

The Significance of Islamic Documentaries in the Facilitation of Islamic Learning at University Level

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ABSTRACT

This study entitled "The Significance of Islamic Documentaries in the Facilitation of Islamic Learning at University Level" was conducted in University of Karachi focusing the Faculty of Arts. It aimed to explore the significance of Islamic documentaries, values and ideologies on learning of students at university level. For this purpose, the descriptive study is conducted based on empirical design. Target audience was students of enrolled in the Faculty of Arts at University of Karachi where a sample of 120 students was drawn. The pre-constructed questionnaire was distributed among the participants for data collection. The findings of the study revealed that Islamic Documentaries bear positive impact on the student learning and academic achievement.

Key words: Islamic Learning, Documentaries, University, Digital Media, Education

INTRODUCTION:

Education is the main source of acquiring knowledge and gaining insight. Plato defines education as process of gaining knowledge which is life-long i.e. initiated with first year of childhood and ends with end of life. Additionally the term education is used in wider sense i.e. education makes an individual ideal citizen, developing the ideal perfection for humanity and citizenship, and teaches they ways to rule and obey. Thus the basic aim of education is to realize all round development. In this development moral and aesthetic development occupies the foremost place.

The process of education is based on four foundations that are philosophical, psychological social and economic. All of them are given equal importance while setting up the national educational policy of the state and it became the landmark that helped the educational system to reform from traditional education to the progressive education. Unlike traditional education the progressive education focuses on the individuality and it is student centered. It believes in providing students a link between experience and learning. Keeping in view the objectives of progressive education the curriculum is now being designed accordingly to provide concrete and long lasting education to the pupils. Thus even the subjects

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that were previously considered as a theoretical are being taught by using different teaching techniques to make it persuasive and eloquent. Dewy¹ is of the view that education is continuous reconstruction of the learning experiences.

As highlighted by Kumari², the increased use of technology in education has brought many significant changes in the environment of formal education. New teaching methodologies and strategies are being developed by using new technologies in classroom to make teaching learning process more efficient and effective. From decades films and documentaries are being used for educational purposes and now its culture is getting enhance with passage of time. Due to common use of computers and multimedia in classroom the trend of learning through documentaries is getting widespread. A same time, Sharma³ has highlighted the challenge of integrating philosophical and ideological foundations of education with technology in education. Kathleen, Thomas⁴ has aptly informed that the role of teacher as reflective practitioner becomes all the more important in this context.

Documentary films are considered as type of reporting regarding world. In other words, the documentary provides the viewers with information, facts and figures regarding places, events, people, and others, virtually. Documentaries are aimed to represent and show factual aspects of what happened in term of audio and videos and highlighting what is being happened around us. Documentaries are considered to be the presentation of facts thus it support the teaching learning process by creating vivid image of the facts and figures it also helps students to be critical thinkers. Now important things are to identify the effectiveness of these documentaries in teaching and effective learning of learners. Numerous studies have identified this relationship i.e. such type of documentaries would be effective and useful if are used as tool in classroom as facilitates the students to assess and view more abstract issues.

Documentary films, as mentioned can be used for effective classroom teaching during which teachers and instructors can ask appropriate questions in order to guide their learners and students. Teachers and instructors may have to ask students to think how and why these problems and issues demonstrated through documentaries and to find out solutions to these issues and suggest how these issues and problems can be solved. This requires the power shift and students and learners must be provided with different tools to solve these issues. Additionally it is also of great importance to address feelings of students regarding these issues. Documentaries are not always easy things to view but still are effective and facilitating the viewers' attention to issue and problem.

Golden⁵ is of the view that teachers in this regards by tapping the natural attractions of students to documentaries and films can facilitate the students to understand key aspects, themes, concepts, viewpoints, tones and practices. This would improve the narrative, persuasive and expository abilities of students.

Finally different studies also have identified that teaching through and studying through documentaries facilitates the students and learners to learn how to construct the nonfiction texts and how these texts may be used to shape the viewers' opinions in this regards.

The subjects that depicts philosophical concept or which are related to religion are considered as theoretical subjects and they are being usually taught through lecture methods and descriptive pattern of evaluation is being used for assessment. However this practice leaves many unanswered questions in students mind because of ambiguity in concepts which eventually results in extrication of student from religion. Though curriculum of state are designed in such a way that their educational system should promote their religion and the individual should stay connected to their religious beliefs. But the common practices of teaching religion through unattractive teaching technique make it tedious. Thus in progressive concept of education it is mandatory to teach religion and other subject through practical teaching strategies and deliver knowledge through different means of technology so that students can relate to religion easily.

