

**A Comparative Study of the Development
of the Primary Stage of Islamic Religious
Education in the State of Kuwait and
the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
from 1950 to 1990**

**Thesis submitted for the award of Doctor of Philosophy
to the Division of Education
at the University of Sheffield**

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VOLUME I

by

Adel Abdulwahab Eissa Al Sharaf

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated

**To all the people who were sacrificed
for the liberation of Kuwait**

To all teachers and parents in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia

To my family, relatives and friends

**To my wife Maryam and my four children,
Lolwah, Nour, Bader and Taibah**

with love

PART II

Chapter Four	Comparative analysis of I.R.E. curriculum textbooks in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia	
	Introduction	106
	The Saudi I.R.E. textbook for the first year	109
	The Kuwaiti I.R.E. textbook for the first year	114
	The Saudi I.R.E. textbook for the second year	117
	The Kuwaiti I.R.E. textbook for the second year	120
	The Saudi I.R.E. textbook for the third year	125
	The Kuwaiti I.R.E. textbook for the third year	130
	The advantages and disadvantages of the I.R.E. textbook for the two countries	136
	The I.R.E. textbook's actual functions and implementations in the light of its stated aims	144
	What do we need the I.R.E. textbook for?	147
	The implementation of the I.R.E. textbook	151
Chapter Five	The philosophy of the aims of I.R.E. in relation to Islam in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia	
	Introduction	160
	Islam and education	161
	Philosophy of education and Islamic religion	165
	I.R.E. aims and objectives	171
	Conclusion of the aims of I.R.E.	176
	Aims of I.R.E. and the major social factors in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia	184
Chapter Six	The role of I.R.E. teachers in the development process in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia	
	Introduction	199
	What is the role of I.R.E. teachers in the Gulf region?	201
	Why we teach I.R.E.	212
	I.R.E. teaching methods	217

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CONTENTS

Explanations of Islamic words	1
Abstract	2
Introduction	4
PART I	
Chapter One	The central question of the study 11
	Research questions 13
	The purpose of the study 14
	The methodology 18
	The importance of the study 21
Chapter Two	Review of literature 28
	Introduction 29
	Section A 33
	Section B 46
Chapter Three	Historical Background 56
	Introduction 57
	History of Islamic Religious Education 60
	1) Informal I.R.E. 61
	2) Formal I.R.E. 63
	I.R.E. in Kuwait before 1950 65
	I.R.E. in Kuwait after 1950 70
	I.R.E. in Saudi Arabia before 1950 72
	I.R.E. in Saudi Arabia after 1950 75
	The similarities and the differences in I.R.E. between Kuwait and Saudi Arabia 77
	General analysis 84
	Introduction to the aims of I.R.E. in primary education in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia 86
	The aims of I.R.E. in primary education in Kuwait 89
	The aims of I.R.E. in primary education in Saudi Arabia 94
	A comparative view of the aims of I.R.E. in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia 98
	Conclusion 102

Chapter Seven	Parents and I.R.E.	
	Introduction	227
	The nature of the relation between parents and I.R.E.	229
	Parents from the Islamic perspective	231
	Parents' duties towards their children	235
	Effective participation between I.R.E. and parents in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia	240

PART III

Chapter Eight	Data Analysis and Discussion	
	Introduction	253
	The study's progress in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia	254
	Statistical treatment for results	256
	A. Validity and objectivity of the questionnaire	256
	B. Reliability of the questionnaire	257
	Analysis of parents' responses	258
	Conclusion	279
	Discussion of the Kuwaiti and Saudi interviewees regarding the four fields	281
	Field One: I.R.E. and society	281
	Field Two: Children and the importance of I.R.E.	284
	Field Three: Parents' co-operation with the I.R.E. teacher	287
	Field Four: I.R.E. curriculum for the primary stage of education	290
	Analysis of teachers' responses	294
	Conclusions	311
	Kuwaiti and Saudi I.R.E. teachers' remarks	315
	Inspectors' response to the teachers' fields	320
	Field One: Aims of I.R.E.	320
	Field Two: The role of I.R.E. in society	324
	Field Three: Parents and I.R.E.	326
	Field Four: Teachers of I.R.E.	329
	Field Five: I.R.E. textbook	332
	Field Six: Developed I.R.E.	337
	Conclusion	340

Chapter Nine	Conclusion and Recommendations	343
	Recommendations	346
	I.R.E. curriculum textbook	347
	I.R.E. teachers	348
	I.R.E. and parents	350
Bibliography		352
FIGURES		
	1. Aims of I.R.E. and the major contextual factors in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia	186
	2. The general foundation for developing I.R.E.	194
	3. I.R.E. teacher surrounded by the education system	206
	4. Effective participation between I.R.E. and parents	243
APPENDICES		
	1. Saudi I.R.E. textbook for the first year	
	2. Kuwaiti I.R.E. textbook for the first year	
	3. Saudi I.R.E. textbook for the second year	
	4. Kuwaiti I.R.E. textbook for the second year	
	5. Saudi I.R.E. textbook for the third year	
	6. Kuwaiti I.R.E. textbook for the third year	
	7. Statistical treatment for results	
	8. Transcription of interviews	
	9. Questionnaires	

Explanations of Islamic Words

<i>Akhirah</i>	Resurrection
<i>Allah</i>	God
<i>Ansar</i>	The helpers, title of the believers of Madina who received and assisted the Prophet after his migration from Makkah
<i>Adhan</i>	The announcement and call for Islamic prayer five times a day
<i>Hadith</i>	What the Prophet did or said, or his tacit approval of something said or done in his presence
<i>Hidjra</i>	The emigration of the Prophet from Makkah to Madina, the starting point of the Islamic era
<i>Imam</i>	Leader of the congregational prayer
<i>Kuttab</i>	Elementary Quranic schools
<i>Makkah</i>	(Mecca) The birth place of Islam and the place of Muslim pilgrimage (Haji)
<i>Madina/Medinah</i>	The city of the Prophet Muhammad after the hidjra, and the second holy city of Islam
<i>Muhajirin</i>	The emigrants who came with the Prophet from Makkah, or before or after him, and later made up a considerable proportion of the population of Madina
<i>Mullah / Mutawa</i>	A Muslim community leader, also an Imam at the mosque
<i>p.b.o.h.</i>	Peace Be On Him
<i>Seerah</i>	The life model of the Prophet Muhammad
<i>Sharia</i>	The way of Allah - the totality of religious and moral laws of Islam
<i>Sunnah</i>	The Prophet Muhammad's sunnah comprises His deeds, utterances, and His spoken approval
<i>Al Tawhid</i>	Means literally 'making one' or asserting oneness; it applied theologically to the oneness of Allah in all its meanings
<i>Ulama</i>	Muslim scholars and thinkers (plural of ' <i>alim</i> '), one who possesses the quality of <i>ilm</i> , knowledge and piety

ABSTRACT

The central question of this thesis asks: what are the differences, if any, between Islamic Religious Education development in the state of Kuwait and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia? A thorough review of literature concerning Islamic Religious Education (I.R.E.) is carried out, covering the historical background of I.R.E. during the 1950s and '60s in both Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. The development in I.R.E. that has taken place up to date is highlighted, and the aims of I.R.E. in primary education in the two countries are examined.

The formats of the I.R.E. curriculum textbooks in the first, second and third years of primary education in each country are compared. The development of these textbooks with regard to the aims and functions of I.R.E. are described, and their advantages and disadvantages analysed. The philosophy of the aims of I.R.E. is discussed in depth, with respect to Islam in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, focussing on the relation between the Islamic religion and education. The question of why I.R.E. is taught is considered, as well as the role of the I.R.E. teacher in the development process in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. The involvement and duties of parents and teachers, and their effectiveness in the communication of I.R.E. to children is discussed. The level of parents' participation in I.R.E. is examined.

Questionnaires were distributed to teachers of I.R.E. and parents in both countries, and the results analysed. This showed significant differences between Kuwaiti and Saudi I.R.E. teachers in terms of both background and responses. The study was concluded with several suggestions and recommendations for the integration of I.R.E. in the two countries.

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

If we are serious about giving religion its true place in the educational curricula we have to do two things almost simultaneously. First, we must not restrict religious guidance to formal traditional lessons on religion. Second, we must reconsider the syllabuses devised for this particular lesson and re-evaluate them in most parts of the Muslim world.

(Qutb 1979, p.55)

Modernisation, restoration, and transition are features of the education system in modern life. Perhaps it is accepted by all in the east and the west that many countries should gather to discuss and argue what is the best for their education, and find in which direction they should lead their pupils. One sees summit after summit, meeting after meeting, conferences, projects and many other proposals followed one by another in different places at different times, all aiming to achieve better education curricula in developed countries.

A cultural borrowing and curriculum change is another feature of the educational system of the developed countries. For example Japan, U.S.A. and Europe are in competition and challenge to present an appropriate curriculum to pupils in the primary stage. The developmental process of their curricula will never end and this is natural.

One of the most important things during this movement and development is for each country to refer back to its culture, origin and religion as a general foundation of the educational curriculum. In this way each country's curriculum is shaped by its own history and culture.

In Muslim countries the Islamic religion is one of the most significant foundations of the educational curriculum. Teaching Islamic Religious Education

(I.R.E.) involves different levels and therefore different considerations.

In 1975 the Gulf Co-operation Council (G.C.C.) was established. The Arab Bureau for the Gulf States Educational Research Centre in Riyadh undertook responsibility for educational issues and the curriculum for the Gulf States. Although the main office and other branches have produced magnificent proposals and publications serving many fields scientifically, they did not, as this thesis will show, identify the aims and objectives needed for I.R.E. to be integrated and so accept one curriculum. As a result this comparative study between the State of Kuwait and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia aims to examine the differences of I.R.E. curriculum in primary education (ages 6-10 in Kuwait and 6-12 in Saudi Arabia) and its development since the 1950s in order to present a suitable proposal for one united I.R.E. curriculum implementing the educational and religious needs for the two societies in the light of Islamic principles.

Al-Kuwait Alyaum, a government magazine, (2nd December 1991) concerning article 139/91, recommends forming a specific consultant committee regarding the application of Islamic legislation. This article was issued by His Highness the Emir of Kuwait. The thesis takes this development into consideration and looks forward to working beside it in an academic way. In this way the thesis may help the committee by presenting arguments matching their requests and guiding them to a way of applying Islamic legislation within I.R.E. in the primary stage. The thesis aims to refresh their knowledge and assist towards any decision which might be taken in the future, in particular by providing them with the Saudi model of I.R.E. .

Because our social and educational life in the region is not close to Islam, the researcher feels it is important to make a comprehensive study and analysis of the I.R.E. curricula's application and differences, especially within the primary

education sector in the two countries, as Kuwait and Saudi Arabia are two similar cultures. They share the same language and religion and it is therefore important to look at their differences as well as their similarities so as to find the best way of teaching I.R.E. in the Gulf region. By 'the development of I.R.E. in the Gulf region' this thesis means what is required to provide teachers and parents in the Gulf's society with ideas, views and alternative answers for the problems they face in daily life with children in school or at home. In this way they can be helped to act positively towards society, from the religious and educational point of view.

This comparative study hopes that eventually Kuwait and Saudi Arabia will work together to bring their I.R.E. curricula into agreement and unite to improve education for the children of both countries. In this way the thesis accepts Holmes' argument that:

Comparative educationalists should, it seems to me, ask themselves, in spite of its long history, whether selective cultural borrowing is theoretically justified and feasible. If it is, then much more than at present needs to be known about the value system that motivates the outlook and behaviour of recipients of foreign innovation. For this reason I consider the establishment of useful ideal typical models in the light of which a clash of cultures can be analysed constitutes a major research task for comparative educationalists.

(Holmes 1981, p.33)

In the context of this study, Islam represents Holmes' 'ideal typical model'.

There is a hope that parents in the region understand the dimension of I.R.E. and its effect upon their children and deal with it accordingly. Also there appears to be a great wish to see that I.R.E. works effectively through society's institutions, especially schools and homes, and speeds up the improvement of education in the light of Islamic values and Arab culture.

There are a number of significant questions to be addressed in this study, further to the central question of the study and the research questions, to find out ways of developing I.R.E. through this comparison. Where does the country direct the coming generation? What is the philosophy of I.R.E. in the two countries? Do they have the same aims and objectives? Why do they have two different I.R.E. curricula? What is the role of the I.R.E. teacher? Can parents play a role in directing I.R.E.? And, finally, who is ultimately responsible for developing I.R.E. for the future generations? All these questions and many others will be discussed in detail in different parts of this study to make the concept of developing I.R.E. very clear, especially when they are linked to the study result. So in the three parts of this study the reader will find ways of developing I.R.E. through this comparison.

This thesis contains three parts, the whole divided into consecutive chapters. Part I, Chapter One identifies the central problem of the study and aims to examine the differences between the development of I.R.E. in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. Chapter Two reviews the literature to give a clear understanding to the non-Arabic speaking reader. Chapter Three provides the historical background of I.R.E. since the 1950s up to the 1980s, and shows the stages and gradual development of I.R.E.

Part II, Chapter Four clarifies the comparative analysis of the I.R.E. curriculum textbooks in the two countries, with special reference to the primary stage, examining the textbooks' aims and means of implementation. Chapter Five deals with the philosophy of the aims of I.R.E. in relation to Islam in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, as well as identifying other major factors which are relevant to I.R.E. Chapter Six discusses the role of the I.R.E. teacher in the development process, and attempts to identify why I.R.E. is taught in the region. Chapter

Seven discusses the involvement of parents in I.R.E. and their duties. This chapter will also identify the effectiveness of parents and teachers in developing their children's education.

Part III, Chapter Eight, deals with the data analysis and discussion for both tools, (the questionnaire and interviews), and will compare the teachers' and parents' views towards I.R.E. Finally, Chapter Nine draws together the conclusions of the study, and makes suggestions and recommendations.

Because most of the references and sources of this study are in the Arabic language, the English reader might not find it easy to understand the different views and ideas about the Islamic religion, and there may be a tendency to reach different conclusions in spite of the arguments presented in this study. What must be accepted, however, is that it represents a comprehensive study of Kuwait and Saudi Arabia during and after the Gulf war, allowing teachers of I.R.E., parents and inspectors to explain their views on I.R.E. in the region. Moreover it is presented from an Islamic viewpoint.

PART I

CHAPTER ONE

CHAPTER ONE

The Central Question of the Study

SECTION A

The main aim of this study is to answer the question: *What are the differences, if any, between Islamic Religious Education development in the State of Kuwait and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia?*

Following the recommendations made in the Gulf States Educational Research Centre report (1985), that the Islamic Religious Education curriculum should give more attention to developing in three dimensions - students, teachers and curriculum - the first problem is, clearly, how to develop I.R.E. in primary schools. This is because a first important stage in the education system are the pupils in the age group 6-10 years old who are easy to guide and simple to form in any way, because they have impressionable minds on which to build.

In many Arab countries there is no sign of a development of I.R.E. in primary education so that it becomes an effective and practical subject. For this reason the importance of I.R.E. is unclear, with some people placing it first in importance, whilst others place it last. The Dean of Faculty of Sharia in Kuwait clearly places it first, pointing out:

In the name of liberalism, nationalism and socialism we in the Arab and Islamic countries are disappointed that we cannot live, at all levels, better economically, politically and morally. Islam invites us to follow this path totally.

(Al Nashmi 1980, pp 12-13)

In 1975 the Arab Bureau of Education for the Gulf States was established with its headquarters in Riyadh and branches in other Gulf states. The Bureau aims to study educational issues within the Gulf states, i.e. curriculum, evaluation, teaching methods and general issues. Each subject has a special team, for instance Science, Maths, Arabic, English and Religion. The organisation's members represent and participate in all curriculum subjects. In addition they work to solve curriculum problems and to bring the curriculum up to the Ministry of Education's standard. Although their important Report is written in Arabic, the writer has quoted from it, translating into English as accurately as possible those parts which are relevant to this study.

The first aim for the Centre has been *to work to unite and integrate the aims of education in the Gulf region*. A study on developing I.R.E. in the Gulf States in general was held in 1984 and the field work study finished in 1985, producing a final report about the development of I.R.E. It has been said:

The centre has tried recently a project to integrate the general aims of education into a general foundation, together with the aims of the stages of education and the curriculum. This was agreed by a general conference and the Executive Council so that the latest achievements of the Centre in terms of development of the curriculum could be included in the textbook for teaching I.R.E. in the primary stage.

(G.A.S.E.R.C. 1984, p.7)

The current study will investigate the findings of the 1984 seminar and look at their suggestions and recommendations. It will also discuss and analyse the outcome of the report in order to find the best way to develop I.R.E. and help I.R.E. teachers with their day to day problems, particularly in the primary stage. The report will be examined and surveyed in the light of the future development of I.R.E. in primary education, with Kuwait and Saudi Arabia providing a comparative study so as to investigate the following questions:

Research questions

1. Is there any statistically significant difference between Kuwaiti and Saudi parents in their views of the role of I.R.E. and society?
2. Is there any statistically significant difference between Kuwaiti and Saudi parents in their views of the importance of I.R.E. for future generations?
3. Is there any statistically significant difference between Kuwaiti and Saudi parents in their views towards co-operation with I.R.E. teachers?
4. Is there any statistically significant difference between Kuwaiti and Saudi parents in their views of I.R.E. curriculum textbooks in the first, second and third years in primary education in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia?
5. Is there any statistically significant difference between Kuwaiti and Saudi I.R.E. teachers in their views about the aims of I.R.E. in primary education in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia?
6. Is there any statistically significant difference between Kuwaiti and Saudi I.R.E. teachers' views of the role of I.R.E. in society?
7. Is there any statistically significant difference between Kuwaiti and Saudi I.R.E. teachers' attitudes towards parents' role in I.R.E.?
8. Is there any statistically significant difference between Kuwaiti and Saudi I.R.E. teachers' role in I.R.E.?
9. Is there any statistically significant difference between Kuwaiti and Saudi

I.R.E. teachers' views of their I.R.E. curriculum textbooks in the first, second and third years in primary education in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia?

10. Is there any statistically significant difference between Kuwaiti and Saudi I.R.E. teachers' views towards developing I.R.E.?

These questions are very relevant to the central question of the study (see Chapter One, p.11), and show the fields this study is aiming to examine.

The purpose of the study

This comparative study aims to investigate the differences between Kuwaiti and Saudi I.R.E. in primary education.

One of the reasons for making this comparison between Kuwait and Saudi Arabia is that during my period of teaching I realised that I.R.E. in Saudi Arabia is different from that in Kuwait in many important ways, e.g. in the textbooks, as well in its aims and the approach to I.R.E. in society, despite the fact that both countries follow Islam. I felt it would be interesting to investigate the reasons for this.

Teachers of I.R.E., parents and educational inspectors are the main participants of the study sample. This investigation will focus on the I.R.E. textbook for the first, second and third years. It will compare the aims of I.R.E. in the two countries, its philosophy and implementation. In addition to this the investigation will examine the teacher of I.R.E.'s role in a developing society and, finally, will identify parents' participation in I.R.E. and their effectiveness upon the children's understanding of I.R.E.

In fact all these factors can assist the researcher to examine clearly the development of I.R.E. between the two countries. Ultimately the outcome of this comparison could lead to a new model of I.R.E. which can be used for the two countries in the future, and unite the teaching of I.R.E. in the Gulf region.

Benhamid, in his article 'Comparative Education, Contemporary Issues and Trends' discusses the comparative studies in Arab countries and points out:

In order to understand the state and status of comparative education in the Arab region today, as practice and as a field of theoretical investigation, we need to look at the factors that influence the development of education in general, and of comparative education in particular.

(U.N.E.S.C.O. 1990, p.291)

The researcher, through many years of teaching I.R.E. in primary, intermediate and secondary education, can say that I.R.E. is not as clearly identified as other subjects. As a result, there are many different and varied views about what I.R.E. is. In its conclusions the Gulf Centre report states:

The work that has been done in order to develop the teaching of I.R.E. - in spite of its importance - has been limited and does not achieve all its objectives by comparison with other subjects.

(G.A.S.E.R.C. 1984, p.299)

For example, some teachers might think that I.R.E. is simply teaching the student about religion as a subject in school. Others might say it is giving an idea about a good thing, or memorising verses from the Holy Quran, while some think it is to create good behaviour in students.

It is the responsibility of the educational system in the region to teach I.R.E. at universities and colleges. If we are to encourage students in Islamic Studies to become I.R.E. teachers in the future, what do we expect them to know

about the subject? Students in different colleges seem to have no idea about what I.R.E. means. Parents also say nothing about Islamic Religious Education, its importance and role in society. They say nothing about improving or developing I.R.E., except when some of them have been interviewed and questioned during the 1980s, either in Kuwait or Saudi Arabia.

There are many ways to develop the subject, and the way I.R.E. is taught is very important. However, some people think it should still be taught using the blackboard, regardless of new teaching aids, because the subject is old and the alternative teaching methods are new. It is therefore necessary to discuss ways of introducing new teaching aids and new methods into the teaching of I.R.E. This was discussed as part of the seminar on the Gulf States Educational Centre. The report pointed out:

There are many who believe the needs of developing I.R.E. should contain a foundation, performance of the curriculum as well as a method for evaluation.

(ibid. p.299)

So if we believe that teaching I.R.E. is important then we also must look at new teaching methods and consider whether the use of new methods will be positive or negative. This also will be part of the current study.

Looking back at the development of I.R.E. in the Gulf, in modern schools in many Arab countries there is no sign of development and no clear structure, apart from Kuwait where the new I.R.E. text book was introduced during the mid 1980s. We are fortunate in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia that the teaching of I.R.E. is compulsory in Arab schools from the primary through to the secondary stage, along strictly defined lines. It has been pointed out that:

The future of Islamic religious education in the Arab countries and Islamic societies depends upon the understanding of the experts to encourage the building of the education system along Islamic lines.
(Farhan 1982, p.97)

In many secular states religious education is left open as a subject for students and merely presents ideologies, human doctrines and models as a conceptual framework, without a core of belief. In some Muslim countries I.R.E. avoids teaching pupils any of these ideologies and simply represents Islam as the religion of the state. A middle way between these two extremes needs identifying.

During the 1950s and '60s I.R.E. had a different form from the present day in both Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. This could be formal or informal; in school, homes and/or mosques. All these stages need to be studied as background before going deeply into the present I.R.E. curriculum. However, it is necessary to study past teaching methods of I.R.E. in order to enable teachers to be able to put the present day methods into the correct context with a full knowledge of I.R.E. in Islamic countries.

I.R.E. is a subject like many other subjects such as Maths, Arabic and Science, in the primary schools, but I.R.E. needs to be discussed at length in order to find out what the differences are between I.R.E. in the two countries. The reason for this is that I.R.E. is part of the religion of the state, and it is essential for every Muslim to know his/her duties.

SECTION B

The Methodology

This section will focus on how this comparative study will investigate differences between Kuwaiti and Saudi society and I.R.E.

The primary methodology will be the case study, because it represents a large number of teachers and students in the region. Also many parents will be involved in order that they may participate and give their opinions and ideas to inform the results of the study. The reason for this is that in the Arab countries most parents are often not inclined to be involved in education, except for a small number who visit the school and ask the teachers for help.

There are two methods of research which will be conducted for this study - questionnaires and interviews. The reason for choosing two research methods is to explore the subject precisely and comprehensively. Although there are advantages and disadvantages to using these two methods, using only questionnaires would be inadequate because some people may give answers which they feel they ought to give, not what they really think. Bell (1987) says:

A major advantage of the interview is its adaptability. A skilful interviewer can follow up ideas, probe responses, and investigate motives and feelings which a questionnaire can never do. (p. 70)

Even if the questionnaire is followed up, remember that many people find them very impersonal. As this comparative study is undertaken in two countries, one method is not sufficient. The first view sees the advantage of the interview only, whereas there is another view which says:

Interviews may not be the only source of data within a particular research design. In some cases they may be the main source implemented by observational field notes, questionnaires, repertory grids and so on.

(Powney & Watts 1987, p.26)

As a result of this it can be seen that there is an advantage in the questionnaire as it gives people time to think out their answers. Also the questions measure many things in the area of I.R.E. and link them together as a whole. The disadvantage of the questionnaire is that it might take a long time searching for schools, teachers and parents, as some might feel unable to answer them because they have no background or knowledge of what is required. On the other hand people sometimes want to know the outcome of the work, so the researcher should be clear what to do and why.

In this qualitative research the questionnaire on its own is not enough to give more information, especially when people answer without thinking or caring about the subject. The advantages and disadvantages of the interviews can be seen through the number of people chosen for semi-structured interviews, which is very small compared with the questionnaires. One sometimes finds that people are not happy to co-operate with the researcher. In an interview there are problems of time and place perhaps. Ads, in his book The Academic Research : its concept, methods and tools (1989), declares the advantages of interviewing to the researcher who is aiming for a qualitative description study or a survey study relevant to actual life (p.141).

Finally, I believe that interviews and questionnaires complement each other and can help when listening to the opinions of inspectors with regard to the I.R.E. curriculum in both Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

The sample of teachers and parents used in the study will be stage

sampling:

Stage sampling is an extension of cluster sampling. It involves selecting the sample in stages, that is taking samples from samples. Using the large community example referred to earlier, one type of stage sampling might be to select a number of schools at random and from within each of these schools select a number of classes at random.

(Cohen & Holliday 1979, p.105)

600 questionnaires will be prepared and divided into different areas (see Chapter 8 for more details). It will be a comparative and descriptive study. The data collected will be analysed both statistically and qualitatively using a T-test (see Appendix 7).

SECTION C

The Importance of the Study

Why investigate this problem of the differences in I.R.E. between Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, its aims, textbooks and the role of I.R.E. in society? In our lives probably everything changes from time to time, and nothing is fixed or certain. Heraclitus expresses this and says that "you do not step twice into the same river," (Kirk 1966, p.197). For instance the education system may change from year to year, from one country to another. However, for some this view is not absolutely correct, because there are some things that do not change, because they are to do with our belief in Allah.

The importance of I.R.E. comes from religion, and the emphasis is on "religion". There is no doubt that a conversation about Religion is very wide and comprehensive because, unlike Mathematics for example, Religion deals with the soul and body.

Many people have discussed Religion in a variety of ways such as Religion and faith, Religion and life, Religion and belief, Religion and science, and so on (see Chapter Two). This thesis will discuss Islamic Religion and education, not only in a general way but also specifically. This means the study will cover many things especially related to the Gulf region. The researcher chose this particular area, and not some other, because not all the Gulf states participated in the seminar held in Kuwait in 1984 to discuss the development of I.R.E. Academic institutions such as U.N.E.S.C.O. were also involved, although Saudi Arabia did not send a representative. So this study will consider the situation in Saudi Arabia in order to widen the 1984 experiment in relation to the teaching of I.R.E.

The study will concentrate on two countries - Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. Kuwait has been chosen because it is the researcher's own country and his experience in I.R.E. has been gained there, and also because there is an urgent need to see in what form Kuwait's education system can cope with I.R.E. after the recent war.

Saudi Arabia has been chosen because it is the closest country to Kuwait and also the largest in the Gulf region. It has many institutions of the Islamic religion. These religious bodies place great importance on teaching I.R.E. to the public, which sometimes affects pupils' attitudes towards religion. This study will therefore attempt to focus on public opinion, both inside and outside school, in order that I.R.E. can take its proper place of importance within the educational system's objectives so as to discuss the problems of pupils within an Islamic framework.

The curriculum of Islamic Religious Education in the Arab countries is obviously controlled by the State's implementation of the needs of society. This sometimes is an advantage to equal opportunities in education but can also be a drawback. It can sometimes cause serious problems if not presented appropriately.

The primary stage (6-12 year olds in Saudi Arabia, 6-10 in Kuwait) will provide the two case studies so as to furnish data to support the investigation into the advantages and disadvantages of the I.R.E. curriculum textbooks in both countries. By this I mean teaching methods, teachers' performance and textbook content, qualities and capacities which help pupils to understand the subject and its difficulties.

Moreover, it is important to compare teaching methods in the past with those of today so that we may learn from our mistakes and develop good practice still further. This will also help us to draw up objectives for the future, and prepare a programme for training I.R.E. teachers for the future. The textbook's content will be studied with a view to considering whether it is suitable for pupils at the primary stage, or whether it is too advanced for them at this young age.

The study will try to give a clear picture of what I.R.E. is generally and to identify the meaning of Islam and its relevance to education. As soon as we have this clear picture of Islam and its role in society we can see how it affects all of us, not just through education but in all facets of our lives.

Let me take an example of the secular state and identify why some people do not believe that religion is part of formal education. They think that religion is between man and God, while education is between man and man, or they might think that education is new knowledge while religion is old knowledge and that there is no way they can co-exist. This problem is perhaps difficult to solve in the same way that drug and alcohol problems, AIDS and sexual problems are difficult to solve, not to mention issues such as homelessness. In the secular state these problems cost a great deal of money to solve. I hope this study will help those who do not have a clear picture of the importance of I.R.E. in society, particularly in Muslim societies, to see that Religion can influence people, both spiritually and in their worldly behaviour.

