

Educational Equality in Islam: A Study of Social Justice and Inclusion

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Abstract:

This paper critically analyses the Islamic education as a model of enhancing social justice and inclusive education in both the past and present. Based on the principles of the Quran, traditions of Prophetic, and classical Islamic scholarship, the article develops the idea that education in Islam is perceived as universal right and ethical duty and it is based on the principle of justice (*adl*), mercy (*rahmah*) and human dignity. It examines historical examples of inclusive education in early Islamic civilization and the role of mosques, madrasas and informal learning circles in ensuring that different social groups, such as women, orphans and those with disabilities, can access education. The paper also examines the difference between equality and equity in the Islamic thought and how the need-based distribution of resources is significant towards attaining substantive inclusion. By critically assessing some of the modern issues that are faced by Muslim-majority societies such as socioeconomic inequalities, governance restrictions and cultural constraints, the study shows that there is a huge discrepancy between the Islamic principles and the existing educational practices. Based on the empirical analysis of the chosen case studies, both advances and the existing inequities can be explained, which means that context-specific changes are urgently required. Metaphorical analysis of essential Islamic educational concepts identified in the paper including light and path and garden are also used to show how language and discourse construct inclusive pedagogical visions. The study suggests an inclusive framework of Islamic education in the 21st century grounded on these observations and suggests that learning institutions should have the freedom to combine doctrinal authenticity and modern policy innovation. It ends by providing viable solutions to be taken by teachers, policy makers and communities to implement the Islamic principles in solving the modern educational inequalities so that they can provide their part in making the education system more just, equitable and holistic.

Keywords: *Islamic Education, Social Justice, Educational Equity, Muslim Societies, Policy Reform*

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1. Introduction

In a world where technological progress and globalization have never been as high as they now are, equality in education is a far-off dream of millions of people and it is critical to highlight one of the most acute crises of the 21st century. Although the world has made international commitments over the last 40 years to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 4, the numbers of out of school children and youth are forecasted to have stagnated: the global number of out-of-school children and youth amounts to 251 million as of 2024, and the number of these children and youth has only decreased by 1 per cent in nearly ten years, in part owing to the chronic under-investment of the issue in most countries, especially in low-income countries, where one out of three school, The socioeconomic status still has an even greater impact on learning results in comparison to gender or geography, and cycles of poverty and marginalization and intergenerational inequality perpetuate; in low-income countries, learning poverty is experienced by up to 90 percent of children, and extreme differences between the per-learner spending of US\$55 in low-income settings and US\$532 in high-income settings illustrate the inequalities (World Bank, 2025; UNESCO, 2024). These disparities are not just statistical failures but deep moral and financial criticisms, where the economies lose trillions of productivity and fail to support social cohesion, democratic engagement and sustainable development. With the exacerbation of conflicts, climate disasters, and financial limitations, the need to have equitable education is never more critical, and requires structures that go beyond technical solutions to include the causes of exclusion that lie within wealth, location, disability, and systemic bias (Bennett et al., 2024). Islamic vision of education is presented as a compelling, timeless counter-narrative to these injustices, which makes the process of knowledge acquisition not a right but an obligation and a sacred command of social justice (*adl*) and human dignity. The Quranic texts and the prophetic sayings to seek *ilm* (knowledge) by everyone irrespective of their gender, class and status make education one of the pillars of equity, where inclusion becomes a way to worship and community duty (Akhtar, 2024). This model denounces the presence of hierarchical barriers and promotes compassion (*rahma*), justice and tolerance as a basis of inclusive learning environments that accept diversity in ability, background and belief (Wazdy, 2024). Unlike secular models that have been criticized due to market-driven exclusions, the Islamic philosophy on the education system incorporates spiritual, moral, and intellectual concerns, not just personal empowerment, but also the collective empowerment and reinforcement of the society. However, the recent scholarship emphasizes the proactive role of these principles in combating contemporary marginalization as a whole and provides a comprehensive

approach to discussing gender parity, inclusion of disabled people, and access of refugees and promoting critical faith that requires justice before God (Felsenthal, 2025; Nurhayati, 2025). Therefore, it is not a nostalgic reconstruction but an active instrument of transformative inclusion in a disintegrated world.

