

Islamic and Western Approaches to Guidance Services: A Perspective from Pakistan

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Abstract:

The 20th century brought significant changes in human behavior, approaches to life and social awareness. These changes have great implications on daily lives of people across the globe. In this whole process, in spite of several benefits, a large number of people also face problems in understanding of issues related to guidance services which directly and indirectly affect their aspirations in daily life activities. This situation highlights the need and importance of research in this area. As the title reflects, the present paper is an attempt to explore this situation particularly in the perspective of Pakistan. It also attempts to present a comparative overview of Islamic and Western approaches of guidance services. This explanatory and comparative study is a qualitative research based on secondary sources of information. The real focus of this study is to identify and analyze the psychological and philosophical impacts of guidance and its services for human wellbeing. For this reason, the study explores various dimensions of Islamic and Western approaches to guidance services particularly in the perspective of contemporary education system of Pakistan as a case study.

Keywords: Islamic Approach, Western Approach, Guidance services, Philosophy of guidance.

Introduction

The present age is the age of development, particularly in the perspective of education, information and technology. This advancement has also enhanced the process of human development by promoting human potentialities, capabilities and opportunities

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(UNDP, 1990). For this reason, now there is much better access to a variety of required material to fulfill human needs and comforts in life. However, it is noteworthy that only the availability of physical resources are not enough to satisfy human beings. In overall perspective, the present global situation also reflects that in spite of having plenty of availability of resources, there is a widespread element of human unsatisfaction. This situation has caused dissemination of a variety of misunderstandings among individuals particularly among different faiths; resultantly giving birth to widespread social unrest and instability in various segments of societies. Therefore, a large number of people are unable to fully appreciate the doctrines of peaceful activities, coexistence and moral value of various religions. This situation demands better mutual understanding especially through adequate guidance services (Rogers, 1957).¹

Miller (1961) opines that guidance is assistance to an individual in the process of his / her personal and professional development. It means that guidance is a support given to individuals for making intelligent choices and realistic adjustments in life.² Comprehensive guidance services programs promote individual's success through focus on academic achievement, promotion, prevention and intervention activities. Cribbon (1955) argues that guidance is assistance given to individuals in making wise choices, interpretations and rational adjustments.³ In this perspective, the main focuses of this research are to explore: i) the nature of Islamic and Western approaches to guidance services, ii) their similarities and differences; and, iii) the nature of their relations in the perspective of Pakistan's prevailing educational system. In this context, it is also important to know that: what are the basis and backgrounds of these guidance services; how and why they differ from each other; why they have various similarities and differences; and what is their relevance to Pakistan's situation?

Methodology

To gain the positive outcomes and change in the shape of progress and prosperity, the importance of guidance is vital due to its concepts and facilitation to carry out all levels of optimistic tasks in different fields. This study is an explanatory and documentary research mainly based on secondary sources of information. The analysis is made on the bases of available sources, especially the Holy Quran, Islamic doctrine, encyclopedias, books, journals, research reports and internet sources. An attempt is made to analyze the situation of a variety of thoughts derived from Muslims

and Western thinkers who contributed to achieve such goals and objectives for the good and wellbeing of the students and general public. In the perspective of all available information, maximum effort is made to identify and analyze the similarities and differences between the two approaches of guidance services, their roles in various areas, and how can they benefit to the educational system of Pakistan.⁴

Conceptual Framework of Guidance Services

The guidance services and their implementation reveal the outcomes of the society through various means. Needless to say that without proper approach of guidance services, the dream of social and moral development of a nation cannot be materialized. It is the slogan of the day to change the nation, change you for the best; otherwise, desired objectives cannot be achieved without positive change.

Guidance

In the present age of science and technology, every nation of the world is trying to enhance its capabilities, especially in the field of socio-economic development. For this purpose, the society needs guidance and satisfaction to promote social capital (Putnam, 1995). Without adequate guidance, individuals are unaware of the gravity of different issues. Therefore, the skilful human involvement is required to achieve the goals of development.⁵ Guidance can deliver good approach to everyone, both literate and illiterate. In a Muslim country like Pakistan, different approaches of guidance clearly indicate that society can be further developed by adopting the Islamic values of guidance with special reference to Holy Quran and Sunnah. Besides it, on a number of occasions, the western approach also guides the individuals which are other good sources of guidance.

Parents and teachers play the role of an adviser and provide guidance at home and at school for a child, but in reality this service is not sufficient for a child in the present day complex society. Now-a-day, trends and issues are so complex for young students that they feel baffled and bewildered to comprehend them. There is no nation or association without facing a problem in this world, that's why guidance services are the important issues in Pakistan and in many other countries. Over the years, different concepts and approaches of guidance services have been explained by Muslims and non-Muslim philosophers in different ways. For instance, according to Shertzer (1976), guidance is the process of

helping an individual to understand himself and his world.⁶ Conceptually, guidance involves the utilization of a point of view to help an individual as an educational construct. It refers to the provision of experiences which assist pupils to understand them and as a service it refers to organized procedures and process to achieve a helping relationship.

