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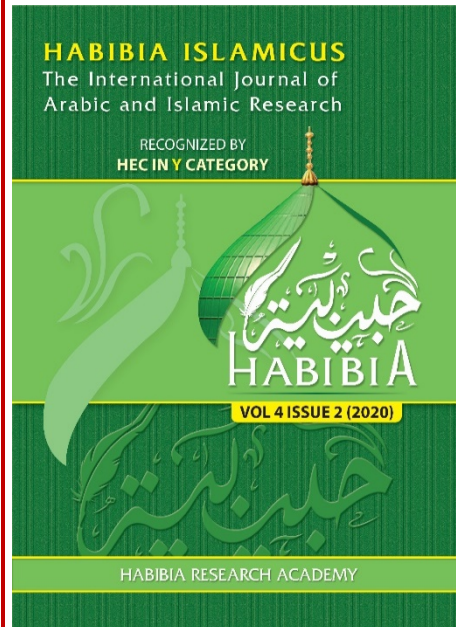
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TOPIC:

**EFFECTIVENESS OF PRIMARY EDUCATION DURING
GOLDEN ERA OF MUSLIM SPAIN**

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EFFECTIVENESS OF PRIMARY EDUCATION DURING GOLDEN ERA OF MUSLIM SPAIN

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ABSTRACT:

Golden Era of Muslim Spain was tremendously progressive in every filed of life, especially in the field of education. Muslim caliphs took keen interest in the development of education. Scholars from around the world were invited and adequate. The magnificent support of education by Muslim Caliphs raised the standard of learning and literacy to a high level in Spain. During Golden Era of Muslim Spain, focused was specifically on primary education. State worked for the grooming and development of new generation. The study raised specific questions; Did Masjid played an important in the development of primary education? Did Primary education was easily accessible to every child? These questions were evaluated with the help of credible and authentic reference books. Through investigation it was found that Islam and Prophet (P.B.U.H) strongly emphasized on value and acquisition of knowledge. To acquired knowledge Masjid played central role from the early days of Islam. Every Masjid had one Madrasah along with complete teachings of Islam and worldly education. During Golden Era of Muslim Spain state followed the tradition of making Madrasah with Masjid. Elementary schools were established in every town during Golden Era of Muslim Spain, State made primary education free for all citizens. Administration provided financial and managerial support and spends a lot of money for primary education during Golden Era of Muslim Spain. Primary education played vital role in the development of new generation and became of progressive society. Education became the sign of prestige and luxury for people to its best during Golden Era of Muslim Spain.

KEYWORDS: Primary Education, Golden Era, Effectiveness.

INTRODUCTION: Primary education plays vital role in the development of a child. The future of the state depends on its strong primary education. Primary education is very important for young ones, in fact it is necessary for various reasons including to ensure that children acquire basic knowledge. It is essential because in primary education child get to learn basic learning like how to read and write and it is the main foundation which laid to their higher education, and then they will achieve higher success for a brighter future. According to universal program, EFA (Education For All), every state should fulfill the needs of primary education to their pupils. "Education for All (EFA) is an international initiative first launched in 1990 to bring the benefits of education to "every citizen in every society." To realize this aim, a broad coalition of national governments, civil society groups, and development agencies such as UNESCO and the World Bank were supported this program (The World Bank report, Ibrd.Ida, 4 August, 2014). Like today's "education for all" program, we can see this progress in early days of Islam as well. In early days of Islam, Muslims gained knowledge form Masjid. It was the first place where teaching was started in Islam. The Masjid was also used for the place of justice, due to this importance of Masjid in every part of world where Islam reached its mandatory to make Masjid. In this

regard it is related that second Caliph “Hazrat Umer bin Khattab sent his governors to Basra, Kufa,, Syria, and Egypt, by instructing each of them to established Jami” (Shalaby, 1979). The second Caliph also appointed “narrators” to these jami (mosques) for the purpose of reciting the Holy Quran and Hadith (Nasr, 1982). Thirst of knowledge acts as a link for one to achieve pleasure in this world and the hereafter, and to become close to ALLAH. That’s why Muslims of Spain paid their attention to the development of education and for this they firstly made primary education accessible and free for all around the Spain. They knew the worth of education as it became the main object to know what is right and what is wrong. For this purpose state during Golden Era of Spain made many elementary schools in every town so that everyone could access these schools, and for the relief of the people state made this primary education free for all so that everyone can get basics education free of cost somehow they has given scholarships to the needy students for the higher education too.

