nur' should be widely known in Bangladesh. A number of research works can be done on Nursi, his educational thoughts and 'Risale-i Nur' in universities of Bangladesh and in other ways, including initiation of curriculum courses in universities. Institutional format as well as setting up Nursi Centre is also needed to study the great sage and spread his thoughts. Seminar, symposium, conference, book publication and other programmes can be taken up to explain the necessity of adoption of Nursi's educational concept. The above mentioned issues were touched on in the article.

Keywords: Risale-i Nur, Madrasa al-Zahra, Bangladesh, general education, religious education, modern science.

* Ph.D. Researcher, Department of Islamic Studies, University of Dhaka, Bangladesh. e-mail: ehsan.jasim@gmail.com

Introduction

The rise and fall of a nation are directly associated with proper knowledge in different fields. Alongside the moral development, progress and prosperity of any nation and civilization mainly rely on education. The Ottoman Caliphate couldn't come out from the downfall due to the adoption of Western culture and lack of proper Islamic knowledge. Bediuzzaman Said Nursi emerged in that time and worked for the Turkish society as well as the Muslim Ummah. He became a pioneer legend to establish a peaceful society by spreading his thoughts and philosophy, including educational philosophy that is combined between Qur'anic knowledge and modern science.

The prominent Islamic scholar of the twentieth century was not involved in active politics or he did not take any political programme, but his work, writings and thoughts influenced society, politics, economy, education and other sectors. He specified the disease of Muslims and tried to treat it in Qur'anic view. He noticed inner conflict. He placed different thoughts, including thoughts on education, for the way-out. The thoughts contributed to social change and Islamic awakening in Turkey and influenced other parts of the world.

The Muslim world is currently facing internal and external problems. Bangladesh is one of the countries of Muslim world. It is the 8th most populous country in the world with a population exceeding 180 million. The South Asian country is the second largest Muslim-populated country. Over 90 percent of the country's inhabitants are Muslims. Interestingly, about 90 percent of the people foster the same custom-culture, belief and thoughts; and the social values. The people live within a territory with the same geographical location and weather. However, Muslims in the country are divided in various religious sects, and social and political differences. Weak and divided education system is another major problem, which can be resolved through adopting the educational formula of Said Nursi and the message of Risale-i Nur. Today's world is moving forward to science and technological development. Bangladesh can be benefited in the sector through adopting the Said Nursi's formula. The integration of religious education and modern secular science will be the best way.

A biographical glimpse of Said Nursi

Born in 1877 in a devoted Muslim family in the village of Nurs (Sukran Vahide, 2005, p.3) in Bitlis of eastern Turkey, Bediuzzaman Said Nursi is a proud figure of Turkey. His father Sufi Mirza and mother Nuria were very honest and pious Muslims. Said Nursi commented about them, 'I learned humility from my mother. And I learned rules and devotion from my father (Mahfuz Syfullah, 1997, p.13).

The Turkish hero became familiar as Bediuzzaman, which means ‘wonder of the age’ for his astonished merit. He began his education in a madrasa at the age of nine and completed formal education at the age of fourteen. During his formal education life, he continued his education through his own efforts, filling with amazement even his teachers; and ‘his exceptional intelligence assisted him in mastering many different sciences’ (Sakir Gozutok, 2000, p. 393). Later, he studied various branches of knowledge. Alongside the Qur’an, Hadith and Islamic jurisprudence, Nursi studied secular sciences and became familiar with subjects like history, geography, mathematics, geology, physics, chemistry and astronomy (Serif Mardin, 1989, p.75) in a short time. As a result of a photographic memory, Nursi memorized the Qur’an by heart and the most important Arabic dictionaries and several treatises on Islamic law.