Similarly, Naryana (2006) explained guidance as assistance provided by experts to the individuals in order to encourage them to make their own choices and decisions about their lives and thereby adjust to their environment comfortably.⁷ In the view of Siddiqui (2008), the guidance as an assistant provided by the teacher to the students to facilitate learning difficulties.⁸ Shahzad (2005) says that teachers act like a guide for students for their future planning. They assess their overall strengths and weakness to provide necessary solutions. They co-ordinate with parents to develop guidance services for children and to solve the children's abnormalities in their life, act as helper in solving the problems and guide them how to act and react in life.⁹

Guidance Services

The increasing complexity of life and the velocity of technical development have resulted in growing need of guidance services. Many times, individuals are facing countless complicated problems in certain areas such as agriculture, arts, medicine, science and technology, education, banking, marketing, and business, etc, due to which they need guidance to overcome respective challenges. Guidance services play an important role in molding the overall structure of society where every person can feel satisfaction and comfortable in his / her own sphere. These provide a path to people where they can also add their own share.

Guidance services may be described as methods of relating and responding to others with the aim of providing them with opportunities to explore, to clarify and to work towards living in a more personally satisfying and resourceful way' (Mishra, 2004).¹⁰ The major role of guidance services is to bring out the best possible change in the life of an individual for the betterment of himself / herself as well as the society. Katz (1966) sees guidance in the perspective of culture and in his view:¹¹

"If the role of education is to transmit the culture, an important role of guidance is help the individual come to terms with the culture - that is, the choices he makes will indicate how he sees himself in the culture. But first he must see the culture in himself. Thus, his first question should be; where have my values come

from? Then he will be better prepared to ask, where are they taking him?"

It reflects that guidance services must be directed towards strengthening the desire and will of every student to know and to learn more and more about himself / herself weaknesses and capabilities through a planned program of instruction. In the absent of such knowledge, students cannot independently exercise their choices in education, vocation and social life.

Philosophy of Guidance

The real meaning of philosophy reveals the inner and outer behavior of a person and it shows the relations with other people. Besides it the human's life is a combination of happy and gloomy situational analysis where they will face and incorporate by their experiences. For the first time, the real picture of philosophy of guidance was painted by Parsson (1905). It was based on the philosophy: "Stop wastage of human time and energy." In the later period, this branch of knowledge was further developed in the West which now tell us about:¹²

- Every individual should be helped and guided to study and understand himself as a unique personality
- Guidance is used for adjustment
- It is used for human personality
- Human interaction
- Self-direction
- Creativity

Similarly, the Islamic philosophy of guidance started fourteen centuries ago and is based on the teachings of Holy Quran and Sunnah. Here, the real focus is on modifying and developing human behavior with the emphasis on leading one's life in accordance with the instruction given in *Quran* and *Hadeeth*. Quran (2: 213) says: "Mankind was one community and Allah sent prophets with glad tidings and warnings and with them.¹³ He sent down the scripture in truth to judge between people in matters where in they differed. And only those whom (the scripture) was given differed concerning it after clear proofs had come unto them through hatred, one to another. Then Allah by His leave guided those who believed to the truth of that wherein they differed. And Allah guides whom He wills to the straight path." On another place, the Holy Quran (6: 161) says: "Say O Muhammad ﷺ: Truly my

Lord has guided me to the straight path, a right religion, the religion of Ibrahim Hanifa (i.e., the true Islamic Monotheism to believe in one God, Allah, i.e., to worship none but Allah, alone, and he was not from Al-Mushrikun.”¹⁴

Islamic Approach to Guidance

As is reflected from the above discussion, Islamic guidance provides a conceptual code of life. From dawn to dusk, a practicing Muslim starts his live with the name of Allah by prayer and recitation of the Holy Quran. In Quran, it is revealed that if you want peace and tranquility; lead your life according to the teachings of Islam. Then you will be succeeded in this life as well as hereafter. Therefore, the Quran (5: 105) says: “O you who believe! Take care of your own selves. If you follow the (right) guidance [and enjoin what is right (Islamic Monotheism and all that Islam orders one to do) and forbid what is wrong (polytheism disbelief and all that Islam has forbidden)] no hurt can come to you from those who are in error. The return of you all is to Allah, then He will inform you about (all) that which you used to do.”¹⁵

