

SYED ALI ASHRAF'S THOUGHTS AND
CONTRIBUTION TO THE ISLAMISATION OF
EDUCATION

BY

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the ideas and philosophy of Syed Ali Ashraf (1925-1998), a prominent Bangladeshi scholar, educationist and philosopher who had played a significant role in the conceptualization of the practice of Islamisation of education in the Muslim world. It outlines his biography and the background which had an influence in his future life. It examines his role and contribution to the organization of the First World Conference on Muslim Education (FWCOME) in Makkah in 1977 that is regarded as one of the five (5), a watershed in the contemporary Muslim education. He was crucial dent of organization of subsequent World Conferences on Muslim Education. He contributed as a thinker, scholar, author, academician, policy-maker, and as a high authority in the field of education. But his name and works have not been fully discussed and given due recognition. His views and thoughts on the crisis in Muslim education, his ideas on resolving the crisis through the programme of Islamisation of education were then analyzed. This study is the employed historical and analytical research methods with documents analysis (qualitative in nature). The historical method employed literature and text analysis of both primary and secondary sources. It also employed the descriptive and interpretive methods. The study was able to show that Ali Ashraf succeeded in providing a theoretical and practical framework for Islamic higher education and its policies. He had a deep metaphysical foundation of Islamic education, and conceptualized the Islamic approach to history and civilization, literature, art and culture. The study draws attention to the core issues of Islamic education, which focuses on adding one or two religious subjects to the curriculum per se, but to the restructuring of the whole system of Islamic education based on the principles enshrined in the *Qur'an* and *Sunnah*. The study recommends the urgent need for the revival of the World Center for Islamic Education (WCIE), the rejuvenation of the academic journal, *Muslim Education Quarterly* and a few of his other successful higher educational models such as *Darul Ihsan University*. Finally, this research acknowledges Ali Ashraf's distinguished efforts across universities and various research centres in the world and, in particular, for being instrumental in the birth of a new generation of Muslim scholars, academics and researchers around the Muslim world, and hopes that the rest of the Muslim world would also give due recognition to for his efforts.

خلاصة البحث

يتناول هذا البحث أفكار سيد علي أشرف (1925-1998) وفلسفته، وهو عالم بنغلاديشي مبرز، وتربوي فيلسوف كان له دور مهم في وضع تصور لممارسة أسلمة التربية في العالم الإسلامي، فيوضح البحث سيرته الذاتية ومؤهلاته التي كان لها تأثير في حياته المستقبلية، ويدرس إسهامه في تنظيم المؤتمر العالمي الأول للتربية الإسلامية (FWCOME) في مكة المكرمة عام 1977، الذي يعدُّ نقطة تحول في التربية الإسلامية المعاصرة، فقد كان مصرًّا على تنظيم المؤتمرات العالمية اللاحقة في التربية الإسلامية، وأسهم في مجال التربية بأنه مفكر باحث ومؤلف أكاديمي وصانع سياسات وسلطة محترمة، لكن جهوده وأعماله لم تُناقش بتمامها، ولم تنل التقدير الواجب، ومن ثم؛ جرى تحليل وجهات نظره في أزمة التربية الإسلامية، وأفكاره لحلها من خلال برنامج أسلمة التربية، وقد اعتمد البحث النهج النوعي، وتحديدًا المنهج التاريخي التحليلي في استعراض الدراسات السابقة والوثائق وتحليلها، كما استخدم المنهج الوصفي التفسيري؛ لبيان أن سيد علي أشرف تمكَّن من توفير إطارين نظري وعملي لإنشاء الجامعات والسياسات التربوية الإسلامية وإدارتها، وكان لديه أساس ميتافيزيقي عميق للتربية الإسلامية، وتصورٌ للنهج الإسلامي للتاريخ والحضارة والأدب والفن والثقافة، مما يُنبه إلى القضايا الأساس للتربية الإسلامية التي لا تركز فقط على إضافة مادة دينية أو موضوع ديني إلى المناهج في حدِّ ذاتها، وإنما تُعيد هيكلة نظام التربية الإسلامية كله؛ بناءً على المبادئ الواردة في القرآن والسُّنة، ويوصي البحث بالحاجة الماسة إلى إحياء المركز العالمي للتربية الإسلامية (WCIE)، وتجديد المجلة الأكاديمية، ومسلسل التعليم الفصلي، وعدد قليل من أمثلة التعليم العالي الأخرى الناجحة من مثل جامعة دار الإحسان، وأخيرًا؛ يُمكن القول إن البحث نجح في منح سيد علي أشرف التقدير لجهوده المتميزة في الجامعات ومراكز البحوث المختلفة في العالم، ولا سيما ولادة جيل جديد من العلماء والباحثين المسلمين في جميع أنحاء العالم الإسلامي.