After finishing formal education, Said Nursi visited a number of places. His reputation was increasing in his young age. Due to his fame, he was invited by the governor of Van and began to reside there. He took full advantage of the Governor’s library and studied various issues, including science. He had tried to establish a university namely Madrasa al-Zahra in Van. He could not establish the university because of World War-I. He, however, took part in the war and was detained by the Russian force in 1916. He languished in jail as a war captive. After two years, he escaped in 1918.

He divided his life into two main periods-- ‘Old Said’ and ‘New Said’. He was Old Said during the final decades of the Ottoman Caliphate. Prior to its collapse, Said Nursi joined debates over how to save the 600-year-old Caliphate and restore its power. However, the Ottomans, who until this time has always been ahead, did not perceive their backwardness (Sakir Gozutok, 2000, p. 389). Against this backdrop, Said Nursi put forward many original solutions, most of which were in the field of education. He was a firm believer in science and modernization in the light of the Qur’an and he placed his thoughts on the issue. Nursi emerged as ‘New Said’ during the transition of Turkey from Caliphate to Republic (Said Nursi, 2010, p.8). In the second period of his life, he wrote the most remarkable work ‘Risale-i Nur’.

Political unrest gripped Turkey at the onset of 20th century. As a result, about 22 governments were formed in that country from 1908 to 1918; and none of them lasted even five months on average (Hafizur Rahman, 2018, p. 33). Said Nursi was not unaware of the circumstances of his times, and offered solutions for the country’s problems (Sakir Gozutok, 2000, p. 393). In his writings and speeches, he discusses the downfall of the Ottoman Caliphate and points out the ways to

overcome it. He suffered the most while facing the biggest challenge of holding Islam in Turkey (Hafizur Rahman, 2019, p. 191). In 1909, Said Nursi faced trial for reported Ottoman coup. He was acquitted later. He refused Mustafa Kemal Ataturk's proposal for being minister. Said Nursi lived much of his life in prison and exile. He supported Adnan Menderes, but the support did not stop him from criticizing the ruling party.

The great Islamic scholar composed the *Risale-i Nur* aiming to establish link between the Qur'an and the natural world. Many people consider it as Tafsir of the Qur'an, but it is not a traditional Tafsir book. Writing work of the immortal authorship began while Said Nursi was in exile in Barla of Isparta under very strict watch. From 1925 to 1933 during eight years of his exile there, he wrote two-thirds of *Risale-i Nur*. His frequent arrest and exile did not stop him from continuing his interpretation of the Qur'an. In the last decade of his life, Said Nursi settled in Isparta city. In 1956, his written books were allowed for print. The books were collected under the name '*Risale-i Nur*'. It has been translated into over 50 languages till now. The great scholar breathed his last in Urfa of Isparta on March 23 in 1960 (Muhammad Irfan Hawlader, 2020, p. 171) and was buried in Urfa (Ibrahim M. Abu-Rabi, p. xxiv). However, the Army authorities removed remains of his body from Urfa to an unknown place as Late Said Nursi became more powerful to the rulers. His grave has not been traced yet (Ihsan Kasim As-Salihi, 2015, p.121).

A brief discussion on *Risale-i Nur*

After Mustafa Kemal Ataturk's coming to power, Said Nursi realized that Turkey was going to be a secular state. At that time, he decided to revive the faith of the individuals, hence choose a bottom-top approach for socio-political change. He stayed in Ankara to convince Mustafa Kemal (Sukran Vahide, 2005, p. 27). Later in the changed situation, he emphasized on Iman and development of ethical and spiritual strength. The philosopher emphasized on belief, saying that man's true happiness and progress could be achieved through adoption of new forms of education and theology (Turner & Horkuc, 2009, p.33). He fostered all his energies to foster a culture of belief (Ibid, p. 34) and hold the Islam. His approach towards social change instead of politics was very much different. Said Nursi states, 'Belief is necessary, Islam is necessary; this is not the age of Sufism (Said Nursi, 1997, p. 85).' When the teaching of Islam was prohibited and Turkey was facing very unfavorable conditions, at that time 'the *Risale-i Nur* was most effective in these conditions in teaching both the theoretical and the practical aspects of Islam (Ihan Yildiz, 2000, p. 414)'.