In Surah Luqman, Quran (31: 20) says:[“See you not (O men) that Allah has subjected for you what so ever is in the heavens and what so ever is in the earth and He completed and perfected His grace upon you (both) apparent (i.e., Islamic monotheism and the lawful pleasure of this world including health, good looks, etc.) and hidden (i.e., ones is faith in Allah - Islamic monotheism) knowledge, wisdom and guidance for doing righteous deeds and also the pleasures and delights of the Hereafter in paradise)? Yet of mankind is he who disputes about Allah without knowledge or guidance or a book giving light.”]¹⁶

This concept of guidance reflects that Islam provides a complete code of life and in this context; it is also noteworthy that such teachings are mentioned in Quran on 221 occasions. Islam is a complete code of life because it encircles all aspects of human guidance. In this perspective, Ahadith and the Sunnah are the elaboration of Quranic verses. The guidance given in the Quran and the Sunnah is the key to success for human life. This is because it addresses all issues of human needs and for this reason Quran (7: 52) says: “Certainly, We have brought them a Book (the Quran) which We have explained in detail with knowledge - a guidance and a mercy to people who believe.” In verses of Surah Al- Baqarah the Quran (2: 2) enlightens humankind as: “This is the book (the Quran) where of there is no doubt a guidance to those who are Al-Muttaqun, the pious believers of Islamic Monotheism,

who fear Allah much (abstain from all kinds of sins and evil deeds which he has forbidden) and love Allah much (perform all kinds of good deeds which he has ordained).” In the same context, it is mentioned in *Sahih Bukhari* (5747) that: “*Abdullah ibn-e- Masud* (May Allah be pleased with him) said: “Verily the best speech is the Quran and best guidance is the Prophet Muhammad s’ guidance.”¹⁷ This discussion shows that the Islamic system of education emphasize to the educators that they must make their learners able to think and work for the betterment of *Ummah* in an idealistic way. The individual ego must be merged with the collective ego of the *Ummah*, which must reflect the super ego of Allah (SWA).

Western Approach to Guidance

It can be argued that guidance services in the Western world starts from the best principles of the Holy Quran which reveals the overall good personality of a man with the best doctrines of humanity. Although, many Western thinkers believe that guidance is totally free from religion, language, caste and tribe, but with the passage of time, the Western people involved in various activities which the religion rejects once for all. The Western countries tried their best to develop their nations through science and technology. They did great revolutionary changes through education and adopted formula of guidance services in different departments of the state.

Guidance services gained popularity in the Western society after the First and then the Second World War (1914-1918 and 1939-1945, respectively). At the end of Second World War most of the people became crippled, handicapped and mentally retarded. Therefore, to accommodate these types of people, guidance services were considered necessary in Western societies. In this context, being a famous social reformer and thinker, the role of Parsons (1854-1908) was crucial. In modern secular circles, he is considered as the father of modern management guidance. He launched his vocational guidance and vocational skills programs at Boston University. This was the first clinic in the history for the guidance which covered a wide range of problems (Jones, 1994).¹⁸

Similarities and Differences

All the guidance services have the aim to benefit respective societies. In this context there are several similarities as well as differences among them. As the main focus of this brief research is to explore similarities and differences of Islamic and Western

approaches of guidance; the salient features of this situation are presented in the following lines. So far as commonalities are concerned, both approaches come together regarding the well established common grounds of wellbeing of humankind, e.g., socio-economic, political and moral development of individuals and societies. All the relevant ideas in Islamic and in Western approaches of guidance services brings different change in human behavior with the aim to achieve common objective of human development. However, in spite of having these commonalities, there are some basic differences in both approaches, as highlighted in the following table.

Table 1: Difference in Islamic and Western Approaches of Guidance

Main Element	Islamic Guidance Services	Western Guidance Services
Source of guidance services	Quran and Sunnah (in every sphere of life) ¹⁹	Psychologists, coaches, therapists, and counselors ²⁰
Nature of belief	Every Muslim believes that the Quran is the final revelation of Allah which is enough for the guidance of mankind. ²¹	Common belief is that scientific advancement is good enough for human beings. ²²
Concept of hereafter	Concept of life after death is given. The teachings of the Holy book guide an individual for the life in this world and for the one hereafter. ²³	No concept of life hereafter and thus the main focus on present worldly life. ²⁴
Main centre of guidance	Spiritually, mosque and madrassa and then comes other educational institutins. ²⁵	Various guidance centers and educational institutions. ²⁶
Main persons as source of guidance	Elder members of the family (in his early life, Prophet Muhammad ﷺ himself followed the same path). ²⁷	The Western countries provide guidance services in hospitals, teaching institutions, and in clinics. On top of that in the Western society guidance from elders is not required. ²⁸
Spirituality and materialism	Islamic society is spiritual. ²⁹	Western society is materialist. ³⁰