The educational background of Muslim countries further throws light on this possibility and has shown a history of extraordinary openness that has been eroded by traditional ways. Since the early learning circles were instituted by the Prophet Muhammad in Medina and the spread of the mosque-based system of education under the caliphates of Rashidun and Umayyad, and then the establishment of madrasas became institutionalized during the Abbasid reign, especially the Nizamiyyah of Baghdad (1067 CE), Islamic civilization was the first to achieve mass literacy and universal scholarship that cut across social classes (Findikli, 2022; Umar, 2025). Female academics, orphans, and representatives of different ethnicities took part in these systems, and the transmission of knowledge was considered a common good instead of an elite privilege, and led to the contributions of the Islamic Golden Age in the fields of science, philosophy and jurisprudence. However, colonial interferences, modernizing forces and the contemporary policy voids have put this legacy to the test leading to tensions between the ideal and the reality which the current study aims to address. This paper analyzes educational equality in Islam in the perspective of social justice and inclusion, reviewing the foundational texts and comparing historical models and the contemporary issues in Muslim-majority settings. It seeks to unite theory and practice by using thematic and critical discourse analysis of primary sources and recent empirical knowledge to suggest action courses that can be taken by policymakers, educators, and communities. By so doing, the study reaffirms the perennial applicability of Islam as an emancipatory power, a promise in a period of education crisis in the world, and a roadmap to fair futures based on fairness and human unity.

2. Literature Review

The theoretical foundations of educational equality in Islamic scholarship are deeply rooted in the Qur'an and Hadith, which frame knowledge (*ilm*) not as a commodity but as a divine obligation and instrument of social justice. Qur'anic imperatives such as;

اقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ⁴

“Read in the name of your Lord.”

⁴. Al-Alq, 96:1

and the elevation of the knowledgeable above the ignorant (58:11) establish education as a universal right that transcends class, gender, or ethnicity, positioning human beings as stewards (*khalifah*) responsible for moral and intellectual Upliftment (Irmawati et al., 2025). This universalism is supported by tradition; the Quranic teachings that state that knowledge-seeking is an obligatory duty of every Muslim (Ibn Majah) and the ways to go to heaven through learning emphasize the importance of education in removing layers of hierarchy and creating an *adl* (justice) and *musawah* (equality) (Sholichah et al., 2025). Intellectual and moral and spiritual aspects are also further brought into the process by the classical scholars and their modern interpreters, who oppose exclusionary practices in favor of inclusive pedagogies that focus on dialogue, exemplarity, and character-building (Baisuni, 2025). Analytically these sources do not simply issue access but require transformative equity: education has to result in balanced persons able to govern morally, making any systemic denial of education a transgression of the divine command and the communal promise.

The Western and comparative conceptions of educational justice and inclusion are complementary and dissimilar in many aspects and are typically based on liberal egalitarianism and critical theory that tend to accentuate structural impediments and neglect spiritual aspects in some cases. The holistic framework of the OECD conceives the essay of equity and inclusion as mutually conditional policy areas governance, resourcing, capacity-building, and monitoring that urge systems to deal with the intersecting disadvantages with targeted but Universalist interventions (OECD, 2023). However, separate from that, decolonial critiques caution against Western-centric approaches, which run the risk of epistemic delinking to be appropriated by an ethno-nationalist agenda, thus preventing the actual inclusion of marginalized populations (Zembylas, 2025). They share the same metric (capabilities and social justice) and differ on the secular nature of above approaches: where Rawlsian fairness or the capabilities theory proposes a distributive justice focus, the Islamic theory proposes a transcendent aspect of approach that ties the individual rights to the collective moral responsibility. This contrastive distinction shows both synergy and weakness in the West models are both expert in the diagnostics of empirical policies but lack ontological richness, which Islamic foundations offer to continued ethical inclusion.

The literature available on equity in Muslim-majority nations illustrates that discrepancies between the ideals and the implementation of the doctrines exist across various dimensions, especially the access, quality and outcomes that are influenced by the socioeconomic stratification and the policy inertia. Critiques in Indonesia reveal how the city-rural differences and social stratifications still limit the access of marginalized children to the

Islamic education despite constitution guarantees of equality (Hefner, 2025). The same trends can be observed in Malaysia, where the redefinition of Islamic education through the state agencies such as JAIS aims at developing civic moderation and social responsibility, but the barriers to this realization are in the resource disparities and the cultural norms that the state is unable to eliminate (Shukri, 2025). Management-oriented literature also shows that Islamic educational leadership can be used to spearhead quality inclusive education, although only when paired with equity, but only when the curricular and governmental frameworks are categorically anti-stratifying (Hadi, 2025). Taken together, these empirical lessons provide a reminder of a perennial paradox, namely, that, though Islamic paradigms formally eliminate discrimination, in practice, techniques of exclusion are replicated by the region and institution, and reforms that instantiate *adl* are required, and will need context-specific reforms to achieve.