Bediuzzaman Said Nursi worked to establish an Islamic community following the pattern of the model society of the Prophet. His approach, thoughts and philosophy were reflected in the Risale-i Nur. It is the most influential and major work of the Turkish hero. Nursi himself described the work as the fruit of his lifelong study and research. He states that the Risale-i Nur belongs to the Qur'an (Sakir Gozutok, 2000, p. 398). He illustrated the message of Qur'an through a distinct approach in his magnum opus. The topics, which were included in Risale-i Nur, are very diversified and inclusive. The most renowned and outstanding book Risale-i Nur is among the most read after the holy Qur'an and Hadith in the Muslim world (Thomas Michel, 2005, p. 148).

In his immortal work, Said Nursi showed that there is no conflict between religion and science. He had shown that Muslims were suffering from psychological instability. He worked for way-out and Risale-i Nur was written from this view. The authorship played a vital role to face attack on Islam and influence of communism in the last century. Said Nursi placed solutions in the changed situation after analyzing the rise of Westernization, secularism and atheism in the Muslim Ummah. He emphasized on change from inner. Turkey's present situation is the output of Said Nursi's relentless activities.

Background of Said Nursi's thoughts on educational reform

Bediuzzaman Said Nursi was a visionary scholar of the time who was well aware of the challenges faced by the Muslims at various levels. He moved forward to lead humanity towards the truth. He tried to reform education at every level. He had taken the initiative for the integration of religious and secular education, considering it as a best tool for Muslim renaissance. The main purpose of the initiative is to produce sincere and committed Muslim citizen in order to get rid of the crisis of the Muslim intelligentsia and to develop science and technology in the Muslim world. He believed that disunity among different streams of education system is the biggest reason for Muslim backwardness (Ramazan Balci, 2013, p. 40).

He used to live in his native eastern Anatolia during his early young life. At that time, he became familiar with timely thinking in the changed situation. At the end of the second decade of his life, he realized that the madrasa (religious) education system is not adequate to provide complete Islamic knowledge that can face modernity. He also criticized Madrasa education for lack of professional training (Sukran Vahide, 2005, p. 24). Against this backdrop, he proposed a new curriculum for the Turkish madrasa education system.

Not only the madrasa education, the visionary scholar felt that the whole education system of the-then Turkey must be reformed and integrated in accordance with the demand of time and necessity. At the time of rising European dominance, Western civilization and backpaddling of the Ottoman Caliphate, Nursi understood that the Muslims can't move forward with the traditional education system. He believed that education would be the most effective way of maintaining the unity of the Caliphate and securing its progress. So, in order to reform the existing education system, he was thinking of building a university where there would be a modern education system along with theology. Through his large-scale project, Nursi tried to combine two types of education system-- religious stream and conventional stream-- that produces dual citizens. He believed that educational reform will contribute to solve the problems which the Muslim society was facing.

Said Nursi tried to establish the proposed university in Anatolia namely Madrasa al-Zahra, which will be a centre of religious knowledge and optimistic sciences simultaneously (Markham, 2011, p. 194). He realized that without the Sultan's support, it wouldn't be possible to implement such a great project. In 1917, he visited Istanbul to collect funds for the institution and met Sultan Abdul Hamid to place his proposal. However, according to Markham, 'Said Nursi moved to Istanbul in 1907 to present his proposal to the Sultan for the University. He was also motivated to engage with a broader spectrum of intellectuals, scholars and officials in Istanbul' (Ibid, P.11-12). On the other hand, Serif Mardin states that there are no clear reasons which would have prompted Nursi to move to Istanbul, but he argues that it might have been the deterioration of economic conditions throughout the Ottoman Caliphate that gave a new urgency to Nursi's desire to present his educational reforms to the Sultan (Serif Mardin, 1989, p. 79). Sukran Vahide, however, believes that Nursi moved to Istanbul to get support for the Islamic University (Sukran Vahide, 2005, p.33).