In addition to this the study will focus on the teacher of I.R.E. and discuss the role of teaching religion in society. The point has been observed by the researcher through his previous study of many books and in the fieldwork in Kuwait, that teachers' performance needs to be thought about deeply, especially as it applies to Islamic Religious Education.

There may be some I.R.E. teachers who believe that we should teach I.R.E. to pupils because it is part of Islamic religion, no matter what method is used to teach it, and that pupils should just accept this.

Teachers' performance and teaching method are always at the centre of the educational process but, unfortunately, many teachers think that teaching I.R.E. is like boiling eggs - simple. The fact is that it is quite different. For example, many teachers who have been teaching for many years are probably feeling quite bored. They need to refresh their teaching methods and if this does not happen, then teaching standards might go down.

The researcher is aiming to help those teachers by giving them a chance to share and discuss I.R.E. with other colleagues and parents. We in the Gulf region need to think about this very seriously, no matter how long it takes, in order to develop teachers' performance. The pupils will feel the benefit in the long run.

To recognise the satisfaction of the pupils towards I.R.E. parents need to observe their children and then ask them how they feel regarding I.R.E.: are the children satisfied, or not? If not then the reason for that in the primary stage might be that the children's needs are being neglected.

This probably could happen with students in secondary education who can express what they feel, but this study wants to discover how pupils in primary education can express their feelings towards the subject. Parents can perhaps examine their children's feelings more than others and if there are any problems education should be looking carefully at our pupils to find out where the problem is. It is an important stage to study and analyse the reason behind the problem.

It is also important to find out if pupils like the subject, or the method of teaching - whether they think it is good or bad. Unfortunately many pupils do not have a chance even to talk openly to the teacher about their opinions and problems which may be solved within the I.R.E. classroom. It is important to give pupils - even those in the primary stage - the self confidence to say what they think, otherwise we are all losers, if we as teachers do not study pupils' attitudes towards I.R.E. as closely as possible. Although the report of the Educational Centre does not indicate or examine this, parents' participation in I.R.E. is weak. It seems that parental duty to help their children to understand the subject is important, and if parents could write about what their children feel in the primary schools this would be more objective. Some parents may be happy with I.R.E. and some may not. For those who are not happy they should feel able to discuss this and the reasons for it. Any improvement in teaching the subject will reflect upon their children. The first recommendation in the Gulf States Centre report says:

The philosophy of Islamic society should determine the aims and values in all educational and social institutions, and provide the learner with a religious knowledge as part of the aim of I.R.E.
(G.A.S.E.R.C. 1985, p.28)

If this study can help make both parents and children satisfied with the teaching of I.R.E., then it will be successful.

There is no doubt that keeping in touch with parents will improve the relationship between teacher and parents and this will reflect upon pupils' understanding and performance. On this point Al Nashmi (1980) suggested parents should be stopped from resigning their educational role and he said:

Resignation from education is a very dangerous thing which needs to be given attention by the States to examine the way people are treated in society as families, parents and mothers. The educational media, hierarchy and objectives need to co-operate in tackling this theme.

(Al Nashmi 1980, p.60)

People have varying degrees of interest in I.R.E. Some believe in the importance of religion, others do not, even though religion plays a big role in the lives of most of people, especially those in the Gulf region.

For this reason the study will concern itself with the importance of I.R.E. in a Muslim society through the education system. When people begin to apply the teachings of Islam to their lives they and their families benefit. As a Muslim country, Saudi Arabia is the biggest in the Gulf region, and the most important because of the Holy places, so the importance of I.R.E. in Saudi Arabia should be wider and deeper than it is in Kuwait.

This means that they are teaching Islamic religious education daily in school in Saudi Arabia, while it is less in Kuwait. It also means they teach Islamic religious education in more than one category of textbook. It is important to compare the past with the present in both countries in order to examine what is the most suitable position for the future.

However, the researcher believes that teaching I.R.E. in the future should be different from the way it was in the past because everything in our educational life has changed. We are living in the 1990s. Our way of life is totally different from the 1960s, so we need to improve our teaching methods whilst keeping the core of Religion as it is. For example, can we in the Gulf region use computers to teach children about Religion? Can we use the new technology through television or whatever to show our pupils that Religion is not only to be found in the mosque?

Finally, this study will add a new piece of literature to the library of Islamic religious education, locally and internationally. The survey up to this time seems to me to show that researchers have not covered I.R.E. in the Gulf region or internationally as it should, and this is mentioned in the Gulf States Report.

Because this study links Religion and education, it will therefore make a new contribution to Islamic religious education for all the researchers and students at Kuwait University College of Education, Islamic Studies Department to help them to be better teachers in the future.

CHAPTER TWO

CHAPTER TWO

Review of Literature

Introduction

Any review of Islamic religious education literature available in the Gulf region is very limited. However, there have been a number of important and relevant studies. Therefore, in order to make it clear to the reader, there will be rather more description than normal to help non-Arabic readers follow the subject, and to have a wide background of the importance of the study. In addition to this, to simplify this specific study about I.R.E., the researcher has translated the main sources and resources which are relevant and given a brief description of them in this chapter. The arguments and criticisms of these sources will be found in appropriate later chapters.

A general viewpoint of these sources in Sections A and B is that the researcher has tried to cover the published studies of Islamic religious education from many countries, both Muslim and non-Muslim, i.e. Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Sudan, Tunisia, Libya, Pakistan, UK and USA, in order to give the reader as wide a view of the subject as possible.

The literature encompasses books, articles, reports, lectures, conferences and theses from different bodies and institutions. Also independent opinions about Islamic religious education were studied from Muslim thinkers and 'Ulama' who have a rich experience of I.R.E. and who have written many books about Islam.

The I.R.E. curriculum in the Gulf region is not separated from that of other Arab countries. It is interesting to note that many Arab and Muslim countries teach Islamic religious education and might have the same objectives. This is because these objectives are derived from Islam and the Holy Quran - as will be noted from the literary sources - whether written in Muslim countries or in non-Muslim countries by Arab writers.

There are two main sources I have not listed, which are the Holy Quran and the "Sunnah". The reason for this is that all Muslim nations follow the principles of these two sources as a matter of course, not only in their education systems but through their lives and cultures. This is taken for granted in many Muslim countries.

In Section A I will discuss what Al Tumi, 1979, says about the role of I.R.E. teachers in society, as well as examining the characteristics of the Muslim teacher which is related to the field of 'I.R.E. and society'.

The second study by Qutb, 1980, which has described the teaching of I.R.E. by different methods, is related to the field of 'I.R.E. textbooks'.

Al Nashmi, 1980, deals with education and religion in Muslim countries, and mentions the basic constructions to an Islamic religious education, and discusses the responsibility of parents towards their children, and this study is relevant to the field of 'parents' co-operation with the I.R.E. teacher'.

However Alwan, 1981, expresses children's education in Islam in full detail. He also discusses a child's duties towards its parents, as well as the parent's duties towards its child, and this is relevant to the field of 'Children and the importance of I.R.E.'

Abdullah, 1982, deals with the importance of I.R.E. to pupils and links Islam and education in many ways, and this is quite relevant to the field of 'I.R.E. curriculum for the primary stage of education'.

Mujawer, 1982, in the meantime, discusses I.R.E. in the primary stage, focussing on psychological and physiological aspects of the learner, as well as arguing about the teaching methods of I.R.E. in all branches in primary, intermediate and secondary education.

In addition, Shalaby, 1982, focusses on the historical side of Islamic religious education, its role in the mosque and the kuttabs, showing its importance, and this is relevant to the field of 'development of I.R.E.'

Farhan, 1982, discusses the importance of I.R.E. aims from an Islamic point of view. He also deals with the challenges facing I.R.E. from the west, and this is relevant to the field of 'the aims of I.R.E.'

Mursi, 1983, deals with the foundation of Islamic religious education, focussing on children's education in Islam from an historical point of view, and this is relevant to the field of the 'teacher of I.R.E.'

Al Shafie, 1984, talks about the aims of I.R.E. in relation to Islam, and talks about a curriculum textbook in the Arab countries, and this is relevant to the field of 'development of I.R.E.'

Finally, Al Nahlawi, 1988, mentions the link between education and Islam, as well as the role of parents in Islamic societies to educate their children, paying attention to the co-operation between home and school.

In Section B I will examine and analyse the studies made by the Gulf Arab States Educational Research Centre in Kuwait and the Ministry of Education from 1980 up to 1987. These studies are very important and relevant, as I will show the result of each in comparison with the current study.

SECTION A

Al Tumi, Omar, 1979, Some of the Principles of Islamic Education

This book is clear in discussing matters of Islamic religious education and contains more than ten chapters on the subject. I will describe some of the chapters briefly and leave the arguments they raise to be discussed later in my thesis.

In the second chapter Al Tumi talks about the function of the teacher in Islamic religious education. He emphasises the importance of the teacher in modern education, especially in the teaching of I.R.E. He shows how in the past the Holy Quran and Sunnah gave teachers, scholars and 'Ulama' a major role in society. He also talks about the concept of the teacher's function in assessing the pupil in school and in society.

Chapter Three deals with the personality of the Muslim teacher; what it means; what are the characteristics of the Muslim teacher mentally, socially and physically. He divides these elements into sections and each section is discussed separately, e.g. in Section A, pp.111-116, I.R.E. teachers must be good Muslims and true believers in God. Section B: This belief should lead to better conduct in such ways as loyalty, patience, forgiveness, mercy and so on. In Section C, pp.169-185, he describes many characteristics of I.R.E. teacher, for instance to have a good intellectual understanding of I.R.E. as well as other subjects which may be relevant. Finally, an I.R.E. teacher needs to be optimistic, flexible and self confident.

He points out:

...the Muslim teacher should have a good relationship with God as well as with people in terms of religion. He/she also should have a good relationship with all pupils, teachers and others in society.
(Al Tumi 1979, p.127)

In addition Al Tumi discusses the moral duty of an I.R.E. teacher, and he lists a number of Muslim thinkers such as Al Gazali, Ibn Senaa, Ibn Sahnoon and others, and quotes what they have said about the following:

The moral duty of the I.R.E. teacher towards him/herself

The moral duty of the I.R.E. teacher towards God

The moral duty of the I.R.E. teacher towards pupils

The moral duty of the I.R.E. teacher towards teaching

Al Tumi's experience in teaching Islamic religious education was gained in the School of Education at the University of Al Fateh in Libya. He talks about preparing I.R.E. teachers within the Islamic framework (p.317) and compares the past with the present education. He says:

There are three aims of preparing I.R.E. teachers - personal aims reflect the change in teacher behaviour, knowledge, skills and attitudes. Then the professional aims regarding the teaching of Islamic religious education for the future. Finally social aims should be made by educational institutions in the society in which the teacher is to teach.

(ibid. p.317)

Qutb, Muhammad, 1980, Islamic Education Curriculum

Qutb described Islamic religious education from the beginning of the prophet Muhammad (p.b.o.h.) as the greatest teacher in Islam because he gained the knowledge from his Lord. On p.43 Qutb says that teachers ought to practise their religion more than others in such a way that their ability and capacity to teach and follow his orientation can be passed on to others. He pointed out that:

The educator should have a certain characteristic to enable him to do this dangerous task. Firstly a learner has to feel that his teacher is more learned than he, so he will be the receiver. Secondly the teacher has to be able to give in order to teach others. Thirdly, to know the best way of presenting knowledge.

(Qutb 1980, pp.43-44)

Qutb was suggesting some ways of Islamic religious education such as education by motivation, education by action, education by punishment, education by habit and education by story. Education by filling the time in these ways is a good thing and includes guidance from Islam (p.131).

Al Nashmi, Ajeel (1980) in Milestones in Education

Al Nashmi has examined some recent problems in education in the light of Islamic religious education. He criticises the present education system because he says it does not reflect back from the past which means that many societies have lost their moral education in the name of freedom. He points out that:

Western educational foundations are built on absolute freedom - freedom to act and work, freedom of thought and belief, but teaching religion and morality draws back the person from society.

(Al Nashmi 1980, p.33)

He then tries to discover the methods which could help to avoid conflict between religion and education. On p.58 he writes about parental recognition and asks whether television has taken over the parents' role.

The author points to three basic constructions to an Islamic religious education. Firstly it is comprehensive and balanced; secondly it helps a person to be discriminating; and thirdly it is the principle before the information (pp.124-139). For example parents, teachers and educationalists make mistakes when giving pupils information without looking at the application of this information in order to change pupils' behaviour and build new concepts. Pupils should be taught that it is right to obey their parents, rather than teaching them a theory which

has no relevance in their lives. Moreover this book presents the aim of Islamic religious education which is to educate the whole human being - soul, mind and body.

Alwan, Abdullah, 1981, Children's Education in Islam

In Vol. I the author describes the ideal marriage in relation to education. One of the aims of marriage within Islam is to produce children. In the second chapter Alwan expresses the parents' feelings towards their children by interpreting some verses from the Holy Quran. He talks about the procedures and rituals in Islam following the birth of a baby, so as to show that Islam has been given attention from the beginning of their lives.

In addition Alwan indicates what he sees as the reasons behind children's childhood problems and in Section Two of the book he divides responsibilities for teachers and parents in order to understand faith, morals, physical education and so on. It is not the responsibility of schools or teachers only, but parents should also participate in these points.

He also discusses the child's duty towards parents, relatives, neighbours, teachers, friends and youngsters. There are a number of social niceties and proprieties in Islam which have to be observed and to be learned at school and on p.432 he addresses these: drinking and eating (good manners), ways of seeking permission particularly from parents, seating and talking and so on.

All these points and others are part of Islamic religious and moral education and are needed for all levels of education from the past through to the present. All the examples in this book indicate a specific time, and the book points out that:

The Muslim generations are still everywhere; every age sees that the Prophet's messengers are the ideal model in faith, morals, courage, solidarity and so on ... the Muslim youth are still following them in their education system because they are the best guidance.
(Alwan 1981, p.651)

On p.817 he talks about two basic norms in education. First of all a 'link' norm, which means to link the children at an early age to the Islamic faith, soul, social, thought and sports. All of these methods are given attention in Islamic religious education in a Muslim society. Secondly a 'warning' norm, which means to warn children about any ideology other than Islam, and about the things forbidden in Islam. Also warning against bad friends as well as not to follow any ideas or philosophy without thinking carefully. These are examples of what children should be warned about in order to keep them on the path of Islam.

Abdullah, Abdul-Rahman, 1982, Educational Theory : A Qur'anic Outlook

In the first chapter the writer points out three things to link Islam and education on the one hand, and Quran and education through the verses from the Holy Quran and "Sunnah" of the Prophet Muhammad (p.b.o.h.)

In Chapter One (pp.23-43) he asks what is the philosophy of Islamic religious education in the Arabic language books from the past to the present, and the theory towards knowledge. He also asks what it is that Islamic scholars have said about education within Islam.

In terms of knowledge he discusses in depth a number of verses of the Holy Quran to show their importance in Islamic religious education for every Muslim in his/her life (pp.81-108). Moreover, he talks about the aims of education in the school curriculum and its relation to Islam.

In the last two chapters he produces an argument for all subjects and the Islamic viewpoint and finally indicates the importance of other people, from the Islamic religious education point of view.

Mujawer, Muhammad, 1982, Teaching Islamic Religious Education

This book has divided education into three stages - primary, intermediate and secondary. In each stage he discusses the needs of the student psychologically and physiologically. Secondly he argues for a modern concept of teaching, and on p.176 indicates the importance of the aims of I.R.E. compared with other subjects. Regarding I.R.E. he asks himself, 'What do I know?', 'Who do I know?' and 'How do I know?'

Thirdly the book approaches the teaching of Islamic religious education on a different level, for example:

- teaching students the Holy Quran;
- teaching students the "Hadith" - the Prophet's sayings;
- teaching students the "Seerah" - the Prophet's life;
- teaching students the faith.

This book is one of the main pieces of literature in Islamic religious education. I will discuss it further in a later chapter.

Shalaby, (1982), Islamic Education - its History, Philosophy, Method

The author decided to change the original name of the thesis which was A History of Islamic Religious Education, 1952, and was presented as a doctoral thesis at Cambridge University.

In Chapter One he talks about locations of teaching and learning before Islam and in the beginning of Islam. He discusses how people accepted teaching

in their own houses. On p.102 he shows the role of the Mosque and why education moved from the Mosque to school and what the differences between them were. In Chapter Two he deals with the library and its importance in relation to Islamic religious education. He gives examples of the three different types of library - public, public and private, private. Later in my thesis I will indicate the different ways students studied with comparisons of past and present.

In Chapter Three Shalaby talks about teachers and formal and informal teaching. Additionally he divides teachers in the past into three groups, as follows:

- a. Kuttab teachers - who teach in pupils' houses
- b. Private Tutors - who teach rich people and children from the royal family
- c. Mosque/school teachers - the majority of teachers

As will be seen from the above, Islamic religious education has taken place at many levels in Muslim countries. Shalaby talks about equal opportunities in education between all pupils in Muslim society and says that :

the person now can decide with no hesitation that equal opportunity in the Islamic world was guaranteed and available for both poor and wealthy. Being poor has never obstructed in any way a person's ability to learn and gain knowledge.

(ibid. p.291)

Shalaby also discusses the morality of teachers, not only in schools but also through parents who give teachers permission to punish their children at any time in order to educate them.

Finally, in Chapter Four he deals with students, their views of I.R.E. and the competition among them to get better standards. The book points out that Muslim thinkers and philosophers have addressed teaching young children, pupils

in the early ages at school, home and mosque. Shalaby's thesis was given Egyptian authority to be published and distributed to the academic institution.

Farhan, Ishaq, 1982, Islamic Religious Education between Originality and Modernity

This book discusses the importance of Islamic religious education and its aims from an Islamic viewpoint. It gives features of Islamic religious educational philosophy, such as social and practical features working hand in hand with other methods of Islamic religious education. On p.85 he discusses the challenge facing Islamic religious education through the Western culture, e.g. TV, video, journals, and general media. The second point he makes is that the Islamic thinker does not give a clear enough idea of how to protect youth from using western culture in the wrong way. The third point, he says, is an important issue about Islamic curriculum or Islamic culture in the Arab countries. Roughly this is that:

Islamic culture curriculum in the Arab countries is frozen in an old fashioned style which does not pay any regard to the development of modern societies which keep youth away from the wrong path.
(Farhan 1982, p.91)

Finally he deals with the future of Islamic religious education in Arab countries and attempts to suggest a strategy which will be useful for the future.

Mursi, Muhammad, 1983, Islamic Religious Education, its Foundation and Development in the Arab countries

In the introduction the author indicates the lack of modern writing on Islamic religious education in Arabic libraries. He also expresses surprise at the lack of Western interest in Islamic religious education in spite of its importance (possibly because the literature is in Arabic). He then moves on to the encouragement from Islam of science, learning and education. On p.46 he discusses the recommendations of the First Conference of Islamic Education

which was held in Makkah in 1977. In his view the foundation of Islamic religious education is based on the following:

- a. Islamic religious education is complete and comprehensive;
- b. Islamic religious education is conducted practically;
- c. Islamic religious education is for both the individual and society;
- d. Islamic religious education is innovative and conservative.

On p.141 he talks about children's education in Islam and its features and makes an argument for the kind of knowledge Islamic religious education should build on for children. In Chapter Two he mentions the education of children in Islam right from their early years, and also deals with teachers of Islamic religious education. He points out the importance of teachers and says:

Teachers in Islamic religious education take a high place, following the Prophet (p.b.o.h.) as a teacher of the nation.

(Mursi 1983, p.175)

The book also describes Islamic religious educational institutions such as mosques, kuttab, schools, libraries and so on.

Al Shafie, Ibraheem (1984) Islamic Religious Education and Its Teaching Method

He enquires into the aims of Islamic religious education from different points of view from many other writers. He says on p.50 that to achieve the aims of Islamic religious education the teacher should go further than the classroom and use the home, television, radio, and other institutions. He talks about the aims of Islamic religious education in detail, some of which are:

1. satisfying the need for religious knowledge by the pupil;
2. to supply religious knowledge as required by the pupil;
3. to correct the wrong concepts of religion;
4. filling the pupil with noble sentiments, i.e. love, group needs etc.

It seems to be these points and others are covered by the aspects of Islamic religion's aims in terms of psychology, in this life, and in the days after life is over.

Abdullah, Salah, 1986, Basic Curriculum and Its Relation to Islamic Educational Theory

In the first chapter he discusses the concept of curriculum and the importance of philosophy in the curriculum. He deals with the function of educational philosophy to clarify the facts of human behaviour and shows us the conflict between the educators in society in the educational process. On p.44 he discusses philosophy and the Quran because in general philosophical experiments and imagination came from many different thinkers, such as Plato and Dewy, whereas the Holy Quran provides us with a single comprehensive concept of life and the universe. He describes the differences and says:

the fundamental difference between Quranic wisdom and philosophy is in the methods of treating subjects.
(Abdullah 1986, p.44)

My own view on this matter is that religion is built upon faith and invites all people, everywhere to believe; but philosophy depends on a critical mind to achieve its 'facts'. Some people may not have religion but have faith - however religion and faith do complement each other.

In addition Abdullah criticises unclear curriculum textbooks in Arab countries which merely copy everything from western books even if what is copied is against religion. Also these curriculum books to some extent teach the democratic system without any reference to Islam. He concludes that Islamic religious educational theory is not a hypothesis which needs to be proved, but is derived from the Quran and "Sunnah" of the Prophet and is a basic principle which

should not change. Finally he deals with the basis of knowledge, both social and psychological.

Al Nahlawi, Abdulrahman, 1988, The Foundation of Islamic Religious Education and Its Style at Home, School and Society

In the first chapter of his book Al Nahlawi discusses the link between education and Islam through a dimension of compulsory I.R.E. and the necessity of I.R.E. in Islam. He then describes the foundation of Islamic religious education in three ways: devotion, ideology and legislation. Firstly the impact of educational devotion on Muslims; secondly the Islamic notion of an ideology of man, the universe and life; thirdly the influence on Muslims of legislation as guidance.

The importance of the teacher in Islamic religious education is different compared with a western view because the aims and functions of Islamic modern schools are not the same. He says Islamic religious education manifests itself in the Islamic society (pp.162-177).

Finally he gives examples of Islamic religious education in the Holy Quran and 'Sunnah' through many verses and stories as well as patterns and advice which should encourage people to think deeply about Islamic religious education in the present day.

Abul Ayinain, 1988, 'Research Methodology in Islamic Religious Education'

In his article he addresses a number of questions, for instance:

1. What is the meaning of I.R.E. and its scope?
2. What is the concept of research in I.R.E. and what kind of method can be used?
3. What are the qualifications for the researcher to have in I.R.E.?

The descriptive study can also be used in I.R.E. research in any way so as to examine people's opinions towards their religion. This method also is useful for dealing with educational problems in the light of I.R.E.

Lastly, the comparative method is one which is used in all educational affairs. In addition to this the researcher has to share the problems first for the comparison, then to link the reasons and the result. He also recommends that a comparative study in I.R.E. must be used in a proper way to reform the education system in co-ordination with Islamic principles (pp.3-23).

SECTION B

G.A.S.E.R.C. (1980) Present evaluation for the curriculum in the light of its aims in the Gulf States' Islamic religious education

In modern life it is necessary to revise the concept of I.R.E. and its aims. This revision needs to examine the actual form I.R.E. takes in the present and therefore this (1980) study aims to evaluate the actuality of I.R.E. in the Gulf States through analysing the aims of I.R.E. at all levels.

It is also important to examine the contents of the I.R.E. textbooks and so it is a descriptive study which presents the actuality and its dimension in the Gulf states. The 1980 study does not try to outline what is supposed to have been done in the Gulf states but gives some indications where necessary (pp.2-5).

The 1980 study will use the textbooks, reports, activities and available documentation as well as general and special aims to examine the following:

1. To analyse the aims of I.R.E. at all levels.
2. To study the actual curricula in all stages in the Gulf States.
3. To evaluate the present curriculum in the light of the aims.

The 1980 study result

1. The aims of I.R.E. seem to be those of religious subjects but not the aims of I.R.E. as it appears in the textbook.
2. Some of the I.R.E. aims are not sufficient because they are not presented fully.
3. Most of the I.R.E. aims are general and not easy to achieve.
4. There are some differences between the aims of the Gulf states and there are similarities, but the differences are larger. It could be possible to have

different aims of ordinary curriculum subjects regarding environments and attitudes, but the aims of I.R.E. must be the same.

5. There are different thoughts from state to state. Some focus on economic and social life, others focus on religious knowledge and faith.
6. Some states have no aims of I.R.E., others have general aims and philosophy and are not relevant to I.R.E.

Also there are some points which might not relate to this study.

The I.R.E. textbook:

1. Mostly the textbook does not reflect the aims of I.R.E.
2. There is a lack of balance between the States' textbooks
3. Some of the textbooks are not aimed at the standard of the learner
4. Some states give more information than others
5. Some states teach religion separately as religious sciences, i.e. Al Fiqh, Al Tawhid

There are certain remarks which have been made for teaching the Quran, Hadith, faith and worship. Consequently the time devoted to teaching I.R.E. is widely different, between two to nine lessons a week (pp. 9-13).

The recommendations are:

1. To clarify the concept of I.R.E. as a complete construction to the Muslim and Muslim society, or its religious knowledge and religious subjects;
2. To identify the function of I.R.E. and its role in the light of understanding Islam and its aims;
3. To reformulate the general and special aims of I.R.E. to be translated as behavioural performance;
4. To reformulate the style of teaching I.R.E. in order to make it compare with other curricula or better;

5. To give more attention to teacher preparation in order that there can be a pattern of educating children towards Islam;
6. The co-ordination between the Gulf states is very important in terms of the textbooks and the unity plan, because this will characterise the personality of a Muslim person in the Gulf region.

Finally, the nature of Islamic religious education is emotionally linked with the Arab culture. It can play an important and central role in reconstructing the Muslim Arab person in a correct manner, and create a better society similar to advanced countries (ibid. pp. 23-26).

The Gulf Arab States Educational Research Center (1984) Study of improved teaching of Islamic religious education in the Gulf States

A general survey of the 1984 study, as has been mentioned in Chapter One, is the largest and most relevant one to a study of I.R.E. because the sample was distributed to all the participants in the region.

The Arab Bureau of Education for the Gulf States in 1984, at their annual general conference, agreed to the Gulf States Educational Research Center, (Kuwait Branch), to meet the following objectives:

- to carry out a study for improving I.R.E. in the region
- to organise a seminar for developing teaching of I.R.E. in the region

The focus of the 1984 study

The main focus of this study was to protect our pupils from the many non-Islamic ideologies which might affect their behaviour, or make them anxious. These ideologies have a very attractive gloss to them and as a result pupils are tempted to follow these alternatives or they become anxious. As they are not religious alternatives, and because I.R.E. teaching may at times be similar to other

subjects and far from educating a Muslim person in a Muslim society, so it was agreed in 1984 to study the I.R.E curriculum carefully.

The aims of the study

The 1984 study aims to identify milestones in developing a style of Islamic religious education in primary and intermediate stages in the Gulf states and other Arab countries by asking the experts and researchers in the field to share their knowledge and make suggestions for developing teaching I.R.E. by answering the following questions:

- Does teaching I.R.E. develop as do other curriculum subjects?
- Has any research into the development of I.R.E. been carried out?
- What teaching methods, educational aids, and curriculum evaluation are involved in the development process of I.R.E.?
- Does I.R.E. development include teacher training?
- To what extent do experiments regarding I.R.E. achieve the country's educational aims, is there any evaluation for this, and what are the outcomes?

The report suggested other studies should be made in order to encourage researchers to tackle Islamic religious educational problems in a practical way. The report pointed out:

This study offers space for many other studies when executive problems are raised, e.g. in I.R.E. teacher training, the curriculum content, textbook, evaluation and any other activities relevant to I.R.E.

(G.A.S.E.R.C. 1984, p.8)

In brief the report placed emphasis on the lessons of Islamic religious education and its development. The authors felt it important to prepare Islamic religious education lessons so that they were clear within the philosophy of the state, general aims and actual everyday life. Secondly the report discussed the

need to develop Islamic religious education in a modern context. Thirdly they reviewed the Islamic religious education curriculum and its potential among students in all stages. They then discussed the function of development in all levels in order to provide a clear picture of what is Islamic *religious education* and what is *religion*.

The scope of the 1984 study

It is of relevance to teachers of I.R.E. and inspectors within the Gulf states and perhaps some parents who show an interest in I.R.E. Also the study has examined the textbook and documents available in the primary and intermediate stage, so authors of such texts will have found it useful.

The study's result

The conclusion of the report is as follows:-

- a. There is a prevailing belief that there is a need to develop I.R.E. (including teachers' performance) and to set up the curriculum and activities.
- b. The work of developing I.R.E. is still very limited - in spite of its importance - compared with development done for other subjects.
- c. Creating a good Muslim society is one of the aims of teaching I.R.E. which teachers should emphasise.
- d. To use I.R.E. to concentrate the learner personally, to encourage his/her abilities and skills, to discuss, take decisions and perhaps solve their problems.
- e. I.R.E. is different from other curriculum subjects because it is related to the Islamic faith and aims to maintain Islamic values and principles to guide a Muslim person and society. So specialised I.R.E. teacher training and qualifications ought to be considered (ibid. pp. 299-302).

