

Character Education According to Qur'ān and Hadīth: A Description of Provision of Character Education in Secondary Schools

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Abstract

Character being reacting in a decent (fairness, responsible) way to the circumstances, need to be taught to the students. This study was designed to explore whether the teachers at the secondary level provide character education or not. For this purpose, a stratified random sampling technique was used to select 1438 students from the population of grade 10 students of the Hazara Division. A questionnaire was developed and used for gathering data from the respondents, which was validated by the experts. Cronbach's reliability coefficient of the questionnaire was 0.712 which was got through a pilot study conducted on 100 students. Frequency and Charts were used for the description of the situation. Results indicate that according to Qur'ān Jinn and humans are created by Allah to worship him but Satan is trying to turn them away from Allah. So adopt good character by taking care of your actions. Reconcile mutual differences and conflicts among each other as the believers are "but brothers". Be guard against oppression as Allah will forgive you. Results of the survey indicate that teachers train students to follow the teachings of Islam, resolve conflicts, and apologize in case of hurting each other. Character education is a part of their curriculum. It is recommended that the education department should show high concern and implement a check and balance system for the actual implementation of character education at schools. Additionally, the physical, mental level, the socioeconomic and religious status of the students should be kept in mind during the provision of character education to students.

Keywords: character education, teachers, secondary school, student, socioeconomic, religious

Introduction

Character is a consistent internal temperament to react to circumstances with decency.¹ It can be deduced from the above definition that character covers all human activities which show itself in mind, behaviors, feelings, and actions based on religious norms, laws, manners, culture, and customs. Character settles on one's thoughts and actions done. Good character is a motivation to do what is right in every situation². Character education inculcates the normal ways of thinking and behaving which help the individual in living and working together as a family, community, and state and helps them to make decisions, which can be accounted for. Truth, fairness, and responsibility are the major rules of good character³. Due to the increasing tendency of negative behavior in youth, attention towards character education in public schools has been growing⁴. These students are guided to adopt certain prescribed behaviors⁵. Character education is a gradual process of building the character of students⁶. The aspects included in this research are discussed in the following headings.

Following the teachings of Islam

In Islam bringing positive changes in one's life like beliefs, thinking, mindset, and doing which ultimately increase the sense of responsibility, devotion to work, reassurance, love, respect, cooperation, and fair dealing⁷. All these good characters are the teachings of Islam. If these teachings are not followed, one cannot get favor and blessings of Allah⁸. Some of the teachings of Islam are represented in the form of Qur'ānic verses and Hadiths. For example, in Qur'ān the Almighty Allah says:

"وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ"⁹

"I have created the jinn and humankind only for My worship."

In another verse of Qur'ān, Allah says:

إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ الشَّيْطَانُ أَنْ يُوقِعَ بَيْنَكُمُ الْعَدَاوَةَ وَالْبَغْضَاءَ فِي الْحَمْرِ وَالْمَيْسِرِ وَيَصُدَّكُمْ عَن ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَعَنِ الصَّلَاةِ فَهَلْ أَنْتُمْ مُنْتَهُونَ¹⁰

This verse summarizes that Satan has a plan to provoke hate and extreme dislike among you through gambling and intoxicants and stop you from Allah's remembrance as well as prayers. So will you not abstain?.

So the above two verses of the Holy Qur'ān stresses upon living according to the teachings of Islam. This style of living according to the teachings of Islam needs training. One of the important sources of training provided to live according to the teachings of Islam is the teacher.

Character Building Training

One of the important responsibilities of the teachers in schools is to build the character of their students. The teachers can train their students by seeking guidance from the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet (PBUH). The importance of good character is evident from the following Hadith.

The Prophet (PBUH) Said:

"لا شيء أثقل في الميزان في يوم القيامة من حسن الخلق. يكره الله ما هو عديم القاعدة".¹¹

"On the Day of Judgment, good character will be heavier than anything else and Allah hates motiveless."

Good character is one of the important personality characteristics possessed by the individuals and the requirement to enter paradise. Abu Musa Al-Ash'ari (May Allah be pleased with him) reported:

I asked the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ): "Who is the most excellent among the Muslims?" He said, "One from whose tongue and hands the other Muslims are secure."¹²

That is why the Prophet (PBUH) had the best character as mentioned in the Holy Qur'ān:

"وَإِنَّكَ لَعَلَىٰ خُلُقِي عَظِيمٌ"¹³

"And you are of a great moral character."