Research Question: The present study was designed to evaluate the primary education in Golden Era of Muslim Spain by raising the following question:

- 1- Did primary education was accessible to every child during Golden Era of Muslim Spain?
- 2- Did Masjid played an important role in development of primary education?

Methodology: In present study, effort is being made to point out that because of Islamic philosophy of acquiring knowledge; Muslims focused on primary education in Golden Era of Spain. This research is basically a content analysis, for this purpose verses have been given from Quran. Related literature was also helpful for this study.

Content Analysis: Some verses from Quran have been extracted and content analysis was done through reliable books and published material. In Quran Allah says: In Suratul Zumar verse No: 9 “Can the learned and the illiterate be of the same status? Are those, who know, equal with those who not know?!” It is fact that in Islam there has an emphasis on value of knowledge. Allah clearly said to mankind to acquire knowledge, it is further described that learned and illiterate would never be of the same status. For that purpose Muslims made Masjid and it was for five time prayer in a day and fulfilling the need of educational institution for the people. For finding answers of the research questions first it will discuss the sources of primary education during Golden Era of Spain. So basically there were many sources for primary education that’s why it was accessible for every person in the Golden Era of Spain. There was no regular system of education in early days of Islam, and the Masjid was served the purpose of the academics and schools. It was considered to be an

act of religious merit to teach young. Primary education was given by mother to their children up to the age of seven. After that age children were go for elementary school that was called Madrasah. Basically in primary education child had to studied Quran and Sunnah with the help of their parents. After that for other subjects they need to go to the elementary schools which were spread among the whole kingdom by Caliphs. It is true that primary education was a private concern, but it was widely defused that the majority of Spaniards knew how to read and write (Reinhart Dozy, Spanish Islam, 1913, p455).

Masjid (Played vital role in the development of Primary Education): In early Islamic period Muslims gained knowledge from Masajid. It was the first place where teaching was started in Islam. The Masajid were also used for the place of justice, due to this importance of Masajid in every part of world where Islam reached its mandatory to make Masajid. In this regard it is related that second Caliph “Hazrat Umer bin Khattab sent his governors to Basra, Kufa,, Syria, and Egypt, by instructing each of them to established Jami” (Shalaby, 1979). The second Caliph also appointed “narrators” to these jami (mosques) for the purpose of reciting the Holy Quran and Hadith (Nasr, 1983). Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H) made the mosque the main place of learning, teaching and supervising Muslims. Anywhere a Masjid was established, basic instruction began. He also sent teachers of the Quran to the tribes and they were called Ahl-e- Ilm ‘the people with knowledge’ (Woodcock, 2006). This meant that education spread everywhere and these traveling teachers live the life full of contentment. As the numbers of Masajid were increasing rapidly in early Islamic Period in which Muslim got education of Quran and Hadith and also they educate themselves with other subjects during the subsequent Muslim Dynasties. In fact these masajid served as educational institutions in addition to their other role as places for prayer. When the Quran was learned by the Companions, they were busied in greater task than teaching children. Ibn-e- Khuldoon says, “Those who had learnt the Quran and its wisdom were the only people who could issue the legal responses and from them the religious set of guidelines were to be received” (Ibn-e-Khuldoon, op,cit.428, 429). During the Golden Era of Muslim Spain Primary education was served in Masjid regularly, mostly children learned orally by their heart (Hifz) and after that they were able to read and write basic texts. They taught Quran and Sunnah, and their believes and faith in first place. Normally in Masjid there were several circles (halqa) of Muslim Scholars who taught people free of cost, everyone had easily access to this halqa. Scholars had their particular timings in particular corner of the Masajid. After completing of some basic studies children went to other scholars in same Masjid with different timings for further studies (Burney, p529). These Madrasah were

affiliated with main universities, only in Cordova there had eight hundred Madarssah in it to fulfill the requirement of education.