Ecolinguistic and metaphorical studies of Islamic didactic speech using the background theories of conceptual metaphors and ecological stories shed light on the way language contributes to the perception of learning, justice, and inclusion and reveal significant gaps in the current literature. The statement by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) that knowledge is organized in metaphors like light, education is organized in metaphors like path, or equity is organized in metaphors like garden is abundantly utilized in the Quran, with educational metaphors being used to bring a sense of harmony to the creation and community wellness, instead of competition and status (Stibbe, 2015). Recent corpus based ecolinguistic analysis, goes farther by mapping environmental and green ideological practices in Islamic literature to show that linguistic framing can either support or oppose anthropocentric exclusions in learning settings (Mukminin, 2025). However, a massive gap remains: although theoretical exegeses are abundant, not many of them combine the ecolinguistic means with the real-world results on the equity production in the Muslim communities, and even fewer of them deal with the intersection of the metaphors of the flood or the light in modern crises (as the recent ones with Pakistan or Indonesia) and policy failure (Nada, 2025). This paper will fill these gaps by synthesizing conceptual underpinnings, comparative critique, evidence in the region and a discursive analysis to promote a unified assessment of transformative educational justice.

3. Problem Statement

Even though Islamic scholarship, which rests on the Quran and the Hadith, clearly states that educational equality is a divine command of social justice and universal inclusion, there is a sharp contradiction in modern Muslim-majority societies. The systemic differences in the

access, quality, and educational achievements due to the socioeconomic stratification, gender biases, ethnic exclusion, disability marginalization, and policy deficiencies directly go against these underlying ideals. Colonial legacies, modernization pressures and contextual inertia have sabotaged the historical models of inclusive learning in early madrasas and mosque circles which used to be role models of openness leading to the pervasive poverty of learning. The comparative concepts of western views on educational justice have an excellent structural analysis, yet they tended to be weak in adopting the spiritual aspects of *adl* and *musawah* of Islam, which restricts their transformative capabilities. Such an open tension between the sacred theory and the practice of life not only goes against the basic ideas of Islam, but also prevents the unity of society and its stable progress. These critical gaps are interrogated in the present study in order to construct the Islamic based authentic frameworks of real educational equality and inclusion.

4. Research Objectives

1. To examine the foundational Islamic teachings on educational equality and social justice.
2. To explore the mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion in historical and contemporary Islamic educational systems.
3. To analyze the role of social justice principles in promoting equitable educational opportunities.
4. To propose practical strategies for enhancing inclusion in modern Muslim educational contexts.

5. Research Questions

1. What are the core Islamic principles (Qur'anic and Prophetic) that underpin educational equality?
2. How have these principles been interpreted and applied (or misapplied) across different historical periods and regions?
3. In what ways do social justice and inclusion manifest (or fail to manifest) in current educational policies and practices in Muslim societies?
4. What practical frameworks can be derived from Islamic teachings to address existing barriers to educational equality?

6. Methodology

The qualitative research design that is adopted in the present study is a thematic analysis based one (Braun and Clarke, 2006) to produce a more detailed, contextually oriented insight into the concept of educational equality as a representation of the Islamic social justice and

inclusion. The method of data collection is a combination of primary material the Quran, canonical collections of Hadith, and classical Islamic scholarship by thinkers like Al-Ghazali, Ibn Sina, and Ibn Khaldun with secondary sources based on peer-reviewed scholarly literature published since 2020 and official education policy documents in key Muslim-majority countries and detailed studies of the current schooling practice. The method of analysis is a combination of critical discourse analysis, which reveals the hidden power structure and restrictionary ideology behind the discourses of education, and ecolinguistics framing, which takes a critical look at how metaphorical structures, like knowledge as divine light, equity as a flourishing garden, or exclusion as a devastating flood impact societal views of access and justice. Such hybrid approach allows to conduct iterative coding of textual data, discern the motifs and interrogate both ideals of the doctrines and contradictions of the lived. The triangulation of sacred texts and empirical policy realities to accomplish the process guarantees interpretive rigor, ethical sensitivity to religious texts and generates actionable, Islamic based genuine insights towards the progress of inclusive education in the twenty-first century.