APPROVAL PAGE

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted as a whole for any other degrees at IIUM or other institutions.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ACT	Ashraf Charitable Trust, (Dhaka)
BIIT	Bangladesh Institute of Islamic Thought, (Dhaka)
DIT	Darul Ihsan Trust, (Dhaka)
DIU	Darul Ihsan University, (Bangladesh)
CID	Center for Intellectual Discourse, (Dhaka)
FWCOME	First World Conference on Muslim Education, 1977
FC	Follow-up Committee (FWCOME)
IOKE	Islamisation of Knowledge and Education
IOK	Islamisation of Knowledge
ISESCO	Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, (Morocco)
IUM	International Islamic University Malaysia
IIT	International Institute of Islamic Thought, (USA)
IAC	Islamic Academy, Cambridge, (UK)
ISTAC	International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization, (Malaysia)
IU	Islamic University of Uganda, (Kampala)
IUI	International Islamic University Islamabad, (Pakistan)
IIER	Institute of Islamic Education and Research, (Bangladesh)
KAAU	King Abdul Aziz University, (KSA)
KSA	Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
OIC	Organization of Islamic Conference, (Currently, Organization of Islamic Co-operation)
MEQ	Muslim Education Quarterly, (IAC, UK)
SAAIHIL	Syed Ali Ashraf Institute of Higher Islamic Learning, (DIU)
WCOME	World Conference on Muslim Education
WCIE	World Center for Islamic Education, (KSA)

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Islam brought peace and prosperity to the world, and created a great civilization. It is the holistic source of man's spiritual, intellectual, moral and worldly advancement.¹ Islam guides man to achieve wellbeing in both the worlds: in this world and in the hereafter. Indeed, Islam is a religion of knowledge, wisdom, development, progress, and civilization. It sets a complete code of life with a dynamic world order. Islam was practiced by the last Prophet Mohammad (p.b.u.h) based on the revelation of the *Qur'an*, during the period of his mission (610-632AD). He was ordered to rehearse unto man the signs of Allah, purify them, and instruct them in the scripture and wisdom.² The Prophet Mohammad, (p.b.u.h), was par excellence in character and personality and he was known as a champion of dynamism, expertise, and skill. He was a great teacher, trainer, leader, and an ideal ruler directly guided by Allah. In the verse of the first revelation, Allah commanded Him: "Read in the name of Your Lord Who Created. (He) created man from a clot. Read: And your Lord is the Most Bounteous, Who teaches by the pen. (He) teaches man that which he knew not." (96: 1-5).³ The Prophet Mohammad said: "I was sent to complete (to show and practise) the *akhlaq* (character)." Through the teaching of the Prophet Mohammad, Muslims realized the value of knowledge, the 'traits of good deeds, and the essence of *Allah's* creature, His

¹ Muhammad Umar Zubair, *The Conference Book: First World Conference on Muslim Education*, (Mecca al Mukarrahmah, and Jeddah, King Abdul Aziz University, 1977), p. 9.

² *Qur'an*, 3: 164.

³ *Qur'an*, 96: 1-5. Muhammad Abdul Rouf. *The Muslim Mind: Foundation and Early Manifestation*, (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1991), p. 1.

attributes, the signs of the absolute Creator, and the dynamics of the universe. Finally, the Prophet left a vast and very vibrant Islamic civilization to the world founded on revealed knowledge, wisdom, and practical efforts. The Prophet's teaching transformed Muslims from simple minded, hot-tempered people to builders of civilisation, capable of reasoning sophisticated issues within the framework of *Qur'an*.⁴ Thus, as adherents of the Prophet, all Muslims are obliged to nourish themselves through the pursuit of knowledge to understand perfectly the real meaning, goal, and purpose of the wondrous creations of Allah. The intellectual (*ulul albab*) Muslims can do it through deep observation, thinking, reading, and writing. According to Rauf, "The pursuit of more and more knowledge is praised, and the status of those with knowledge is highly raised."⁵ In this way Muslims develop, cultivate, modify, and improve their sound mind and intellectual personality through the proper study and learning.