Said Nursi presented his concept on education and the proposal of setting up a university for promoting integration of knowledge between religious sciences and modern sciences, but he couldn't collect sufficient fund due to the World War-I. During the regime of Adnan Menderes, the great thinker tried to establish the university again, but the government did not provide necessary support. However, Madrasa al-Zahra introduced a very high philosophy of Islam with combination of theology and science in its curriculum. In the sister of Al-Azhar University of Cairo, 'the language of Arabic is obligatory, the language of Kurdish is acceptable, and the language of Turkish is to be necessary (Hakan Gok, 2016, p. 40).'

Relation between religion and science in eyes of Said Nursi

The world has become a global village following development in science and technology. In such an era, we can't think of anything without modern technology. Against this backdrop, we should understand that there is no conflict between religion and science. According to Said Nursi, religion is developed by the supernatural knowledge, while science is based on acquired knowledge and the knowledge comes from Allah's creation. The great scholar cleared such views and contributed a lot to make a glue relationship between religion and science. His scientific approach to religion made him unique. He believes that science is a subset of religion. According to him, the conscience is illuminated by the religious sciences and the mind is illuminated by the positive sciences and wisdom occurs from the combination of these two (Markham, 2011, p.10).

Bedizzaman Said Nursi tried to overcome the negative attitude about the relationship between religion and science. According to his views, if Muslims acquire Qur'anic knowledge and modern science simultaneously, they can confront their intellectual challenges. So, he tried to develop a conception of science based on the oneness of Allah. Said Nursi saw the universe from this perspective. His concept over coordination between religious science and modern science has been reflected in *Risale-i Nur* completely.

The *Risale-i Nur* speaks over knowledge and power of Allah and the descriptors that introduce the Lord. It describes the Qur'an as the interpretation of nature and inverse. Said Nursi describes the universe as a large 'Book' in which every word is created in a miraculous way. According to his views, the 'Book' should be read like reading a book. In such a way that anyone reaches Allah by reading the Qur'an as a sent Book, he can also reach the book of nature by reading. The Qur'an presents the universe as the greatest and the most infinite evidence of the oneness of Allah. The Qur'an offers more attention to the evidence that every person can easily understand. The Qur'an mentions that 'And He taught Adam the Names, all of them' (Qur'an, Chapter-2, Verse-31). Nursi writes about this Verse that, 'it was the teaching, due to man's comprehensive disposition, of countless sciences, and numerous all-embracing branches of knowledge about the universe, and extensive learning about the Creator's attributes and qualities, which afforded man superiority over not only over angels but also the heavens and the earth and mountains in the question of the bearing of the Supreme Trust' (Said Nursi, 2015, p.254.)'

According to *Risale-i Nur*, the science is based on the names of Allah. Each of the arts is a mirror of Allah's names. Anyone can understand the universe

through understanding the names. Said Nursi said in his *Risale-i Nur* that the purpose of mentioning the miracles of the Prophets in the Qur'an is to encourage scientists to make and demonstrate similar ones. It is a significant point. As far as we know that no one discussed the matter in such a way like Said Nursi. Thus, he worked for a combined education system, integrating religion and science.