The Gulf Arab States Educational Research Centre (1985) Seminar of the final report of improving Islamic education in the Gulf States

This seminar was held following the previous study, and they complement each other. The aims of the seminar are:

1. To analyse the results of the previous study.
2. To discuss its suggestions related to developing I.R.E.
3. To discuss the difficulties and obstructions confronting I.R.E.
4. To try to formulate suggestions to achieve development in I.R.E.

The participants of the study were 14 experts and representatives from the Gulf region, except Saudi Arabia, who sent their apologies. Also there were 4 members from two other organisations, viz. UNESCO and the Arab Organisation for Science, Culture and Education. The study sample are teachers and inspectors from primary and intermediate stage. The seminar focussed on:

1. I.R.E. lessons and societal philosophy
 - the importance of teaching faith and the customs of society.
2. I.R.E. lessons and the general aims of education
 - to aid teachers to identify the lessons' aims, and to plan for the lesson to be a success.
3. Lesson preparation and the aims of I.R.E.
 - make the aims relate to the branches of I.R.E.
4. Lesson preparation and the function of I.R.E.
5. Lessons of I.R.E. and complete religious knowledge.
6. I.R.E. lessons and performance style.
7. I.R.E. lessons in the light of its special concepts.
8. I.R.E. lessons and clear thought.
9. I.R.E. lessons and their evaluation needs.

In addition to this they accepted the previous study and its recommendations, and added the following suggestions:

1. To increase the periods of teaching I.R.E. in some Gulf states and to have not less than four I.R.E. lessons a week.
2. The importance of having a scientific and specific study of I.R.E. to find a suitable plan for many fields to achieve the aims of a Muslim society. I will give examples as follows:
 - Teacher field:
 - prepare specific study for I.R.E. teacher preparation
 - to be careful of initial I.R.E. teacher training in the beginning and during service (in-service)
 - examine the obstructions which might hinder or delay the I.R.E. teacher's performance
 - not to allow people to teach I.R.E. except those who are well qualified scientifically and educationally.
 - Text Book field:
 - to be sure that the I.R.E. textbook, its aims, style and presentation, is suitable to the learner
 - to give more care to I.R.E. textbook publishing and presenting, and to present its ideas clearly and in different colours
 - to provide a first and second year I.R.E. textbook with full photographs (pp.2-32).

Finally, the seminar raised three major questions for all the participants to share, and these are:

1. What are the aspects that they want to add in order to contribute to developing teaching I.R.E. in the Gulf states?
2. What are the difficulties and obstructions they thought were confronting I.R.E. development, and how should they be dealt with?

3. What are the issues related to this matter, and what later studies are needed to service I.R.E.? (ibid. p.84)

In fact this thesis gives these three studies special attention and tries to build up more ideas so that I.R.E. in the region can be updated and developed, and there will be wide discussion and argument using other general studies within I.R.E.

Kuwait Ministry of Education (1987) Technical report of the committee for the evaluation of Islamic religious education in the first and second year of the primary stage of education

This study for developing I.R.E. was carried out by a committee of 11 members from the Ministry of Education and two from outside. The committee aimed to evaluate the new I.R.E. textbook for the first and second stage in primary education in Kuwait before the Ministry of Education introduced the textbook all over Kuwait.

First of all the committee studied the documents and previous reports, memoranda and the aims of I.R.E. in the primary stage. They also agreed to discuss the foundation of conducting the curriculum of I.R.E., its aims, contents and activities. Secondly it examined how far pupils, teachers and parents accepted the curriculum.

They interviewed head teachers, inspectors, teachers of I.R.E. and parents. The study aimed to observe I.R.E. lessons and teacher performance.

In their technical report the committee clarified their agreement to the integrity between the aims of I.R.E. and the general aims of education in Kuwait. They were also satisfied that the aims of I.R.E. are derived from the general aims of education in Kuwait (p.9). The report also showed that textbook vocabularies

implement the aims of I.R.E. Thus the committee studied the constructive foundation of the I.R.E. curriculum and described the foundations of the I.R.E. curriculum as follows:

To create a Muslim person

To create a Muslim society

To reveal to children the substance of Islam implemented by faith, morals and principles

Moreover, the conclusion was that all the foundations of I.R.E. textbooks had clear scientific and educational philosophy (p.11).

The study's results

1. The aims of the textbook were co-ordinated and linked with the aims of I.R.E., primary stage and the general aims of education in Kuwait.
2. The foundations of the curriculum textbook were constructed upon a clear philosophy, and derived from I.R.E., learners, society and modern educational theory.
3. The data shows that 82% of the sample interviewed have notification of the foundation of the I.R.E. textbook.
4. 89% of the sample agreed the aims of the I.R.E. textbook will fulfil the pupils' needs.
5. 67% of the interviewees see that I.R.E. textbook aims are not difficult to achieve.
6. 91.4% shows that I.R.E. textbook contents are suitable, i.e. 37% excellent, 42% good and 15% average.
7. 93% indicate that pupils like the subject, i.e. looking at the pictures and enjoying some of the simple poems.
8. 96.3% say that pupils like the I.R.E. textbook, i.e. active in the classroom, listening to the stories.

9. 90.2% shows that some poems are suitable.
10. 78% agree to circulate the I.R.E. textbook.
11. The committee recommended there should be a focus on the teacher's performance to teach the textbook through educational programmes so as to study the foundations, aims and evaluation of the I.R.E. curriculum.

Finally, the committee recommended that those involved with I.R.E. should communicate with parents in order to co-operate between home and school to reinforce Islamic values within the pupils' daily lives (ibid. pp. 79-85).

CHAPTER THREE

CHAPTER THREE

A historical background

Introduction

Chapter Three looks at the historical background of I.R.E. during the 1950s and 60s in both Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. Before I go into detail about this it is important to say that history is part of modern life, whether in the east or the west. No one can say that history is something from the past and has no regard to the present, though some people might think that our lives should not look back but just forward to the future. Although religion and history in the past are close together, history is still the same while religion has changed in different societies, i.e. there are secular states which ignore religion in the present because their lives are totally changed and there is no room for religion. On the other hand there is a point of view which says that religion is a continuous process no matter what time-scale we are looking at. The idea that religion is a fundamental issue in Muslim countries historically might seem to be supported by the review of literature, though it has been pointed out:

Review of the literature which an empirical researcher is required to undertake is in itself a kind of historical study because he is reconstructing what was done in the past in a particular respect; so the principles of historical research have some bearing on parts of his work at least.

(Cohen, 1986, p.47)

Probably from this point of view one can understand the importance of the past in the historical studies. So, Chapter Three will deal with the history of Islamic religious education 40 years ago in the Gulf region by comparing Kuwait with Saudi Arabia in order to achieve the following objectives.

- a. A history of Islamic religious education generally
- b. Islamic religious education in Kuwait before and after the 1950s (formal and informal)
- c. Islamic religious education in Saudi Arabia before and after the 1950s (formal and informal)
- d. The similarities and differences in Islamic religious education between the two countries

In Section A I will try to follow the development in Islamic religious education in the two countries from the past and outline for the future, and how a history of Islamic religious education links up with the setting up of an education system.

The chapter will focus on a history of I.R.E. in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait during the 1950s and 1960s up to the present time. The discussion will be in two categories: formal and informal. Formal religious education means control and organisation by the state or government, often in school, curriculum and teachers. The informal religious education means control and organisation by the public and scholars or alumma, before the establishment of the Ministries of Education in the two countries.

Then to give a clear picture of I.R.E. in the past the chapter will discuss and analyse the similarities and differences between teaching I.R.E. in the two countries. It will continue by examining the status of I.R.E. in the region and how the comparative study will help to plan the I.R.E. for Kuwait. Finally it will examine how the past might reform the future.

Section B deals with the aims of I.R.E. in primary education in the two countries as follows:

- a. The aims of I.R.E. in Kuwait.
- b. The aims of I.R.E. in Saudi Arabia.
- c. A comparative view of the aims of I.R.E. in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

This section will give a brief description of the aims of I.R.E. in general, and discuss the aims of the primary stage of education. It will focus on some of these aims in relation to the I.R.E. textbooks in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, as well as dealing with primary education in Saudi Arabia in relation to Islam. Finally, Section B will take a comparative view of the aims of I.R.E. between the two countries to examine how they compare with each other, and what the possibilities are for improving the aims of I.R.E. in the two societies in order to cope with the change in social life after the Gulf war.

SECTION A

History of Islamic religious education

The history of Islamic religious education refers to the Islamic religious educational institutions, whatever people call them : kuttab, quranic school or formal or informal education. I prefer to divide them into new categories:

1. informal, by which I mean the Islamic religious education before the State set up the Ministry of Education;
2. formal, which means Islamic religious education after the set up of the Ministry of Education and control by the government.

The reason for distinguishing between the two is to examine the development of Islamic religious education step by step and to discuss the difficulties of each one and to see any further dimension Islamic religious education has gone through, because many writers collect Islamic religious educational institutions together under Islamic religious education centres without linking with the present. For example, it seems to be very useful if students at advanced level study the history of Islamic religious education in order to know what their parents and grandparents studied, what were the problems facing them and to what extent they suffered, and also to see the role of the people in teaching Islamic religious education and the role of the educated people such as Ulama and so on.

Informal Islamic religious education

This occurs in:

- a. Kuttabs
- b. Mosques

- a. The first informal educational centre was known as 'Kuttab'. Kuttab is an Arabic word derived from 'ketab' meaning 'book'. So the word indicates that kuttab is relevant to 'book' which means reading and learning. Added to this 'kuttab' means the place to teach and learn and it could be a house or a room beside the mosque or in the camp - this does not matter. The kuttab or Maktab as they sometimes call it, aims to teach the Holy Quran and help people to memorise the verses (Mursee 1981, p.226). The role of the Kuttab was many educated Muslims came from east or west to read and understand the Holy Quran correctly. Also they help other Muslims who understand Islam but do not follow it, so the kuttab might push them a step forward to Islam.

The Kuttab was the first requirement to other studies such as Arabic language and maths. A brief description of education in the Kuttab is that it was open daily from Saturday - Thursday. It was not open Friday because this is a holy day (holiday). There might be a blackboard on which to write. Ibn Khaldun (1401), one of the Muslim philosophers and sociologists, declared the importance of gradual education for children, and that there are three methods of learning: repetition, illustration and deep learning. He criticised the teaching methods as just learning by rote without allowing any discussion or argument, and said

We have seen many teachers who do not understand teaching methods properly and giving pupils some difficult questions that are not easily answered.

(ibid. 286)

Some teachers in the kuttab are given money while some get nothing because they do the teaching as a voluntary act to the glory of God. This system was the first informal type of Islamic religious education.

- b. Secondly the mosque was the second type of Islamic religious educational centre and the main instrument for teaching. The function of the mosque in the past was not only for prayer but as a social centre where people could go to, say, discuss general and religious problems. The mosque finally became a place for marriage and to discuss matters of justice.

The mosque was vitally important in Islamic countries in the past. Its role has changed up to the present time when many Muslims use it only for prayers on Fridays. There are many reasons why this change has come about and it has affected Islamic religious education in the process. In fact the Prophet build the first mosque for many other purposes apart from only prayer. Shalaby has linked the history of Islamic religious education and the many changes strongly to the history of the mosque. This is because mosques needed nobody's permission to enter while with houses (i.e. kuttab) you had to ask. He indicates that the famous mosques in Islamic history played a major role on a par with universities in the present time. Shalaby quoted from Lane-Poole:

In AH360* Jawhar Alsakily built Alazhar Mosque 'Jammi'. Since AH378 the mosque was specifically for academic studies and research and remained so from that date until the present university system was created - so they were the early universities in the Islamic world.

(Shalaby 1982, p.105)

Formal Islamic religious education

This occurs in:

- a. schools
- b. libraries

- a. The school is one of the two kinds of formal education long ago in Islamic countries which were established after the informal education structures. At this point Shalaby raises the question :

Why did education transfer from the mosques to the schools? What are the differences between mosques and schools? And finally why do Muslim schools focus on Islamic studies more than other subjects?

(ibid. pp.113-115)

In my opinion these questions are still relevant. Firstly education transferred from mosques to schools because of the noise a large number of students makes and secondly because they wished to increase the number of different subjects studied. The second question about the difference between the mosque and school is that the mosque does not have facilities such as lecture rooms, accommodation, kitchen, sitting rooms and so on. The third question about focusing on Islamic studies is that this is the need of society. It seems to me that there are other reasons

* AH means "After Hidjra" and is an Islamic date set up after the immigration of the Prophet Muhammad.

for moving education from the mosque to the school. To some extent social life has changed in Muslim countries, these countries have become more open and modern and this makes it unacceptable to continue teaching in the mosque. This has been the case in other fields, i.e. the justice system has moved from the mosque into the courts; even social activities have moved away from the mosque. However, in some states like Kuwait and Saudi Arabia the mosque still fulfills its traditional role to some extent and there are many lectures and social activities held there which have thus begun to re-establish the mosque in a new form.

- b. Libraries are the second formal Islamic religious education. In the past libraries played an obvious role in education when many people seeking knowledge and learning found it in books. This led to the foundation of large famous libraries such as the 'Bite Al-hikmah' in Baghdad and the 'Dar Al-hikmah' in Cairo. They provided all facilities for students to use by assisting them with a number of librarians who had good experience in the field.

The interesting thing about these formal educational establishments is that they encouraged students. They made students feel that education was a part of Islam and anyone seeking the path of learning is also seeking the path to God, because Islam encourages people to learn to be close to God. The Holy Quran says:

Rise up; God will raise up to (suitable) ranks (and degrees), those of you who believe and who have been granted (mystic) knowledge and God is well acquainted with all ye do.

(58:11)

Islamic religious education in Kuwait before 1950

Islamic religious education in Kuwait started in the kuttab during the period 1883-1950,. The first kuttab was set up in 1887, a few years after the first teachers came from other countries to teach in Kuwait in 1883. Many people did not call them teachers but 'Mullah' or 'Mutawa', preachers, those Mullahs teaching Arabic language, Islamic religion and mathematics. Islamic religious education was the major subject at that time. Al Nouri, in his book The History of Education in Kuwait in the half century from 1883-1943, described the whole story of early education in Kuwait and many Kuwaitis who write about the history of education refer to this book. Al Nouri, before his death, was himself a Kuwaiti religious teacher, and his weekly programme on Kuwaiti television brought the subject to a wide audience. The Mullahs started teaching I.R.E. in kuttab by teaching the Arabic language, the basic foundation in alphabetical order, then from the Holy Quran Chapter No.30 which is very easy and simple for pupils. When they finish they start again from the beginning, Chapters 1-30. This might take one or two years depending on the ability of the pupils to read. The Mullahs reward pupils by giving presents for progress made.

Educational syllabus in kuttab

As some kuttabs teach skills of writing and reading, other kuttabs teach the Holy Quran and Islamic religion which shows that the kuttab had simple, basic education without a textbook, with a curriculum imposed by the teacher. It could be asked "Can there be a curriculum without a textbook and agreed syllabus?" To a certain extent this study accepts this to be the case in the kuttab, because there is a teacher, pupils, subjects such as Maths., Arabic and religion, as well as a special place in which to teach, whatever type of kuttab in Kuwait, even the ones set up by the rich people in order to help the poor who could not afford the fees. There is

daily teaching, morning or afternoon, tests and punishment for careless pupils. It has been said:

The Mullah was absolutely free in his management of the kuttab and in what he chose to teach and the way in which he dealt with his pupils on a disciplinary level.

(Abdulghafoor 1978, p.38)

From what she said before it is clear that the Mullah had full authority in organising and evaluating his/her way of teaching.

Relationship with parents

Most often the relationship between parents and Mullah is very good. Parents are responsible for bringing their children to the kuttab. The Mullah is responsible for punishing his pupils if necessary by using a long stick on hands and feet, and parents encourage him to do so because they fully understand that he will educate them to be good. Therefore you will find a large number of those who studied with the Mullah who feel that he assisted them in building education in Kuwait. They feel that his teaching method gives them the solid idea that you cannot build a society if you sleep, so the rough treatment helped them to be stronger later on. In addition, a large number of kuttab pupils became ministers, under-secretaries and decision makers in Kuwait during the 1950s and '60s. This shows the importance of parents' encouraging their children to be good citizens and gain qualifications.

Education in the mosque

The role of the mosque in Kuwait in the past was no less than that of the kuttab because the leader of the mosque - the 'Imam' - was doing the same by collecting and gathering children in the afternoons to teach them verses from the Holy Quran and give them explanations of Islam and their duty towards worship five times a day. The education syllabus in the mosque is focused on the following:

1. The Quran
2. The Fiqh
3. The Creed
4. The Seerah of the Prophet Muhammad

Teaching in the mosque is more religious than in the kuttab although the facilities are not enough, because the mosque is bigger and many people come to pray and bring their children to learn openly with the Imam more than with the kuttab. The nature of the mosque commands more respect because it is a holy place where children feel they should keep quiet. Both mosques and kuttab have children under the age of ten years. There are separate kuttabs for girls, though there are fewer of these than for boys. As Al Misnad says, girls are normally withdrawn from kuttab when they are about 11 years old. She points out:

Kuttab schools were attended by children of both sex under 10 years. Kuttab teachers were simple and pious men and women who had a basic knowledge of the Quran, the Hadith, traditions of the Prophet and Arabic language, while their teaching methods were extremely simple and primitive. There are no proper records of the number of children who attend kuttab education in the Gulf area. Although there were some separate kuttabs for girls, most attended by girls were co-educational. Nevertheless, girls were normally withdrawn from kuttab when they were about 11 years old and were no longer regarded as children.

(Al Misnad 1985, p.31)

There are many types of kuttabs in the Gulf region, though Al Misnad mostly talks about those in Kuwait, Bahrain and Qatar - not Saudi Arabia. Not so much is written about the education of females though we must not neglect the female role in education either past, present or future, because women make up half our society. As the Holy Quran says, they should be treated equally. However, the main issues this study needs to address are how we can build education, in the light of the past, into a new form in the future, by discussing the advantages and disadvantages in the education system. It seems to me that female education is not given the same emphasis as male education, although Al Nouri pointed out in his book under 'News neglected by history', that:

The number of kuttabs for male and female is increasing, i.e. in 1935 there were about 35 kuttabs, 25 for male learning with writing, reading and maths, and 10 for female teaching writing only.
(Al Nouri, p.63)

In 1916 a Kuwaiti muttawah was teaching females in her house from the Holy Quran, though this did not mean they could read and write properly. As Abdulghafoor says, she felt the situation changed later and improved for females as male education began to be better established. To some extent I agree that female education was neglected in Kuwait in the informal period, so we should now look at the changes in the formal period.

Formal education in Kuwait

After the kuttab period it is clear that I.R.E. moved to a different level because of the people's enthusiasm for learning and education to become formal rather than informal. However, Kuwaiti people gave thanks to the first group of teachers and traders who liberated the country and brought it from darkness into the light.

At this time in the history of Islamic religious education, it was seen that there was a basic lack of formal education in Kuwait, so they sent a letter to the ruler of Kuwait to ask permission to open a school. This male school - which was the first sophisticated school in the country - was opened on 22 December 1911 and was called 'Al Mubbarakia' (International Book of Education). There was great emphasis in this school on religion from the head teacher down through the teachers and the curriculum, which covered Religious Education, Arabic Language, Islamic History, Geography and Mathematics.

The school was funded from enrolment fees, alms from the public and other sources. It showed how the people could be united in a purpose provided they have clear aims and objectives towards, for instance, a school. The second male school was established in 1921 and was called 'Alahammadia'. Later the number of schools was increased at which point an office was established to take responsibility for education. The following figures show the increase of pupils in Al-mubbarakia school:

Year	No. of pupils
1912	254
1913	346
1914	332
1915	304
1916	341

(Al Nouri, p.45)

In his book Kuwait in the Past and Future, Mahmoud describes the story of the education office, how they controlled curriculum planning, teachers, and

many other issues relevant to education. The people who ran the education office were gathered from the public, especially as the number of schools increased.

In 1947 the Religious Institute was established in Kuwait for primary and intermediate education. It focused on religious subjects and teaching Islamic Sharia. In spite of the increasing number of primary schools generally, there is only this institute for Islamic Religious Education even for non-Kuwaiti students, many of whom came from Africa and other Arab countries to study. Also there are some problems facing this school and the study will discuss elsewhere what kind of development was done, and whether or not it was successful.

Islamic religious education in Kuwait after 1950

The development of education in Kuwait in the 1950s covered many aspects and I have divided these changes and developments into four issues, so that one can see to what extent I.R.E. development had taken place:

a) Development of educational policy

Reorganisation of the government's educational policy.

Free education for all.

Education undertaken by the Department of Education.

1962, the name of the Education Department was changed to Ministry of Education.

5-Year Plan drawn up.

b) General education

Set up the primary and intermediate education system.

Establishment of Technical College.

A permanent curriculum committee is set up in the Ministry of Education to discuss the problem of school curricula.

The Arabic language periods in primary schools increased from 12-14 a week.

The science syllabus in both primary and intermediate schools completely revised.

51 new or revised books introduced dealing with the teaching of Arabic, English, Mathematics and Science at various levels.

c) General development

Use of audio visual aids for a variety of subjects.

Medical care in every school.

Adult education begins during this period.

Free school meals prepared by the Central Kitchen.

New science books introduced for every year of primary education.

d) I.R.E. development

In 1965-67, new or revised books were introduced to supersede some of the previous textbooks which were inadequate or out of date.

These new books on Arabic Language, Religious Instruction, English Language, History, Mathematics, Science, Physics, Chemistry and Domestic Science. Religious Education and Arabic Language textbooks were reorganised.

Through the previous ten years the chance of developing I.R.E., in my opinion, was not enough. The next chapter will look at this dilemma within Kuwaiti society.

Islamic religious education in Saudi Arabia before 1950

The beginning of the nineteenth century witnessed a revival in education owing to the efforts of a few individuals and Islamic missions (Wassie, 1970). Arabia has been the cradle of civilization for thousands of years. The Prophet Muhammad was born as the last prophet sent by God to humankind. It is in Saudi Arabia where Islam rises and shines from the city of Makkah (Mecca), and is the place every Muslim should visit once in his or her life for pilgrimage.

The history of education in kuttab and mosque is relevant to religion in Saudi Arabia to a high level. Historically Islamic religious education started in Saudi Arabia informally at the kuttab and mosque, established in Makkah and Medinah in 1903. M. Zeynel founded a regular Arab school in Jeddeh and another in Makkah (ibid. p.4).

Education in the kuttab

The kuttab as an Islamic elementary school was conducted within the cities of Saudi Arabia in many places, especially around the Holy places. Many schools (kuttabs) which taught boys and girls to read and write were also established in various areas (S.M.E. p.7). The same role was fulfilled in Kuwait by the local 'Imam' (religious leader) who took responsibility for teaching religion by memorising verses from the Holy Quran. The females also had a chance to study in the kuttab before this time:

There were women or a group of women from society who had separate rooms in their houses as schools in order to teach females religion, Arabic and mathematics. Many people shared in giving female teachers a monthly allowance, though some of them did not take money for the job.

(Girls Education Department 1987, p.21)

Education in the mosque

The mosque in Saudi Arabia is a place which is the heart of the community. You can see this even in the present time. When the time for prayer arrives people close offices, markets, universities and all government ministries for 15 minutes to pray and then go back to normal. In the villages as well as in the biggest cities you will find a mosque open throughout the day. There are many travellers and poor people who call at the mosque seeking help. Teaching in the mosque is regular, and often daily, and in my opinion this is the way many people have learned about Islamic religion - more than in schools, especially older people who spend much time in the mosque.

In addition Islamic religious education has helped a large number of children both Saudi and non-Saudi, particularly those who have emigrated to live in Saudi Arabia. Many kuttabs are located in the mosques, which means the more mosques there are, the more kuttabs they have. There is no doubt that both kuttab and mosque work hand in hand to teach Islamic religion and it is clear to me that although the kuttab in Kuwait was stopped a long time ago, the mosque, in both countries, has taken its place. This stopped in the late 1950s and early 1960s because the government controlled education and all pupils enrolled in the government's school when education became compulsory. Also there is an Institute of Religious Education for anyone interested in studying Islam in depth. After this was set up there was no need to go to the kuttab at all, even if there is a kuttab in some areas in Saudi Arabia, especially in the villages. Possibly the kuttab will die off now because the modern schools and universities have taken their place in teaching religion. But in Saudi Arabia they have what is called a 'Quranic school', often run by the Ministry of Education.

Private and Formal Education

Although Islamic religious education in kuttab and mosque in Saudi Arabia is mostly informal, private education has been available since 1803 and was set up by the Ottoman Empire. In some cases kuttabs automatically developed into private schools because some wealthy people sent their children to study in Egypt and Lebanon, and many other people noticed and realised that education was inevitable. One of these was King Faisal Ben Abdul Aziz who supported private education for both men and women when he was vice-president of part of Saudi Arabia. The first school was established in 1943 as a primary school organised by females and called The 'Alahlia' Girls School (ibid., p.22).

Formal education for girls moved on to a new stage when the government established the Girls Education Department in 1960. In brief the aims of this department were to prepare females to take responsibility as mothers of the new generation in the light of knowledge, and to help them bring happiness to the whole family. Secondly it fulfilled the needs in Saudi society for educated women. Thirdly it opened the door for many females wishing to reach high standards in academic studies (ibid. p.23).

It seemed that the government was gradually moving from stage to stage successfully. In the meantime private education was moving even more successfully as the numbers of private schools increased. Examples of these schools are 'Alsawlatia School', 'Alfalah School' and 'Dar Alhadeeth' (Saudi Ministry of Education 1982, p.4). The Ministry of Education accepted these schools because of their high standards. This was accepted depending on how far the school followed the policy of the state as far as having clear objectives was concerned. Also they were looking at the school syllabus, textbook and so on in order to see whether or not their objectives were being enforced.

It appears that private education was of a high standard so that many parents sent their children to study and become qualified. Generally the school curricula contained subjects such as Logic, Philosophy and Astronomy and also taught students to understand the subject matter of Islam in the proper way.

In Saudi Arabia the idea of girls' education is divided into two opinions. One accepts that it is important for girls to have education in order to follow the development in social life. Others feel guilty that females should be involved at school. In this particular area a number of female volunteers often invite a group of their friends to study at one house regularly. They invite anyone interested to join them instead of staying at home.

Islamic religious education in Saudi Arabia after 1950

The education system in Saudi Arabia was developed a long time before any official body was established by the government and the sign of this is the large number of private schools on the one hand and the support of rich people on the other. Another sign of the level of education is the duty of the Muslim Ulama towards teaching people the Islamic religion. The main points to see are the development of Islamic religious education in the 1950s and through the general development of the educational system, e.g.:

a) Development of educational policy

1954 Ministry of Education established.

1959 5-Year plan set up for the Ministry of Education.

A body of education was established in many areas.

1966 the Ministry of Education published internal regulations for primary school headteachers.

b) General education

1957 opening of schools in urban and rural areas.

1958 the number of primary schools had risen to 541.

Control of the textbook introduced to include publication, printing/
distribution.

1968 History is included in the new syllabus for primary education.

c) General development

Ministry of Education invited local people to re-write the primary school textbooks, which had been imported from other Arab states, in order to make them more relevant in light of local environmental conditions.

1958 first conference on education.

1959 a general presidency of girls' schools set up.

More consideration given to teaching methods in primary education.

1967 steps taken to provide schools gradually with audio visual aids.

d) I.R.E. development

1949-50 the General Administration of education had established a
college to train a certain number of teachers of Islamic Theology.

During the 1950s there was no development in I.R.E. except the re-writing of the primary textbook by local people. This step probably encouraged the development of the local education system.

1964 there were 47 private schools, including a religious school.

The general development in education during the 1960s did not show any clear development on I.R.E. From both Kuwait and Saudi Arabia the development of I.R.E. was less than it should have been in the way of either change or development, and yet there were opportunities and possibilities for this. Firstly there was no comprehensive evaluation of the I.R.E. curriculum and

teaching methods. Secondly there were no clear objectives to be followed and improved upon because both countries were moving from one stage to another.

The similarities and differences in Islamic religious education between Kuwait and Saudi Arabia

The importance of this section is to discuss many issues within I.R.E. after the general, historical description of the two countries. The first point is the similarity in Islamic religious education between the two countries as set out in the following statements:

1. Islamic religious education in both countries started in the kuttab.
2. In both countries the Kuttabs were located in houses and mosques.
3. The Islamic religious leaders, ulamas and imams, were teaching Islamic religious education in both countries.
4. The movement towards education came from the people, supported by the ulammas and traders in both countries.
5. The Kuttabs were often financed and run by older people in the society of both countries.
6. The desire to learn, read and memorise the Holy Quran is similar in both countries.
7. The similarity in the kuttab and mosque curricula in both countries is obvious.
8. Teaching methods in both countries are very similar.
9. Both countries to a certain degree have the same aims and objectives of teaching Islamic religious education.
10. The teaching in Kuttabs and Mosques as well as schools in both countries has involved contracts with foreign teachers.