Elementary Schools (Spread in each and every town of Spain by State): In 8th century A.D, Cordoba has its first elementary school near launched near a Masjid, and the idea of elementary schooling extent like wildlife, later in 9th Century A.D, nearly every Masjid had an elementary school for the education of boys and girls. At the age of six nearly all boys, except the rich (who had private tutors), some girls, boys, and slave children started elementary school (Al Hassani, 2006). Tuition was normally free or so inexpensive that it was accessible to all. The needy students get scholarships for education. One of the first lesson children learned in school was that how to write the beautiful ninety nine names of Allah Taala and simple verses from the Quran. After this the whole Quran was studied by the students thoroughly and then added arithmetic in the syllabus. Abdul Rehman III was fond of education and he established many schools in every possible village. Likewise Abdul Rehman III, his grandsons also pay attention in this regard, they also established schools for everyone where poor students get education by free and for rich children there were different schools where they paid fee for the education (Burney, p290).

COURSES TAUGHT IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS: One of the first lessons children learned in the school was how to write the beautiful ninety-nine names of *Allah Taala* and simple verses from the Quran. After this, the whole Quran was studied by heart (*hifz*) as an optional course, then added arithmetic and other subjects to the curriculum. *Abdul Rahman III* was fond of education, and he established many schools in every possible village. Likewise, *Abdul Rahman III*, his grandsons, also pay attention in this regard; they also established schools for everyone where poor students get education by free, and for rich children, there were different schools where they paid a fee for education (Burney, 1969).

FREE PRIMARY SCHOOLS FOR STUDENTS: Primary Schools were free for all needy students, and Caliphs took a keen interest in maintaining the standard of these educational institutions. That is why in Muslim Spain, there was not a single man who could not read and write. Caliphs made sure that every young child gets his primary education free of cost in his elementary schools, and that is why everyone in the Golden Era of Spain was able to read and write.

Financial Management for these Educational Institutions: State made primary education accessible and free for all. For free education state made many different infrastructures to cope with the needs of these educational institutions. For managing the financial needs of education the income of the “Zin-Bazar” market of Cordoba was

reserved for the maintenance of schools. The rich people also had to contribute to the education fund. The salaries of the teachers and professors were distributed from the Caliph's own private fund (Burney, 2006). The learned Caliph Hakam II founded three schools in the neighborhood of the chief mosque, and twenty four in the suburbs of Cordoba to impart free education. According to one chronicle says, McCabe, "There were eight hundred schools in Cordoba alone". Caliph maintained the progress of educational institutions and as a result the majority of Muslims could read and write (McCabe, 1935). Elementary schools were free for all needy students and Caliphs took keen interest in maintaining the standard of these educational institutions. That's why in Muslim Spain there were not a single man who could not read and write. Muslim Caliphs made education free for all; tuition was normally free or so inexpensive that it was accessible to all. The needy students get scholarships for education. One of the first lesson children learned in school was that how to write the beautiful ninety nine names of Allah Taala and simple verses from the Quran. After this the whole Quran was studied by the students thoroughly and then added arithmetic in the syllabus. Abdul Rehman III was fond of education and he established many schools in every possible village. Likewise Abdul Rehman III, his grandsons also pay attention in this regard, they also established schools for everyone where poor students get education by free and for rich children there were different schools where they paid fee for the education (Burney, p290).