Islamic civilization provided extensive knowledge to Muslims as well as to the whole of humanity. In the tenth and eleventh centuries, it had reached the peak of success and glory with the knowledge, science, education and development. According to McKay-Hill-Buckler: "The Islamic world witnessed enormous intellectual vitality and creativity, Muslim scholars produced important works in many disciplines, especially mathematics, medicine, and philosophy."⁶ Later, Muslims lost their leadership as well as the creative incentive, and the intellectual supremacy of the world. From the eighteenth to twentieth centuries, the Western world achieved outstanding progress in the material and intellectual field while the Muslim world lagged behind. At

⁴ Ahmed Mabrouk. *Islamic Worship: Fundamentals and Applications*, (Kuala Lumpur: Fajar Ulung, 2016), p. 2.

⁵ Muhammad Abd, Rauf. *The Muslim Mind : Foundation And Early Manifestation*, (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa Dan Pustaka, 1991), p, 1

⁶ McKay-Hill-Buckler. *A History of World Societies, 3rd Edition*. (Toronto: Houghton Mifflin Company Boston, 1992), p, 294.

the same time, Muslims have been intellectually subjugated and economically exploited by the physical invasion of European colonial powers.⁷ Later on, particularly in the twentieth century, the Muslim world faced serious crisis and challenges posed by many anti-Islamic phenomena, events and activities created by Western hegemony and colonial rulers.

In the field of education, the concept and the system of modern education with secular worldview entered the Muslim societies and had been working under the control of Western civilization. The secular views acted against the Islamic faith, culture, and practices. Such views abandoned the essence of divine revelation, the main principles, goals and purposes of man's spiritual life committed to the Creator-Almighty Allah. The *Qur'anic* revelation provides man the ultimate truth and light and provides the guidance on how they can become '*Khalifatullah*', as the real representative of their Creator in the world. Indeed, revelation is the basis of Islamic knowledge and education. On the one hand, the modern system of education has failed to disseminate and promote these holistic views to the people in the world. Ali Ashraf explained: the secular worldview, which is at the root of modern secular system, does not consider the relationship between God and the human being as intellectually or socially relevant. Hence, 'revelation' or 'the revealed knowledge' is not regarded as a source of knowledge. It was ignored.⁸ However, this system of education has continued for a long time and has controlled, influenced and confused the whole Muslim society with the partial benefit of life without proper spiritual purpose of humanity. It only highlighted the importance of materialistic development, skills and expertise for professional

⁷ Muhammad Umar Zuabir, *Conference Book : First World Conference of Muslim Education*, (Mecca al Mukarramah, and Jeddah, King Abdul Aziz University, 1977) p. 1

⁸ Rosnani Hashim, *Foreword, Educational Dualism in Malaysia: Implication for Theory's and Practice*, (Kuala Lumpur: The Other Press Malaysia, 2008), p. xiii.

management of life, without any religious responsibility for the hereafter. Ali Ashraf summarized, saying: Modern secular education teaches only Western ideas about society, external nature, and human beings. Philosophy, psychology, sociology, political science, and economics- all these are taught according to theories and concepts that have nothing to do with Islamic ideas of human beings and nature.⁹

On the other hand, traditional Islamic education stresses the fact that a Muslim's life is governed by the ideas and concepts found in the holy *Qur'an* and *Sunnah*. Thus, Muslim societies are governed by two opposite systems of education. Hence, this self-contradicting system of education became harmful to the societies that were independent of each other and they are mutually exclusive and possibly contradictory educational philosophies.¹⁰ Rosnani explained, "The Islamic worldview with *Tawhid* (the unity of God) as its core, underlines the traditional, religious education, while the secular, Western worldview, which has removed the notion of sacredness from the knowledge and existence, underlines the liberal, secular education."¹¹ As a result, the present Muslim society faces two classes of conflicting people who have created a catastrophe in the Muslim life. A part of them made have different opinions on the various fields of state policy, governance and management such as nation building, economic development and national ideology. Ultimately, Muslim priority, interest, and wellbeing were undermined and thus, "Somewhat deflected from devoting to holistic, integrated development of Muslim nations."¹²

From this perspective, many Islamic scholars and social leaders did not support the Western system of education, but rather tried to maintain and improve the traditional

⁹ Syed Ali Ashraf, *Islam*, (England, Stanley Thomes (publishers) Ltd, 1991), p. 133.