In addition to these similarities, many children were sent to the kuttab and mosque by their parents to learn about the Holy Quran and also to learn basic skills of writing and reading. Many people worked and gathered round Kuttabs giving money and charity to the teacher as a fee in order to learn about their Islamic religion. They did this of their own free will initially, but it became a habit they grew into. This will be discussed further after considering the differences between the Islamic religious education of the two countries.

In brief these differences are seen as follows:

1. The kuttab in Saudi Arabia was better than the kinds of kuttab in the Turkish Islamic school style of long ago, when they were set up in order to influence Arab society to learn the Turkish language. Because of this the kuttab in Saudi Arabia replaced the Turkish kuttab, while in Kuwait the kuttab was mainly independent.
2. Islamic religious education in Arabia was for Saudis and the large numbers of non-Saudis who came to study or stay in the holy states.
3. Islamic religious education in Kuwait is not so comprehensive as it is in Saudi Arabia, which means that the Saudi kuttab was supported and contributed to by other religious bodies and institutions all over the country. These bodies are run by the government and religious leaders.
4. Islamic religious education in Saudi Arabia is at a higher level, providing students with certificates and giving them permission to teach in their own countries or in the Saudi mosques and kuttab, whereas in Kuwait this is not the case.
5. Teaching Islamic religious education in Kuwait generally is not as strong as it is in Saudi Arabia.

6. The organisation of the kuttab is not exactly similar because in Kuwait the kuttab is very simply run by individuals, while in Saudi Arabia they are run by religious bodies who help with the organisation.

Although there are differences, both succeeded in teaching children Islamic religious education and focused on other issues.

There are two questions I would like to raise. Firstly, did children like this type of education or were they urged to do so? Secondly, did both countries succeed in achieving their objectives? In answering the first question it seems to me it is difficult to decide that pupils like I.R.E. because they all have different circumstances. Some pupils found parents encouraging, others not. Some children are motivated to succeed and others are not. There are some children who may have no desire at all to go to the kuttab and parents may not understand that, so try to force them to go and to study. Conversely there are others who will stay at the kuttab even if they do not like it. Parents sometimes feel guilty because they may have lost the opportunity to learn or educate themselves and they do not wish to see their children in the same position. For instance, many parents attended the kuttab and got a good job in society and had more status in their social lives. Another group may have had difficulty in finding a job because of their inability to read and to write.

Regarding the second question: There are about 2,500 pupils in Kuwaiti kuttabs with first & second schools, as Al Nouri says, to show what success the kuttab had in educating people in Kuwait or Saudi Arabia. However a sign of the success of the kuttab is that many people in both Kuwait and Saudi Arabia can read the Holy Quran and understand the basic instructions of Islam. This means that I.R.E. was supported and developed in the society of both countries either formally or informally. Because of this there are many teachers, accountants, and

other professional people and this is what Islamic religious education is intended to produce. This indicates that Islam is not only a matter of prayer and fasting but also ensures people become useful members of society.

Motives and rationale of the kuttab

Eventually education in kuttab and mosque could not give the same facilities in terms of curriculum and student welfare as the Ministry of Education could give. During the 1950s and '60s education in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia developed gradually covering many educational objectives which the kuttab and mosque could not do in all levels in terms of organisation, curriculum, colleges and school facilities. This was in addition to other general educational developments. This development ran in parallel to that in society, economic and political fields. It is useful therefore to look at the motives and rationale of the kuttab.

There are some people who believe that there are more reasons for establishing a kuttab or school than teaching Islam.

The motives behind the establishment of these schools were distinguished to five main categories: Religious, Policy, Academic or Cultural, Arts or Education and Personal or Publicity.
(Gumber 1985, p.43)

The question in my opinion is how many of these reasons are accepted. For instance, the religious reason is very clear and remarkable as a reason in many schools and kuttabs in the region, which is because they want pupils to be educated to become teachers or employers. The political reason is unacceptable in the Gulf region because there are no alternative political indications or influences, even if there is minimum support from the government. The other reason is that at some time these various reasons complement each other, because Islam invites

people to learn, so the academic reason and the religious reason are basically the same and will lead to a better society. It is possible to say therefore that many of these reasons could be possible motives for the existence of kuttabs and schools in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, except the Publicity and Personal reasons because the scholars do not use kuttabs for collecting money from the public. Also they create competition between pupils to show who has better skills of writing, which might bring more pupils into the kuttab. This publicity would encourage many other pupils to join the kuttab.

The nature of kuttab life

In the past the way of life was simple, easy and comfortable, while nowadays it is difficult, complex and busy. From this view one can see that teaching I.R.E. in the past was possible in houses and mosques. There was only one teacher, sometimes with an assistant. There were no meal breaks in cafés or restaurants, no morning march with music and no head teacher. Pupils had no chair to sit on and there was no textbook. Everything was very simple and pupils memorised their lines from the Holy Quran. Pupils had great respect for their teacher or Mullah because of his way of teaching, which was very strict. At that time there were no major sexual problems, no drugs, no vandalism that we see at the present time. If there were any problems they did not affect students' behaviour, which was normal. This does not mean that they were not particularly active or clever, because the level of competition was very high and anyone who failed would be in trouble with his parents, especially a boy. This meant that parents were keen to educate their children's behaviour. Hard work was one of the main features of this kind of education in the past. Discipline in the kuttab and mosque was high.

If we look deeply into I.R.E. at the kuttab and mosque we might not feel the same way they felt at the time. I have looked at life in the kuttab for a long period of time and can say that my conclusion is that it reflected the Muslim approach to learning the Holy Quran as the centre of the curriculum, regardless of anything else. The happiness and satisfaction in the shadow of the Holy Quran was very clear in Muslim life in the past. The question is, what is wrong with modern life and modern education? With all its facilities such as schools, teachers, equipment, new systems in education, credit systems, textbooks, free education and free transport, I can say that the more religious discipline we have in our schools in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, the fewer problems we get from pupils. They try to behave well as they learn about the Islamic way of life. This is what the researcher realised many years ago in different levels of education in Kuwait from primary right through to university.

I do not think good behaviour could be achieved if our education system tried to copy or transfer everything from the west's modern education. To some extent I agree that we should bring whatever is necessary from the west, but with certain conditions. With respect to those people in the west who build their education by their own capacity, in Arab countries people should not copy everything, by which I mean that people have to realise that western education was created for western society which has its own culture and natural historical development. Therefore it is not acceptable that we should just lift the western education system, bodily, and try and make it work in an Arab environment. Secondly, Arab countries in general and the Gulf States in particular must have their own capacity to develop an education system with the help of local people. This does not mean that everything has to be created but it is important to simply transfer just what is necessary from western society and the rest should evolve from Arab ideology and culture.

Thirdly, I.R.E. as a curriculum subject is probably only appropriate to be developed and taught in Arab countries. As far as I am concerned, Islam as a religion cannot be separated from the Arab societies in which we as Arabs live, so I.R.E. also cannot be copied from the west. Consequently we have a clear path and legislation to follow from Islamic religion and the researcher believes we can build on this to benefit our Arab society.

This is not a pessimistic view, but it is a theme to discuss and a policy to consider. The talk about the past and the present aims to investigate these issues relative to I.R.E. in order to help and develop the education system in the future, and to decide to what extent we need Islamic religious education. It is an attempt to open a window for people to look and share opinions, ideas, criticisms and so on, in order to see significant milestones of Islamic religious education.

A General Analysis

The purpose of Chapter Three is to show the importance of I.R.E. in the past in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. Also to examine the unity of people in the past in society in their aims and objectives, the potential of many of them towards non-compulsory and informal education, compared with the 1980s when many students seem upset or hesitate to learn in school. There are many parents going to school every day to talk to the head teacher about their children's problems in attending school. Although education in the 1950s continued it was with difficulty, as Al Misnad agreed when she said:

The two public schools, 'Almbarakiya' and 'Alahmadiya' which continued to function successfully, but in the 1930s they were hit by the world economic depression ... both schools lacked adequate funds.

(1985, p.34)

I believe that this experience should be taught to our pupils in the future as an example for them to follow and to influence the competition between them. The experience of the previous generation is an example and model to the future generations. It shows how in the past people tried to gain education against the odds - no electricity, no power and no money. The nature of life changes from time to time and no one knows whether the change is for better or worse. Our educational aims should have something to teach us at every period of time.

Islamic religion asks Muslims to be solid and strong, not weak. It seems to me that we need to teach our children in the Gulf region that you also have to be certain if you are to achieve your aims and objectives in this life. A good Muslim works with his own hands and is self dependent, not dependent upon his father's hands. As the Holy Quran says:

And says work (righteousness) soon will God observe your work
and his Apostle and the Believers.

(9:105)

No one can build their life until they have the right tools. We might ask other people to help us and to share their experiences and knowledge, but we should still be responsible for our own decisions (especially education). This is the way Islam wants us to be.

We in the Gulf region must use whatever is available to work to develop our education. It is the time to work, not to talk. The responsibility for the future of Kuwait and Saudi Arabia is in the hands of Kuwaitis and Saudis, with thanks and appreciation to all the people who are helping us to liberate our countries. The history of Islamic religious education as we have seen is a history of mixing education and Islam. This view, in my opinion, is correct because it will save society if we absolutely agree with it. There is no doubt that if we follow our Islamic religion as pointed out in the legislation of the two countries, we will succeed not only in education but in all our lives.

Obviously our education system is damaged and hurt as a result of the present situation in the Gulf region. This study is an attempt to link the people who will rebuild education again by providing ideas and an evaluation of I.R.E. between the two periods before and after 2nd August 1990. Therefore the experienced Kuwaitis and Saudis need to work hand in hand for the future of Islamic religious education as long as they can, but they will need support from all the people in the Gulf region.

SECTION B

Introduction to the aims of I.R.E. in Primary education in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia

In this section I will present the aims of I.R.E. in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia in order to clarify the picture for the reader. Then I will discuss the aims of I.R.E. in the Primary education between the two countries, and produce comparative views of the differences of the aims of education in the two countries in order to see what are the best ways of developing I.R.E. through these aims.

Basically the aim of I.R.E. is to create a good person, as was confirmed by the First World Conference on Muslim Education at King Abdulaziz University. There is unanimity about this among large numbers of Muslim writers. As Nasser says:

All of the educational curriculum aims to prepare a good citizen except Islamic education, which aims to make a good person.
(1989, p.273)

The argument about preparing a good citizen or person, from my point of view, should not focus on the name only because each curriculum must aim to prepare better conditions either for the person or citizen in society. So if Nasser or others made this statement, it does not mean that other curricula are doing badly. In all cases education links with religion and culture, and all religion is seeking to prepare a good person for his or her society. This applies to every country, every citizen and every society. Perhaps Muslim writers who say that this makes a good person are copying the meaning from the Quran and the Quran is sent to all

people, and no individual society is specified. Though Muslim countries are, of course, more closely tied to the Quran and they link their education to it.

The report of the Gulf States Educational Research Centre also agrees with this definition and concludes:

... creating a good Muslim in a good Islamic society is one of the aims of teaching Islamic education.

(G.A.S.E.R.C. 1985, p.300)

Perhaps this shows that this definition has a political element and this means that society and I.R.E. can co-operate in reaching the aims of I.R.E. While great consideration was given to the aims of Islamic education in 1985 as a result of the study, it was indicated that the aims of I.R.E. should cover a wider area, implementing reforms in teacher training, curriculum, teaching methods and so influencing students. That means the aim of I.R.E. is not only to produce a good person but should be looked at in a wider context, such as the social, political and economic contexts in society.

Zaki Badawi gave a comprehensive definition of Islamic religious education when he said:

Muslim society must aim naturally at instilling the principles of Islam in the hearts and minds of its young to achieve, through them, the ideal of the faith, the continuity of the 'ummah' which the Holy Quran describes as the best nation ever brought forth to men.

(Badawi 1979, p.104)

Even this definition is a very general one because the principles of Islam distinguish many sections, and under each there are many duties. So for those people who do not understand Islam very well they might find some difficulty in following the meaning of Islamic education.

In his article 'The Glorious Quran is the Foundation of Islamic Education', Prince Muhammad Al-Faisal Al-Saud made it clear for many people what Islamic religious education is and how it deals with Muslim opinion. He points out:

Islamic religious education has its own peculiar character which distinguishes it very clearly from all other types of educational theory or practice. This distinguishing feature is due to the ambient presence and influence of the Quran on Islamic education. The Quran is, by the consensus of Muslim opinion in the past and the present, the immutable source of the fundamental tenets of Islam, of its principles, ethics and culture.

(Al-Faisal 1979, p.126)

In order to see these types of educational theory in practice within Islamic religious education it is clear that these definitions referred to the Holy Quran and Sunnah as major sources. Then they moved to the educational theory and chose what was relevant and acceptable in addition to religion. They also picked up whatever was necessary and not against Islam because Islam is a total system, completed by God. I agree with that, though at the same time it seems to be that the direction now is possibly not the same as it was in the past. There are some views linking Islamic religion to some new ideology which may replace teaching I.R.E. in the future, i.e. in some Arab countries such as Syria, Libya, Egypt and Iraq there are sections who mix Islam with socialism or liberalism and they have written books about it. But they face strong opposing views from Muslim institutions and authors. They also want in some way to link Islam and Western ideology but they must fail because Islam is a complete religion created by God and therefore no one can compare it with any ideology made by humankind. Al Nashmi says:

If the actual life of people today is the outcome of their thoughts and opinions, the actual life of Islam has come from a holy curriculum and we are not involved in stating our opinions on this because it is a curriculum from God.

(1980, p.18)

To make these points clear, the aims of I.R.E. in the Gulf region indicate that the standard of teaching methods and textbooks for I.R.E. in many Arab countries are less well developed (G.A.S.E.R.C., p.87). This is one reason for the Gulf states to develop I.R.E. The second reason is that nothing new has happened to the teaching of I.R.E. in spite of all the improvements in many other Arab countries in their teaching methods. The I.R.E. textbook is still very old fashioned, as I have said before. The other point is that although I.R.E. is taught to a particular level, this level, in the eyes of many Muslims, is not sufficient. This study will attempt to investigate the situation in later chapters.

The aims of I.R.E. in primary education in Kuwait

The education system in Kuwait uses the 'top-down' model. So the aims of education generally are managed by the Ministry of Education in consultation with Kuwait University and other institutions. In addition, Kuwait's constitution includes the following points:

- Kuwait Arab identity (item 1)
- Islam is the religion of the state (items 2, 9, 12)
- Islam is a main source of legislation (items 2, 18)
- Society's adoption of a democratic living style by all available means (item 5)
- Education is an essential factor for the progress of the society, secured and patronised by the State (item 13)
- Education is a right for Kuwaiti citizens and is compulsory in its elementary stage (item 40)

(Ministry of Education Report 1989, p.14)

The aims of I.R.E. in Kuwait are derived from the general aims of education developed by the I.R.E. headquarters Committee. There are three dimensions beyond the aims of I.R.E. which are carefully considered: [1] The nature of Kuwaiti society; [2] The nature of Islamic education; [3] The nature of the learner. These three dimensions might be re-ordered as [2] first then [1] as [3] if we really develop I.R.E. At each stage there are separate features and needs of the students. The characteristics are implemented as part of the criteria of I.R.E. aims. The general aims of I.R.E. in Kuwait were written in Arabic roughly as:

1. Reinforcement of belief in God (Allah). Glory to God as the creator of the universe and belief in His Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) with all that He has brought;
2. Filling the subjective needs of the learner, such as psychological and social needs, within the manner of Islam;
3. To achieve a correct Islamic understanding about the nature of the relationships of human beings and the way to deal with society;
4. Gaining Islamic values in order to control students' behaviour;
5. Assisting students to understand religious terminology in a practical way;
6. Protect younger children from deviating from the religious way;
7. Create the Muslim mind openly and maturely;
8. Give the learner proper answers to questions about the universe, referring to scientific achievements where possible;
9. Reveal the civilisation side of the Islamic religion so as to make the learner believe more in religion;
10. To clarify what is the religious attitude to movement and the changing process in life;
11. Make a balance between the mind and the emotions to link our lives and the hereafter;

12. Prepare the young to keep to the straight path and obey God and the Prophet through worship;
13. Create an integrated person by faith, meditation and behaviour in order to create the complete society;
14. Prepare the young to work towards taking responsibility for society.

(Kuwaiti Ministry of Education 1981, pp.15-16)

The Ministry of Education decided on the aims of I.R.E. in primary education for pupils up to 10 years of age. They were written in Arabic in one book for each stage - primary, intermediate and secondary. However, as a teacher since 1977, I have to say that I have never seen these aims, nor have my colleagues. These aims are probably filed away somewhere in the Ministry of Education and I am concerned that they are not available for teachers until early 1990. So we must look at what we would like the aims of education to be in the future.

The introduction to the Ministry's aims seems to be telling teachers of the achievements of the I.R.E. committee up to 1981. They state:

We present to you this hard work in order to see and focus on these aims and then to apply them in the field. Thus we trust your ability and loyalty and responsibility as well as your attention to teach your pupils in the way that you have agreed and are enthusiastic to do, to transfer these aims to actual life.

(ibid., p.8)

In fact, I do not agree with this introduction if the aims are not available to I.R.E. teachers to understand and discuss. It seems to me that the aims of I.R.E. are for inspectors only, or to show the Ministry of Education that we have written aims available. Secondly, they might not prepare teachers to use these aims because they are not easy to understand and apply at school. In this case teachers of I.R.E. might fail because they are working in different ways than the ways of

the aims. This is one of the problems this study wishes to investigate, to see how teachers of I.R.E. can affect pupils in both cases - when they have aims available and agreed, or, if they are not familiar with the aims, would they follow what is in the teacher's guide book and pupil textbook even more. But whatever the reason, the aims of I.R.E. should be available to the I.R.E. teacher, especially in the immediate future in order to have a full and comprehensive discussion.

Some of the primary aims of I.R.E. in Kuwait are as follows:

1. To transfer the learner from subjectivity to the social framework, for example:
 - teaching the learner the idea of giving and receiving
 - teaching the desire to join the group
2. To modify the tendency of pupils regarding possessions, for example:
 - educating pupils to respect other people's possessions
 - encouraging pupils to care for and to help others
3. To bring up pupils to carry out responsibilities and duties:
 - helping pupils to be independent as far as possible
 - encouraging pupils to understand the authority of Islam
 - to know that any authority in Islam should be merciful
4. To teach the learner his rights and duties in order that s/he may love and obey Allah and gain reward, kindness and favour in return
 - to love the Prophet (peace be upon him)
 - to obey parents as a reward for their welfare
5. To bring up the learner to have values and to control their behaviour within the family.
6. To prepare the learner to think fit thoughts.
7. To satisfy the physical, social, psychological and mental needs.
8. To help the pupil feel pleasant emotions from Islamic education.

9. To ensure the pupil learns good habits, attitudes and health.
10. To prepare the pupil to be positive towards religious ceremony.
11. To describe the basis of Islam and the method of worship, particularly prayer and fasting.
12. To prepare the pupil for life by linking her/him to the Holy Quran and Sunnah of the Prophet (p.b.o.h.).
13. To give pupils acceptable answers in response to their questions.

(ibid. pp.13-14)

These aims of I.R.E. were set up in the early 1980s following an attempt to change the textbook and bring it more up to date. This study will examine the textbook in more detail in a later chapter. Let us now see what the aims were during the 1960s and '70s. They might not be similar to present day aims but there is a common target for teaching I.R.E. depending on the direction of the aims towards pupils or textbook and sometimes towards teaching methods. Clearly the aims of the 1960s did not achieve this, or cover what has been achieved in the 1980s because the more you look back the simpler the system seemed to be. Whatever the aims of I.R.E. at that time, it was obvious that pupils were not given the same attention in the 1980s, i.e. even the name of the subject - Religion Subject - was different at that time because it aimed to teach the Holy Quran and give religious information only. Later they called it Religious Education, and then I.R.E. From my point of view I can say that the kuttab period implemented education and religion in a simple way, and even the 1960s and '70s gave no clear sign of development for the learner.

The aims of I.R.E. in primary education in Saudi Arabia

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Kuwait have the same 'top-down' system in education. This means the government centralises education from the university down to the primary school. Both countries have a Ministry of Higher Education and a Ministry of Education, in addition to which Saudi Arabia has the headquarters of Girls Education. The main difference is that Kuwait has constitutional and general legislation in the country in different subject such as Law, Education, Health etc., while Saudi Arabia has none because they regard the Holy Quran as the legislation of the state. So all the rules are assumed to be derived from Islam. The Ministry of Higher Education has conducted the educational policy and aims and purposes in Saudi Arabia and I will give examples of some of these in the following:

1. The purpose of education is to have the student understand Islam in a correct comprehensive manner, to plant and spread the Islamic creed, to furnish the student with the values, teachings and ideals of Islam, to equip him with the various skills and knowledge to develop his conduct in constructive directions, to develop the society economically, socially and culturally, and to prepare the individual to become a useful member in the building of his community.
2. Keeping pace with the characteristics of each phase of the psychological growth of young people, helping the individual to grow spiritually, mentally, emotionally and socially in a round way, and emphasizing the spiritual Islamic aspect so that it will be the main guideline of private and public behaviour for the individual and society.

3. The elementary stage is the foundation on which rests the preparation of youth for the following stages of their life. It is an important stage which covers all the members of the nation and provides them with the fundamentals of sound ideology and trends and with experience, information and skills.
4. Rearing the correct Islamic creed in the soul of the child and providing him with a comprehensive Islamic education in his morals, body, brain, language and feeling of belonging to the Islamic Nation.
5. Training him in prayers and teaching him good conduct and virtues.
6. Developing in him the various basic skills, especially language, counting and body exercises.
7. Supplying him with the necessary amount of information in various fields.
8. Acquainting him with the blessings God has bestowed on him and on his geographical and social environment so that he can make good use of these blessings in serving himself and his community.
9. Rearing the child's good taste, looking after his imaginative activities and strengthening his admiration of manual work.
10. Developing his feeling of responsibility to understand his rights and duties in the limits of his age and the characteristics of the stage he is in, and planting in him the love of his country and loyalty to his rulers.

11. Creating in him the desire to accumulate more knowledge and useful work and training him to make good use of his leisure time.
12. Preparing the child for the following stages of his life.

(Saudi Ministry of Higher Education 1978, pp.4-17)

It is obvious that the Saudi policy of education has given Islamic religion a vital role within the education system at all stages. They also consider Islam in all parts of education and society. The situation in Kuwait is different because the aims of education do not focus on Islamic principles, as the Saudis' do.

Some of the aims of I.R.E. in the primary education in Saudi Arabia are as follows:

1. To educate pupils in Islamic Religious Education to know their creator who created the heavens and earth ... to fear Him and obey Him.
2. To educate their conscience and set up their religious instruction spiritually as a better way to protect them from error.
3. To build up pupils in the early ages in a good morality, and direct their behaviour towards beneficence and avoid depravity.
4. To enlighten pupils that all religion brings forward orders and doctrines and forbids things for the benefit of themselves and society and to take away harm from them.
5. To provide pupils with religious terms and religion's usefulness revealed from the Holy Quran and Sunnah as well as the prophets' lives. Righteous and honest people will know their duties towards Allah and themselves and families as Islam will assist their thoughts and opinions and spirits.

6. To make them love the Holy Quran and appreciate it, also to learn correct recitation and skills of reading, to understand the style and the Quranic miracle.
7. To teach them about the Prophet's Hadith so they enjoy and apply it.
8. To find out the model from the Prophet's life and his followers and to be proud of it.
9. To draw their attention to Allah's greatness, glory to him, and to develop their understanding to discover innovation of the universe.
10. To worship Allah and Allah alone, and to have no partner but Him for ever.
11. To assist pupils to behave well and to stop at the religious extent.
12. To protect society from deflection and perversion and the non-Islam ideology.
13. To warn pupils about heresy, superstition and the bad customs which affect society because it is against the Islamic religion.
14. To maintain the Islamic principles and foundations ...

(Saudi Ministry of Education, 1985, pp.2-4)

The Saudi Ministry of Higher Education thus presents a clear policy of education, as the Kuwaiti Ministry of Education did, but the aims of I.R.E. in the primary stage, it seems to me, need to be prepared and distributed to all I.R.E. teachers in a book or memorandum.

In fact the Saudi and Kuwaiti aims of I.R.E. both need to be more open for the teachers to discuss, add to or change within their meetings at least once a year. This would make things clear for teachers to follow and improve their performance.

A Comparative view of the aims of I.R.E. in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia

In theory the general aims of I.R.E. in the two countries, from my point of view, are not so simple that they can be covered and analysed in just one section, but I can raise some of the main points through the following comparisons.

Firstly, the aims of I.R.E. in Kuwait derive from the general aims of education in the state, while the general aims of I.R.E. in Saudi Arabia derive from the general policy of the Kingdom. This means that the Kuwaiti system of education is separated in one unit, e.g. the aims of I.R.E. in Kuwait give more details to individual pupils whereas in Saudi Arabia the aims of I.R.E. gives only a short outline to the individual pupil. As a result of this, the Saudi aims of I.R.E. focus on some of the Islamic matters more than educational matters, while Kuwaiti aims of I.R.E. focus on educational matters and religious matters equally. Saudi aims are presented in a few pages and it seems to me inadequate, while Kuwaiti aims are contained in three books.

Secondly, Saudi aims of I.R.E. do not clarify the methods of approaching and applying these aims in detail as much as Kuwaiti aims do. But I can see that both countries have confirmed their belief in God (Allah) as the main aim of I.R.E. in a Muslim country. Thirdly, both countries indicate in their I.R.E. aims the need for a correct understanding of Islam for pupils, and that I.R.E. should also protect pupils from opposition to Islamic ideology.

Fourthly, Saudi general aims of education mention the right of education for girls, while Kuwaiti legislation gives females rights in all matters, including equal education with males, but there are some Saudi females dissatisfied with the

level of education they have been given. Al Manea, in her Ph.D. thesis, confirms the point of women's education and says:

Saudi Arabia is a country where the Islamic principles are strongly adhered to, where the religious instructions are followed in all legal acts, where religion is the major source of social values and morals. Therefore the link between religion and women's education is very strong. In the name of religion, until recently, women in Saudi Arabia were deprived of education, confined to their houses, and knew little about the outside world.

(Al Manea 1984, p.29)

She also said that in the Quran there is no one verse that deprives women from acquiring education. In fact the Quran encourages all believers to seek knowledge without indicating their sex.

God will raise up, to rank, those of you who believe and who have been granted knowledge.

and

Say, are those equal, those who know and those who do not know?

(58:11)

All these verses are directed to all believers, both men and women (Al Manea 1984, pp. 30-31). To a certain degree I do not agree with her view because this happened in the 1960s but not in the 1980s, although she and many other Saudi families studied abroad. In addition, the general aims of Saudi education integrate I.R.E. and the Islamic culture, because I.R.E. teaching occurs at all stages, and the Islamic culture is only taught at the higher education level which, to some extent, is similar to the Kuwaiti system.

Writing the general Saudi curriculum on Islamic orientation is one of the policies of the Education Department in the Kingdom, but Kuwait was attempting to do the same during the 1980s and has not finished their task yet. Also, the two

countries have similar views on how to deal with society. In Kuwait, I.R.E. aims towards an ideal society by preparing young people to take responsibility, while in Saudi Arabia I.R.E. emphasises the religious aspect of life and aims for students to be active in participating in their actual society.

The Saudi aims of I.R.E. are not as comprehensive as Kuwaiti aims of I.R.E., possibly because the general Saudi aims cover a large number of Islamic issues and are written in one book for each stage while in Saudi they are written on just a few pages. Both countries give attention to spiritual, mental and emotional growth in their I.R.E. aims. Finally, both countries' primary aims of I.R.E. offer a chance for pupils to learn, practically, how to pray.

There is no doubt that some of the aims are similar, but the main question is to what extent these aims of I.R.E. and the general aims of education will exist in the future and be suitable for the new circumstances of the societies. I think the aims of I.R.E. in the primary education is the first step to rebuilding the education system, to consider any mistakes from the past and to re-examine the weaknesses of our education during the 1980s. I feel the time-wasting period has gone, and people in the Gulf region such as teachers, educationalists and decision-makers must take over the problems and solve them them by working hard to ensure a better education for the next generation.

The argument about educational aims might take more than one thesis, so this study will try to give signals and pointers to help the people who are trying to change the system, and who have the authority to make final decisions. The argument and discussion of the aims of I.R.E. is returned to in a later chapter.

What are the benefits to be gained from the lessons of the 1950s? Historically the past of I.R.E. had many lessons for the present and the future as

this chapter shows through the description of life in the past. It seems that parents' participation in education in the past was stronger than it is at present. Parents were more involved. The first lesson is to suggest that for rebuilding Kuwait people should be optimistic in believing that Kuwaiti citizens will want to rebuild their education system in the 1990s so that it is at least as strong as it was in the 1950s.