Documentaries can serve as an effective source of knowledge regarding religion at University level. Adulthood is the age where an individual start thinking more abstractly and try to inquire pre learned concepts to its core thus teaching religion through documentaries and other attractive means can make individual more connected to its religion. It can revive the spirituality which can eventually help him to lead his life on the religious values and beliefs. Cho, Song, & Han⁶ opine that technology assisted of classroom follow up also train them to be more attentive viewer and critical thinker.

Particularly discussing about Pakistan's educational system the National Educational Policy⁷ emphasize that the first aim of education is making the Islamic Practices and Quranic principles basis to train and educate the Pakistan's future generation as true Muslims. In order to fulfill this objective it is compulsory to encounter Islamic teachings in curriculum of not only Islamiat or Islamic studies course but also in every course which is offered by institution. Not only content but teaching strategies which will be used to deliver the courses should attractive enough so that they can root down Quranic principles and Islamic ideologies in the individual and help them to promote and become practicing Muslims.

In this concern documentaries can play a vital role in delivering the lecture on the sensitive topic regarding Islam. Tayob⁸ is of the opinion that documentary assisted teaching learning process create a positive image regarding the religion in students minds so that they should feel more concern and connected to history, ideologies, concepts, rule and regulation concerning Islam. As documentaries gives visual display of the abstract concept it help students to make a vivid image regarding that issue and it will also leave him thinking about the topic for a long

period of time. Watkins⁹ has expressed the similar thoughts while highlighting the role of documentaries in teaching religion. Yun (2007)¹⁰ has highlighted the role of pictures in teaching learning which may be transformed into documentaries for more effective use.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

1. To inquire the connection of adults with Islam.
2. To study the effect of Islamic documentaries on adults learning.
3. To study the opinion of adults on Islamic documentaries.
4. To deliver vivid concept regarding Islamic Teachings.

HYPOTHESIS:

1. Islamic documentaries may build connection between adults and Islam.
2. Islamic documentaries will positively facilitate Islamic learning
3. In becoming practicing Muslims Islamic documentaries will motivate youth.
4. Spirituality may be nurtured through Islamic documentaries
5. Islamic documentaries will help in delivering vivid Islamic concepts in youth.

DOCUMENTARIES AND LEARNING PATTERNS:

The foundation of the use of documentaries in the classroom emerges from the understanding that students learn in different ways. Students and learners are different with each other intrinsically; therefore have different preferences to different learning styles. Teaching on the other hand is purposeful intervention, aimed to promote the causing and learning to happen. As highlighted by Howard, G. (1993)¹¹, learning styles vary widely and may be categorized into different groups and classes, some among them include:

1. Visual Learners:

Visual learners' learning is high or they learn best if information and data is presented before them is in visual format.

- 1.1 Visual learners are found learning effectively and efficiently when information and data is provided and presented visually or in written format. Therefore in classroom settings, learners may get benefits from the instructors using white or black board extensively, listing potential points of lecture or providing the students with outline to be followed during lecture. Visual learners therefore get more information and learn more from textbooks, notes, and other visual material. Visual students are also behaviorally different from others i.e. they usually prefer to learn and study in quite place, preferably in quite rooms.
- 1.2 McCulloch (2004)¹² identified that the visual learners usually use eyes of their minds when require to remember or retrieve learned information. Teachers therefore can design the visual aids and materials to make learning effective as such learners learn effectively when things are designed visually. Austin & Jong¹³ identified that visual learner's get more benefits from things

enrich with visual aids, in classroom settings, books and texts. Hill (1993)¹⁴ noted and explained that visual learners have artistic side; enjoying activities involve visual designs and arts.

2 Auditory Learners:

Auditory learners on the other hand are different from visual learners and their learning is effective and efficient when things are enriched with auditory and oral format. Auditory learners therefore learn more when lectures are designed orally, based on discussion. Best way to make their learning effective is audio lectures and class discussion, group discussion and audio material and tapes. Auditory learners usually remember things in way they often hear, the way one have told the things or they may repeat things out loud. Such learners usually learn best when involve in discussion and speaking/listening exchange.

3 Verbal Linguistic Learners:

Verbal- linguistic learners enjoy writing assignments and communicating with instructor with the means of writing materials. They are fond of writing blogs, articles, books and poetry to express their learning.