¹⁰ Rosnani Hashim, *Educational Dualism in Malaysia: Implication for Theory's and Practice*, (Kuala Lumpur, The Other Press, 2008), p. ix.

¹¹ *Ibid*, p. ix.

¹² *Ibid*.

Islamic education, culture and values within the Muslim society. Even, a part of them showed resistance to the secular system of education. Furthermore, some scholars tried to reconstruct the Muslim education with the advanced themes of Islamic world order. Their main aim was to fit it in the context of Western system of education and modern progress. Thus, different types of efforts have been undertaken to change and improve the educational situation of Muslim societies by the establishment of Islamic-integrated system of education in order to meet the challenges of modern life and needs. These efforts have continued in various parts of the Muslim world almost for a hundred years from the end of nineteenth century. Consequently, for many decades, some Islamic scholars from the traditional and modern system have been working to overcome the challenges in Muslim societies. A few of them took the initiatives individually and collectively. They worked in the diverse regions in the Muslim world like the Indian subcontinent, the Malay world, North Africa, Egypt, Turkey and partially in the Arab world. They also devolved and followed a few traditional, local and regional systems of education such as the *Madrasah*, *Pondok*, *Dars Nezami*, *Farangi*. Some prominent scholars were Afghani, Hasan-Attar, Abduh, Ibn Ashur, Syed Ahmed, Hamka, Za'ba, Shibli Nomani, Nawab Ali, Islamabadi, Iqbal, Mowdodi, Nursi, and Qutb.

Apparently, in the rare case, a few colonial rulers and some post-colonial independent Muslim states and governments have also tried to reform and reconstruct Muslim education with the basic Islamic principles under the banner of the modern system. The establishment of some renowned Muslim and Islamic educational centres and universities in several parts of the Muslim world such as the 'Calcutta Madrasah', Aligarh Muslim University, Darul 'Ulum Deoband, Darul 'Ulum Nadwatul Ulama and Jamai'a Millia Islamia in India, the Zaytunah College in Tunisia, the Islamic College in Malaysia and the Bhawalpur Islamic University in Pakistan was significant in this field.

The well-known traditional Islamic centre of the Muslim world, Al Azhar University, also took initiatives to reform its traditional education with modern thoughts and concepts. But, colonial legacy with the modern and liberal system of education has still been continued as the mainstream national education system in the Muslim world. Besides, efforts at the reconstruction and reformation of Muslim education also was continued by concerned scholars, social leaders and State policy makers of the Muslim countries. They also tried to develop a new 'Muslim World Order' with Islamic ideals in various fields such as socioeconomic, politics, governance, peace, security, international relations, communications, and organisations through the concept of 'Pan Islamism', 'Islamic Revivalism', and the concept of Muslim Ummah. The establishment of OIC in 1969 was intended to promote international cooperation and as related by Ahsan: "Its foundation was laid down fourteen centuries ago when a new community of Muslim was established in Arabia under the leadership of the Prophet Muhammad (SAAS). Its philosophy was formulated in the Qur'an."¹³ In the same way, the establishment of the Islamic Development Bank was also a progressive initiative in the Muslim world.

Consequently, a few significant international Islamic conferences and intellectual events were held in the Muslim world and other places patronized by Saudi Arabia in the middle of the 1970s to face the challenges of the modern world. The Islamic Solidarity and Technology Conference was held in Riyadh in 1975; the first World Conference on Islamic Economics was held in Makkah in 1976; the first World Conference on Muslim Education was held in Makkah, 1977, the World Festival of Islam in London in 1976, Muslim Ummah Conference in 1976 in London, International

¹³ Abdullah al-Ahsan, *The Organisation of Islamic Conference*, (Hendon, International Institute of Islamic Thought, 1988), p.1.