The other lesson is that Kuwaiti society will face considerable difficulty in conducting the new policy of the state because the whole region has been affected by the Gulf War. Education, economic and social life will be changed in such a way as to make it difficult to prepare people for just how different life is going to be.

As the Gulf region's life during the period 1960-1980 was not dependent 100% on the local people they need, in my point of view, to be more independent from the past. They surely have to know how to rebuild their own education by reducing the number of foreign teachers in general education as well as in I.R.E.

Many of those groups of teachers have no idea about the region and do not understand the needs of the I.R.E. as local teachers do. This means we have to support our local teachers to look after Islamic religious education as their parents and grandparents did in the past.

To spend a lot of money on sporting activity, for example, is not necessary and this money could be saved for developing education in many ways. It is useful to know what development has been made during the last 30 years in I.R.E. in both Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

There should be a clear strategy for I.R.E. in the future, particularly in primary education. This is said not from an emotional viewpoint but because it is practical. Also the advantages of teaching I.R.E. and the disadvantages are important to know from the past to the present and future.

Conclusion

Chapter Three examined the past of I.R.E. in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia during the 1950s and 1960s and up to the 1980s in order to see the development of I.R.E. in the kuttab and the mosque as informal education by discussing previous resources. It also focused on the role of the Mullah for male education and the mutawah for female education. The role of parents has also been mentioned. Added to this the formal education was supported by the government after demands from the public.

The progress of development in education in the two countries has been looked at in Chapter Three, as well as similarities and differences between Kuwait and Saudi Arabia in I.R.E. to make it clear to the reader when I.R.E. started and what were the difficulties faced.

Section Two in Chapter Three dealt with the aims of education and its policy in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, and showed how I.R.E. aims were derived. The aims of I.R.E. indicated that in spite of the two countries being close geographically and religiously, there are many differences between them in their education systems. This means that there are two experiences, two schools of thought and two styles of I.R.E. education system. Finally Chapter Three talked about primary I.R.E. education and gave some indications of the current situation and what is currently being developed for the future.

In concluding Chapter Three it seems to me that some of the Kuwaiti and Saudi I.R.E. aims need revision, and the development programme must focus on I.R.E. as a core curriculum subject at school in the primary stage in both countries.

Ultimately, after the Gulf war, those concerned with the educational unity of the region should examine more closely the needs of I.R.E. in the future, through the Gulf States Educational Research Centre in which the development of I.R.E. can be improved more and more. My suggestion is to have a team of educationalists, sociologists, psychologists, religious leaders, I.R.E. teachers and parents who can clarify the needs of society. The time has now come when it is appropriate to sit down and discuss all the I.R.E. matters. Finally, the next chapter will compare the two different models of I.R.E. textbook in the primary stage between Kuwait and Saudi Arabia to examine the differences of the I.R.E. textbook in the light of the countries' aims. In this way the thesis will move from comparing the general aims of I.R.E. in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait to comparing the specific way they are put into practice through the two countries' primary level textbooks.

PART II

CHAPTER FOUR

CHAPTER FOUR

A Comparative Analysis of I.R.E. Curriculum Textbooks in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia

Introduction

The textbook could and should be the heart of the educational process in the Gulf States if it is used properly; how to make the textbook attractive and acceptable for both teachers and pupils. In my view simplicity in the illustrations is one of the characteristics of the textbook that ought to be easily understood and developed. In Section A of this chapter I will analyse the I.R.E. curriculum textbook, its development and improvement in the 1980s, paying special attention to the first three I.R.E. textbooks used in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia in the primary stage. As a sample they reflect on the nature of six years of I.R.E. in the Saudi system and four years in the Kuwaiti system of primary education. They are also important because the first three I.R.E. textbooks were experimental and used to develop subsequent textbooks.

This chapter will begin by comparing and analysing the I.R.E. textbooks used in the primary stage in the two countries by covering the following points: The general form of the textbook and how it is presented as chapters, sections and lessons. Then it will examine the style of the textbook, whether it is an old or new publication, in colour or not, and the number of pages. It will also deal with the contents of the textbook in detail, discussing the headings and sub-headings, as well as the concepts and lessons of each, by analysing and comparing comprehensively the information contained in Kuwaiti and Saudi textbooks.

It is hoped these points will give the reader an idea of what has gone into developing the I.R.E. textbook during the 1980s, its advantages and disadvantages, which will help them to judge if they should accept my arguments concerning whether the development has been sufficient, and whether there is need for change or improvement.

Section B is the attempt to analyse and discuss the actual functions of the I.R.E. textbooks' contents and their implementation between the two countries in the light of their stated aims, which is the original matter in this thesis, as this has not been done before. This might show the direction in which I.R.E. is going in the near future. I will also try to answer an important question in this matter: What do we need I.R.E. textbooks for? This chapter is long because I believe that information about the textbook should be gathered and analysed in one place.

SECTION A

Analysis of the I.R.E. curriculum textbook

I.R.E. textbook for the First Year

The Kuwaiti I.R.E. textbook which I will examine is the latest one, which was published in 1989 after an initial experimental period in a number of schools in Kuwait, then used in all schools. The textbook is the fourth edition written by the "committee for developing the I.R.E. curriculum" within the Ministry of Education and is based on the model developed after the survey study suggested by the G.A.S.E.R.C. in 1984 (see pp.12-14, Chapter One). The book is for boys and girls aged 6 -10 years, and consists of approximately 187 pages.

The style of the Kuwaiti I.R.E. textbook is indicated in the introduction, which says:

This textbook is new and was developed to follow the general development in life concerning children's growth. The book also invites parents to participate in encouraging their children to love the book. It includes many examples of I.R.E. lessons, style and general form.

(p.11)

So the general form of the book is teaching by concepts of which there are many examples in the book. There are many pictures in the book to clarify the concepts as much as possible, and I will go through them carefully to see how useful they are.

The latest Saudi I.R.E. textbook (see Appendix 1) was published by the Ministry of Education in 1989 and was revised by Al Uthimeen, a Saudi religious scholar. It is the thirteenth edition and contains only 24 pages. The book begins

with instructions to the I.R.E. teacher to be a pattern on which pupils can model themselves and their behaviour, and how to teach the subject of I.R.E.

The style and general form of the Saudi textbook depends on questions and answers with only a few pictures to illustrate the points made. The book is divided into two parts, the first part teaches "Al Tawhid" and part two "Al Fiqh" (jurisprudence of Islamic worship).

Let us look at some of the specific points of I.R.E. information in the books before moving to their content. The first point is that the Kuwaiti I.R.E. textbook is larger than the Saudi one, more than seven times larger (187 pages compared with 24 pages). Secondly, the Saudi textbook is written by one unknown person whereas the Kuwaiti book was written by a team of named educational experts. Thirdly, the difference in length of the two books raises the question, 'Does the shorter book really cover the subject properly?' Finally, to what extent does each textbook deal with the aims of I.R.E.? A detailed look at the contents of the two books is needed to study the advantages and disadvantages of both textbooks.

The Saudi I.R.E. textbook

Saudi I.R.E. concentrates in the first term on Part One of the textbook, which aims to teach Al Tawhid as the main part of Islamic religion. Teaching Al Tawhid in Saudi Arabia takes place not only in the primary stage, but also in advanced stages. The reason for this is that through Al Tawhid they can teach pupils in the early stages that to be a believer and a Muslim one must have a clear understanding that there is no God but Allah. Al Yassini confirmed this when he

said: "Al Tawhid is the central theme in the Wahhabi doctrine"* . The Shaikh Muhammad focuses on the importance of Al Tawhid. He maintains that the unity of God reveals itself in three distinct ways. The first is Tawhid (al-rububiyah), which is the assertion of the unity of God and His actions. He alone is the Creator, the Provider and Disposer of the universe.

The second is Tawhid (al-asma waal sifat). This concept deals with God's characteristics. He is The Benificent, The Merciful, The One; He is Knowledgeable, as the Holy Quran says:

He is established on the throne and unto Him belongeth whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth, and whatsoever is between them, and whatsoever is beneath the sod.

(20: 5-6)

The third aspect in Al Tawhid is described as Tawhid (al-Ilahhiya). Worship of God should be to God alone. There is no God but Allah. The third Tawhid was indicated in the same chapter:

"There is no God but I: So serve thou me (only)." (20:13)

(Al Yassini 1985, p.27)

No doubt this indicates the importance of Al Tawhid so it is clear now why the Saudi I.R.E. textbook teaches this in the first term. Of course Al Tawhid is also taught at University level in the Faculty of Shariah in many Arab countries, for those who are interested in Islamic studies. Therefore the Saudi primary textbook is often teaching pupils through questions followed by answers in very

* Shaikh Muhammad bin Abdul Wahhab was the leader (1703 - 1791) who applied the religious pattern of life in the Arabian peninsula. He was a follower of Imam ibn Taymiah (Hanbali School). He helped the Al Saud family to establish the Saudi State. Since then Saudi Arabia follows his teachings on Islam, commonly known as the Wahhabi School of thought.

short sentences. In my opinion the book is too short, but at the same time very easy to learn and remember, while some questions need more detail and explanation. Part One of the textbook has 11 pages and only contains seven questions about Al Tawhid, together with pictures. Let me give an example of the questions and answers:

Q: Who is your God?

A: My God is Allah.

Q: Who created you?

A: Allah created me and created all human beings.

Q: Who created the night, the day, the sun and the moon?

A: Allah created the night, the day, the sun and the moon.

The other questions are written in the same style. It seems to me that some pupils might ask about God and at this age, if teachers do not know how to answer these questions, then it is very dangerous for the pupils. For example, children at this age want to know more about God and about where He is and why they cannot see Him. From the Islamic point of view the teacher should answer truthfully, telling the children that you must believe because the Holy Quran and the Prophet said this. The other point is whether the teacher can help children to link with religion through the natural environment, such as taking children into the garden and showing them simply how things grow day by day and night by night. They can also do this by visiting factories to show them what we have around us; and visiting the Science Museum and so on. After all these activities the teacher could ask some very simple questions such as, "Do you think or believe that everything we have seen, everything we touch, everything we recognise, is created by itself?" And, "Everything around us, the moon, sky, rain, flowers, stars, sea, and mountains - how does all this happen without a creator?"

These questions, and many others, teachers could ask pupils in the primary stage to think about and then answer. In this way teachers can achieve the aims of education generally and I.R.E. in particular. It will help pupils to think for themselves and ensure they never forget. Also I think the pictures themselves in the textbook are very dull, as it is better that pupils see things for themselves, naturally.

The thinking process is not dependent on just Maths and Science but also should be possible within the I.R.E. teaching. No doubt there will be those who feel that it is not important to use the mind in studying Religion at the primary stage for fear this might confuse young pupils. In this argument it seems to me that as soon as we have a good I.R.E. teacher we will never confuse anyone, i.e. the evaluation of textbook from time to time will keep things clear.

Section Two in Part One of the Saudi textbook is totally different from Section One. It refers to worship and service to Allah and goes under the name of Al Fiqh. The importance of Al Fiqh is that it guides Muslims in their worship. Al Fiqh contains the legislation of Islam in dealing with all matters in our lives. No one can understand Islam until s/he understands this aspect of the religion.

This section of the textbook deals with two simple acts of worship in Islam: 'wudu' (ablution) and 'salat' (prayer). 'Wudu' means to clean yourself before prayer. As Mawdudi described it in Let us be Muslim, ed. Murad 1985:

On hearing the call of Adhan you get up, go and wash yourselves. What does this show? It makes you realise that having an audience with the Lord of all the worlds is very different from everything else you do. Unless clean, your clothes are clean, you have performed wudu, you are not worthy of entering His presence. Then, in the course of wudu, while washing your limbs, you constantly remember Allah. After finishing you recite the prayer taught by the Messenger of Allah, blessings and peace be on him. Thus not only your limbs but your hearts are washed clean.

(p.155)

The teaching of wudu for Muslims today is because they have to pray five times a day and therefore they have to understand the correct way to do their wudu. As Mawdudi said, it is not the act itself but the meaning behind the act of washing, starting with the hands and finishing with the feet. It shows that Islam wants Muslims to be as clean as they can be - not only the body but also the soul.

Although prayer is the second 'pillar' (duty) in Islam, the Saudi textbook does not show it as being important in the early stages, and 'wudu' and 'salah' only cover 3 pages, using the same teaching method of question and answer. For instance:

Q: What must you do before prayer?

A: I have to make wudu and be clean for audience with Allah.

The second question is, "How should you make wudu?" and the answer is then given. The third question is "After you have done your wudu, how do you pray?" and the answer follows.

In my view this explanation in the first year primary stage textbook is not enough on its own. The reason is that there is no picture to show how to do your ablution and prayer. Also there is no indication of the importance of it in Islam which might help parents to carry on their job at home in helping children to observe the correct behaviour. The other point is whether question and answer is a good method. It makes it simple for the pupil to understand and memorise but, again, the textbook does not give the pupils a chance to think why they are doing this action or ceremony, or the reasons behind it. The textbook does not link Al Tawhid and Al Fiqh, which I consider necessary for pupils to understand that all branches of religion are complementary to each other, and it is impossible to

separate them. Without guidance, pupils may find it is too difficult to know how to link them together.

If pupils have a full knowledge of what Al Tawhid is about then surely they will go directly on to worship God.

Part Two is similar to Part One in its methods, and is divided into Tawhid questions about the Messenger of God, the Prophet Muhammad, and Islam. Finally, in Section Two, Al Tawhid talks about the number of prayers required every day and what the Muslim says during prayer.

The Kuwaiti I.R.E. textbook

The Kuwaiti first year I.R.E. textbook (see Appendix 2) teaches by concepts, i.e. the first year book includes seven concepts, each of which has many pictures to make it clear and understandable to pupils. Are these pictures helpful? More than 90% of the textbook is pictures - for what reason? There are also some poems for pupils to read as a group. In addition all the seven concepts deal with Al Tawhid by using many different pictures, e.g. the first concept - Allah is the creator of the universe and everything around us. To make this more easily understood by pupils, the textbook devotes pages 27-61 to this concept in 42 pictures, which seems a great many pictures to describe a single concept. It seems to me that many of the pictures are not relevant, for example pp. 28, 29, 34, 35, 49, 58, 59 could all have been taken out, and it would have made no obvious difference to a pupil's understanding of the concept. The book tells pupils that all food and drink, trees, fruit and many things are created by God for mankind.

The second concept - Allah is the Provider and the All-bountiful, pp.61-100, is illustrated by using 54 pictures. Anyone teaching from this textbook can see that some pictures are repeated, such as animals, food, trees and so on for no

good reason. Pages 63, 69, 71, 72, 79, 82, 85, 90, all have pictures which do not give a clear idea of the concept, while there are some pictures which show that Kuwaitis are Bedouin living in the desert, which has not been the case for many years. Other pictures are not relevant to pupils' lives. In general it seems that the textbook does not give a clear understanding of the concepts and probably even confuses pupils, because many of the pictures have no bearing on their lives. For example, when you compare the two pictures on pp. 86 and 87 - the new communication system satellite - with pictures on pp. 40, 53, 87, 93, 133, 139 which show camels in different forms, it is clear that there is no obvious link between them.

It has been said:

The school textbook is the main resource to give pupils knowledge which they can refer to at any time in order to help them in solving the problems facing them, and which leads pupils to search deeply into some issues, and develop their own desire to study.

(Fialah 1985, p.229-230)

If Fialah is right it is clear that this book is a waste of time and money because pupils studying I.R.E. in Kuwait cannot reach the stage required. To have pupils simply looking through all the pictures is a waste of time as he/she may not understand the point of what they see. It wastes time when teachers have to describe the pictures in class, or when pupils talk to their friends about them. Added to this is the time wasted by teachers in answering pupils' questions about the pictures. If questions are asked teachers have to answer them, as they cannot ignore them.

Also I feel there is much waste in changing the textbook regularly, as it costs a great deal of money to produce the books and they are distributed free of charge. When large amounts of money are spent on textbooks it takes away finance from the education budget generally.

In Part One the book describes God as the Creator, then the book moves on to the Prophet Muhammad (p.b.o.h.), his early life, his order and advice to his nation, what to do for poor people and so on. In this concept there are differences between the sub-headings of the pages and the pictures following, e.g. on pp.151, 152, 153. These pictures of elderly people are totally irrelevant to the concept that the Prophet (p.b.o.h.) was compassionate and good. (See also pp.161, 163 for more examples).

The last concept in the textbook about the Prophet (p.b.o.h.) brings us to the Holy Quran from Allah, Glory to God. There are many pictures of salah and wudu, step by step from p.172. These are very clear to follow and understandable for the pupils.

As a researcher searching for reasons to support or criticise an opinion I need to know other teachers' views, as well as the views of parents, in order to see what are the best ways of developing a textbook for primary stage in I.R.E. I have studied closely the Kuwaiti I.R.E. textbook used in the primary stage and feel that most of the criticism is to do with the lack of development of the textbook. Also there is no clear link made between the textbook and the I.R.E. aims as laid down by the Ministry of Education. This prevents it being acceptable for our pupils so that they can grow to enjoy the subject and feel as happy with it as they do with other subjects in the curriculum.

There may be others with viewpoints which agree or disagree with my judgement, but in spite of that I feel this textbook is much more advanced than the one used in the 1960s and '70s . The old I.R.E. textbook had no pictures. At least the new one gives pupils ideas about modern life outside and inside their own country, within a religious framework. However, the new one needs to be

reorganised so as to reduce the number of pictures used. Moreover the concepts could be presented in a way more easily understood if pupils were given more time to think about and discuss the ideas dealt with.

Mujawer, the supervisor of two courses at Kuwait University on the teaching of I.R.E., declares that the nature of I.R.E. is not like other subjects which give information only without any emotion to the soul of the learner (1982. p.173). He is the supervisor of the I.R.E. textbook in primary education in Kuwait, and I am pleased to be able to learn from him theoretically and practically. In spite of my criticism of the textbook under his supervision I agree with some of his views, and also believe that in the future I.R.E. in Kuwait will need more attention so as to ensure that we are not looking just to the framework of the I.R.E. textbook but also searching for the central aims of I.R.E. and the reason behind it. Fialah (1985) agreed with this idea when he said:

The school textbook as an educational factor within the educational process is represented as an important method in which it can reach targets and aims even if there are many other factors such as journals, T.V., radio and computers. The textbook has its importance because it is in the hands of the pupils.

(Failah 1985, p.229)

From the views of both Mujawer and Fialah it seems that the I.R.E. textbook in Kuwait needs more consideration, if there is general agreement to change and develop the education system in Kuwait in the aftermath of the war.

I.R.E. textbook for the Second Year

Saudi I.R.E. textbook:

Let us look at the Second year primary textbook for Saudi Arabia which has the same style, form and capacity as the previous one - 27 pages divided into

two categories - with the same author and year of publication (1989). This book was written by the General Office of Curriculum Development .

In Part A, Al Tawhid discusses three major principles that mankind must know and follow -

1. Knowing God
2. Knowing religion which is Islam, and its meaning
3. Knowing the Prophet Muhammad (p.b.o.h.)

Then the book gives the definition of worship (see pp.9-11, Appendix 3).

The main difference in this section is that it gives the definitions without any questions, while in the second part of the book 'Al Fiqh' it uses the question and answer system. For instance, talking about cleaning, the child is asked - what does it mean? Then "how do you do your 'wudu'?" - and a brief answer is provided.

These points might not be clear to pupils as this textbook has no pictures at all. Also they use the same methods of teaching by adding definitions. Lastly, the book asks the teacher, in a footnote, to do a wudu in front of his pupils and ask them to copy him.

In Part B of the Saudi textbook on p.18, the five pillars of Islam are indicated as follows -

1. Belief in God and his messenger Muhammad
2. Performance of prayer (Salah)
3. Fasting at Ramadan (Sawm)
4. To give alms (Zakah)
5. To do a Hajj (pilgrimage)

It is a short statement without any details or pictures. The schedule of the five prayers is given in the Fiqh section on p.21 which says how many prayers a Muslim does each day and what they say. The textbook shows the first step to pray and the last step. In the last three pages of the book there is a question about who should pray, with an answer. It seems it is intended that the teacher should pray in front of the pupils then ask them to follow.

It seems that the book gives very short statements for pupils who may need more time to know how to pray. The disadvantage of this is that it puts the emphasis on the teacher to teach the correct way to pray, in the classroom. Some teachers may only give the example once, while others may do it several times. The pupils themselves might have known prayer at home, or not. As far as the textbook is concerned pupils should understand how to pray and it might be useful to have a visual aid which will make it easier for pupils to understand.

Normally pupils study the five principles of Islam year after year within the I.R.E. syllabus in more detail and discussion right through intermediate and secondary stage and in higher education in some faculties. However, in the primary stage it is important that the ideas and principles are put simply and in a way that young children can easily understand and accept. It is also important that pupils enjoy the subject. There may be some teachers who do not illustrate the meaning and principles of Islam because they feel children are too young to understand everything.

This raises the question of 'When is the best time for young pupils to start prayer?' There are many views on this, but most people feel that the earlier children learn to worship God, then the easier and more natural it is for them in later life. The Muslim thinker Al Gazali has discussed this issue, and agreed that it is good to teach children, in a simple way at first, the ideals and principles of Islam

at a young age. Also the Prophet recommended parents to order their children to pray at seven years of age, and punish them if they do not at the age of ten.

Pupils of primary age are more open to suggestions and prepared to act on them, especially in following prayer at school, than at any other stage. Therefore the younger they are when they begin to learn, the stronger will be their faith as they grow older.

Kuwaiti I.R.E. textbook:

Looking at the Kuwaiti I.R.E. textbook for the Second Year (see appendix 4), it has the same style, form and capacity and is also written by a group of I.R.E. inspectors supervised by the same person. The third edition is dated 1989-1990. They mention that the first edition was a pilot study containing 180 pages including five concepts, each one followed by a small number of pictures and some definitions.

In the introduction they point out that:

...this textbook represents the new curriculum in Islamic education. It is an attempt to gather the experience of the curriculum syllabus from the pupils themselves.

(p.9)

To examine this statement more closely it is necessary to work through the textbook carefully.

The book contains two major aspects:

A. The Muslim obeys Allah and his Prophet. Four concepts follow from this:

1. - love Allah and His Prophet and obey them
2. - the right worship is to Allah
3. - the Muslim believes that God is with him/her always
4. - obey the Prophet Muhammad (p.b.o.h.) and obey God

B. The Muslim loves her/his parents and obeys them. Five concepts follow from this:

1. - parents are sources of love
2. - parents are sources of emotion and care
3. - parents are sources of safety and stability
4. - love from parents is from the love of God and His Prophet
5. - obeying parents is obeying God and His Prophet

The first concept (p.16) starts in picture form showing someone reading from the Holy Quran, followed by a poem and two verses from a different chapter. There is also a short statement to the effect that 'if I am a Muslim I love God, I obey God and thank Him' (p.19). The first concept is explained under 18 sub-headings with numbers in sequence on the right hand top of the page. For example, the following are included in the 18 sub-headings:

1. A Muslim obeys Allah and His Prophet.
2. A Muslim worships Allah (twice).
3. A Muslim worships Allah through prayer and fasting.
4. A Muslim washes prior to worship.
5. The washing is part of worship.
6. Muslims thank God for Islam.

Several of the sub-headings are repeated and the pictures are not in the correct places, e.g. the picture on pp.28-29 does not illustrate the statement of the sub-heading (see pp.30, 31, 32). These are likely to be very confusing statements for pupils, because the concepts seem to be out of phase with the pictures.

On p.34 there are many statements about parents, teachers, policemen and so on, but what is the textbook trying to convey? On pp.35-38 the subject is

worship and ablution for prayers, but the pictures are not appropriate. From pp.52-59 it is made clearer for pupils because it gives step by step lessons to be followed. Page 63 seems to me not relevant because the sub-heading is about thanking God for Islam, and the pictures are unsuitable.

The problem with using large numbers of verses from the Holy Quran is that pupils may think they have to memorise them. This is not the idea of the textbook at all, which aims to give examples of how the Holy Quran can be translated into the life of a Muslim.

There is also clear evidence that the textbook is simply filled with text, whether that text is appropriate or not (see pp.66-73). All the pictures seem to be connected with science and not I.R.E., and therefore seem not to be relevant to the concept being explained.

A textbook for the primary stage should be attractive so that pupils can read and understand it. I would therefore criticise the way the pictures are chosen - why have they chosen pictures of people praying in the desert to illustrate following the Prophet in prayer (see p.75)? It would be better to show a picture of people praying in the mosque in Kuwait, as this is more relevant to the every day life of Kuwaiti pupils. Another example of the misleading nature of the pictures in the textbook is on p.80 where the top picture shows pupils playing with friends - but in old Kuwait. Why not show people in a modern context?

The question one might ask is "Do the children like this textbook and agree with it later on?" Stone perhaps gives us the answer when he says:

... it becomes more understandable that some teachers find it difficult to respond positively to the changing demands and expectations of children as they grow older. As children grow in understanding themselves, they become more critical of teachers and the lessons they present.

(Stone 1990, p.33)

I certainly agree with what he says and feel that our children will really criticise this textbook when they grow up. I have already met some children who are unhappy with the I.R.E. textbook but do not know how or to whom they can express their views. They would like the textbook to be more useful and understandable to them, as they feel happy with the subject but not with the book.

A general view of the first concept included 88 pages with many ideas which were not properly organised. This will make the task facing pupils very difficult, in the short time available to them. There is a great deal of information to learn and if it is not presented properly then it is made doubly difficult.

In the second concept, the correct worship of Allah, there is a great deal of confusion. For example, pp.91-110 of the textbook starts with two pictures of prayer then moves to another subject entirely with two full pages of writing followed by 13 pictures. This is followed by four full pages dealing with different eras in religion, such as the Prophet Ibrahim, prayer, doing good things, things created by God, visiting relatives and so on. On p.105 there is the same picture repeated from p.71 but from a different angle. What possible purpose can this serve?

The third concept - Muslims believe that God is always with them - is very confusing for pupils. Some pictures following pp.117-120 are in the wrong place, and the pages of writing talk about so many different things. For example on p.124 the Prophet Muhammad's emigration out of Makkah is mentioned to

show that God protected him in his journey. Up to this stage there are 25 sub-headings under each of which is a statement about religion.

The fourth concept - obey the Prophet Muhammad and obey God - is discussed on pp.128-136, using examples of respect for older people, following the Prophet and many verses from the Holy Quran. On p.137 there is a large picture showing a poor and sick baby to show pupils that we should support poor people as the Prophet did. This carries on in the same style on p.145-148, talking mainly about the life of the Prophet and his followers.

In addition to this there is a great deal written about a number of concepts, and the textbook moves to a new era on p.151 when it deals with parents. As I said before, there are five more concepts in this part of the textbook with much for pupils to read as well as repeated pictures. There are also seven chapters from the Holy Quran, none of them easy to read or understand at this age. Added to this there are three poems.

The major thing to decide is what we want our pupils to learn from all this information. In my opinion it is not merely the size of the textbook that is important, but its quality. The Kuwaiti I.R.E. textbook may have 180 pages in each stage, but the question is of what use are all these pages if they do not encourage pupils to believe? They simply confuse pupils and actually prevent them from learning about Islam.

There are some I.R.E. teachers who feel that the best education is to give pupils more information, because they think the more pupils have, the more they can apply Islam. In my experience this view is not quite right, and teachers should look at it from another point of view. They should see how pupils respond then teach them again, and so on. Eventually Islamic advice is to take things step by

step, because no one can be perfect or ideal in Islam whatever they do, except the Prophets, God bless them all.

I.R.E. Textbook for the Third Year

Saudi I.R.E. Textbook:

The third year Saudi I.R.E. textbook contains no major difference from the second and third Saudi textbook (see Appendix 5). There is a similarity of text style and teaching method to the first two books, as it was written by the same committee. The third textbook has no pictures at all. The date of publication was 1989 - the same year as the first and second I.R.E. textbooks. Al Tawhid and Al Fiqh are two of the parts of the book. As I said before the wahabee doctrine is reflected in the Saudi textbook more than in the Kuwaiti textbook. Part A contains three foundations:

1. Knowing Allah
2. Knowing the Prophet Muhammad
3. Knowing religion

In the introduction it says:

It is a Muslim's duty to know his Lord and worship him alone. He must also know his religion and his Prophet Muhammad (p.b.o.h.) to be a real believer. He will never reach that unless he knows the following: God, Prophet, religion.

(p.9)

Note: the textbook is for boys only.

The main issue I want to pick up is that if they are direct questions with direct answers already made then we have to be careful about pupils' ability at this age to understand some of the difficult words from the Holy Quran. In saying this the point is raised that there is no way for pupils to leave the subject of I.R.E. or

not attend the lessons of I.R.E., because it is compulsory for all Muslim pupils in the state. Why then should we not make I.R.E. more desirable? In my view pupils should have a very clear understanding of Islam in as simple a way as possible. Here is another example:

Q: If you are asked who is your God?

A: You say my God is Allah.

Q: If you are asked what is the meaning of God?

A: You say it means master, worshiper and actor.

These questions about God and others are asked directly, which seems to me difficult for pupils. At this stage pupils can pray or practice praying, then they will know all the meanings at the advanced stage.