Guidance Services in Pakistan

According to Robert (1969), guidance services are closely linked with teaching learning process. With regard to Pakistan's situation, since the creation of this country, in theory the guidance has been an integral part of education system. This is also highlighted in the proceeding of National Education Conference held in 1959 and the sub-sequential educational policies and plans of Pakistan.³¹ Sometime back, the UGC (University Grant Commission) and now HEC (Higher Education Commission) has emphasized universities of the country to established guidance services in their campuses.³² Here, the main focus has been to facilitate students and teachers to solve their immediate problems. According to University Grant Commission's recommendations (1977), teachers must be equipped with necessary understanding and skills of guiding to be able to help students in their learning activities through applying a variety of techniques of 'group work' and role of other responsibilities. In this context, Braddock (2001) argues that the rationale of guidance services for students is to:³³

- Improve academic achievement;
- Foster positive attitudes toward learning, and work;
- Increase acquisitions and application of conflict resolution skills; and,
- Decrease dropouts.

It needs to be mentioned here that in Pakistan, Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) is the only university which provides the facility of support and guidance services to its students throughout the country. According to Rashid (1996), the guidance and counseling services at AIOU can be categorized as:

- Guidance and counseling services at the main campus;
- Guidance and counseling services at the regional campus/centers; and,
- Guidance and counseling services in the tutorials and workshop.

In AIOU, the guidance and counseling related to academic matters is carried out by the academics department by providing information and advice in course programs and other related matters. Admission and Examination departments are to solve students' academic problems. In addition to that, there is Students' Affairs Cell to solve students problems related to admissions,

courses, mailing, issuance of results and degrees. The AIOU has 44 regional campus and centers throughout the country. In these campuses and centers, AIOU has a post of student counselor and field worker to guide students.

In overall perspective of this country, theoretically the guidance services are an important part of teacher education programs. However, practical aspects do not get enough support and encouragement, due to which teachers and students face a variety of problems related to their schools, colleges and universities. Additionally, among the general masses, there is serious lack of awareness regarding availability and role of guidance services. There is an urgent need that all public and private sector education institutions should provide facilities to guide their students as well as staff at every level. Here, the role of government is crucial especially by involving educationists, by providing required facilities and training, and by further improving curricula. This should be done by keeping in mind the Islamic ideology and cultural traditions of the country, otherwise a purely secular and an alien approach may backfire. However, it does not mean that no benefit should be obtain from the best approaches to progress developed in the West. In fact, Pakistan's educational institutions cannot enrich themselves academically and professionally if they ignored the good guidance services being developed and used in other countries.

Analysis and Discussion

Guidance services are an important component of education system in every country of the world. This is even more important for a country like Pakistan which traces its ideological roots in Islam and a vast majority of its population also follows this faith and they are very sensitive and committed about their beliefs. This paper attempts to analyze the situation of Islamic and Western approaches to guidance with the main focus of their similarities and differences. Additionally, it also attempts to analyze the overall situation of guidance in Pakistan. The earlier part of the paper discusses the background of guidance services and, Islamic and Western approaches to guidance services. In the later part, it presents the philosophical aspects of Western and Islamic thought with special reference of Quran and Sunnah and related material, including a variety of books, journals and other sources. The discussion made in the paper reflects that:

- In Islamic approach to guidance, the main source of guidance is Quran and Sunnah while Western approaches are based on secular thoughts of their philosophers.
- Muslims believe that Quran is the final revelation of Allah and Islam is a complete code of life. However, in Western approach, it is commonly believed that scientific advancement is the real thing for the development of humanity.
- The concept of life after death is one of the core components of Islamic approach while in Western approaches, there is no concept of hereafter as the whole focus is on present worldly life.
- Family values and role of elders is very dominant in Islamic approach to guidance while in Western approach it is mainly the secular educational system which fixes the directions of daily life activities.
- This situation reflects that Islamic approach is spiritual in nature in contrast to Western approach which is mainly materialistic.

The discussion also presents the analysis of Pakistan's situation which reflects that in theory, guidance services have been an important part of its educational system since the creation of this country. However, practically the situation has been different and due to a variety of weaknesses in the system, students and teachers have been facing a number of problems.

Conclusion

The outcome of the discussion made in this paper reflects that in spite of having some similarities; the guidance services provided by Islam and Western philosophers are predominantly different from each other. Islam lays the foundations of guidance on spirituality and considers the Quran and Sunnah as the ultimate sources. However, Western thoughts are based on rationalism and reasoning. No doubt, both seek the accomplishment of man, the difference lie in the approach and the mean to the end. It is clear from the analysis that guidance provides an opportunity and road map through which individual and collective objectives can be achieved in a systematized way. For a common person as well as for the collective development of a society, it would be helpful to benefit from both approaches and it should be done systematically and strategically. A strong channel of communication is also essential to bridge the gap between the two approaches. This is

even more important in the prevailing age when the present world is considered as global village where the young people are far more interconnected as compared to the recent past.

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