The Prophet said that believers have the best character and are best with their womenfolk¹⁴. He also said:

"إِنَّ مِنْ أَحَبِّكُمْ إِلَيَّ وَأَقْرَبِكُمْ مِنِّي مَجْلِسًا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ أَحْسَنُكُمْ أَخْلَاقًا وَإِنَّ أَبْعَضَكُمْ إِلَيَّ وَأَبْعَدُكُمْ مِنِّي مَجْلِسًا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ التَّرْتَاوُونَ وَالْمَتَشَدِّتُونَ وَالْمَتَفَيْهُونَ"¹⁵

"Verily, the most beloved and nearest to my gathering on the Day of Resurrection are those of you with the best character. Verily, the most reprehensible of you to me and the furthest from my gathering on the Day of Resurrection will be the pompous, the extravagant, and the pretentious."

These are some of the important elements stressed in Hadiths to be adopted. So it is the responsibility of the schools to inculcate these characteristics in the students as well to seek their place in paradise. The other important quality of good character stressed in Qur'ān and Ḥadīth is conflict resolution.

Conflict Resolution Training

Qur'ān is the greatest source of guidance of human beings in all spheres of life. It teaches us to live in peace with each other in our

communities as well as with our fellows and don't create any conflict among each other. For example, the Prophet (PBUH) always carried the dialogue and peace process for the resolution of conflicts¹⁶. It can be deduced that dialogue and peace process can help towards bringing unity and harmony in society. It is because these rich Islamic values and tenets convince the people to work for the unity of society. The important measure for bringing unity in society is reconciliation. Allah says in Qur'an:

"وَأَصْلِحُوا ذَاتَ بَيْنِكُمْ"¹⁷

"And reconcile your mutual differences."

The personality of the students is badly suffered if they have disputes with each other. It is also evident from the verses of Qur'an. Allah says

"وَأَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَلَا تَنَازَعُوا فَتَفْشَلُوا وَتَذْهَبَ رِيحُكُمْ وَاصْبِرُوا، إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ"¹⁸

"Obey Allah and His Messenger and do not dispute with one another, or you would be discouraged and weakened. Persevere! Surely Allah is with those who persevere."

Instructing about the consequences of dispute among each other Allah says that people lose courage and are demoralized. The other effect of dispute among each other is that people lose strength.

To summarize it can be said that that dialogue and peace process can help towards bringing unity and harmony. Similarly, reconciliation is an important character of the Muslims for removing their mutual differences. Imagining the consequences of dispute, one finds that it demoralizes the people because of loss of strength among them.

Feeling Happy with Fellows

The widespread purpose of Islam is the development of friendship, and a sense of community. Allah says:

"إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَ أَخْوَانِكُمْ وَأَتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ"¹⁹

The Verse stresses believers that they are like brothers and there is a need for reconciliation between brothers. One should fear Allah. Muhammad (PBUH) once said:

"لَا تَبَاغَضُوا وَلَا تَحَاسَدُوا وَلَا تَدَابَرُوا وَكُونُوا عِبَادَ اللَّهِ إِخْوَانًا وَلَا يَجُلُ لِمُسْلِمٍ أَنْ يَهْجُرَ أَخَاهُ فَوْقَ ثَلَاثِ"²⁰

This Hadith forbids hating and jealousy from each other. You should be like brothers. So you should not boycott each other for more than three days. The Prophet (PBUH) said:

"مَثَلُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ فِي تَوَادُّهِمْ وَتَرَاحُمِهِمْ وَتَعَاطُفِهِمْ مَثَلُ الْجَسَدِ إِذَا اشْتَكَى مِنْهُ عُضْوٌ تَدَاعَى لَهُ سَائِرُ الْجَسَدِ بِالسَّهْرِ وَالْحَمَى"²¹

"The parable of the believers in their affection, mercy, and compassion for each other is that of a body. When any limb aches, the whole body reacts with sleeplessness and fever.

In the above three Ḥadīth, the Prophet (PBUH) stressed reconciliation with each other. He forbade the Muslims to boycott each other for more than three days.

The Character of Great Muslim Heroes

Great Muslim heroes and leaders are those who are selected neither by anyone nor by any committee. The leaders are to guide and establish an Islamic society. According to Qur'ān, the great leaders own knowledge and power.