Seminar on Islamic Thought in Switzerland in 1977, Islamic Development in the Muslim World conference in Dhaka, in 1978, and the yearly AMSS conferences (since 1972...) in USA and Canada were the most mentionable events. These events extended an advanced Islamic ideological discourse and intellectual emergence with the effective influence and positive impact throughout the Muslim world. Indeed, it highlighted the necessity and advanced perception of reforming Islamic thought and Muslim education in favor of renewal of Islamic civilization in the modern world.

Among these conferences the first and the most historical and transformative was the First World Conference on Muslim education, FWCOME-1977 held in Makkah. It resulted in a new dynamic of Islamic intellectual movement that emerged with the Islamic concept and philosophy of knowledge and education based on the *Quran* and the *Sunnah*. Its principal aims and goal was to revive and reintroduce the glorious intellectual tradition, values and excellence of Muslim civilization through the advanced science, technology, invention, development, leadership, peace, and prosperity based on revealed knowledge, religious wisdom and spirituality.

1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

In the middle of 1970s, an effort toward the reconstruction of Muslim education was initiated and consequently, the Islamisation of education movement began in the Muslim world as an outcome of the FWCOME-Makkah conference, 1977 where an organizational initiative on Muslim Education was taken by a group of leading Islamic scholars in 1977. Among them were figures such as Qutb (Egypt), Mubarak (Syria), Nadwi (India), Natsir (Indonesia), Nasr (Iran), Attas (Malaysia), Faruqi (Palestine), Ashraf (Bangladesh), Jubair and Naseef (Saudi Arabia), Brohi, Quraishi, Khurshid, and

Saqeb (Pakistan), Zaim (Turkey), Hadi (Iran), and Lemu (Nigeria).¹⁴ In order to materialize their vision, these scholars organized a number of conferences since 1977. The First World Conference on Muslim Education (FWCOME)¹⁵ was held on 31-8th April, 1977 in Mecca, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, at the then King Abdul Aziz University. Ali Ashraf was one of the Secretary Generals of the Conference Steering Committee. About 300 venerable Muslim scholars participated in the conference from all over the world including around 50 Ministers from several Muslim countries. They generated a common desire to revive or re-define Islamic education in order to save the future generation from the onslaught of a secular philosophy of life and education that are at the root of the dominant world view, directing more or less each branch of knowledge. These scholars realized and stated that Islamisation is possible only by accepting the revealed knowledge in the *Quran* and *Sunnah* as the ultimate effective reference point and the basic source of one's view of life.

Saqeb evaluated the conference as an initiative in building the pristine Islamic aims and objectives of education and an academic calling leading to the rediscovery of the original Islamic concept.¹⁶ Nasr asserted that the revival of Islamic thought in the Modern World was of utmost importance: that the attempt to revive the ethos of Islam should be the combined effort of this first major International Islamic Educational Conference held at the center of the Islamic world, at 'the mother of cities' (*Umm al*

¹⁴ Muhammad Umar Zubair, *The Conference Book: First World Conference on Muslim Education*. (Mecca al Mukarramah, and Jeddah, King Abdul Aziz University , 1977) p. 33-34.

¹⁵ FWCOME-Makkah Conference is abbreviated for the *First World Conference on Muslim Education* which was held on 31st March - 8th April, 1977 at Mecca, KSA, in the then King Abdul Aziz University: KAAU, KSA.

¹⁶ Interim Report Book on Sixth International Islamic Education Conference: (Cape Town, Islamia College, (1996), p. 126.

Qura) whose light has always radiated through the breadth and depth of the Islamic World.¹⁷

In viewing the Islamisation of knowledge and education, the 'FWCOME-Makkah Conference was held with the following objectives: (a) To define the principles, aims and methodology of the Islamic concept of education; (b) To suggest ways and means of realizing the above principles in practice and (c) To formulate methods of securing mutual understanding and co-operation among Muslim scholars all over the world.¹⁸ A conference book and six volumes of Islamic Education series with Ali Ashraf as the General Editor were published as the proceedings based on the recommendations, articles, and discussion of the conference within a few years. On the recommendation of the FWCOME-Makkah conference, the World Centre for Islamic Education (WCIE) was established in Makkah in 1980 by the OIC in order to do research, implement and spread the main themes of FWCOME. Ali Ashraf was appointed as the First Director General of WCIE by the Secretary General of OIC. The Third Islamic Summit of OIC adopted the recommendations of the FWCOME-Makkah Conference. All the Muslim Heads of State and Heads of Government who attended the third Islamic summit held in January, 1981 in Mecca/Taif unanimously passed the 'Mecca Declaration' which, among others things, stressed the Islamisation of the

¹⁷ Muhammad Umar Zubair, *The Conference Book: First World Conference Muslim Education*, (Mecca al Mukarrahmah, and Jeddah King Abdul Aziz University, 1978), p. 83.