There is no doubt that knowing God is important for a Muslim, but the extent to which this textbook helps with this is doubtful. This is one of the disadvantages of the Saudi I.R.E. textbook, and teachers have to be careful when dealing with a subject like I.R.E.

On page 12, under the sub-heading "Knowing the Prophet" (p.b.o.h.) there are three questions. The first question is: Who is your Prophet? The answer says the full name of the Prophet Muhammad, and his Arab origin. After this question the book asks about the hereafter and life after death. It then asks about those who refuse or deny these beliefs. It seems that the three questions do not complement each other. There seems to be no connection between the name of the Prophet and the after-life, and this will probably confuse pupils.

Clearly the textbook does not give a child time to think, because the method is question and answer and therefore the pupils must learn without any opportunity for discussion. This is one of the disadvantages of the Saudi I.R.E.

textbook. Another disadvantage is the short answer when, in the introduction, the book says that a Muslim should know his Prophet and so on. The body of the textbook does not show in what way this can happen. For instance the life of the Prophet Muhammad needs at least 3 - 4 pages or maybe more so that children can understand. Two or three lines is not enough. Indeed a whole chapter would be more appropriate.

Let me give an example of this. The life of the Prophet Muhammad (God bless him) can be divided into four sections. Firstly his life in Makkah included his birth and childhood. What sort of difficulty he had as a youth, and who looked after him, as well as his marriage. There are so many lessons pupils can learn from the life of the Prophet; for example, he lost his father and mother at an early age, and worked by himself looking after animals such as sheep. In this part of his life there are many stories about him and the Arabs in Makkah.

The second section describes his life in Medinah and the number of people who became Muslims and supported him in building the mosque. Also we know of the brotherhood and sisterhood he made between his people. There are many stories from that time that are recorded in Rahman, 1981, Muhammad Encyclopaedia of Seerah, which says:

The second important thing Muhammad did in Medinah was to establish brotherhood between the emigrants from Makkah (Muhajirin) and the helpers of Medina (ansar), partly to solve the problems of refugees and displaced persons and partly to strengthen the ties of brotherhood between them.

(p.29)

From what he says, pupils can learn the importance of helping refugees or poor people and sick people as well, because it is part of Islamic principles.

Thirdly, from the seerah of the Prophet pupils can study how the Prophet Muhammad was a perfect man through his kindness:

Muhammad was as kind as he was polite. He always treated people with kindness and tenderness and never showed harshness even to his enemies. The people who abused him, threw thorny bushes and stones and dirt on him and were thirsty for his blood received nothing but kindness from him ... God mentions this quality of Muhammad's in the Quran 'O messenger, it is a great Mercy of God that you are very gentle and lenient towards them...' (3:159) This kind and gentle nature of Muhammad endeared him to all, young and old, rich and poor, men and women.

(ibid. p.47)

The Prophet's behaviour towards slaves, women, animals, children, poor, relatives and orphans is important for pupils to learn about, and how to deal with others in this world.

Fourthly, there are a lot of short stories we could use in the textbook for pupils to learn of the Prophet's personality, love and mercy, forgiveness, generosity, hospitality, sacrifice, simplicity, humanity, sincerity and honesty and truthfulness. The textbook could show some of these qualities which would make it more useful.

Part Two in Section 1 of the textbook is about Al Fiqh, and the first six questions revise the lessons learned in the second year. This is a good idea. It links the past with the present in terms of learning.

Page 15 talks about cleaning the body after finishing the toilet by using water or paper and so on. After this the book talks about wudu and states the requirements of wudu, giving examples:

1. cleaning the face, mouth, nose
2. cleaning the hands
3. cleaning the feet

4. doing all these regularly

Probably the pupils can understand this but it is much better if they are provided with pictures.

Page 18 is about the necessity to pray five times a day. However this appears to have no connection to the subject of wudu so pupils again will be confused about the subject.

In Part Two, Al Tawhid (p.22) deals with the third foundation of I.R.E. - Knowing Religion. Eleven questions cover this area from different points of view. To compare the second foundation with the third foundation, it would seem that knowing the Prophet is not covered as it should be, while in the third foundation it is given much more explanation. Some examples of the questions about religion are:

1. Q: When you are asked, What is your religion?
A: You say, Islam is my religion through the messenger of Allah, Muhammad (p.b.o.h.)
2. Q: What is the great demand from God?
A: The great demand is to worship Him alone.
3. Q: How many principles are there in Islam, and what are they?
A: There are five pillars in Islam, Prayer, Fasting ...

Page 24 of the textbook carries on with questions about the five principles in Islam and quotes from the Holy Quran for each one. When asked why it is so important for Muslims to obey God and His Messenger, Mawdudi answers this and says:

A Muslim sincerely believes that the teaching of God and His Messenger is absolute truth, that whatever runs counter to it is false, and that it contains all that is good for man in this world and in the

hereafter. A Muslim who has complete faith in these truths will, at every step in his life, look only to God and the Messenger to guide him and submit to whatever they require. Such a person will never feel troubled in his heart about obeying God's commandments.
(Murad 1985, p.103)

From what Mawdudi says there is no doubt that a Muslim, male or female, is responsible to God for everything that happens in his/her life. Therefore both the Saudi and Kuwaiti textbooks talk a great deal about obeying God and His Messenger.

Part Two of the I.R.E. textbook in Saudi Arabia talks to pupils about prayer and other duties in Islam. On p.28 the book details nine points about the conditions of prayer, such as Islam, mind, wudu, cleaning, the time, direction towards Makkah and so on.

I think that pupils at this stage should be encouraged to learn how to build up their belief, which is more important than prayer, though at the same time the teacher of I.R.E. can show them how to pray and not necessarily to know all the details about prayer as is written in the textbook. The reason for this is that pupils might find the knowledge in the subject of I.R.E. very difficult and feel they would rather not learn it. They might actually prefer other subjects in the curriculum. All pupils will study I.R.E. comprehensively during their school lives, so we should give them a chance to enjoy the subject at this early stage as much as we can, and we should remember that they will learn again about prayer later in their school lives.

Kuwaiti I.R.E. textbook:

The third year I.R.E. textbook in Kuwait (see Appendix 6) was published in 1989/90 as a second edition after the one-year experiment. It was written by the same committee who developed the I.R.E. curriculum and is in a similar style to

the first and second textbooks. It consists of 240 pages, the largest textbook yet for I.R.E. It provides a general form of teaching by concept, pictures, poems and verses from the Holy Quran.

The introduction to the textbook indicates the needs and aims of it in speaking to pupils, teachers and parents, i.e.:

This is the third book in the primary stage which we present to our pupils gradually following their growth, suitable for their skills and abilities ... the book provides each lesson by implementing a complete subject so that teachers may interact with pupils ... it is a great opportunity for parents, whatever their knowledge, to participate in the teaching of their children from time to time.

(pp.7,8)

There are seven concepts in this textbook, as follows:

1. The Muslim believes in the supreme being of God.
2. The Muslim believes that God has created many things we know nothing about.
3. The Muslim believes in life after death.
4. The Muslim performs prayer at certain times.
5. The Muslim believes that God watches all we say and do.
6. The Muslim prays to God asking him for goodness.
7. The Muslim prays by reading, understanding, memorising and listening to the Holy Quran.

Analysing this textbook is hard work for pupils, besides trying to understand the verses from the Holy Quran. There are questions to be answered after each lesson. If we examine the beginning of the textbook (see pp.10-13) we see that it states that everything in the universe has been created by God. Pupils are asked to study the pictures and identify things as much as possible, though the same picture is in the second year book, but in a different context. For example: "Why did God create the sun, the moon and stars?" The pupils are expected to

interact and interpret the subject using poems as well as many difficult verses. The disadvantage of this is that there seem to be a large number of questions which pupils have to respond to after each point. For instance:

- a. answer the following: what, why, where
- b. fill in the space using the following words
- c. match the following groups of statements
- d. answer the following questions
- e. what do you understand from this picture?

These are some examples of the questions in this textbook. It could be useful to ask pupils so many questions in I.R.E., or it may be that they find the subject so difficult to understand that the many questions would further confuse them. This would particularly be the case where the teacher had not explained the subject fully.

Some of the questions are very good and give pupils time to think, and build their mental ability while at the same time the teacher can ask more questions in different areas of religion. The advantage of this is it would let the pupils think about the subject step by step, and the teacher could bring the questions and activities in as the pupils were ready for them. This might be helpful to pupils in understanding the subject well.

It is important that when learning I.R.E. pupils are not pressured into a large number of assessments. In many cases pupils feel that passing examinations is the most important part of learning and may be worried and anxious. Many Kuwaiti parents are also concerned about the amount of assessment done on a weekly, monthly or quarterly basis because they feel they have to help their children pass these assessments. I would suggest that it is more important to

ensure pupils are happy with a subject which will naturally lead on to their learning more efficiently, rather than always expecting them to pass examinations.

Pupils who are happy have a desire to study more about religion because it is more relevant to their lives than other curriculum subjects. For instance, on p.55 is illustrated the Muslim belief that God created things, including things people cannot see such as souls and angels. But the mistake of the textbook is to show many pictures of things people can see, which are not relevant to the headings. So the pupils will see things and misunderstand the concepts. It seems the textbook is confusing in that it does not clearly indicate what the symbols represent, and nothing is illustrated as to the understanding of the soul or angels. For instance, on p.69 the sub-heading is about angels but the pictures are boys and girls studying. Children might simply follow the pictures, not the text, though if they did read what was written they would find that the book talks about God sending angels to mankind. This is very confusing. There are many other examples where pictures seem to be at odds with the text and one feels very sorry about this. On pp. 78 and 82 there are two very strange pictures and it is difficult to see where their relevance lies in regard to angels.

Pupils may begin to lose interest because they feel the subject is simply too difficult to study. If the team who wrote the textbook had considered more carefully they might have tried to make sure that pupils could understand it better. Perhaps they should stop using this large I.R.E. textbook and make it clear what they are trying to teach.

The textbook contains many religious stories of the prophets Ibraheem, Moses and Muhammad (God bless them all) which are very useful for pupils to know when written in a simple way. However each story has many verses from the Holy Quran. In this matter it seems if the textbook could increase the number

of stories this would be very useful. To maintain pupils interest psychologically the textbook should not have poems, questions or pictures in such large numbers. Nor should I.R.E. have weekly, monthly or quarterly exams. But they can have stories in large numbers and religious examples in dialogue form, or teach pupils to memorise a hadith of the Prophet Muhammad. These suggestions will help reduce the weekly and monthly exams to quarterly at most.

Inevitably there will be a study of the needs of the new Kuwait following the Gulf war. This will involve teachers, sociologists, parents and local experts in education. It will be important to think about and analyse the information which the textbook presents to the primary stage. For example, from pp. 84-94 there are ten pages pupils should read and understand about life after death. There are long verses with shorter verses which will probably confuse pupils. It seems incorrect to discuss the phenomenon of death at this stage. It is ridiculous to focus on an important subject and leave aside suitable subjects which seem relevant to primary stage pupils. There are many pictures in the book for pupils to identify and express their feelings, in which we can teach pupils what to say about these pictures in regard to religion.

Up to concept three there are 100 pages. This would seem to be enough for pupils to learn and discuss in one year if the I.R.E. teacher covers the subject properly. Even if the religious information in the textbook is good, the large number of questions, statements, pictures, poems, assessments, conclusions and verses from the Holy Quran mean that it is difficult for pupils to identify what are the most important points from this mass of information. I would suggest that it would be better to focus on two or three sections in the textbook. They could ask pupils to bring in pictures of, say, a mosque, as an activity within the curriculum. Or they can link pictures together in one subject then ask pupils to explore the ideas, then we could have a section for pictures, a section for Quran and a section

for all other lessons. Pupils always like activity and teachers can work on that even in simple ways. Let teachers of I.R.E. think about it and they can do it.

The Kuwaiti I.R.E. textbook for the third year compared with the Saudi I.R.E. textbook, seems to show that the Saudi textbook has short descriptions while the Kuwaiti one has very long descriptions. The two books seem very different, almost opposite to one another. Perhaps it would be better to bring the two books closer together in their presentation, and what they teach at similar stages. For example:

Prayer: times of admission, cleaning, way of praying

Fasting, Ramadan

Zakah (alms)

The Hajj

Using pictures is not always the correct thing to do. Page 172 in the Kuwaiti textbook, about Zakah, leaves a question mark in the minds of pupils about the three pictures shown together for this subject. The teacher might want to answer the pupils' questions, but this would probably make the story even more complicated.

The subject of the Hajj pilgrimage to Makkah is very hard for pupils to understand at this age, especially if they are not allowed to go to Hajj until they are adults. So why all the pictures on pp.180-188? I think the sections on Zakah and Hajj might be better left until students are older, say in the intermediate stage.

There is no doubt that there is considerable waste of paper in the Kuwaiti I.R.E. textbook. Pages 194-196 about places visited in Makkah during the Hajj are relevant to neither religion nor education, unless the team writing the textbook intended it to be a guide book to travel around the world in the name of religion.

Concept five also takes the pupils into different subjects: belief in God and knowledge of God, then moving to a new sub-heading about Muslims not hurting others. There seems no relation between these subjects and it is difficult to see why they are discussed together. It only means the textbook becomes bigger and bigger.

In the light of these observations I would say that it is time to look seriously at changing the textbook now before even more confusion is caused to the teaching of religion, and as soon as possible.

The advantages and disadvantages of the I.R.E. textbook for the two countries

There are three major points which follow from accepting my opinion, and which will need special attention in the future of Islamic religious education in Kuwait. First of all there should be a general revision of the aims of I.R.E. Secondly, the model of the I.R.E. curriculum in the primary stage should be monitored for the next 5-10 years. Lastly, we should find out the needs of our pupils regarding society's change from one stage to another so as to make things clear within the framework of Islamic principles.

Although this thesis represents a comparative study between just two countries, there are needs in other Arab countries which relate to the basic principles of Islamic education as seen in their education as Arab, Muslim countries. The International Year Book of Education (1982) indicates this, and says:

Other governments make a firm appeal to religious ideas as one of the major sources of appropriate educational principles. As with several revolutionary societies, already used as examples, governments may also be facing problems of development and may or may not have rewritten their constitutions to emphasise the significance of religious ideas for their society.

(I.Y.B.E. 1982, p.22)

This view indicates how Islamic religion gives people the right to seek a better society linked to its own culture and local needs. The Kuwaiti education system is now examining the way to carry on general and higher education, and at this stage Kuwaitis must study carefully how and from where they will start. They must also consider where I.R.E. should go in the future, and how many years will be needed to rebuild the whole education system under the Kuwaiti constitution if the country is going to follow the advanced world. On the other hand, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia will be facing a new educational problem because Saudi Arabia will be more advanced, while Kuwait is still finding its feet after the war. Thus a gap between the two countries may develop and the question is, can I.R.E. do anything to fill this gap? This study probably will help to keep the two countries close in developing their I.R.E. aims, textbook and teaching methods, although the outcome of the study will decide what form the process will take.

Also it is up to the two states to decide whether they take any notice of the study. The main purpose of this study is to follow the development of Islamic religion and to think deeply about the best way of teaching religion in both countries over a period of time, and then to measure the differences at stages.

As a comparative study it will focus on the advantages and disadvantages of the textbook and solve the problems which teachers cannot see in the daily teaching as long as they have long periods each week. There is a hope that this study can stand by the planning of education in the region and continue discussing and analysing the recommendations of the G.A.S.E.R.C. report in 1985. In this

way it will also criticise, and thereby improve, the education system through the I.R.E. curriculum to serve people and children. There is no doubt that following Islamic principles within the I.R.E. curriculum in school will save time and money in society. In this way society as a whole should benefit.

The following examples show how I.R.E. can save time and money in society through teaching with the textbook. Firstly, I.R.E. protects pupils and government from damage and keeps things clean and tidy. As religion always requires us to be good it is a pattern for everything in our lives. Treating others with loyalty and respect is another example of the way I.R.E. can save people time and help members of society co-operate with one another.

Secondly, because Islam encourages people to learn as long as they can, this learning will make them qualified and serious so they can contribute in society. There are many people who can help and support projects in society, not just financially but in their thoughts and ideas if they learn and study.

Thirdly, teaching I.R.E. also protects the country from drugs and alcohol problems which also saves the country having to spend money on these problems. If you respect yourself you want others to respect you. Islamic religious education, practised correctly, will encourage good behaviour in people and be of benefit to mankind. This will also benefit society. One can see in the present time in the western media, television or newspapers, that thousands of pounds are being spent to stop crime and social problems. All this could be done by emphasis on teaching of I.R.E. correctly and strongly.

Although to some extent justice, equality and freedom are now considered ideologies, these all came from religion. In his book Introduction to Islam (1979) Hamidullah describes justice in Islam and says:

A characteristic feature of the Quranic legislation in this respect is the judicial autonomy accorded to the different communities comprising the subjects. Far from imposing the Quranic law on everybody Islam admits and even encourages that every group, Christian, Jewish, Magian or other should have its own tribunals presided over by its own judges, in order to have its own laws applied in all branches of human affairs, civil as well as criminal.

(p.114)

Islam asks people to do the best they can in their jobs, study or acts and this ultimately benefits society.

These are just some of the things that pupils are taught in I.R.E. If other countries started their teaching from the religious point of view then it would prevent a lot of problems in society. For these reasons I believe that teaching I.R.E. can protect people from drugs and keep the country clean and protect belongings.

Teachers must remember that teaching I.R.E. is not just giving pupils as much information about the subject as possible, but more how they should live and behave in society. Teachers should ask: What kind of behaviour do they want pupils to show? What kind of pupils are they trying to create? When the Kuwaiti constitution seeks a better life for its citizens, then why should this not be addressed in our future education?

There are many points to be raised when analysing the I.R.E. textbooks, and it might take thousands of pages, but within the limitations of this study I can only give the preparatory analysis and leave another study to develop it.

This comparison of the Kuwaiti and Saudi I.R.E. textbooks is not complete until the other part of the I.R.E. curriculum has been studied. This part is studying and memorising verses from the Holy Quran by heart. Clearly the

Saudi I.R.E. curriculum gives much more time for pupils to read chapters from the Holy Quran in each lesson, or as separate lessons, and they call these 'Quranic lessons'. It is to help link pupils to the Holy Quran through reading, learning, memorising and studying the Quran in detail. Of course, pupils may face difficulty in reading from the Holy Quran and they need to be shown how to read correctly.

In Kuwait, for instance, little is done to help pupils to read the Holy Quran correctly, as all they do is repeat verses after the teacher. But in Saudi Arabia they focus on the Holy Quran, although they have Quranic schools all around Saudi Arabia and pupils can graduate from them at the same time as graduation from other schools. This gives Saudi Arabia a distinct advantage in teaching a 'Quranic lesson' over the I.R.E. curriculum in Kuwait and other countries in the Gulf region.

So, the main differences between the Kuwaiti and Saudi textbook are: the Kuwaiti I.R.E. textbook uses simple language when writing for pupils; the Saudi I.R.E. textbook uses difficult language. This shows that Saudi I.R.E. uses the same language that is used for older pupils.

Neither Saudi nor Kuwaiti I.R.E. textbooks makes the language easy and accessible to pupils, which the researcher feels is a shame as it would make the whole subject more attractive for children, and the meaning of Islam would be clearer.

It seems that the Saudi I.R.E. textbooks are teaching pupils without any consideration of their abilities towards the language of religion.

Moreover, the Saudi I.R.E. textbook does not go into enough detail about the concept of Islam to make the subject easily understood by pupils; it is also repetitive and does not give enough simple explanations. This could lead to pupils repeating and memorising parts of the textbook which they do not fully understand, as compared with the Kuwaiti I.R.E. textbook, which tries to reinforce the subject using large numbers of pictures together with statements about some of them which enables pupils to remember. However, a disadvantage with the Kuwaiti I.R.E. textbook is that it tries to give a large number of concepts of Islamic religion at a very young age which might confuse pupils. At least the Saudi textbook only focuses on two or three ideas which can be easily remembered. These are some of the advantages and disadvantages of the Kuwaiti and Saudi textbooks.

In the conclusion there are many similarities between the two textbooks however. It is hard to say which text is better, because each has advantages and disadvantages for pupils and teachers as well as parents.

These views may be accepted or rejected, but they are a genuine attempt to improve the teaching of I.R.E. in the region, so as to help our pupils and to talk to them directly about I.R.E. and what we as Muslims should be doing in our society.

Islam in Kuwait or Saudi Arabia is the religion of the state, and it is affected by the educational strategy of the Ministry of Education. The flexibility that is one of the characteristics of this strategy means that the I.R.E. curriculum could change, and teaching methods can also be changed in line with the development of society. Eventually the aims of education could pass through religious channels within the I.R.E. curriculum in order to make sure that I.R.E. has an effect on pupils, positively, towards society.

The present strategy of education in the Gulf generally was developed during the 1980s when there were significant social and educational changes happening. These changes were aimed at giving pupils a better I.R.E. and the textbooks were developed at all stages at the primary level to assist this. There is no doubt that many good ideas were shared and used in the production of the textbooks. The question is to what extent they succeeded in their task? I feel that this is not the end of the story, however. Society and events in the Gulf region are still changing and developing, and the teaching of I.R.E. and the textbook should reflect some of these changes.

It is a good opportunity at this present time to look at the Kuwaiti and Saudi education systems, to learn that education really becomes a process of nation building. The people of the region ought to decide their own future according to their faith. They must teach pupils that it is important to think for themselves as they found it useful to share people's opinions and experience. The Islamic viewpoint on this is that as long as there is general discussion and open talk within the Islamic framework for any subject the final decision will be better, and this is one of the main objectives of this study, to listen to people's views and make a survey, then decide what is next.

There are a many people in both Kuwait and Saudi Arabia who are facing devastating times as a result of the Gulf war. They wonder how Muslims could behave as they did. Were those people who invaded really educated? If so, what sort of hearts did they carry in their bodies? Have they seen what they left behind after the invasion? Do they have feelings like other people? Have they even heard about religion?

These and many other questions can be read in the eyes of pupils and they need to express them and to receive answers. It is important that we develop pupils' abilities mentally and physically because then they become strong enough and cannot be defeated easily. In the hadith of the Prophet he says "the stronger believer is loved by God more than the weak believer ...". Therefore through I.R.E. it is quite possible to make pupils feel safe and help them in the months and years to come. Finally, one of the important features of I.R.E. is that it can help spiritually.

SECTION B

The I.R.E. textbooks' actual functions and implementation in the light of their stated aims

Section B will identify the development of I.R.E. in the 1980s with regard to the aims and functions of I.R.E. in the Gulf region. As Chapter Three pointed to the aims and illustrated the differences between Kuwaiti primary stage and Saudi primary stage, this section will focus on the implementation and function of I.R.E., how it operates, and how the aims are implemented through the textbook. From my point of view, the developments of the 1980s are not sufficient, possibly because they did not match all the aims of I.R.E. Let us examine this through the following examples.

The System of Education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (A Summary Guide)

(1985) says:

The school curricula undergo a constant improvement process to make them more responsive to the gigantic development which is taking place in the kingdom in the economic and social fields. They also have to meet the increasing demand on education and keep abreast with up to date educational concepts and technology. All development and improvement has to observe the true Islamic values which the Saudi society adheres to.

(p.15)

If it is true that the Saudi education system is looking forward to developing the education curriculum through Islamic values, then the I.R.E. curriculum ought to be the main subject reflected in the development in the I.R.E. textbook. Analysing the primary stage textbook does not clarify any of these Islamic *values* directly, as it clarifies Islamic worship and Al Tawhid.

I have said that Saudi aims of I.R.E. are not too long, even though all these aims are not translated through the textbook of I.R.E. in the primary stage. That is, the aims look at assisting pupils' growth and their abilities and capabilities, but the language of the textbook does not reflect this properly. Let us take another example, which shows that the textbook has applied and gone through different issues, e.g. the Islamic creed, training about prayers and rights and duties in Islam. All these points are made in the Saudi statement of aims, but not in the textbook at the same time. In addition to this, the Saudi aims create a desire to gain more knowledge about religion, and the textbook maybe proves that, without considering how and in what sense the textbook should be attractive for pupils to read and understand.

Rahman says that:

Thus the main function of Islamic education is to educate the young generation in the divine religion of Islam, to develop in them the spirit and ideals of this religion, and to prepare them for a missionary life in the service of Islam.

(1980, p.94)

The Saudi I.R.E. curriculum seems very close to this view as they have taken the teaching of religion into consideration more than any other subject.

Moving to the Kuwaiti I.R.E. textbook and how it works in regard to the aims of I.R.E., one can see that there are some examples indicating that the aims of I.R.E. have been reflected and influence pupils through the textbook. For instance, the Kuwaiti I.R.E. textbook aims to move the learner from the subjective to the social framework. I.R.E. also aims to help individuals to join a group, respect other people, care for and help other people, help pupils to be independent within the frame of religion. All this means to make them more responsible and teach them their religious rights and duties. All these aims are simply carried out through the I.R.E. textbook.

I would say that even if the text of I.R.E. has achieved many of the aims there is still a possibility of a gap existing between the aims and the textbook. Al Shafie described the aim of Islamic education as being: "To supply religious knowledge as required by the pupil" (1980). Obviously the Kuwaiti textbook has given much more knowledge to pupils than this. As a matter of fact Mujawer argued about a modern concept of teaching I.R.E. in his book Teaching Islamic Religious Education (1982) and this is perfect because it means we should look to the quality of the Islamic religious education textbook rather than the quantity. Why then did he agree as supervisor of the I.R.E. textbook in Kuwait to present this large textbook for the primary stage? It makes no sense to teach about modernity then not to apply it when you have the power to do so. Perhaps the answer is found with Mursi, who indicates that there is a lack of modern writing on Islamic religious education in the Arabic Library (see Chapter Two for more details).

So if Mujawer and Mursi feel that Islamic religious education has to be developed, in what way do they say this should happen? Perhaps the Kuwaiti aims of I.R.E. need to make pupils feel the full warm emotion of Islamic religious education. If we give them a long hard textbook will that make them feel happy? Of course not.

To a certain degree I agree with Farhan (1982) when he says that in the Arab countries the I.R.E. curriculum is frozen in an old fashioned style (see Chapter Two), but I want to say that the Gulf States could be the first who are free to develop the I.R.E. curriculum to a higher level. They have achieved many objectives which other Arab countries have not, as the G.A.S.E.R.C. pointed out in Chapter One. Without doubt this is because the Gulf states are looking forward to developing I.R.E., both its aims and curriculum. Therefore they need to follow

these changes from time to time and be aware that what was done for I.R.E. in the 1980s may need further improvement in the 1990s.

What do we need the I.R.E. textbook for?

This question is to see whether the textbook is well orientated in the Gulf region, and to determine precisely what aims of I.R.E. must be applied in different circumstances or changes in society. This is because the aims are to be formulated within the textbook. Issues of culture, religion and education are an important component in society. It seems that there is no one formula or framework in which to conduct writing of the textbook for I.R.E. Therefore there is freedom to allow the textbook to fascinate pupils and their parents, and maintain the Gulf societies' aims.

Perhaps one of the problems is that the textbook belongs to the state and the state can change it whenever it likes. This situation occurs when there is a 'top down' education system, as in the Gulf region. This means that religious teachers and institutes have no opportunity to use their professional experience to do what they think is best for I.R.E.

Another problem of the textbook, which makes it respectively either useful or useless from my point of view, is that when writing the textbook the aims and objectives of I.R.E. are either looked at closely or not closely enough. All these problems could be solved in order to develop I.R.E., though in some cases the problems come from pupils and teachers not feeling happy with the I.R.E. textbook because it does not fit within their capacity and understanding.

To identify these problems of presenting the textbook so as to match the needs of society, we can merge the needs of society and those of the pupils in the following way.

Firstly, in designing a curriculum for I.R.E. it should be remembered that it should be clear to the people, who should be involved in the process. Secondly, pupils' actual life should be consolidated through the textbook. Thirdly, the aims of I.R.E. should be related to a 3-5 year education plan, followed by an examination of the situation of the pupils, parents, teachers and textbooks to demonstrate that the I.R.E. curriculum is working well.

Although the aims of education are written down within the curriculum design in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, teachers' opinions have often not been taken into account. Therefore many teachers have no idea about curriculum design. It seems to me that teachers need instruction here through in-service training, and need to be made aware of the importance of the curriculum. It has been pointed out that

Designing a curriculum is like designing a house; an architect consults his client to find out what the functions of the rooms are to be, how the space is to be used. He will also consider the money available.

(Sockett 1976, p.23)

So some teachers understand that 'curriculum' means educational objectives. Others think that 'curriculum' simply means a textbook only. Another group thinks that 'curriculum' means textbook plus examination. Yet another group thinks it means the whole educational process. In view of these varying beliefs I have to give a definition as it is understood at the present time. Kelly is useful here, when he says that:

Tyler suggested that the curriculum has to be seen as consisting of four elements and curriculum planning therefore as having four dimensions: objectives, content or subject matter, methods or procedures, and evaluation.