7. Islamic Foundations of Educational Equality

Knowledge (*ilm*) is a universal right which is clearly defined in the Quran and Prophetic traditions, and education has not been presented as a socioeconomic privilege but as a sacred obligation, which is the basis of human dignity and social justice. The first revelation is a declaration of a binding command to the entire humanity whereas the Hadith "Seeking knowledge is obligatory upon every Muslim" (Ibn Majah) makes the same command obligatory without any exception categorized by gender, position or any other aspect. This intellectual basis raises *ilm* to a higher level of information gathering to a transformational force that validates human dignity (*karamah*) as natural to creation and necessary to morally serve the earth (Elouazzani, 2024). Analytically, these teachings deny any status of access and education is the process through which individuals are able to perform their duty as *khalifah* (vicegerents) hence lead to social justice as ignorance-induced inequities are eliminated. This is supported by modern Islamic theology that proves how Islamic epistemology based on revelation is balanced by reason to foster solidarity, in which the pursuit of knowledge is not only a form of personal worship but also a communal protection against oppression (Akhtar, 2024; Nasir, 2025).

Islamic education principles specifically oppose any form of discrimination on the grounds of gender, race, class, or ability, teaching that all human beings are equal in the sight of God and have the right to have an access to education without restrictions. Some of the Quranic

statements include, O mankind, indeed We created you of male and female of us and we made tribes and peoples that you may know each other. In fact, the most exalted of you before the eyes of Allah is the most upright of you" (49:13) destroys race and ethnic privileges, and Prophetic sermons in the Farewell Address eliminate the argument of the superiority of Arabs over non-Arab or white over Black. This rejection is then applied to women having equal opportunities in education as seen in Hadith where women and men are required to seek knowledge and the inclusion of people with disabilities, where Islamic doctrine places compassion and equity as theological requirements and not discretionary reforms (Baisuni, 2025). Quite on the contrary, these principles are a practical challenge to historical and modern exclusions and demand that divisions based on class or physical difference are a crime against the Quranic vision of a just society. This clarity of doctrine gives a strong analytical tool in the form of which to evaluate present-day inequalities, and it turns out that any form of discrimination in the field of education is not cultural diversity but a direct violation of the equality prescribed by God (Apriantoro, 2026).

The principles of *adl* (justice) and *ihsan* (excellence) that are interconnected are at the core of the Islamic educational philosophy, which requires not just the fair access, but the development of moral and intellectual excellence in every learner. *Adl* needs parity in resource allocation and removal of structural prejudices in schooling whereas *ihsan* upraises schooling to the level of benevolence to support every member to their maximum potential as an ethical contribution to society (Qureshi, 2025). This dual structure turns education into a divine act of justice which entails fair play in the opportunity and excellence which is the motivation to strive above the minimum requirements (*ijtihad*). *Adl* and *ihsan* when operationalized create inclusive pedagogies that both incorporate spiritual training and critical thinking that prepares students to combat societal injustices by means of informed action (Hadi, 2025; Ahmad, 2025). Islamic foundations therefore provide a philosophically sound and ethically sound alternative to secular models based on educational equality founded on transcendent accountability instead of transient policy.

8. Social Justice and Mechanisms of Inclusion in Islamic Education

Islamic education, however, is not an aspirational, abstract form of social justice architecture; but an institutionalized reality, and the operationalization of inclusion as a lived reality. The early Islamic civilization developed plural places of education mosques, madrasas and halaqah (informal circles) that broke down strict social categorizations and allowed an extensive involvement of classes, ethnicities, and gender. The Prophet mosque in Medina was both a spiritual and pedagogical center, where knowledge was shared freely between

companions, travelers and marginalized group members, the Ahl al-Suffah, who were disadvantaged in the material realm, but intellectually equal (Berkey, 1992). Madrasas were later institutionalized and especially with the patronage of Seljuk and Abbasid, this opened access by promoting waqf (endowment) programmes that admitted students regardless of their economic value, thus institutionalizing redistributive justice into educational infrastructure (Makdisi, 1981). More importantly, according to Islamic epistemology there is a distinction between equality (musawah) and equity (adl): equality is about making access to all available, whereas equity requires differentiated treatment according to need, which can also be observed in specific stipends, free accommodations, and mentorship of the poor and orphans. This subtle distributive reasoning predicts contemporary capability-theories but is still rooted in a theological moralism that enslaves knowledge by holding knowledge to answer to God (Sen, 2009). The evidence in the cases also complicates the reductionist accounts of exclusion: women like Aisha bint Abu Bakr, and later commentators like Fatima al-Fihri did not just receive an education, but also influenced its circulation, and the understanding of the pedagogical culture of the era is that intellectual ability should overrule an incapacity (Nadwi, 2007). Early Islamic paradigms therefore did not just allow inclusion; it was normalized structurally, as it provides a well-grounded historical paradigm to reconsider modern injustices.