Considering how these different learning styles play out in classroom it is necessary for a teaching to adopt that kind of teaching method which can satisfy all types of learning styles. Documentaries are a kind educational technology which not only provides knowledge to the students but it covers all learning styles thus creating an interactive environment in classroom. Islam is a religion which provides complete information regarding every aspect of life and by implementing its teaching in life can bring satisfaction in an individual's life. Thus if Islamic studies should be taught with the help of appropriate documentaries it can satisfy the need of every kind of learner. Because auditory learners will listen to the documentary and learn it, visual learners will watch it and grasp the information while tactile and verbal linguistic learner will implement and prepare notes on it.

EFFECT OF DOCUMENTARIES ON STUDENT'S PSYCHOLOGY:

As mentioned, the documentaries are effective way to enhance learning and knowledge of learners specifically if they are visual learners, facilitating them to enhance their information and knowledge, acquiring different skills and abilities like thinking skills and therefore resulted into attitudinal and behavioral changes, subject to the fact that if they are used effectively in classroom settings. Documentaries therefore enhance acquisition of knowledge by presenting different information through different media, facilitating the learners easy to understand abstract ideas. Additionally, learning and thinking skills are created and developed among learners through challenging them with respect to their current views, and therefore facilitate them to think critically regarding contents presented in subject documentary.

Additionally, as mentioned, this mode of learning and teaching is subject to attitudinal and behavioral changes among the learners by developing interest and challenging their feelings at the time when documentaries are being viewed. Different studies conducting regarding teaching models have proposed that use of these resources like documentaries are representing different perspectives, preventing the learners to develop and create biased views after they have viewed the documentaries. This method also increases the opportunities of sharing their views and thoughts for critical and reflective thinking. Finally these documentaries and films facilitate to attract attention, increase memory, changes in behaviors and attitudes and abilities to understand abstracts.

RESURGENCE OF ISLAMIC TEACHINGS IN EDUCATIONAL PROCESS:

For the resurgence of Islamic teaching in adults' education process it is important to maintain relation between the past and the present. This cyclic relationship between past and present constitute both knowledge and power. For Muslims, the Qur'an as revelation and the normative biography of the Prophet determine the originating past that must be related to the present. To revitalize it in adult education it is important to use effective teaching strategies which can help him create a linkage between past and present. Documentaries in this respect can help a teacher a lot to deliver his lecture with respect to Islam. This will increase the motivation of the student and develop the urge to understand and to relate to the topic easily. Saifee, Sultan, Baloach, & Khalid¹⁵ has highlighted the role of mass media in enriching teaching learning process and subsequently maximizing learners academic attainment.

OLD VERSES NEW METHOD OF TEACHING ISLAMIC STUDIES:

Most important and crucial function to transmit religious values and beliefs and cultural aspects among children is performed by the parents, elder members of family and mainly by the educational institutions. Before advent of technology or technological advancements to modern extent, the educational institutions were performing this function of transmitting religious and cultural values among the children. In contrast, with the advancement in technology, the ideologies of lives, cultural aspects and other beliefs and norms are transmitted, developed or learned through media. Lim,, Lee ,Choi , Song & Han,¹⁶ identified that media in modern world is contributing in transferring, regulating, constructing and developing cultural and religious values among children. The same may transform teaching learning of Islamic Studies keeping in view the contemporary challenges.

The advent in technologies and rate at which they have been acknowledged and adopted in the society has diminished the role of teachers and parents in this regards. This is another reason behind why world has been and is being transformed into global village. Scott¹⁷ recommended that the documentaries and visual aids must represent the cultural and religious aspects, penetrating in minds of viewers. Another perspective in this regards can be viewed from

field of business or finance and sales or marketing i.e. the concept of product placement, advertisements and other tools for introducing products and services are based on concept of visual learners and documentaries as mode to learn i.e. businesses are trying to introduce and advertise their products and services through documentaries and ads.

ROLE OF TEACHER IN TEACHING THROUGH ISLAMIC DOCUMENTARIES:

Instructor of the course on Islam must be aware of the complexities of Muslim lives and avoid the easy traps of presenting Islam as some sort of colossal entity. When teaching in large university, one often has the advantage of having several Muslim students in any class on Islam. As a result, class discussion on the documentary can be quite interesting as students may bring their personal experience to the conversation.