(Kelly 1982, p.11)

As Tyler says above, one can understand that curriculum contains objectives and other concepts relative to the needs of society. In a Muslim society religion is not only a subject of the curriculum, but knowledge and values have to be embodied in the curriculum in order to reflect the culture of a society. The policies of the Arab countries are reflected in the content of the curriculum, and centralised societies' attitudes and values are controlled and dominated by the governments, whether good or bad.

Other points which make the I.R.E. curriculum important are:

- (a) to link student needs in life with the school subject;
- (b) to give guidance through knowledge and enlightenment;
- (c) to maintain such standards as will be a good guideline for possible future leaders in society.

Teachers should know exactly what they want to do and should plan accordingly within the needs of the I.R.E. curriculum.

Returning to the question of the needs from the I.R.E. textbook, I think that Religion can play a major role, not only in Kuwait and the Gulf states but also in any country which gives religion importance in everyday life. This aspect of religion's role can be started from a religious point of view through education, then social life, and so on. For example, some secular states (such as the United Kingdom during 1988) decided to teach religious education strongly, i.e. worship and assembly in the school curriculum, after more or less ignoring it for 40 years or more. No doubt there was pressure here and there, but religious education was

set up at school. Another example comes from a psychologist at a high level in western countries as well as the Arab world, who advised that both mature and young people should return to religion because in religion there is a potential energy which can help one to lead a settled life. This is why many experts and educationalists as well as religious leaders in the Arab countries and even in the west appeal to many people who have drug problems or sexual problems to find a solution through religion, and Alwan, Al Wai and others have indicated this (see Chapter Two for more details).

I would say that teachers, parents and others should be involved in talking about the I.R.E. curriculum. This could be of particular benefit to those people who lead anti-social lives (i.e. criminals). Indeed, many pupils who are lost to society because of weakness could be given guidance from the I.R.E. curriculum in the Arab countries.

It is wrong to say that religion or religious education is simply a matter of prayer and other duties between a person and God. There are even those who think religion should not go further than the mosque. This means that they minimise the role of religion in the whole of people's lives.

As a result, my study was carried out to find out why the role of religion is minimised in the home, school or in the mosque, because all of these develop our pupils' and people's lives spiritually and make them more active because they will be rewarded in the hereafter for everything they have done in this life. God has not created human beings to sleep and enjoy life only. They have work to do to create better things. They must use their minds and bodies in a correct way, not to hurt themselves or others because they will be questioned one day about this life, what they have done and how they spent it. The Holy Quran says:

One day we shall call together all human beings with their (respective) Imams: Those who are given their record in their right hand will read it (with pleasure), And they will not be dealt with unjustly in the least.

But those who were blind in this world will be blind in the hereafter, and most astray from the path.

(17: 71, 72)

The implementation of the I.R.E. textbook

The function and implementation of the I.R.E. textbook in the general form in the Arab countries, and in the Gulf region, seems religious in the style or language and the content. These textbooks could be improved from different angles which are addressed in the first part of this chapter.

Important aspects of the teaching of I.R.E. were discussed in Section One and illustrated by examples from both Kuwaiti and Saudi textbooks. Let us now see what some experts think the framework of the textbook ought to be generally. First, Mujawer has discussed the I.R.E. textbook for primary education in all areas. Second, Madcor says there is agreement that the core of the curriculum is the textbook:

- a. to be suited to the nature of the learner
- b. to link theory and practice
- c. to prepare the learner for life
- d. to give the learner new experience and clear thought

(Madcor 1987, pp. 323-324)

Third, Fialah says:

- in terms of the language the textbook should be :

- a. precise and simple
 - b. clear of any mistakes orally and in pronunciation
- in terms of exercises the textbook should include :
 - a. a variety of exercises both qualitative and quantitative to help people understand the concepts and structures of the subject
 - b. a comprehensive and graduated textbook will help with any difficulty which may arise
 - in terms of the subject the textbook should :
 - a. follow the educational policy and aims of education
 - b. the number of I.R.E. teaching periods should be sufficient to cover the subject
 - c. Islamic culture and civilisation need to be provided.

(Fialah 1985, pp.232-233)

From his point of view there is a certain degree of agreement in the Saudi-Kuwaiti textbook in the primary education that can be seen in part of these textbooks. But my judgement is that writing the textbook in the Arab region is mainly a commercial business, particularly with schools inspectors, because there is a level of competition anyone can achieve if they have plenty of money.

Of course, not everybody can be involved in this matter. To make the subject clear the Ministry of Education in Kuwait should be able to say why the Kuwaitis are not in charge of the supervision of the I.R.E. textbook. It is ridiculous to see experts such as inspectors and supervisors who have been involved in every single part of education, even in the Kuwaiti social and religious life, control the educational bodies as inspectors and supervisors with an old

fashioned style. This is because after a while they will leave at the end of their contract, so Kuwaitis must eventually take their places anyway.

In the previous pages it was mentioned that new educational proposals in education will soon be made in Kuwait, and the Ministry's proposal should not take the quantitative side and forget the qualitative side in the education system. It has been pointed out:

The width of quantitative studies should follow by the width of qualitative studies and the balance between them is essential in order to reach a clear picture of the future we are planning.
(Al Qadi 1980, p.593)

This no doubt means there is a huge task for the Ministry of Education to do, especially in Kuwait, in regard to curriculum and teacher development. In fact people and parents can give many suggestions to the Ministry of Education regarding I.R.E. It seems that Kuwait and Saudi Arabia have many religious activities from the religious bodies or religious people. These activities may need to be studied accordingly. The subject I suggest discussing is perhaps sensitive and that is why it is important to build good relations between the various interested bodies, i.e. institutions, associations, clubs and organisations, and the educational bodies such as educational institutions covered by the state.

The following remarks should be taken into account:

1. There are a large number of pupils affected by the religious bodies in the region.
2. These religious bodies offer a very attractive programme to children.
3. They try to keep children out of social problems.
4. They also teach children many aspects within religion.

One thing that worries me is that religion is taking place in these bodies more than it is in the school curriculum. By this I mean that religion or religious education or education about religion is growing day by day in both Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. As a result why do schools not talk more about it? We appear to give our children a chance to study religion out of school more than in school. There are some who say that it depends on a person's interest and attitude to his or her children, and the education system has nothing to do with I.R.E.

For those people it could be suggested that formal religious education is more safely run comprehensively through schools under the control of the Ministry of Education. This is because many children in primary or intermediate schools learn a lot about religion outside school either from mosques or from social religious activities. This learning might work with clear aims and more desire than I.R.E. in schools, or it might give children a different concept about religion and confuse them.

In this matter there are more Saudi religious bodies than there are Kuwaiti ones, and it is hard to decide which are better or stronger, though both of them are affected. For instance, there are a great number of Saudi Quranic schools, while these are limited in Kuwait.

There are of course some people in both countries who follow Western ideology or have their own ideas, who think that I.R.E. is adequate and no more development is necessary and that the present textbook is sufficient. They feel that children can learn about religion or Islam from home or television. These people may forget that the role of teaching I.R.E. to their children and the role of religion is to keep society organised. In order to remind them let me give examples of this. Teaching I.R.E. in school can help pupils to keep things clean and good. Also to keep a good relationship with parents and teachers is strongly recommended by the

Holy Quran, such as to be nice, pleasant and polite when dealing with others and to avoid wasting time because time is life. All this is taught through I.R.E. and it is only I.R.E. which can carry out this task because there is no social subject or science subject that can fulfil or replace I.R.E.

I think the majority of people in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia do believe this and the best way to teach pupils is through moral or Islamic religious education in school. This attitude towards I.R.E. from the majority of people can clearly be seen in Chapter Three through the story of the setting up of the kuttab before government schools were established. In Alyaum, a daily newspaper in Saudi Arabia, there was an article which said:

An Islamic author, Muhammad Al Naijeri in his talk about the actual religious education said we should go back to the kuttabs in developed form to be comprehensive to all the Muslim world because it is the first step to educate our pupils in Islam. He also asks to increase the number of periods of teaching Islamic religious education and its activities in all stages.

(Al Naijeri 1991, p.16)

This type of session and lectures are saying that the modern education system should return to the kuttabs as the new ways are not working; it also confirms the role of the kuttab in the past.

So why the education system in many Arab countries hesitates or is worried about supporting the idea of strengthening teaching I.R.E. in schools is difficult to understand. The Ministries of Education in the region are required to study this subject and the importance of I.R.E. inside and outside school in order to keep pupils in line with Islamic culture.

In addition this chapter has discussed in detail the I.R.E. textbook in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia and the problems of having a different textbook for girls.

So I would briefly recap on the general differences and reasons for this, as well as give the main issues about what has been written for girls.

First of all the textbook takes a different form in the first, second and third years. Secondly the textbook contains the Quranic lesson in the first chapter which is different from the one in the boys' textbook. There are similarities in the questions in the Al Tawhid section but the boys' textbook gives more explanations than the textbook written for girls.

Thirdly the textbooks for girls has no pictures at all in spite of all of them being dated 1989-1990, except the one for the second year, dated 1983. Fourthly the section of Al Fiqh is the same and there is no major difference which can be distinguished between the textbooks for girls and boys.

The question is, why are there two different textbooks at all? To answer this question one has to take into account the fact that girls' schools have their own authority and their own department which deals only with female education. The reason for the difference is that they want to show that they have a different educational system from boys, following the Islamic sharia. Also they might want to teach girls in the language suitable to them at different ages (children and adults).

From a religious point of view I am not going to discuss why they separate the boys and girls in education, *because this is the best model of teaching I.R.E.* In many areas in Saudi Arabia people still hold the religious traditions in different forms in the country. The educational bodies have the right to set up education for girls, and perhaps they want to avoid mixed education and leave the girls only with each other. This experiment is the only one in the Middle East or in Arab

countries, and if it is successful why do Kuwait and other Arab countries not follow them?

Finally, in conclusion, this section indicated the relationship between the aims of I.R.E. and the textbook in both countries and the general aims of I.R.E. The section also discussed the variety of people's views towards I.R.E. and its function and implementation and came to the conclusion that in spite of the hard work that has been done to improve the textbooks in both countries, there are some important elements which need to be covered in the future.

Of course parents and I.R.E. teachers can participate and support the development process for I.R.E. in the region, and it is pleasing to see that there is an attempt being made to see that the unity of education in the region takes place in a successful way.

As knowledge of education is wide and many people have different opinions and aims, many are seeking to create the best generation they can in the name of religion and education. It is amazing that so many Arab countries say they are Muslim countries and yet apply different ideologies. They should have a clear identity and take the full responsibility towards religion, or to say we only need part of religion. This is one of the issues that has been raised in this study in order to see what we have done to I.R.E. in the primary stage in terms of textbook and teaching methods, if we are really aiming to develop I.R.E. (See Chapter 1).

From the point of view of this thesis neither the Kuwaiti nor the Saudi curriculum shows a clear answer to the question as far as textbooks are concerned. The reason is that though they do have clear aims for I.R.E. it is not enough to cover this through the textbook only. Creating a better generation has to be done through planning and evaluation. In addition this study wants to show how

Islamic religious education can help to make a good employer, e.g. doctors, engineers, teachers and others in society, if we teach them that Islam wants you to be the best you can in your society. Of course by so doing the country will save money.

Finally, in the name of religion the researcher believes we can build a good education system in Arab countries, but we should know first how strongly we want religion to be involved in the education curriculum either for the textbook or for the I.R.E. teachers. As Chapter Four discusses and analyses the textbook development, Chapter Five will deal with the same subject in more depth, concentrating on the philosophy of the aims of I.R.E. in both countries.

CHAPTER FIVE

CHAPTER FIVE

The philosophy of the aims of I.R.E. in relation to Islam in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia

Introduction

This chapter will focus on the philosophy of the aims of Islamic religious education, its definition and relationship to Islam. Then it will examine different views of the philosophy of education and Islamic religion. The chapter will also deal with I.R.E. aims and objectives, its features and characteristics. Section B will discuss the aims of I.R.E. and the major factors in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, and the possibility of developing understanding of the aims for teachers in order to ensure their greater participation. Finally I will present a conclusion of the aims of I.R.E. for both societies, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. The main difference between this chapter and the previous chapter (Chapter 4) is that this chapter will discuss the aims in relation to the philosophy of education, while the previous one relates the aims to the textbook.

SECTION A

Islam and Education

Islam and education are two divided words. Perhaps some educators see a wide variance between them, especially those who have not studied Islam or read about it; although they might have within their vocabulary a subject called 'Religious Education'. We in the Muslim countries are familiar with using both words together, 'Islamic Education', which means simply education about Islam.

At the same time I have to say that teaching about Islam is something which takes place automatically and naturally in our education system because we are Muslims. As a result of this we find no problems in teaching, or linking, Islam and education in our schools. But to make this clear to non-Muslims I would like to identify some of the vocabulary as follows:

- Islamic economy = economy derived from Islam and involved in Muslim financial life, i.e. not having interest from banks and avoiding cheating when buying or selling
- Islamic law = law derived from Islam which means the law Muslims must follow which comes from the Creator and not from mankind or borrowed from elsewhere
- Islamic science = science derived from Islam. Although the Holy Quran is not a book of science, there is much scientific knowledge in it and a Muslim should believe it and not reject it for any reason
- Islamic religion = religion derived from Islam, meaning that a Muslim's life is in full submission to religion

As a result of these meanings we have simply:

Islamic Education = Education derived from Islam, so education as a system, knowledge or theories coming from Islam, involving a Muslim's life not only as worship but also directing the way of life in the shadow of religion, providing many examples and methods to follow.

In fact in this study I have made this clearer by referring to Islamic Religious Education (I.R.E.). At the same time I strongly agree that Education and Islamic teaching lead to the right path. No Muslim can deny this because anyone reading the Holy Quran deeply and understanding the interpretation of each word, will find all these vocabularies linked.

What I want to make clear is that education and Islam have equal importance in Muslim life. Let us give some definitions of Islamic religious education from various authors.

Gunidel (1981) in The Foundation of Islamic Religious Education compared with educational theories says Islamic education is developed for ever and everywhere ... education means growing and developing; it is derived in Arabic from the word 'rub' which means God. So rub is one of the names of God, 'Allah', and finally he says that from previous study it is clear that the noble aims of Islamic religious education are to know God and fear Him (pp.9-12).

Of course in the Arabic language the word 'education' has many meanings and one of them means 'reform' and 'orientation'. The dissertation written by Al Sharaf and presented to Sheffield University (1990) indicates that I.R.E. is

basically related to the culture of society and its religion. It concerns the concepts within such elements as faith, worship, values, morals and beliefs (pp44-45).

Al Hammadi (1987) in Teaching Style of Islamic Religious Education criticises those who call Islamic education 'religious education' because it means an old fashioned style of teaching within a limited framework at school. We must say "Islamic religious education" which is the original aim of our school (p.17).

There are some writers who say 'Islamic education' and others who say 'religious education' and I would say neither of these titles is satisfactory to this study because my understanding is that Islamic religious education and actual life should be working together in order to achieve the greater definition of I.R.E., but there should be a good atmosphere to apply. So Islamic religious educational aims and philosophy must study exactly what is needed of society by searching beyond the problems in order to find a solution. Al Tumi has linked Islamic Sharia and I.R.E. in the actual term. He says:

We are always required by Islam to be realistic in our educational aims, planning and curriculum, and programmes in which we intend to teach.

(1988, p. 317)

The meaning of this, in my view, is that Islamic religion does not belong to the state or to groups of people or to communities, which seems naive these days as every society has chosen to teach its own pupils two or three times a week and yet teach English every day. It is hard to say that some Arab countries are failing to support teaching I.R.E. Islamic religious education has to be stronger than any other curriculum in schools because this is the religion of the state and people must not accept being weak in their religion.

By this I mean the core of Islamic religious education cannot be changed but the framework can be changed, because it is a continuous education.

Ahmad (1976) gives a definition of Islam and says:

Islam is an Arabic word and denotes submission, surrender and obedience. As a religion, Islam stands for complete submission and obedience to Allah - that is why it is called Islam. (p. 28)

Abdalti (1987) identifies Islam as:

The word Islam is derived from the Arabic root 'SLM' which means, among other things, peace, purity, submission and obedience. In a religious sense the word Islam means submission to the will of God and obedience to his law. (p. 8)

The two meanings perhaps focus on the word merely as a word. Let us see what other people understand to be the meaning of Islam and Islamic religious education. Al Tumi gives a clearer definition to the word 'Islam' and links it with education when he says:

Islam has given a clear answer to spirit and mind of mankind in all issues and matters and towards all the challenges and crises. So this clearly in Islam already transfers to Islamic religious education aims, curriculum and methods. (p.315)

In the Holy Quran and Sunnah there are numbers of verses which talk about the balance in Muslim life as a foundation which Islamic religious education is based on. Al Samaluti (1980) agrees with Al Tumi that Islamic religious education is certainly a balance for man and he adds that it is also not in the heart only but also in the mind and one's conduct, i.e. Islamic religious education confirms a pattern and model in society in following Islamic duty. An important

part of Islamic religious education is to set legitimate self defence and behaviour as though Allah is watching and sees everything one does.

Al Samaluti pointed out four new things which define the meaning of Islam in relation to education as follows:

- Islamic religious education is education for general welfare
- Islamic religious education is a continuation of education
- Islamic religious education is openly international
- Islamic religious education is between conservative and modern

(pp. 202-203)

Philosophy of education and Islamic Religion

Before an attempt is made to identify the philosophy of education in relation to Islamic religion and to examine the different views towards the issue, the researcher wants to raise this question: Do we accept the idea of philosophy of education generously? Secondly, do we accept that the philosophy of education is involved with Islamic religious education?

Abdudaim (1991) has discussed this issue clearly and scientifically in his book Towards Educational Arabic Philosophy, Educational Philosophy and the future of the Arab World. This study seems to be one of the best written about the Arab countries and it is published by the Arab Unity Research Centre in Beirut. In the first section he gives a response to why the Arab educationalist is concerned about educational philosophy and in brief he gives the following major reasons:

1. Educational reasons such as -

- a. increasing the number of graduate students
 - b. the high budget spent on education to develop society
 - c. to find out the core of education, i.e. curriculum, teaching methods, technology, aims, values etc.,
 - d. to innovate and renew education and to update it.
2. The second reason is because of the current Arab life crises, i.e: the present education system in Arab countries is imported from the West which means that we must have a new Arabic philosophy. This is one view and as a result there are other views such as going back to traditional Arabic thought and Islamic Religious Educational foundations as a basic ground for the educational philosophy needed.
3. The third reason is to look forward to a new future, not in the educational aspect only but in social, cultural and economic aspects as well. To achieve all these objectives there should be a clear philosophy of education as the key role.

(Abdudaim 1991, pp.14-21).

It is clearly important from his point of view that there should be a strong and sufficient philosophy for the Arab countries. No doubt it is not his view alone but I have discussed with many people who specialise in the field and I do agree with him that if there were a clear attitude to present Arab educational philosophy, then Islamic religion and its values must be considered as the major sources on the agenda.

The conclusion he reached was discussed during the 1960s and '70s in different parts of the Arab world in conferences held in Baghdad in 1964, Libya in 1966, Kuwait 1968, Tunisia 1970 etc. (p.82). Recently, some of these countries

and many others offered a clear philosophy. Abduldaim makes an important statement that the educational aims of the Gulf states are very clear and logical, and implement Islamic faith and knowledge (ibid. p.207). What concerns me is to choose part of these views within the Gulf region and argue for a philosophy of education and Islamic religious education. Starting with Abdullah in his book Educational Theory - A Quranic Outlook (1982) he discusses the idea that "... the traditional philosopher of education tries to derive the solution to the educational issues from philosophy." (p.33)

He also tries to give meaning to philosophy as a body of knowledge. The writer's interpretation is that this may be right but one wonders why philosophy must leave religion to find knowledge? If we assume that religion is rejected by the philosophers then the answer could be:

Our response to this type of philosophy may be in line with the attitude which casts doubts on the role of traditional philosophy in education, though for different reasons from an Islamic viewpoint. The Quran provides us with a definite outlook towards man and his relation with Allah as well as with other creatures and even with his physical environment. Man is considered as Allah's viceregent to whom everything is subject. The Quranic facts are not justified on a philosophical basis and any speculations or assumptions which contradict such facts cannot be accepted from an Islamic point of view. The main cause for our rejection of philosophy is that while reason is governed by revelation in the Quran, it is given full authority in philosophy.

(ibid. p.33)

My experience as a researcher is that many Muslims are sensitive to the word 'philosophy', and religion or 'philosophy of religion'. Therefore they deny the word or avoid using it in a religious context. Of course there is a reason for this to some extent. The theories of many Muslim philosophers such as Al Gazali (450 A.H.) and Ibn Kaldon (732 A.H.) and others, need to be studied comprehensively. This will lead to the study of science and logic and history of the Islamic mystic group - 'sufis' - which did not comply with Islam in full, and this argument may never end. Secondly, some might think that they are wasting

time in discussing basic philosophical issues, as these have already been shown clearly in the Quran and the Sunnah but it might not be clear for everybody, even those who read the Holy Quran.

Thirdly, Muslim thinkers have spent years arguing theology with different groups of non-believers and they resolved nothing. As a result I think that this mistake should not be repeated in the present time but to study our needs in the present and future, and this study will not repeat the same arguments.

Abdullah himself discusses the word 'philosophy' in relation to Islamic education in another book (1986) and says that we no longer need philosophy in education if we want to conduct Islamic education based on Quranic principles. He suggests we do not say 'philosophy with Islam'. The reason is that Allah has determined Islamic aims in the Quran. Abdullah also worries about the Western view of Islamic education because they have helped to set up Arab nationalism. Finally he criticises some Muslim educationalists who believe that Muslims have not crystalised education theory (pp. 65-82).

Do we have a clear philosophy of education in Arab countries or not? Some would say we do, others that we do not. We should review our curriculum in the light of our culture and religion to determine our aims and the method to be followed in order to reach these aims. Nasser (1989) discusses the idea of the lack of educational philosophy in Arab countries and reach the conclusion that:

The Arab countries need educational planning based on the academic research curricula, as at present it lacks special educational philosophy derived from the culture of the Arab societies, and new modern technology.

(p.185)

I can see there is no major difference between those who seek a philosophy of Arab education and those who reject philosophy as a word and accept any other word as long as they want to develop education.

What is the philosophy of Islamic religious education? Is it the point we have to start education with? Perhaps writers have different answers to these questions. In this chapter I propose to express and defend my own opinion in the matter of aims and philosophy of Islamic education.

I can see the importance of Islamic religious education philosophy for the Kuwaiti and Saudi education systems if this philosophy is always seeking better life and if the educational philosopher searches often for the facts and the truth to solve most of the problems which are relevant to the educational process, and study deeply the reasons for the problems. Al Tumi (1988) believes in my view that those educational philosophers, who are expected to plan wisely to promote the educational process for the nation, all believe in Allah correctly. They can try to understand the nature of the universe around mankind as well as themselves and their role in developing society to be better (p.15).

It seems to me that Abdullah, Salah and Al Tumi are arguing in the same way, even if Abdullah does not believe in the philosophy. He thinks also that wisdom is a foundation of educational theory and when this theory becomes derived from the Quran and Sunnah it is easy to transfer as a behaviour (pp. 76-78). This argument led me to say there are three dimensions of behaviour. The first is those who ignore the Islamic theory in education and think it is not suitable for the present time, and they insist on following the Western educational theories. The second dimension is to ignore the Western theories completely and refuse to follow them. Thirdly I think there is a dimension in between where people believe in the Islamic educational theory and its philosophy written by Muslim thinkers a

long time ago, but they do not hesitate to take any ideas, suggestions or proposals in the education and teaching methods from other places as long as they are not against Islamic principles.

Abdullah also confirms that Muslims should beware of copying any theory from the west without recognition of its context, so he supports studying the foundation of Islamic education within the Islamic curriculum. Finally he reaches the conclusion that the aims are the foundation of the educational curriculum (p.85).

This study tends to accept the third dimension towards Islamic education and motivating teachers and experts to ensure that if they follow whatever they need in terms of developing education and its teaching methods, they must take these conditions into consideration:

1. Not to accept any proposal against the Holy Quran.
2. Not to accept any proposal against the tradition of Muhammad (p.b.o.h.)
3. Not to accept any proposal against Arab traditions.
4. Not to accept any proposal against Islamic religion whatsoever.
5. Not to accept any proposal from elsewhere which does not fit in the region.

Finally the conclusion from previous sections persuades me to say that we do have an Islamic philosophy, Islamic theory, Islamic ways in education, no matter what people call it. Islamic religious education is derived from the first verse in the Holy Quran where the Prophet requests we should "proclaim (or read) in the name of Thy Lord and Cherisher who created" (96:1) and from the first school set up by the Prophet called "Dar Alarkam" followed by the Islamic education system which will be shown in the next section.

I.R.E. aims and objectives

The question could be raised as to why the discussion of the aims is so important. This study is carried out to help teachers of I.R.E. with their problems in regard to the curriculum and teaching methods, and how to make them clear.

The word 'aims' is not often used by the public, rather people say "We don't know what to do", or "Where do we go next?" In the west things are more complex, especially regarding religion. When the researcher was a primary teacher of I.R.E. in the 1970s there was no requirement to think deeply about the so called 'aims' of the curriculum.

Perhaps the issue of aims is more philosophical than educational in that it can make one think *why* one is thinking. Thinking about aims can be interesting or even dangerous depending on the level and area. For instance it is interesting to think about the educational aims of Islamic religious education in order to gain knowledge. Wringe (1988) has discussed an important issue with regard to aims in his book Understanding Educational Aims and says, "Who needs them?" He feels that it is important for teachers to know their aims. This study, as argued in previous chapters, accepts that teachers + aims = means.

The subject of the aims might be dangerous when thinking one will never understand without guidance, e.g. what are the aims of the universe? How did God create the universe? What am I aiming to do in this life and after death? These kinds of questions for Muslims are very easy to answer if one understands the teaching of the Quran. But for the un-religious or the existentialist they may

lead to suicide, because they might feel it is a better way to deal with this life, while suicide in Islamic religion is forbidden.

Referring to the question of why one should discuss the aims of I.R.E. it seems important to discuss such aims, especially after the Gulf war. Even if the aims of I.R.E. are good, the whole education system may need revision in Kuwaiti society.

Without understanding the nature of the aims and the circumstances surrounding them it is hard to make any changes or development, so the educational aims will be categorised in this section to see what has been written about them and what are we aiming for.

Wringe (1988) says there are three sorts of aims:

- (1) Aims which would confer benefits specifically upon the individual and favour his own ends and development.
- (2) Aims concerned to preserve or bring about a desirable state of society.
- (3) Aims to bring about such goals as the promotion of truth, rationality, excellence and so on which are sometimes held to be intrinsically desirable or worthwhile.

(p. 20)

From these categories I would like to shed light on the Islamic general aims and objectives, features and characters, how people determine these aims and what are our needs from all the categories for the Gulf region in the future, apart from developing I.R.E. Let us discuss the different views about the aims of I.R.E. comparing Wringe's three points with Abul Ayinain (1988) in Islamic Educational

Philosophy in the Holy Quran who distinguished the aims of Islamic religious education as:

- A. General Aims.
- B. Special Aims.

General aims as derived from the Holy Quran which focus on creating a dutiful human being. The Quranic educational philosophy is determined by the special aims, i.e.

1. The aims reflect the Islamic philosophy of society.
2. The aims should take into account the circumstances of society.
3. The aims must comply with modern life and not be frozen in one age.
4. The aims should maintain the growing stage of human beings and their needs.
5. The aims should maintain the development of education.

This means these special aims might change from decade to decade but the general aims can be used always.

(pp.140-143)

He seems very clear in identifying the features of I.R.E. aims within the Quranic philosophy through the Islamic religious education fields, e.g. health education is part of Islamic religious education. Also sex education to keep the body safe from forbidden things because the body is aimed at worshiping Allah, so it needs to be strong through general exercise. Add to this social education,

moral education, aesthetic education and emotional education and others; all are fields and areas of Islamic religious education (for more details see Chapter Two).

The author has covered the fields of Islamic education in his thesis with many examples from the Quran and Sunnah. In addition Al Tumi (1988) has a different view of Islamic educational aims. He prefers to call them features and categorises the aims under many principles. Examples of these are:

1. A comprehensive principle.
2. A balanced principle.
3. A clear principle.

A comprehensive character of Islamic religious education means Islamic educational aims cover every need of human beings. It also means that religion must be taken as a whole and applied as a whole, i.e. morality, treatment, worship and so on. Added to this we as human beings are given the care of Islamic religious education both in this life and the hereafter (p. 314). This is what Al Tumi thinks in regard to Islamic education.

Many other Muslim writers have said similar things. It seems to me the character of Islamic educational aims are similar but people interpret them differently according to their own targets and understanding. In this section I will outline what are the characters of the aims of Islamic religious education by matching and analysing what has been written so far on the subject and how far we in the Gulf region are from attaining it.

As a second principle, Islamic religious educational aims are balanced between both sides of development, the individual and the society, in order to

fulfil different needs and to maintain inheritance of the past and the requirement of present and future (ibid. p.315).