Evaluation of Said Nursi's formula on education

The Muslim Ummah, including Muslim community of Bangladesh, is facing a lot of problems and challenges in this modern and scientific era. Said Nursi tried to specify the problems and placed the formula of way-out. He termed the inner problems as the main diseases. According to the great sage, lack of understanding of true meaning of Islam is one of major problems from the inner side. Weakness in faith and belief is responsible for falling behind of Muslim Ummah. Diagnosing the diseases, Said Nursi placed solutions in *Risale-i Nur*. He, however, emphasized on faith and belief. Another inner problem is negligence to the Islamic dynamics. In order to overcome the problem, Said Nursi emphasized on true wisdom that implies scientific and religious knowledge. He presented the formula of integrated education to make the Muslims capable of facing the modern challenge. He stated, "Muslims could escape their backwardness only through modern scientific and religious knowledge as well as systematic thought, and could protect themselves against deviation only by acquiring true knowledge." He believes that 'unless humans were provided skills of comprehension, speech, seeing, hearing, and all capacities for understanding, it would not be possible for them to grasp divine attributes and the ways they operate in the cosmos' (Markham, 2011, p.30-31).

As a pioneer legend among the Muslim Ummah, Said Nursi worked for establishing peaceful society by spreading his educational philosophy, which is combined between Qur'anic knowledge and the technological education. He developed a comprehensive methodology of learning where anyone can be able to build a holistic worldview. The purpose of such view is to ingrate the modern sciences into the corpus of the Islamic legacy by amending, modifying, reinterpreting and adapting its components on the basis of the Islamic worldview and its characteristics (Sukran Vahide, 2005, p.48-49).

Nursi observed that the absence of faith from the educational system at contemporary times has lost value. He felt that it is necessary to save Muslims from moral degradation. For this reason, he proposed formula on education in the beginning of the twentieth century. He advocated the concept of integration of religious and modern sciences and adopted the concept in *Madrassa al-Zahra*. Through establishing this institution, the scholar tried to awaken the Muslims

from slumber and bring a revolutionary change in Islamic education. He believed that two parallel traditions of education system, one dealing with religious texts and the other dealing with secular sciences, are contrary to the interest of Islam. According to his views, the combined education system will add western sciences to the curriculum of Islamic disciplines. He believed that the truth becomes manifest through combining the religious sciences and the modern sciences. If the two are separated, it gives rise to bigotry in the one, and wiles and skepticism in the other.

Nursi's logic over the combination of the education system was very much pragmatic. As per his formula, religious subjects will be taught in the secular schools, while the modern sciences will be taught in the religious schools to save the people from irreligion and bigotry. The main purpose of this formula is to produce sincere and committed Muslims in order to get away from the crisis of the Muslim mind and to develop science and technology in the Muslim world. Nursi said that education that is entirely scientific and materialist can produce nothing but tools and modern mechanics. It alienates man from beauty and estranges him from wisdom. The integrated education system also aims to develop the interaction between Western knowledge and Islamic heritage. Nursi intended to abolish the dualism in Muslim education and to provide a sound and ideologically-oriented methodology to confront the contemporary challenges. His educational thoughts were reflected in the pages of the Risale-i Nur.

Education system of Bangladesh

Like other South Asian countries, Bangladesh was also part of British India. So, the modern education in the country was shaped by Britain. The education system in the country is greatly influenced by the western culture, while a number of people are also influenced by the religious education due to large number of Muslim populations. The education system of Bangladesh is complex and it fails to benefit large parts of Bangladeshi society. Compared to the international level, the education system is not competitive and appropriate for the overall national development in the country. The education system is also not useful for Muslims of the country.

The education system of Bangladesh faces an enormous challenge. The existing education system is divided into two main streams-- general (secular) education system and madrasa (religious) education system. The religious education system runs parallel to the mainstream secular education system. However, the madrasa education system is also divided into two types-- Alia and Qawmi. The state-regulated Alia madrasas teach the general curriculum along with the religious

studies; while the Qawmi madrasas only teach the religious subjects. The Qawmi curricula don't include subjects like science, mathematics, geography, and social sciences. As per the Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics, there are 9,319 Alia madrasas with 2.4 million students, while there are 13,902 Qawmi madrasas in Bangladesh, enrolling about 1.4 million students, predominantly males. The two types of madrasa education system not only fail to build qualified and high-thought scholar, but also makes divide in the Muslim society and promotes religious sects and differences.