Documentaries are used as source of lively discussion in classrooms. As mentioned, the core objective of documentaries is to present some topic or to report some issue, therefore students can exercise valid reading and make valid statement regarding the topic. This statement or conclusion made regarding topic is resulted into learning outcomes. Effective way of learning based on documentaries as identified and recommended by Alex & Alex include that teachers may form teams of four to five students, assign them to go with documentary and participate in discussion with facts, information and data presented which is resulted into development of support to text or topic itself.

Another way to motivate and encourage the students in order to discuss the documentary being watch is to assign them taking notes as documentary is being watched. Students in this regards could be assigned with or provided with charts related with specific areas.

SELECTION OF DOCUMENTARY:

In case of documentaries, different perspectives and aspects are important to be considered which contribute in learning of learners and viewers of documentaries. Major and most important aspects and perspectives in this regards include the structure of documentary, its cinematography, audio and music added, editing and quality, voice clarity and so forth. All these aspects of documentary contribute in level of learning achieved from documentary. Documentaries with strong and good story are resulted into greater level of learning, for instance the story of documentary with end, middle or beginning is resulted into emotional impacts among viewers, can therefore of considered as compelling characteristic.

Therefore it is important for teachers, instructors and mentor to consider different aspects mentioned while selecting documentary for learning purpose for instance story of documentary, its characters, theme, objectives and goals of documentary,

conflict arises and solution proposed in the documentary. Documentaries there subject to the approach their subjects, quite objectively, in unbiased way, with distinctive view point. Some documentaries are subject combination of both for instance objective documentaries refers to the type of documentaries which are expected to represent sides of controversial issues and stories, in effective and balance fashion.

Secondly, in contrast, the documentaries with non-judgmental approach, or multi-sided approach facilitate to build tension and therefore adding depth to the documentary. Under this approach, apposing points are highlighted in the film and film makers contrast opinions in order to provoke the viewers to question or challenge their own beliefs and therefore develop understanding to the subject. It is the job the teacher to be well planned to control the argumentation which will takes place in classroom.

It is extremely important to select films that represent the diversity of Muslim lives. While discussing Muslims, it is easier to discuss variations in ethnicity, gender, sectarian differences, and so on. Thus documentary selected should leave impact on students mind.

METHODOLOGY:

This was a descriptive research based on empirical design. The sample was based on convenient method and consisted of Karachi University students of Arts faculty. In this way University students of arts faculty were approached conveniently. Hence, 20 students from each department of Islamic history, Islamic learning, general history, mass communication, sociology and education, were selected to be the part of this study making the sample size of 120 in total. The data was collected through pre-constructed questionnaire. The collected data was then processed scientifically, analyzed and presented with the application of percentage distribution.

TABLE-1

Table showing Islamic response of participants that documentary may build connection between adults and Islam

DEPARTMENTS	YES	NO	INDIFFERENT	TOTAL
ISLAMIC LEARNING	15	5	0	20
ISLAMIC HISTORY	10	8	2	20
GENERAL HISTORY	18	2	0	20
MASS COMMUNICATION	13	6	1	20
EDUCATION	16	4	0	20
SOCIOLOGY	6	10	4	20
TOTAL	78	35	7	120
PERCENTAGE	65%	29%	6%	

TABLE -2

Table showing response of participants that Islamic documentary will positively facilitate Islamic learning

DEPARTMENTS	YES	NO	INDIFFERENT	TOTAL
ISLAMIC LEARNING	19	1	0	20
ISLAMIC HISTORY	11	9	0	20
GENERAL HISTORY	10	6	4	20
MASS COMMUNICATION	16	4	0	20
EDUCATION	12	2	6	20
SOCIOLOGY	16	4	0	20
TOTAL	84	26	10	120
PERCENTAGE	70%	21.6%	8.3%	

TABLE -3

Table showing response of participants that Islamic documentary will motivate youth in becoming practicing Muslims.

DEPARTMENTS	YES	NO	INDIFFERENT	TOTAL
ISLAMIC LEARNING	16	4	0	20
ISLAMIC HISTORY	18	2	0	20
GENERAL HISTORY	9	6	5	20
MASS COMMUNICATION	12	4	4	20
EDUCATION	12	2	6	20
SOCIOLOGY	11	9	0	20
TOTAL	78	27	15	120
PERCENTAGE	65%	22.6%	12.5%	

TABLE - 4

Table showing response of participants that spirituality may be nurtured through Islamic documentaries

DEPARTMENTS	YES	NO	INDIFFERENT	TOTAL
ISLAMIC LEARNING	20	0	0	20
ISLAMIC HISTORY	20	0	0	20
GENERAL HISTORY	20	0	0	20
MASS COMMUNICATION	12	6	0	20
EDUCATION	14	2	4	20
SOCIOLOGY	19	1	0	20
TOTAL	105	9	4	120
PERCENTAGE	87.5%	7.5%	3.3%	

TABLE -5

Table showing response of participants that Islamic documentary will help in delivering vivid Islamic concepts in youth.