It is mentioned in the Holy Qur'ān that a leader possesses knowledge through which he guides the people to the right path, controls the situation, and gains power to make decisions accordingly. In addition to knowledge and power, the leader also possesses patience and sound judgments.²²

In addition to knowledge, power, patience, and sound judgments, the leader also has the quality to develop teamwork. This aspect was mentioned by the Holy Prophet (PBUH) in these words.

"All of you are shepherds, and each of you will be asked concerning his flock".²³

Investigation of Bullying Cases

As bullying is a kind of oppression, Islam prohibits all kinds of injustices and oppression. The Prophet (PBUH) said that

"Be on your guard against oppression, for oppression is a darkness on the Day of Resurrection".²⁴

One the Prophet was asked how the oppressor should be helped? He replied that he should be helped by preventing him from oppressing others²⁵.

This Ḥadīth elaborates on the importance of helping the oppressed and profoundly the oppressor whom you stop from infringement on others' rights. Simply the people misunderstand the bullies they think that bullies take pleasure to pain others. But research findings suggest some reasons to bully others. For example, there may some behavioral issues such as aggressiveness, and conduct problems, or bullies may suffer from depression, anxiety, and eating disorders. Allah said in Qur'ān that one should not laugh at others nor should they defame each other. It is also important that they should avoid calling nicknames.²⁶

The Holy Qur'ān says that Allah forbids wickedness, bad conduct as

well as oppression.²⁷

Narrating from Allah, the Prophet (PBUH) said that He has made oppression illegal. Therefore people should avoid it against each other.²⁸

It is also oppression that a person takes over another person's property or take it without one's permission or don't return the rights to its owner.

Allah commands to bring peace between those who fight with each other but if one transgresses beyond bounds, then Allah Almighty says that fight against sinner until he obeys the order of Allah. And when he complies then live in peace with him with justice and fairness as Allah loves the fair and just people.²⁹

Treating Each Other with Respect

The existence of people from different faiths and opinions is something that we have to acknowledge and welcome heartily, for this is how Allah created and predestined humankind in this world.

Allah has chosen law and practice for people. He could make people one community but wanted to test people. So He told people that He has directed people to they should compete with each other in doing goods.³⁰

In acknowledgment of this fact, Muslims have an inner love and compassion for people of all faiths, races, and nations, for they consider them as the manifestations of God in this world and treat them with heartfelt respect and love. This is the very basis of communities administered by Islamic morality. The values of the Qur'an hold a Muslim responsible for treating all people, whether Muslim or non-Muslim, kindly and justly, protecting the needy and the innocent and "preventing the dissemination of mischief". Mischief comprises all forms of anarchy and terror that remove security, comfort, and peace.

Apologizing and Forgiving Each Other

Apologizing and forgiving each other is an important characteristic of good character. Allah says that if you want that Allah forgives you, pardon as well as overlook people and He is Merciful and forgiving³³. It is evident from the sayings of Allah that the quality of forgiving, gentleness, and kindness are important characteristics of good character. These qualities of forgiving, gentleness, and kindness require patience under trying circumstances. It is also evident that exercising self-restraint and swallowing back anger requires patience. So, in conclusion, we can say that apologizing and forgiving each other are vital qualities of people.

Objectives of the Survey

This study was designed to explore whether the teachers at the

secondary level provide character education or not.

The Population of the Survey

The population of the study came from the Hazara Division with class ten students.

Sample of Survey

Fourteen Hundred and thirty-eight (1438) students were picked up from the population of class ten (10) students of the Hazara Division. Of the whole sample, 50% consisted of Govt. sector students, and 50% consisted of private sector schools. Of the total sample, 50.4% were female students while 49.6% were male students. The ratio of urban and rural area students was fifty-fifty.

Sampling Technique

A stratified random sampling technique was used to select students from both public and private secondary schools.

Research Methodology

The nature of this study was descriptive. The questionnaire about character education provided in schools was used for the collection of data. This survey research was distributed in the following phases.

Preparation Phase

After consulting the review of related literature, the questionnaire for measuring character education was developed. The developed questionnaire was validated by experts. The questionnaire consisted of nine items that were developed on the different aspects of the presence of good character/behavior.

The questionnaires regarding character education were translated from English into Urdu and from Urdu they were translated back to English. This method of translation is called the back-translation method. The purpose of applying this method was to ensure that original and translated questionnaires convey the same meaning.