Said Nursi's thoughts on education in Bangladesh perspective

Bediuzzaman Said Nursi suggested some outlines for integration of knowledge and for a unified education system. The suggestions include examining the reasons for the divergence and differences between various branches of educational system in order to constitute true civilization (Sukran Vahide, 2005, p.49), merging the branches of the educational systems, incorporating material dimension and moral dimension into unified curriculum, evaluation of Islam as the proper guide of the science and the father of all true knowledges in order to make closer Ulema (Islamic scholars) with Europeans who believe that there is a clash and contradiction between Islam and science. These suggestions are also useful for Bangladesh as the country's education system is also divided, while there is a lack of moral values in the education system. However, Nursi placed the suggestions for Muslim Ullah, while the Muslim community of Bangladesh is the part of the Ummah.

The parallel streams of education in Bangladesh have a little relation to each other. The general education system fails to create devoted Muslims, while the religious education system fails to ensure proper number, approach, result, equity and quality assurance to fundamental questions. Knowledge gap in the religious education system contributes to misunderstandings and social, political and religious divides. Science, social science, vocational and engineering subjects are not taught in madrasas of Bangladesh, while people of the general education system are deprived of proper Qur'anic knowledge and moral education. However, the majority of people in Bangladesh are related to general education. The educational complexities were created as a result of the nation's historical vicissitudes and simultaneous existence of different education providers. Nursi speaks over the problems in the context of the-then Turkey and Muslim Ummah.

Nursi's concept of integrated curriculum places implications in remodeling the curriculum for the educational institutions in order to resolve problems of Muslims. Bangladesh's education challenges from the aspects of religious values,

Western culture and modern science. It is one of challenges to provide teaching following national objectives and to address the problems of Muslim society. The-then Turkish society faced such problems and Nursi placed solutions in this regard. Following his idea, the integration of both traditional religious and modern secular science into an integrated curriculum can be adopted in Bangladesh.

The great Islamic scholar believed that the intellectual directions for social change are guided by the universities (Sukran Vahide, 2005, p.43). So, he proposed his holistic model of Islamic University with the integrated knowledge based on Qur'anic framework and scientific advancements. The holistic model can be followed in the religiously managed education institutions in Bangladesh. Most of the people related with the institutions have no even sound idea over modern education and existing subjects which are needed for human life. They also have not enough idea about Nursi, his Risale-i Nur and the concept of education. If they would have enough ideas about the prominent figure of Turkey, they could get a proper solution to address both articulated and unarticulated problems. Nursi and Risale-i Nur should widely be discussed in Bangladesh.

Nursi also developed his educational idea in the context of inter-religious cooperation. Although Bangladesh is a Muslim-majority country, people of some other communities live here. The educational formula of the Turkish scholar is useful to make religious education of Bangladesh inclusive and pluralistic, and general education moral-based. The formula provides young people with a foundation of values that are essential for a productive society. Adoption of Nursi's innovative educational formula will ultimately address the modern and secular education within the religious educational framework and on pertinent gaps.

Solutions in Bangladesh perspective in Said Nursi's views

Problems in the education system of Bangladesh need to be identified aiming to help improve the quality of the education. Students studying in different systems don't have widely divergent views and standards. It is a major problem. The lack of an integrated curriculum is the bane in the education sector, while the lack of coordination between the religious education system and the general education system is blamed for the incompatibility. Nursi's formula of unified education system, which makes coordination among all streams of education system, may be a perfect solution for the way-out. His concept of integrated curriculum based on his educational model that is Madrasah al-Zahra can play a vital role to overcome the educational problem in Bangladesh. The madrasa education system

of Bangladesh can be benefited following the concept of Nursi as ‘he was in favour of democratization and diversification of the madrasa education so that the rule of division of labour could be applied’ (Sukran Vahide, 2005, p. 45).