The evocative symbols that frame knowledge are a metaphorical way of enhancing this inclusiveness since Islamic discourse of education encodes both ethical and epistemic orientations. Knowledge through the Quranic and classical tradition is often represented through the metaphor of light (nur) a concept that means enlightenment, guidance and eradication of ignorance, making education an emancipatory phenomenon that is beyond social darkness (Al-Attas, 1980). In the same manner, the path (sirat) metaphor builds up learning as a fluid process that needs guidance, endurance and community encouragement and thus denies the exclusionary boundaries that impede access to moral and intellectual development. The metaphor of the garden (jannah) in the meantime conceptualizes education as a garden wherein different learners, like different plants, are cultivated to their abilities in line with the ethic of differentiated care, which is consistent with equity as opposed to sameness (Sardar, 2011). Such metaphors do not just exist on rhetoric; pedagogical imaginaries and institutional practices are constructed on the basis of them incorporating the institution of inclusion into the Islam moral language. It has been proposed that through such symbolic structures, what are being touted as technocratic and market-driven models of education that diminish learners into economic components can be countered, with dignity,

compassion and common good being re-established as the focus (Halstead, 2004). By reading them with reference to historical practices, these metaphors bring to light a theologically consistent ecology of epistemological inclusion where the structurally performed inclusion is discursively maintained. Modern Muslim societies are facing a challenge, however, not a lack of inclusive principles, but their reactivation under the conditions of stratification and policy inertia in modern systems. The re-working of these historical and metaphorical resources not only provides a critique of existing exclusions, but it provides a strong culturally appealing blueprint of transformative educational justice.

9. Contemporary Challenges and Pathways Forward

Modern situations characterized by Muslim majority show a sophisticated interaction of structural, socio-cultural and policy-imposed obstacles that still hinder educational equalisation regardless of strong Islamic justice and inclusion foundations. Empirical data illustrates that socioeconomic inequalities, geographic inequalities, gender prescriptions, and exclusion of disability have continued to be the key factors of unequal access and outcomes. In some countries such as Pakistan or Indonesia, the rural-urban divide is a significant factor in school participation and communities with less privileges are further disadvantaged by poverty, lack of infrastructures, and state capacity (UNESCO, 2024; World Bank, 2023). Conflict, climate vulnerability and digital divides further fuel these inequalities and have the tendency of excluding already vulnerable populations to emerging ways of learning in disproportionate ways. Islamically speaking, this kind of disparities can be discussed not only as failures in the policy but also as the ethical contradiction of *adl* (justice) and *amanah* (collective responsibility), which requires the fair provision of opportunities based on the needs of each individual. Modern literature claims that although most Muslim-majority countries have officially switched to inclusive education principles according to international standards, including SDG 4, there is a gap in the implementation process because of poor governance, inadequate funding, and neglect of faith-based epistemologies during policy development (Ahmed, 2023; Zubairi and Rose, 2019). More importantly, these obstacles are not isolated but systemic, they are indicative of systemic inequalities and would need comprehensive interventions that involve economic redistribution, cultural change, and institutional change. The challenge therefore is to harmonize normative Islamic beliefs to universal knowledge and the realities of exclusion that still define the educational landscapes throughout the Muslim world.

The analysis of current policies and reforms in terms of Islamic social-justice creates a perspective of progress and deep constraints of ideals into practice. In Malaysia, the most

prominent attempts have involved the state to incorporate the Islamic values with contemporary educational governance, which has been followed by fostering inclusivity by reforming the curriculum and regulating the institutions, but scholars indicate that responsiveness to the marginalized groups, especially in the rural and indigenous societies, has been hampered by bureaucratic centralization and socio-political restraints (Razak, 2021). In a similar manner, the decentralized education system in Indonesia has allowed the creation of local innovations in inclusive Islamic education, but the inequality in resource distribution and the number of teachers still impedes fair results (Hefner, 2018). Policy frameworks and policies in Pakistan like the National Education Policy focus on equity and access, yet due to chronic underfunding and difficulties in governance, the policy implementation remains weak especially among girls and children with disabilities (Nayyar and Salim, 2020). Comparing these reforms to Islamic concepts of *adl* and *ihsan*, one can find a severe void in the procedural inclusion and substantive equity policies can widen access, but do not necessarily guarantee meaningful access and quality learning. The Islamic social justice requires not only a distributive fairness but also taking into account the various learner needs and developing a moral agency, which is often ignored by current technocratic trends. Empirical research also shows that community-based and religiously-minded programs, including madrasa changes with incorporation of inclusive pedagogies, provide some promising alternatives by harmonizing the educational practices with cultural and religious values, as well as meeting the local inequalities (Bano, 2022). These illustrations imply that successful reform has to be a combination of international policy structures and local Islamic values so that the inclusion is context and normatively sturdy.