Likert scale with five points represented questionnaire. The Likert scale about character education had the options of "Never", "sometimes", "Don't know", "often", and "Always". All the options of the questionnaire were assigned numbers i.e. 1 to 5. "Never" was assigned 1 number, and "Always" was assigned number 5.

To check whether the students understand the questionnaire or not and know whether they can answer the questions or not, a pilot study was conducted on a hundred (100) students. The Cronbach Alpha reliability

coefficient for the character education was 0.712.

As a result of random selection, eighty-four (84) schools were selected. To conduct the study during school hours, twenty students each were selected from each school after formal permission from the school principals/ Heads.

Implementation Stage

The data was collected through the personal visits of the researcher. It was made sure that the students know how to respond to items mentioned in the questionnaires. All students were briefed about the ethical norms of the data and research. The students were demonstrated and explained how to fill the questionnaires. Besides, the students were ensured that the information provided by them will be used for research only and it will be kept confidential. The questionnaire was returned in about 15- 20 minutes. The collected data was analyzed through frequency and bar charts. SPSS 16-version was for the analysis of information collected from students.

Results and Discussions

The data were analyzed according to the objectives which are presented in the following tables and bar charts.

Table 1 My Teachers Stress Living According to the Teachings of Islam.

		Never	Sometimes	Don't Know	Often	Always	Total
Gender	Male	175	112	31	114	281	713
	Female	163	91	19	142	310	725
Total		338	203	50	256	591	1438

Table 1 highlight that majority (591+256) of the students opined that their teachers stress the students to live according to the teachings of Islam.

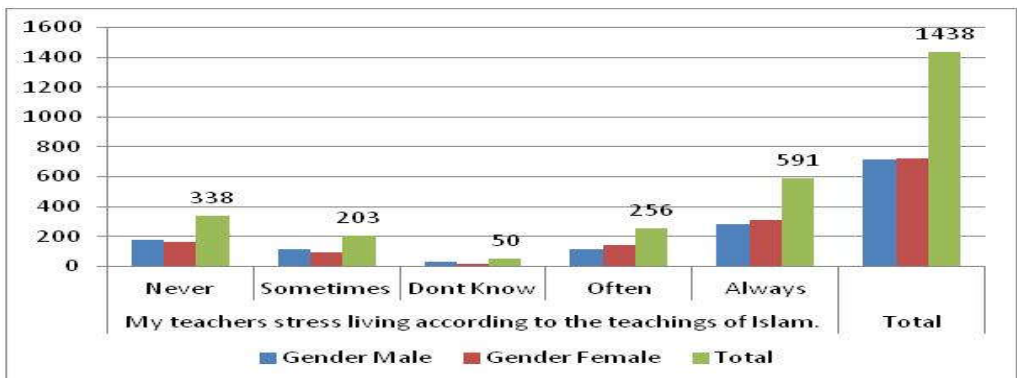


Figure 1 My Teachers Stress Living According to the Teachings of Islam

According to figure, majority of the students responded that their

teachers stress living according to the teachings of Islam.

These results indicate that majority of the students were agreed that they were provided character building training. The elements of good character are that the students should remain honest and fair in life. It is true that the inculcation of these qualities are the responsibilities of the teachers. These qualities should be inculcated in them along with formal educational training.

Table 2 My School Provides Character Building Training

		Never	Sometimes	Don't Know	Often	Always	Total
Gender	Male	9	47	40	214	403	713
	Female	13	40	38	171	463	725
Total		22	87	78	385	866	1438

Table 2 elaborates that majority (385+866) of the students expressed that teachers provide character building training to the students.

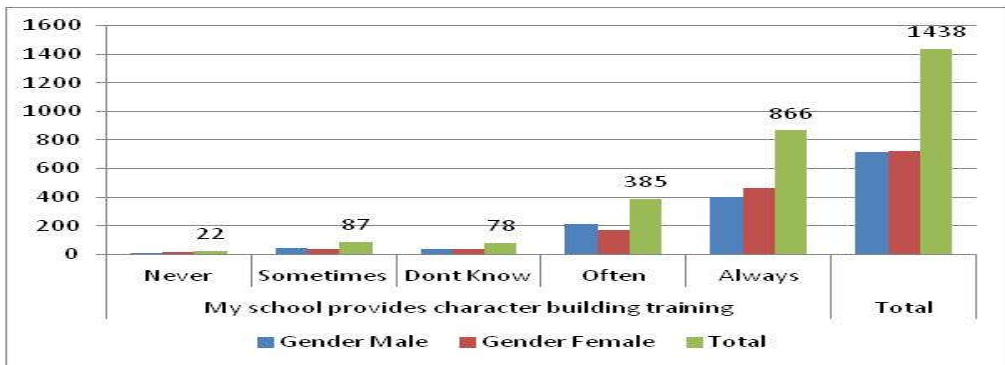


Figure 2 My School Provides Character Building Training

According to figure, majority of the students responded that character training is provided to them in the schools.