Another problem of the education system in Bangladesh is the style of teaching. Memorization is still the standard way of learning. Teachers expect their students to memorize a huge amount of data. Courses are not designed to stimulate discussion and analytical thinking. The contemporary researches conducted in Bangladesh suggest that there is further need of effective training on inclusive education (Sharma & Deppeler, 2012, p. 132-133), but this is not a proper solution. The type of curriculum and teaching method, placed by Said Nursi, may be more practical to overcome the problem. His teaching method is directly lecturing method (Sakir, 404) and he started to teach his students by this method when he was sent to exile in Isparta (Serif Mardin, 1989, p. 96)

Over the past decades, Bangladesh has enacted a number of policies and laws in favour of the inclusive education system. However, the country faces various challenges in this regard. The authorities concerned can’t merge the madrasa education to the mainstream due to religious sentiment of the people of Bangladesh, because the curriculum of the general education system is either a generalized one or a religious one. On the other hand, the religious education system fails to fulfil the demand of Muslim society due to its lacking. So, instead of a fully generalized or religious education program, a generalized program that also prepares students for vocational training should be introduced in Bangladesh. Against this backdrop, Nursi’s concept over the two streams of education system may be way-out in the present context of Bangladesh. He proposed the best combination, ensuring quality and morality.

Recommendations

Bangladesh’s problems on various issues, including religious divide of Muslims and educational problems, can be specified in the light of Nursi’s philosophy and concept. His philosophy and thoughts on education and the formula should be discussed in detail in the country to overcome the problems. Seminar, symposium, conference and other programmes on education in the views of Said Nursi and application of the formula should be arranged in the country.

Bediuzzaman Said Nursi’s philosophy on life and society should be discussed, mentioning the reality of his eventful life and activities in the context of Bangladesh. It should also be discussed how the Risale-i Nur influences the society and it is used as a tool for social change. How it can be used in Bangladesh. So, it

is necessary to introduce Said Nursi, his thoughts on education and his most famous work 'Risale-i Nur' in Bangladesh. Institutional format is needed to work on the issues. Setting up Nursi Study Centre will be the best way in this regard. This centre will promote the work of Said Nursi and 'Risale-i Nur'. Some other institutions like schools and colleges can be established in Bangladesh where the message of the Qur'an in the light of Risale-i Nur will be taught on priority basis.

The methods and ways of Said Nursi over changing a society from inner protects Islam in a situation when Turkey was passing through a critical moment. The ways can be applied in the Indian sub-continent, including Bangladesh. So, some writers should be promoted who will write books on Nursi and his thoughts. Alongside publishing of their book, the Risale-i Nur and books on Nursi and his work written in various languages should be translated into Bengali and published here. It can be said that about 300 million people speak in Bengali in the world.

Although some books were published in Bengali on Nursi and his works, these are not enough. Alongside publishing books, academic courses should be introduced in Islamic Studies Department at Dhaka University and some other departments of the university and some other universities in the country. Academic research work should be encouraged and promoted in the country.

The recommendations in brief:

- # To place the proposal to the authorities concerned to introduce the integrated education system based on religion and science as per the formula of Said Nursi.
- # To set up an independent educational institution with Nursi's formula in Bangladesh on pilot basis.
- # To set up Nursi Study Centre in Dhaka University.
- # To promote M.Phil and Ph.D research work in universities of Bangladesh.
- # To introduce academic courses in several universities.
- # To translate and publish books in Bengali and spread them widely.
- # To create and promote writers on Said Nursi and Risale-i Nur.
- # To arrange Nursi conferences and seminars in several parts of Bangladesh.

Conclusion

Bediuzzaman Said Nursi contributed a lot for social change and awakening in Muslim Ummah. Upholding his philosophy, thoughts and methods, the Turkish society became the beneficiary. Today they are enjoying the benefits. Bangladesh is stuck in such a situation which faced Turkey in the last century. Bangladeshi Muslims are divided into various sects, groups and mentalities. A weak and divided education system is one of the major reasons behind the problems. These

can be resolved in light of Said Nursi and *Risala-i Nur*, which should be introduced widely in Bangladesh to bring a positive change in the country. So, application of Said Nursi's thoughts and adoption of his educational formula are needed to resolve the crisis.