DEPARTMENTS	YES	NO	INDIFFERENT	TOTAL
ISLAMIC LEARNING	15	2	3	20
ISLAMIC HISTORY	6	6	8	20
GENERAL HISTORY	6	2	12	20
MASS COMMUNICATION	11	6	3	20
EDUCATION	13	6	1	20
SOCIOLOGY	18	1	1	20
TOTAL	69	23	28	120
PERCENTAGE	57.5%	19.1%	23.3%	

SUMMARY OF THE DATA:

1. The sample comprised of students from Islamic history (20), Islamic learning (20), sociology (20), mass communication (20), general history and education (20) department of Karachi University.
2. The participants belonged to various age groups most of them 95% belonged to 19-24 years age groups, only 5% were above 24years.
3. When asked from the participants about the role of Islamic documentaries in building connection between adults and Islam (65%) agreed and showed positive response in this respect. While (29%) responded negatively and (6%) responded indifferently.
4. While asking the participants does Islamic documentaries can positively facilitate Islamic learning (70%) responded positively, (21.6%) responded negatively and (8.3%) responded indifferently.
5. The reason for this perception was that (80%) said due to extreme use of social sites and television. They believe that documentaries itself are full of knowledge if the culture of Islamic documentaries will b cultivated at any level of academic years it will facilitate the learning regarding Islam.
6. The data showed that (65%) agreed to the statement that Islamic documentaries can motivate the youth in becoming practicing Muslims. (22.6%) disagreed to the statement while (12.5%) were indifferent.
7. The data also revealed that (87.5%) think that spirituality can be nurture through Islamic documentaries. The reason highlighted was that through non formal ways of teaching, students are more likely to pay attention and grab more information. Usage of different teaching strategies especially documentaries can help students to learn more.
8. The data also disclosed that majority of student (57.5%) thinks Islamic documentaries can help in delivering vivid Islamic concepts in youth. (19.1%) disagree with the statement while (23.3%) were indifferent.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

This study was conducted to explore the role of Islamic documentaries in the facilitation of Islamic learning at University level at University of Karachi focusing the Arts faculty. Through data it was concluded that students also think that teaching Islam with the help of Islamic documentaries can motivate and prolong the memory of the students regarding any concept which cannot be taught through simple lecture method. The entire hypotheses which were assumed were proven correct.

1. It has been observed and identified that documentary films can be chosen as effective and powerful mode of instruction to students. Through this mode, students can be exposed with different aspects of experiences from which they may be unfamiliar, and providing the students with examples of different concepts, difficult in explaining otherwise. Additionally instructors can provide the real life examples through clips, videos and documentaries, related with different concepts.
2. Usually students are lacking experience of wide range of topics and different issues specifically related with courses like Islamic Courses etc. Documentary therefore can bring the attention of different students on issues, facilitating the students to connect with real world challenges, humans are facing in such a way that, dramatic films may cannot.
3. Additionally, use of different documentaries and films facilitates the instructors to introduce different topics which may inform the students and make them familiar with different issues. These documentaries may also provide material for conversation and discussion and facilitate the further research and exploration. It is therefore important to focus while screening any documentary that it focus on or depicts socio cultural and emotional aspects, ensuring that instructors are providing appropriate class time to learners for discussion, what students have seen and observed. Additionally, it is also important to note that instructors must have enough time for conceptualization of different concepts discussed and covered in documentaries so that they can facilitate the learning of students.
4. Public libraries in this regards must have to maintain huge collection of tele-films and documentaries specifically those which are developed and launched by PBS (Public Broadcasting System). Public libraries are major source and excellent facility specifically for their own areas.
5. It is also important that these documentaries and films must cover different social and socio-cultural phenomena, facilitating the learners to learn and raise consciousness of their viewers and target audience in understanding behavioural aspects, people, places, problems, events, institutions or others, highlighted.
6. Finally, these films are usually unscripted therefore having limited contents as compared to what film makers can actually capture or observe on films.

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