Table 3 Conflict Resolution Training

		Never	Sometimes	Don't Know	Often	Always	Total
Gender	Male	37	21	74	104	477	713
	Female	28	19	39	92	547	725
Total		65	40	113	196	1024	1438

According Table 3, Majority (1024+196) of the students were agreed that their teachers train them for the resolution of conflicts.

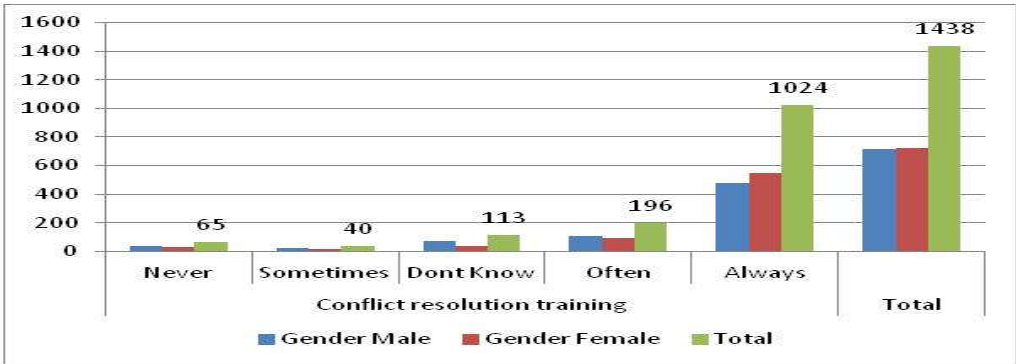


Figure 3 Conflict Resolution Training

According Table 3, Majority (877+63=940) of the students were agreed that their teachers train them for the resolution of conflicts.

Table 4 I Feel Happy with my Class Fellows

		Never	Sometimes	Don't Know	Often	Always	Total
Gender	Male	120	29	94	36	434	713
	Female	118	27	109	27	444	725
Total		238	56	203	63	878	1438

Table 4 elaborates that majority (878+63) of the students feel happy in the company of their class fellows in the class.

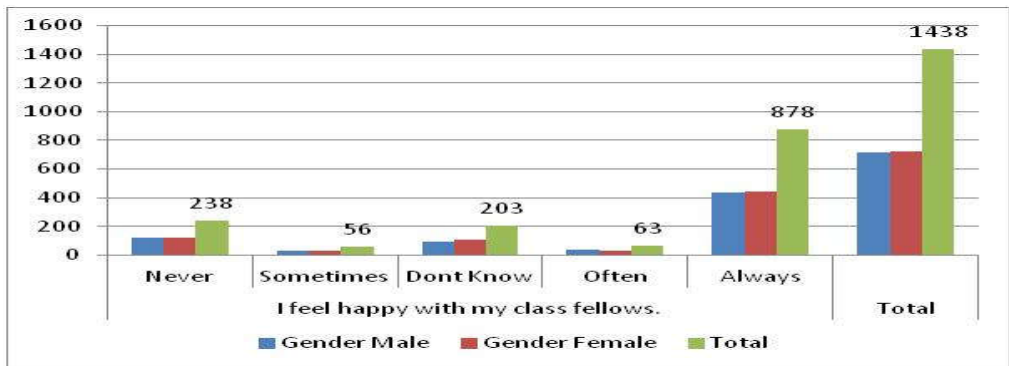


Figure 4 I Feel Happy with my Class Fellows

Majority of the students feel happy in the company of their class fellows in the class.

Table 5 Character Education is Emphasized in our Curriculum

		Never	Sometimes	Don't Know	Often	Always	Total
Gender	Male	35	98	15	241	324	713
	Female	19	113	19	208	366	725
Total		54	211	34	449	690	1438

Character Education According to Qur'an and Hadith:

Table 5 elucidates that majority (690+449) of the students expressed that character education is emphasized in curriculum of grade 10.