Palaces for Primary Education (for Royal and other high figure children): Education had been carried out in the Royal Palaces as well as the palaces of the leading figures of the Muslim society. The curriculum of this type of palaces education was usually drawn up by the father to suit his child, furthermore the student of this class continued to receive their higher education in the palaces after completing their elementary education. The teacher here called "Mu'addib" (tutor) (Tritton, 1957). Like from the neighboring country Abbasid Caliphs, Umayyad Caliphs were also pay attention to the education of their children. They hire the best Mu'addib for their children because they wanted to see their children at high level in education. The curriculum was not much different from the regular elementary institutions. Only some subject were included or excluded according to the instruction of the father. These were the sources of primary education during Golden Era of Spain.

Effectiveness of Primary Education: For making primary education accessible and free for all people, Muslim Spain flourished in every field of education, prosperous in economy and emerged as the developed and powerful country. Basically primary education paid the

way to the Golden Era of Spain, because when basic education spread in all country, people wanted to learned more in many fields and for that they acquired higher education and made many developments and became famous Muslim Scholars of that time. In today's world we can see the value of primary education, but during the Medieval times Muslims made this step to the better future of the world. If a person gets his basic (primary) education there will be 75% chances that he will go for the higher education as well because education gives awareness to the mankind and this is the teachings of Islam. During Golden Era of Spain Muslims followed Quran and Sunnah and made spectacular progress in every filed of life. The enthusiasm for seeking knowledge was fostered by many Caliphs, princes, and governors. According McCabe, there were 800 schools in Cordova alone (Splendor of Moorish Spain, p190). The Caliphs maintained a large orphanage at Cordova, and evidence is available for the existence of many such institutions in a number of other towns. As a result, according to Altamira, 'the majority of Muslims could read and write' (McCabe, p 185). Primary education played vital role in the development of new generation and became a progressive society during Golden Era of Spain.

Conclusion:

Hence in Golden Era of Muslim Spain, Muslims focused on primary education. They made it easy and access able to everyone. Masjid played an important role in primary education because in every part of the country state made Madrassah along with every Masjid, and it was access able for everyone to go there and learned knowledge from scholars. Caliphs took keen interest in the development of educational institutions; they made elementary schools in which every child can get admission without any preferences. They managed the financial requirements of these institutes by spending money from markets and other areas. For this primary education, Muslims of Spain made spectacular progress in every field of life because when there has a good basic education there will be marvelous achievements ahead for new generation. Some of the brief conclusion of effectiveness of primary education is as follows:

- Masjid played vital role in the development of education and used as educational institutions for various branches of knowledge.

- A proper set up for elementary education had been set up during Golden Era of Spain.
- Separate building as an educational institution was founded by Arabs to the world.
- For making vast network of these elementary school throughout the Spain made it accessible of primary education for everyone.
- Making primary education free for all by the State during Golden Era of Spain.
- Alone Cordova has eight hundred schools during Golden Era.
- Caliphs supported these educational institutions by funding them through personal account and made other ways to manage the financial needs.
- Primary education led Muslims of Spain towards success, prosperity, and brighter future.

Recommendations:

- Quality education should be less expensive for all people. Because today's quality education has become expensive commodity availability only in elite institutions, however, most of the students of these elite institutions seek their future abroad. It is therefore recommended that the target of the quality education should be unprivileged and underprivileged people of the country rather than only for the elite class.
- It is recommended to assimilate *Madrassah* system with the normal schooling system, as we can see during Golden Era of Spain there were many *Madrassah* who produced famous Scientists, Astronomers, Physicians, Philosophers, and many more. For this, it is suggested to implement a plan of providing an alternative school system to *Madrassah* students rather than to attempt reforms in existing *Madrassah* system.
- Donations should be arranged for the financial needs of educational institutions. For these universities should be donated with industrial complexes, for this students get an

opportunity to get internships as a trainee in these industries. Like these technical universities should be collaborated with technology industries. For schools, they should be collaborated with the agriculture cultivable lands or in the form of shops in the market. These schools should be functioned under the supervision of the government.

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