Nursi changed society silently by refraining from politics, but he was not against politics. He had taken the strategy considering the then-then situation. He kindled the fire of Iman in the heart of the young generation, who were dangerously exposed to the evil of secularism and atheism. The Islamic-minded people of Bangladesh should give emphasis on the issues. They should follow Nursi's methods, formula and strategies. Not only the Islamic people, the country could adopt the thoughts of Nursi to build a peaceful society. The glaring problems in education can be solved through adopting the concept of Nursi who identified the educational problems in Turkey; while present Bangladesh faces such problems.

Ultimately Bangladesh suffers socially, politically, economically and also in science and technology. Issues brought up in this article need to be addressed in the views of Said Nursi in the interest of a morally, scientifically and technologic developed Muslim society in Bangladesh. The unified education system along with unified standardized syllabus through incorporating religious subjects and modern science is necessary. This education system can prevail.

References

Al-Salihi, Ihsan Kasim. (2015). *The Life Background of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*. (Translated into Bengali by Dr. Mohammad Masehur Rahman). Dhaka, Bangladesh: Liberty Prokashoni (publication).

Ahmmmed, M., Sharma, U., Deppeler, J. (2012). Variables affecting teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education in Bangladesh. *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs*, 12 (3)

Balci, Ramazan. (2013). *Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, Wonder of the Age*. New Jersey: Tughra Books.

Colin Turner & Husan Horkuc. (2009). *Said Nursi*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hawlader, Muhammad Irfan. (2020). *Bediuzzaman Said Nursi and Risale-i Nur*. Dhaka, Bangladesh: Guardian Publications.

Gozutok, Sakir. (2020). '*The Risale-i Nur in the Context of Educational Principles and Methods*' (International Symposium on Bediuzzaman Said Nursi) Istanbul, Turkey.

Gok, Hakan. (2016). Selected Readings from Bediuzzaman Said Nursi's Risale-i-Nur. Clifton: Tughra Books.

Ibrahim M. Abu-Rabi. (Invalid date). Islam at the Crossroads: On the Life and Thought of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi.

Ian S. Markham; Suendam Birinci Pirim. (2011). An Introduction to Said Nursi: Life, Thought and Writings. England: Ash Gate Publishing Ltd.

Mardin, Serif: (1989). Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey. USA: State University of New York Press.

Michel, Thomas: (2005). Grappling with Modern Civilization: Said Nursi's Interpretive Key, In Said Nursi's View on Muslim-Christian Understanding. Istanbul, Turkey. Sozler Basın Yayinlari.

Rahman, Hafizur. (2018). Erdoğan: The Change Maker. Dhaka, Bangladesh: Guardian Publications.

Rahman, Hafizur. (2019). Amar Dekha Turkey (Turkey in My Eyes). Dhaka, Bangladesh: Gaudian Publications.

Said Nursi, Bediuzzaman: (2010). The Damascus Sermon. New Delhi: Sozler Publications.

Said Nursi, Bediuzzaman: (1997). Letters 1928-1932 (English trans.), Istanbul, Turkey: Sozler Publications.

Said Nursi, Bediuzzaman. (2015). The Words. New Delhi, India: Barla Publications.

Syfullah, Mahfuz. (1997). Islam in Twentieth Century and Bediuzzaman Said Nursi. Dhaka, Bangladesh: Medina Publications.

Vahide, Sukran. (2005). Islam in Modern Turkey. Albany, USA: State University of New York Press.

Yildiz, Iihan. (2000). 'The Search in the Transitional Period (1924-1950) for a Religious Education Model'. (International Symposium on Bediuzzaman Said Nursi). Istanbul, Turkey.