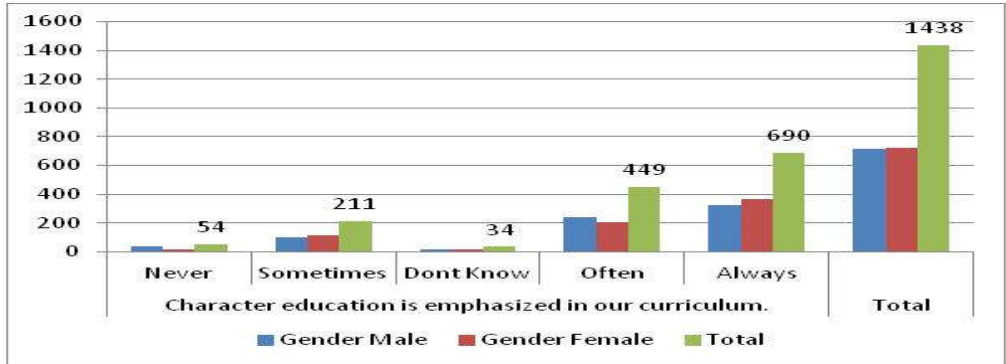


Figure 5 Character Education is Emphasized in our Curriculum

Graph also highlights that majority of the students agreed that character education is emphasized in their curriculum.

Table 6 Character of Great Muslim Heroes is a part of our Curriculum

		Never	Sometimes	Don't Know	Often	Always	Total
Gender	Male	32	20	34	91	536	713
	Female	21	13	22	59	610	725
Total		53	33	56	150	1146	1438

Table 6 depicts that majority of the students (1146+150) say that character of great Muslim leaders is a part of our curriculum.

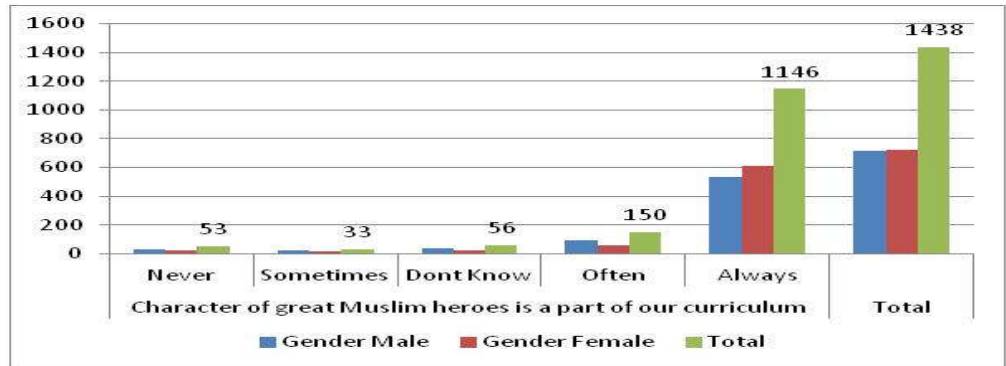


Figure 6 Character of Great Muslim Heroes is a part of our Curriculum

Figure 6 also shows that students responded that character of great Muslim heroes is made a part of their curriculum.

Table 7 School Administration Investigates Bullying Cases at the School

		Never	Sometimes	Don't Know	Often	Always	Total
Gender	Male	101	49	158	84	321	713
	Female	109	33	183	60	340	725
Total		210	82	341	144	661	1438

Table 7 indicates that majority of the students (661+144) responded that the school administration investigates bullying cases at school.

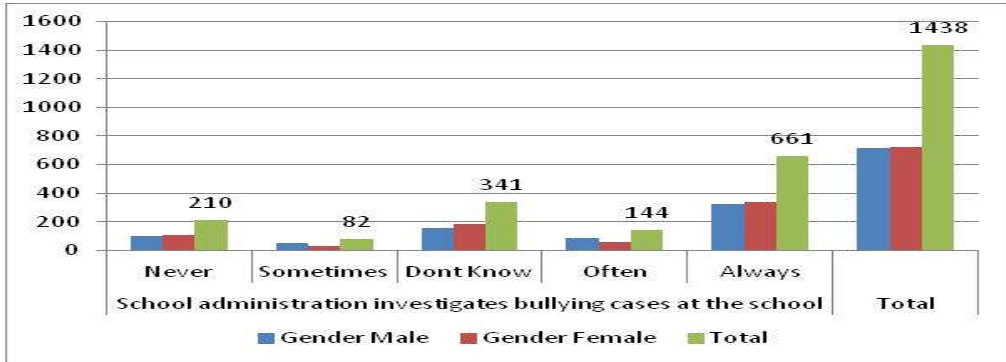


Figure 7 School Administration Investigates Bullying Cases at the School

Figure 7 also depicts that majority of the students responded that bullying cases are investigated in their schools.