¹⁸ In addition, with the specific aims of 1. An Islamic Concept of Education-including Definition, Aims and Objectives. 2. Certain means of realizing these concepts in practice. 3. Mutual cooperation and understanding. And with the subtopics of : Islamic Concept of Education, The Qur'anic Concept of Man; The Challenge of Secularism: Islam's Answer, The Islamic Concept of knowledge and its impact on Education Policy, Education in Saudi Arabia: The Present Crisis, A point of View, The Islamic Concept of History, The Islamic Concept of Education, Principles, Aims and Methodology, Traditional Islamic Systems, Modern Educational System, Education of Muslim Minorities, Definition, Aims and Methodology, Education and Society, Traditional Islamic Educational Aims and Purposes, Methods of Realizing the Principles in Practice, Curriculum and Syllabi of Social Sciences, Philosophy, Literature and Fine Arts; and Mutual Co-operation and Understanding

curricula and the mass media. As a result of the FWCOME-Makkah Conference, and according to the resolution and recommendation of this, five other world conferences, many seminars, symposiums, workshops, national and international conferences were held in several Muslim countries and places until the demise of Ali Ashraf in 1998. The other five World Conferences on Muslim education were held as follows:

- The Second Conference (Islamabad, 1980),
- The Third conference (Dhaka, 1981),
- The Fourth Conference (Jakarta, 1982),
- The Fifth Conference (Cairo, 1987),
- The Sixth Conference (Cape Town, 1996),

Ali Ashraf played a key role to achieve the success of the above conferences. Simultaneously, out of these events, a few other international conferences were held on the same issues in several countries like Jordan, Malaysia, Pakistan, and Sudan. Thus, many educational and research institutes, centres and universities were established, and a large number of research oriented articles and books, journals, bulletins and Islamic education series were composed and published. As a consequence of these activities, the Islamisation of knowledge and education movement was initiated in the Muslim world and it grew to be one of the most effective academic and intellectual projects through various efforts and steps.

It is again worth mentioning that the idea of Islamisation of knowledge and education was tabled at the FWCOME-Makkah Conference and the participants of the conference agreed to reform Islamic thought and Muslim education based on the recommendations of the conference by establishing Islamic Universities, various research centres and institutes to promote the basic aims and objectives of Islamic

education in the Muslim world. Since then, during the first four decades, a number of Islamic universities have been established both in the public and private sectors, and many other universities have adopted the Islamisation of knowledge and education program. The FWCOME saw the establishment of the Islamic Universities in Sudan, Pakistan, Uganda, Bangladesh, higher Islamic research centre in Cambridge, UK and Dhaka, the publication of journals on Muslim Education as well as relevant essays, articles, editorials, books, and other literatures on the subjects.

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

As discussed previously, the outcomes of the FWCOME were very significant for the educational development of Muslim countries. The man behind this conference, who was little known, was its organizing secretary, Ali Ashraf. Indeed, he had made a significant contribution to the development of contemporary Islamic education and its implementation process. He contributed to the development of the conceptual framework and to research and institutional progress through a series of conferences and other academic activities. According to Mabud:

(Ali Ashraf) ...made an original and considerable contribution to the regeneration of Islamic education drawn from the Islamic worldview, laid the foundations of the movement of the Islamization of education throughout the world, and left a global impact on various aspects of the Islamic philosophy of education.¹⁹

The FWCOME and the subsequent five conferences on Muslim education were very significant and influential in the contemporary history of Muslim education and

¹⁹ Sheik Abdul Mabud, Obituary On Syed Ali Ashraf, (2 pages copies were circulated in August, 1998, available to this researcher), p. 2