In the future, an inclusive model of Islamic education in the 21st century should be able to incorporate both the doctrines and empirical knowledge along with new types of policy-making processes to fully respond to the challenges of the new century. This framework must be based on *tawhid* (unity), *adl* (justice) and *rahma* (compassion) and must translate these values into practical measures that embrace equity rather than equality. This in practice would include the implementation of differentiated models of resource allocation, the training of teachers in inclusive pedagogy, and the use of technology to close the access disparity and ensure the ethical and culturally sensitive application of technology. Indonesia and Malaysia experience provides the evidence of the potential of hybrid models that integrate formal schooling with community-driven efforts and build participatory governance and localized accountability (Bano, 2022; Razak, 2021). This would mean, to the policymakers, to build institutional capacity, to increase the financing of education and to make Islamic ethical

frameworks entrenched in the policy assessment measures so as to make them be aligned with the social-justice goals. Teachers need to develop inclusive classroom communities that acknowledge various talents and differences using pedagogies, which incorporate spiritual, moral, and intellectual growth. At the same time, communities are also very crucial in maintaining the inclusive practices by being supportive of such practices through social, advocacy and also by reviving the waqf-based educational funding. This direction is eventually the way forward since redefining Islamic education as not a stagnated tradition but a dynamic justice-driven system that can be able to adapt to the new realities and at the same time not lose its moral compass. This approach provides a plausible culturally appealing framework of attaining educational equality and social cohesion in the world that is becoming more and more fragmented.

10. Conclusion

It is seen that the foregoing analysis has revealed that Islamic education can provide an incredibly strong platform of promoting social justice and inclusive learning in the modern world when viewed through its authentic doctrinal, historical, and ethical pillars. Islamic educational philosophy is based on the Quranic mandate of knowledge as a universal right and the Prophetic teaching of intellectual equality, to go beyond access to equity, dignity and moral obligation. Mosque-based learning to madrasa systems in the Arab world supported by waqf give examples of how early Islamic civilization implemented inclusion all in a non-exemplary way and instead as a principle of normativity as a part of its epistemological and institutional garb. Women scholars, the poor learners, and people with disabilities were included but integrated into the dynamic knowledge system where intellectual effort is emphasized more than social rank. But the contemporary education profile of most Muslim dominant settings shows a disturbing trend not aligned with these principles of systematic imbalances, policy ineffectiveness and social-cultural limitations. These differences emphasize a vexing dilemma, in which Islamic teachings clearly and fully embrace justice and inclusion, yet its practical application is unequal and is frequently limited by the problems of economics and governance, as well as the relegation of faith-based ethical principles to the periphery of policymaking.

To resolve this deficiency a paradigmatic change is necessary where Islamic principles are re-focused on as practical guides and not symbolic allusions. The way is to combine the traditional values with the contemporary educational innovations in order to develop systems that would be textually oriented and normative. This involves placing equity-centered policies through which the allocation of resources is done according to need, nurturing

inclusive pedagogies that facilitate the needs of various learners, and institutional responsibility through ethical governance based on *adl* and *ihsan*. It is also necessary to have the presence of communities in restoring the culture of participatory education via practices like *waqf* and local involvement to ensure that inclusion is maintained even after the formal policy implementation. Combining metaphorical and discursive understanding like the notion of knowledge as light, education as a path etc. further highlights the transformative nature of the Islamic education in creating holistic development that integrates intellectual growth with the moral and spiritual well-being. After all, the recovery of the inclusive heritage of Islamic education is not just an intellectual pursuit but an ethical obligation in the times of increasing global inequality. By reducing the gap between the idealized ideals of Islam and the practical reality, Islamic education can become a potent force of fair change that would provide a culturally appealing and morally sound framework of creating fair, inclusive, and sustainable educational futures.

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