Table 8 My Class Fellows Treat Each Other with Respect

		Never	Sometimes	Don't Know	Often	Always	Total
Gender	Male	138	43	51	78	403	713
	Female	139	40	32	84	430	725
Total		277	83	83	162	833	1438

Table 8 highlights that majority of the students (833+162) responded that their class fellows respect each other.

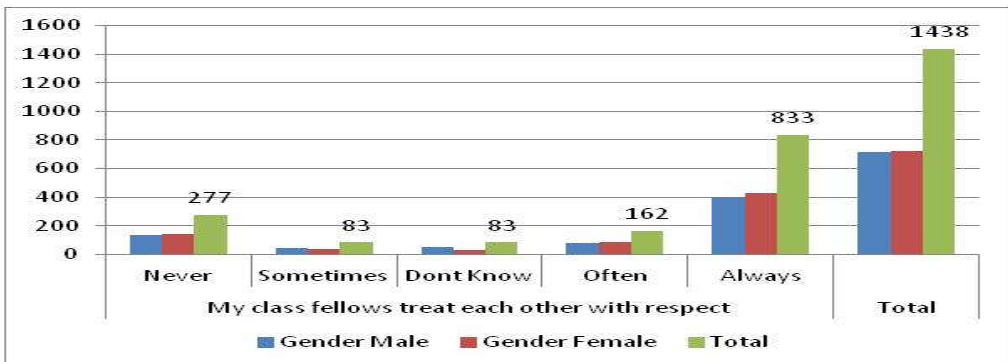


Figure 8 My Class Fellows Treat Each Other with Respect

Figure 8 also highlights that majority of the students were agreed that they treat each other with respect.

Table 9 My Class Fellows Apologize in Case of Hurting Each Other

		Never	Sometimes	Don't Know	Often	Always	Total
Gender	Male	133	41	31	55	453	713
	Female	132	23	19	53	498	725
Total		265	64	50	108	951	1438

Table 9 shows that the majority of the students (951+108) expressed that the students apologize to each other in case of hurting each other.

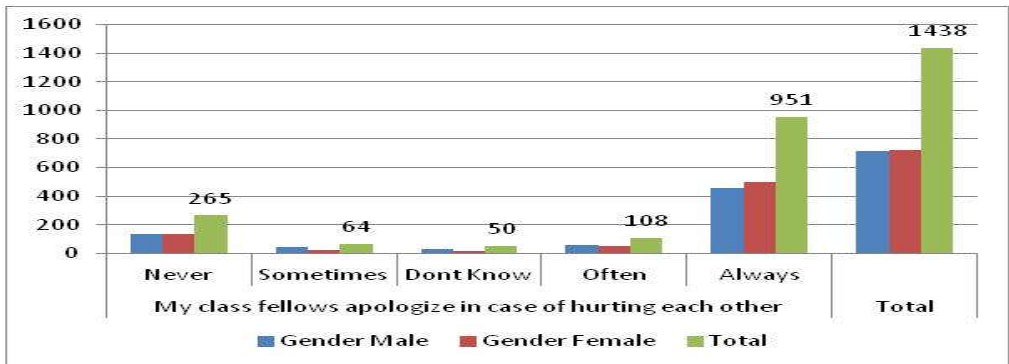


Figure 9 My Class Fellows Apologize in Case of Hurting Each Other

Figure 9 also depicts that majority of the students responded that they are trained to apologize in case of hurting each other.

Discussion

The findings of the study revealed that the students opined that the teachers teach us to live according to the teachings of Islam. These results are contradictory to the results of Iqbal, Idris, and Ali (2018)³¹ who found that students had the opinion that moral development is given little importance as a whole but at the individual level, some effort is made by the teachers. The verses of the Holy Qur'an and Hadiths that give importance to good manners, respect, loyalty, fairness, and cooperation.³² The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) also said that he has been sent to the perfect moral character of the people.³³

The majority of the students were agreed that their teachers train them for the resolution of conflicts. Help students acquire the moral skills of solving conflicts fairly and without force.³⁴

Character education formally made a part of their curriculum and the character of great Muslim heroes is discussed extensively in their curriculum. These results are in line with the results of Iqbal, Idris, and Ali (2018)³⁴ who found that contents and material are available for helping in the character (moral development) education of the students. They moved forward and argued that despite the presence of material; the activities are not regularly

organized at schools.

The results further highlight that Schools investigate the bullying cases in classes. On the other hand, Iqbal, Idris, and Ali (2018)³⁴ that each school has a moral code of conduct to be followed but practically that is not given much importance. These results indicate that in addition to the making efforts for the better academic achievement of students, in the Hazara region importance to security in the classrooms is also given. It is because if the classes are free from bullying and teachers to adopt positive behavior towards the students, it will have a positive effect on the psychological condition of the students. They will feel secure in the class. As a result, positive behaviors of the students develop and they will also excel in their academics.

The results further show that students are trained to apologize if they hurt each other. These results imply that these students are given training in the rights of other people to live, emotional values such as love and affection, and social values such as brotherhood. These results also indicate that the students are trained in humanistic values such as fairness, quality of forgiveness, sincerity, and impartiality, etc.

Conclusions

Teachers stress their children to live according to the teachings of Islam. They provide character-building training to the students. Teachers train their students to resolve conflicts among themselves and investigate the bullying cases in classes. As a result of which they remain happy in their classes. Character education is made a part of their curriculum and the character of great Muslim heroes is discussed extensively in their curriculum. These students are trained to apologize if they hurt each other.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were suggested based on findings and conclusions:

1. The education department should show high concern and should implement a check and balance system for the actual implementation of character education at schools.
2. The teachers may be trained to effectively provide character education to the students in their respective schools. In this way, the students will be able to equip with moral values and they will be able actively and productively participate in social learning programs.
3. The teachers should be aware of the provision of character education according to their physical and mental age level. In the same manner, the socioeconomic and religious background of the students should also be kept in mind while working on their moral development.

In addition to the development of the character of the students in the class, workshops, seminars, and other relevant programs should be organized for the character building of the students.



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- ¹⁰ Sūrah Al Mā'idah, 91
- ¹¹ Sunan al-Trimidhī, Ḥadīth # 626
- ¹² Ṣaḥīḥ Al Bukhārī, Book 18, Ḥadīth # 1512
- ¹³ Sūrah al Qalam, 4
- ¹⁴ Sunan al-Tirmidhī, Ḥadīth # 2612. Sunan Abī Dawūd, Ḥadīth # 4682
- ¹⁵ Sunan al Tirmidhī, Ḥadīth # 2018
- ¹⁶ Abbas Aroua. (2013). "The Quest for Peace in the Islamic Tradition", Transcend Media Service

- ¹⁷ Sūrah Al Anfāl, 1
- ¹⁸ Sūrah al Anfāl, 46
- ¹⁹ Sūrah al Hujarāt, 10
- ²⁰ *Ṣaḥīḥ Al Bukhārī*, Ḥadīth # 5718
- ²¹ *Ṣaḥīḥ Al Bukhārī*, Ḥadīth # 5665
- ²² Sūrah Al Baqarah, 246-247
- ²³ *Ṣaḥīḥ Al Bukhārī*, Ḥadīth # 2409
- ²⁴ *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Ḥadīth # 2587
- ²⁵ *Ṣaḥīḥ Al Bukhārī*, Ḥadīth # 624
- ²⁶ Sūrah Al Hujarāt, 11
- ²⁷ Sūrah Al Nahl, 90
- ²⁸ *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Ḥadīth # 2007
- ²⁹ Sūrah Al Hujurāt, 15
- ³⁰ Sūrah Al Mā'idah, 48
- ³¹ Iqbal, Kildris, M., Ali, R. (2018). "Concept of Moral Development in the Light of Qur'an and Sunnah and Contemporary system of Education". *Tahdhīb al Afkār*, pp: 27-39
- ³² Niwaz, Ishfaq, and Attaullah, (2018)
- ³³ Aḥmad, Musnad, Ḥadīth # 8952
- ³⁴ Lickona, T., Schaps, E., & Lewis, C. (2003). *CEP's Eleven Principles of Effective Character Education*, (Washington, DC: Character Education Partnership)