Obviously the development process which this study is aiming to achieve for Islamic religious education in the region will surely be balanced among teachers of I.R.E. and the general curriculum aims, as well as any change which has happened in society. Kuwait, for instance, might want to change part of the aims of Islamic religious education in the future to help the education system in the long term rebuilding of the country if it is necessary to do so. The suggestion from this study is: Why not bring the teachers together in conference and ask them to give their opinions and ideas for the general aims of education as a great debate from their own experience? They are the most practised experts through their daily teaching. The Ministry of Education could organise this and produce a clear proposal of the needs and an agenda such as teaching methods, aims of I.R.E., teachers' performance and any special problems facing teachers. At the same time they can order certain conditions for those teachers who want to participate, e.g. years of experience, high qualifications, have a good CV in their teaching life.

I appreciate that the G.A.S.E.R.C. in Kuwait or Saudi Arabia have their programme of conferences and seminars in order to develop the education system, and produce recommendations and suggestions to encourage researchers to solve or study the problems. My feeling is to widen this by involving teachers and parents, male and female, to participate, criticise, argue, agree or disagree. It is a daring step but we should take this step, especially as Kuwait is not a big country. Of course, there may be some problems or disadvantages but I feel the advantages would outweigh these. I have said this because the third principle of Islamic religious education is to be clear in its aims and clear in its philosophy, as all should know that Islamic religious education is derived from Islamic religious principles and comments.

Conclusion of the aims of Islamic Religious Education

Saqeb (1981) in his article made it clear that the result of examining aims of education in Muslim society is to be 'modern'. He discussed the concept of modernization as social change, not only in education but also with other factors such as a political and economic system. In his book Modernization of Muslim Education, he describes three cases, Egypt, Pakistan and Turkey, and shows the level of modernization in each. The word 'modern', it seems to me, is a new word in the Islamic religious education dictionary and I can see that to some extent the word is close to 'development'. On the other hand I can see that the outcome of the development could be modernization. He pointed out that:

All peoples of the world are presently engaged in modernising themselves in order to eradicate their backwardness and solve their problems arising out of disease, hunger, ignorance and poverty and thereby to achieve their social and cultural progress.

(p. 45)

Following his statement the aims of I.R.E. are the first steps of development and if a society really seeks improvement it should start from these aims. Mursi (1981) has put his finger on the problem of Muslim countries in regard to developing the Islamic education and stresses:

The mind of Muslim youth should not be detained to protect them but ought to be liberated from the freeze under the umbrella of Islamic faith ... this requires extensive care in choosing the subject of Islamic curriculum ... the weakness of this is because of the neglect of Islamic sciences which were not given their proper status.

(p.44)

As a result of this it seems to me there are similarities between Mursi and Saqeb's general concept. If we open the minds of pupils in the Arab states and the education system curriculum, development will inevitably take place.

Simply, the main aims of Islamic education are religious aims in which to teach the Holy Quran and to know the worship of Allah. Mursi also sees that the happiness of mankind is one of the aims of I.R.E. and to make ideal people as morally as you can is also within the aims of Islamic education. The aims of I.R.E. are to strengthen the link between Muslims and support their unity in thought and attitude (ibid. pp.53-57). I can see no major difference between what has been written on the subject of Islamic educational aims in general but in order to cover the area for the reader I would compare and investigate further aims to show to what extent Islamic educational aims are really important and essential to Muslim society.

Al Shafie (1984) clarifies the objectives of Islamic religious education as follows:

1. to set a basic scientific theory to the Islamic creed in which pupils can learn at school;
2. to provide the learner with the religious knowledge suitable to them;
3. to correct wrong religious concepts;
4. to demolish bad thoughts;
5. to develop new values and sentiment of spirit in pupils;
6. to demolish unacceptable values and emotions from the lives of pupils;
7. Islamic religious education should reinforce the needs of thought and mind and behaviour of pupils;
8. to develop good habits and customs acceptable in behaviour and conduct;
9. to memorise by heart one chapter or more of the Holy Quran;
10. to be prepared for the hereafter;
11. to develop religious knowledge in the learner;
12. to make the learner able to distinguish between good and bad;

13. to make the learner able to assist others in religious matters.

He also has categorised the objectives of Islamic religious education into three parts: knowledge, emotion and conduct (see Chapter Two for more details).

These objectives seem more specific and detailed. Therefore it is similar to the Kuwaiti-Saudi aims which were mentioned before. In addition one can understand that the aims of Islamic religious education are taking different forms from one country to another, but they all work under the form of Religious Knowledge from Islam.

In 1955 the Egypt Curriculum Committee distinguished the aims of education in the primary stage into five areas: physical growth, mental growth, social growth, emotional growth and spiritual growth. All these areas can simply be involved in the Islamic religious education objectives (Al Tumi 1988, p. 295). He describes the social objectives of I.R.E. as follows, to:

1. Reinforce the religious and spiritual life in society;
2. Achieve the setting up of science, culture and arts in the society within Islamic principles;
3. Support the Arabic language and maintain it from decline;
4. Build up Islamic society so that it remains solidly based on the Islamic religion;
5. Build up a strong economically developed society;
6. Build up a strong societal unity and co-operate within freedom of thought and religion;
7. Contribute in reaching international peace based upon justice and rightness and respectability;

8. Participate in raising the educational process and improve the educational service in order to achieve a single set of aims and social objectives.

(ibid. pp. 335--342)

Finally, it seems unanimous that the objectives of Islamic religious education are firm and strong, even though the way of reaching these objectives might be different from one state to another. The reason of course for making these aims firm is that they are derived from the Islamic religion. The main point is to look at how we can develop methods of teaching in the future to achieve these aims as well as to explore our problems and try to find their solutions.

The questions this study will examine are: do the aims of Islamic religious education need to be changed, and in what sense? These questions are to be discussed in a later chapter with teachers of I.R.E. and inspectors to give remarks and comments for any change within the two countries of Kuwait and Saudi Arabia in their education system. Do they feel satisfied with the I.R.E. curriculum, and if they do in what sense? And if they do not, they have to express their opinions. In this event what are the problems they are facing in their daily teaching?

I assume that there are reasons for changing the aims of I.R.E. or to add new aims in the short or long term. I will give examples of this recently from Kuwaiti society. The problem is more psychological, affecting a large number of people as a result of the Iraqi invasion. In his book The Big Terrorism of Nations' Destroyers, Al Hammadi (1992) presents documented stories of atrocities during the savage Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and points out:

Every person in our country wishes to be a martyr, defending his land and family. The social and psychological problems are seen in the martyred who were tortured and executed in Kuwait. The invaders usually executed the martyr after bringing him to his family home. They knocked at the door and intentionally called all the

family outside to witness the execution. This included the children, the aged father and mother, the brothers, and the wife. Families saw their son, tortured, without eyes, ears, nails, with burns all over the body, and with tied hands. Then they witnessed the relief of the martyr by execution, which was by bullets or by an axe. These actions are new to our community so their effect is great.

Although the family is proud of having a martyr, the children and old people who witnessed this action will probably suffer depression for a long time. A lot of them are still having nightmares. One woman who had diabetes and hypertension witnessed the execution of her child, she suffered a stroke and paralysis. More detailed studies are being conducted to measure the post-traumatic stress disorders in these families.

(p. 234)

Kuwaiti society has to rebuild everything in society after the Gulf War. But there is a new problem raised not during the Iraqi occupation, but after the liberation of Kuwait. This is that Kuwaiti society is now divided into communities. The first are those who lived in Kuwait during the period of the occupation under the Iraqi regime. They suffered black days, fear, devastation, looting, torture and a hard life. The second group are those who lived outside Kuwait during the occupation under the care and support of the Kuwaiti embassies. They of course have money and accommodation and other facilities such as education and medical treatment. No doubt life in Kuwait at that time was very different for those living there compared to those of us who lived abroad.

This has created two different thoughts, attitudes and behaviours even between brothers and sisters. Psychologically they look at life differently, especially the future. Many Kuwaitis returned home to find that their relatives had been seriously affected even if they denied it. They spoke in language they had never used before. Most of the people I have met who lived in Kuwait during the invasion are psychologically changed.

My point is that all Kuwaiti people need to refresh their minds and examine the causes in order to return to normal life. And to consolidate Islamic religious

education can play a major part in solving this problem through its aims. This is one example of how Islamic religious education can practically share in solving society's problems. Perhaps both societies, Kuwaiti and Saudi, had similar problems during the Gulf war. My understanding is that I.R.E. must look at what is going on in those two societies and try to help. It might not involve political or economic problems at this stage, but it can change many things if there is the will to do so.

In concluding of this section, I want to focus on some people who have opinions against western philosophy. Al Jundi, (1975), in Education and Generation Construction in the light of Islam, deals with many concepts in education and compares Muslim thought with Western thought. He also indicates the main differences between the two as a concept of education itself. The West prepares the next generation for the change coming to society, while Muslim thought is based upon linking education and values, i.e. society, morality, personality and so on, all working together and communicating in a certain way. Islamic thought, he says, is a marriage between the fixed and the changeable, the old and the new, soul and material, and between divinity and humanity (p. 116).

Perhaps these views are complex for some Western people, and it is hard to understand exactly the differences between the two philosophies, Western and Muslim, except for those people who study philosophy in depth. Because of this there are some Muslims who deny the philosophy of education in Islam and accept Western philosophy at school, e.g. Darwin, Plato, Freud and others, while they do not study the philosophy of Al Gazali, Ibnseena, Al Farabi and others. It is a shame for many Muslims to teach at a high level and write in the daily news encouraging or supporting only the Western view without understanding the Muslim view. This example seems to happen always in Kuwait or Saudi Arabia as well as in many other Arab countries. People study half the facts and think they

are right. This is what the research shows and is indicated in a different part of this study referring to many Arab curricula in Muslim countries. I believe that pupils in our education system must be clear of this misunderstanding, and if the education system insists on teaching Western philosophy, this study insists also that it teaches Islamic philosophy to make a balance and give all the facts.

In addition to this is the following example which shows that we should look at the time Islamic philosophers lived, and try to examine some of their principles and ideas, by focussing on many fields within the education system in the past, to introduce Islamic educational theory, particularly from the Muslim thinkers a hundred years ago. Reda suggests that there are six general principles which together show a complete 'educational theory'. The six elements are:

1. Technical education
2. Psychological foundation of the educational process
3. Learner understanding and personal respectability
4. Teaching method
5. A teacher
6. Pupils' preparation to participate in economic activity for society

(1980, pp.95-96)

He seems to me not to agree that Islamic philosophy implements a satisfactory educational theory, as does Western educational theory. My view goes against this because I believe that Islamic philosophy must originate from the time of the Prophet (p.b.o.h.) fourteen hundred years ago, up to the present time. But religion also matters socially, and worship gives more interest than religious philosophy or philosophy of Islamic religious education in particular. Unfortunately many Muslim countries avoid raising this issue although they know that I.R.E. can certainly play a vital role in the development of society. Perhaps

some people deny this, because they want to please each other, even if it is against religion. Finally, the researcher in education cannot crystalise Islamic philosophy for society, because the real Islam and Quran in the life of Islamic society is absent, as Abul Ayinain mentions. As a result it has to be accepted that there is no clear philosophy which can be followed.

SECTION B

Aims of I.R.E. and the major social factors in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia

This section will analyse the nature of the aims of Islamic religious education in the region in order to put the reader within the situation itself (see Figure 1 for more details). Then it will discuss the development of I.R.E. and its aims. Before I describe my proposal it is necessary to say that in the Arab countries the aims of I.R.E. are often set up by the Ministry of Education in order to say that we do have aims if required in the practical manner. It is hoped that this chapter will give a correct picture of what is actually going on in I.R.E. in the Arab and Gulf states.

The criticism is not rational as many people sometimes like to criticise merely to say something. My idea is to diagnose the disease in our societies in order to treat the situation in a methodical and scientific way. I have discussed the major problem of this study in regard to development of the I.R.E. teacher and curriculum textbook as well as the aims. So let us start to focus on the problem of the study in a different form.

Figure 1 indicates the aims of I.R.E. and major contextual factors, namely society, religion and culture. As the study already examines religion and culture in different parts this section will focus on the effect on society of Islamic religious education, and three major dimensions affected directly and strongly by teaching the aims of I.R.E. in a proper way. The first dimension is society as a whole. To make this clear society will be divided into three - individuals, families, institutions. Each individual in Muslim society, male or female, has to pass

through the Islamic religious education every day at school or kuttab or reading a book or even watching parents pray, or listening to the radio and watching television. The question is, what is society giving their children today to help them reach the aims of I.R.E.? In a later chapter I will focus on this matter (see Figure 4).

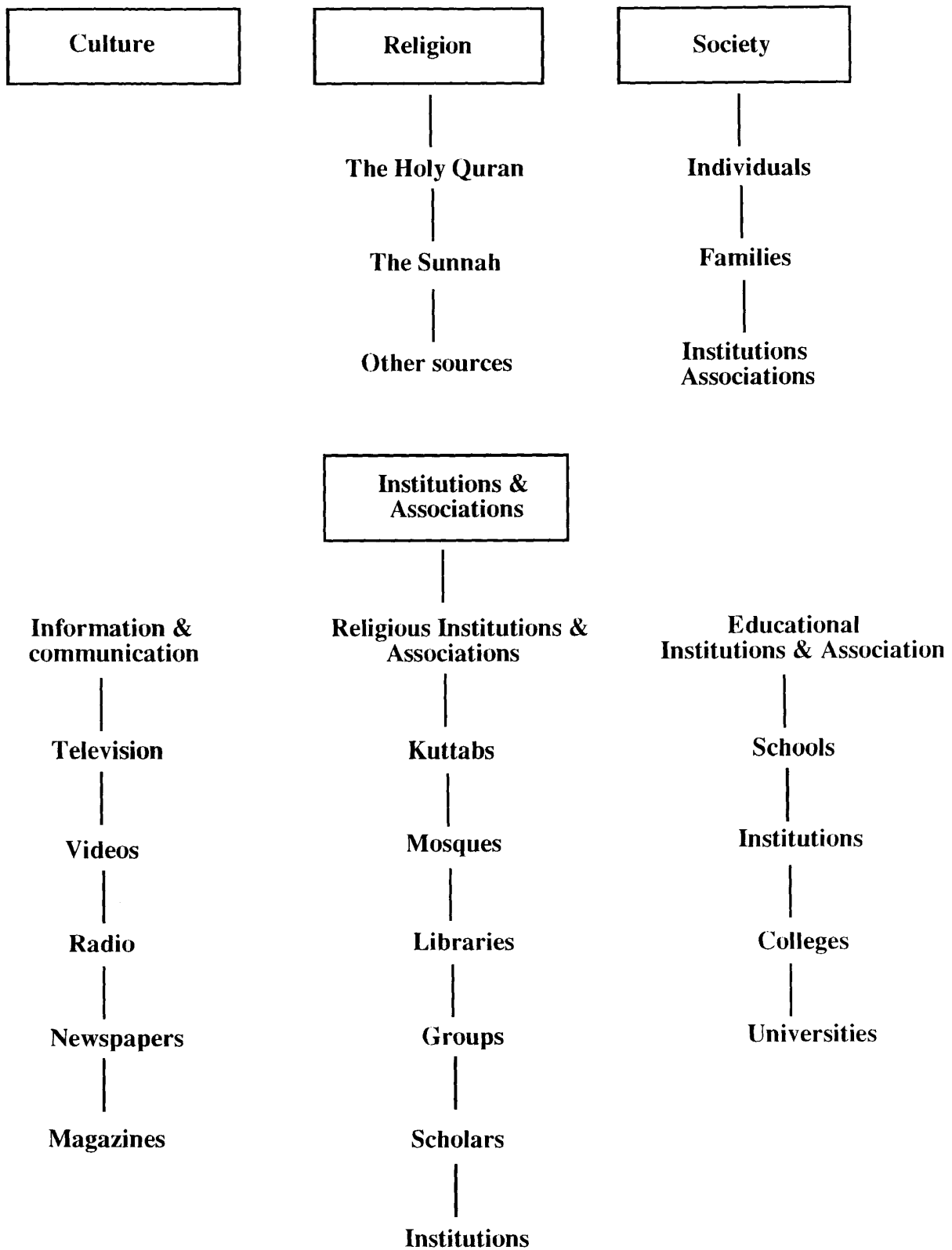


Figure 1: Aims of I.R.E. and the major contextual factors in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia

The third dimension is institutions and associations. By this I mean the bodies in society which play a role in educating the children in one way or another. Everything in our lives in the present is organised by different institutions, i.e. health, environment, education, entertainment, food, business, even relaxation, so what has I.R.E. gained from these associations? This is the modern life which many people think will give them happiness. I doubt this because it is important to examine these institutions and their aims and background to see what we are doing and what is going on. We live in life to change or to challenge what is wrong and what is right. Do we have to live as we do, or as other people want us to do?

All these questions one asks when developing I.R.E. to see exactly the straight path and measure every step with our special guide or manual which is sent by our Creator to be used as the best thing in our lives. Otherwise, if we deny this, we will face the consequences. Because these institutions and associations are so important in our lives today, I have divided them into three ways. These are Educational, Religious and Information institutions. Under each one of these three are a number of bodies dealing with the aims and teachers of I.R.E. as well as the curriculum. By this I mean there is influence from these three groups, and their effect on I.R.E. might not be clear to the public or even the teachers of I.R.E. themselves. Therefore the role of this study is to search behind these factors and influences and to discover where the development of I.R.E. can start. To solve problems regarding the textbook and I.R.E. teacher it is important to show teachers and parents the aims not merely as documented by the Ministry of Education, but as seen in reality.

Starting with the first factor, the Educational Institutions and Associations (see Figure 1). In modern life the education system is run by a hierarchy from the university down to the infant school. In Kuwait primary stage pupils have three periods weekly of I.R.E. of about 45 minutes each, while in Saudi Arabia the

primary stage have nine periods weekly. This indicates that the number of hours of teaching I.R.E. in Kuwait is not enough to enable the aims of the subject to receive full attention.

This limited number of hours also minimises the next stage in Kuwait in the intermediate and secondary stage. As a result the subject cannot be covered fully, compared with Saudi Arabia where they have even more hours of teaching I.R.E. at these stages. There is no doubt that I.R.E. is given more care and attention in Saudi Arabia than in Kuwait.

In terms of institutions, colleges and universities, Saudi Arabian I.R.E. is also much better than Kuwait. An example of this is Kuwait University which offers one course to teach Islamic studies or Islamic culture whereas Saudi universities offer two to three courses in the same subjects. Also all students of Saudi universities must memorise chapters from the Holy Quran but Kuwait University make no such request.

It is amazing to see these academic institutions ignore the teaching of I.R.E. and the Holy Quran. One day people will ask them to give their reasons for this. Zafer (1989) has discussed the aims of colleges of education in the Gulf states and he focuses on Islamic religious education and its role, particularly the study of the Holy Quran which should be taught at the universities following its teaching in the other educational stages. He stresses that :

Even if we assume that students learned some exercises before joining the university, the student must study an important whatever his (sic) major study. There are three important points the university student should learn -

1. Studies in the Holy Quran, learning and memorising if possible within the four years;
2. brief studies in the interpretation of the Quran, what is called "tafseer" etc...

(p. 393)

These and other recommendations are made by him in order to develop university and college programmes in the Gulf region. This study agrees with Zafer's viewpoint, not only in Saudi universities but to be implemented in all the Gulf States universities.

The second factor is religious institutions and associations (see Figure 1). Kuttab, mosque and libraries seem more relevant and engage with Islamic religious educational aims so the study has put them together (see Chapter Three for more details). Although these are informal in that they are not under the control of the Ministry of Education (except libraries) there can be co-operation between them. The main idea is that the mosque and kuttab are working towards the aims of I.R.E. in the religious context because people habitually go to the mosque, and they can learn a lot from the mosque by Friday prayer or by many other activities held in the mosque such as lectures, Ramadan, night prayers and so on. All these activities are taken in a group of people, not individually, so children learn from adults and they gather within for guidance from the Muslims' Ulama to teach them and answer their questions.

Groups and institutions work in some cases hand in hand towards the aims of I.R.E. within society. Kuwait and Saudi Arabia have different religious associations but the biggest in the Arab states is the World Assembly of Muslim Youth (W.A.M.Y.). Al Yassini (1985) quotes some of the objectives of W.A.M.Y. which was established in 1972 with its headquarters in Riyadh:

Following a meeting of the representatives of world Muslim youth organisations, which was sponsored by the Saudi Ministry of Education, the objectives of W.A.M.Y. are -
'to serve the ideology of Islam through the propagation of Al Tawhid, to strengthen the sense of pride in Islam among Muslim youth, and to arm them with rational bases and full confidence in the supremacy of the Islamic system over all other systems, and to help them practice Islamic teaching in all their activities; to support Muslim youth and student organisations all over the world, to help them implement their plans and programmes wherever possible.'
(pp. 72-73)

No one can forget the role of these institutions towards Islamic religious education. As I mentioned before there is a possibility of co-operation between the Ministry of Education and the Islamic organisations to achieve the aims of I.R.E. and to assist pupils in and outside school with clear programmes and activities which can ensure that pupils are learning the same concepts of Islamic principles inside and outside school, and to avoid any learning contradiction.

As a result of this, groups and institutions ought to support teachers of I.R.E. and its curriculum. Perhaps this view is not clear when people try to take away their children from any kind of learning about religion outside of school, because they sometimes want their children not to be affected by any group in society. The question is what these institutions can do in the present time in order to participate in applying the aims of I.R.E.

I imagine that they can evaluate the social and educational problems religiously to see how far people are close to Islam and its duty. Secondly, religious institutions can work hand in hand with other institutions, as well as with educational institutions. Thirdly, from a religious point of view they can assist to build good relations with schools and teachers.

Finally, I feel that the Kuwaiti and Saudi people are affected in one way or another, as these religious institutions guide people in their work and help their children.

The third dimension is Information and Communication (see Figure 1) and it is one of the major factors with regard to the aims of I.R.E. This factor directs people's lives and shifts them from normality to modernity or something they may not be familiar with.

In this life many changes happen because of television, radio or newspapers and the media in general. All these and the explosion of information have clearly shifted the aims of I.R.E. in many cases from what we plan in the Muslim countries to what other countries want. For instance, many people in the Gulf, Kuwait or Saudi Arabia have different kinds of communications with the world through television. Children in many areas in the Gulf use videos and read newspapers or magazines and there is no control over this, except in Saudi Arabia where there is strong censorship for every sort of media entering the country from abroad which perhaps means they are closer to the aims of I.R.E. than Kuwait.

Although there are many advantages to this technology there is a danger if it is not used correctly and with respect. The main question is, Who is behind the mass media? Who develops it? Who tries to present a new programme day by day? My belief as a researcher is that young people must be aware of the dangers of mass media, and not simply accept everything because not all mass media has been made for our countries. We might accept 40% or 50% but we should not accept 100% because this would mean changing our principles and culture. This point should be considered not only for the general population but also for the people in authority in the region. Our lives generally are becoming more westernised in everything: schools, homes, offices, food, clothing, and this might lead us to ignore our culture.

In his article Gauhar (1981) discusses the danger of the mass media in the Muslim world and says:

Let me mention what the media has already achieved. It has robbed man of his option to select knowledge. He is (sic) being constantly informed, persuaded and compelled.

(p.68)

He also believes that as a result of the mass media the educational system in the world has been affected academically and directs the educational aims in the future in the Muslim world. Therefore he suggests there should be:

A survey of the existing educational systems in Muslim countries, including a detailed examination of the curricula, prescribed textbooks and recommended reading materials, methods of teaching, etc...

(ibid. p.79)

How bad or good is this talk about the mass media in the Muslim world? In daily life for example there is much more criticism of the Ministry of Information, particularly in Kuwait. People maintain their religion and culture and T.V. programmes do nothing to help this if large numbers of the programmes are exported from the U.S.A., U.K. and Europe.

I agree with the previous article that the media today is important and dangerous. However, my view is to some extent different because I can see that rich countries such as the Gulf states find it easy to copy the western style in their T.V. because they are able to buy up to date, new films from many companies. If the Ministry of Information does not censor this then the hundreds of video shops will sell them to young people. Added to this are the kinds of films available in the Gulf showing sex, horror, crime, disco and night club parties.

Perhaps one can say the Gulf state radio has a special channel dedicated to the Holy Quran and religious programmes. It seems even if they broadcast a few hours a day that is not enough. It is essential to encourage co-operation between the two bodies, education and information. They must work together to develop society and to achieve the aims of I.R.E. which, if this were the case, would save society time in educating pupils because they could study directly in school and indirectly at home.

As a matter of fact this study is also aiming to find out why the development of Islamic religious education is slow. No one can ignore what people have done in the past in terms of developing the I.R.E. teacher and teaching methods and I.R.E. curriculum textbook, if we compare the 1960s with the 1980s. But the point is why we should not have more development. Also why I.R.E. does not get the same attention from institutions and associations in Kuwait as it does in Saudi Arabia?

In conclusion, Figure 1 is a guide to the thought of developing I.R.E. as a major point of this study. Figure 2 describes and analyses how to reach this development and in what sense. The development scheme of this study is illustrated in Figure 2.

No one can imagine any sort of development without other factors relevant to it. This means the word 'development' can be understood in different ways. One is to see what is going on and to follow and investigate the reasons and factors which make the development process slow. The word 'development' is impossible to use with religion itself because the mystery of religion cannot be developed by people, but school textbooks and teaching religion can be developed.

Figure 2 shows how the development process of I.R.E. works in relation to other elements. The researcher thinks that these elements are foundations of the development process. Therefore the study is working to link I.R.E. in the past and present in order to consider the development historically in both Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. As a result a future vision of I.R.E. development is possible.

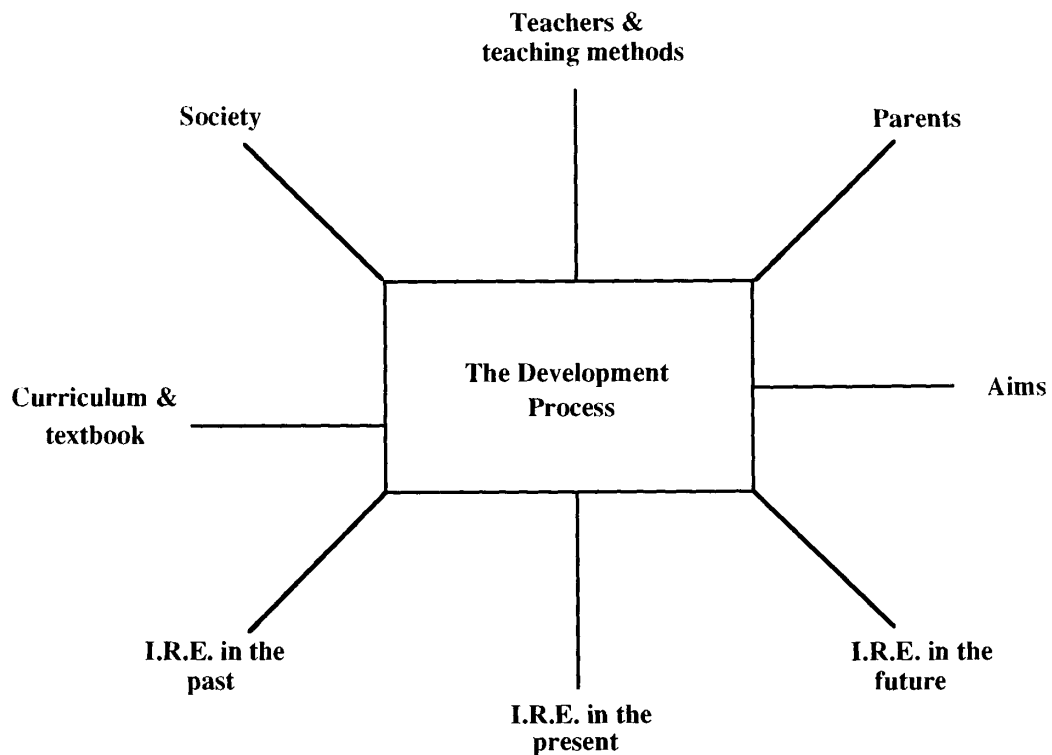


Figure 2: The general foundation for developing I.R.E.

The second foundation for developing I.R.E. is to examine the aims of I.R.E. with regard to the curriculum textbook in both countries. This step has shown how the I.R.E. aims are suitable to the textbook and what has happened in developing the aims, the textbook and the curriculum. This is so important in the region because they are written by the Ministry of Education. Parents and teachers of I.R.E. mainly took no part in that process, which means parents have no idea whether pupils are on the right path or not.

What do we expect from I.R.E. teachers? There is no real protection for our children, bearing in mind the many influences on them including sex magazines from abroad which fall into the hands of young people. Do I.R.E. teachers think about what is going on between pupils themselves in order to use

the textbook properly and to solve problems which students might not mention?
We have to search and find the best way to teach children.

My understanding of the development process of Islamic religious education is not to focus on the frame or style they use in their teaching but to watch the development on pupils in their daily lives, in their morality and behaviour, in their treatment of each other as pupils, and with old people.

I.R.E. teachers will also find that teaching religion makes pupils love their country and not hesitate to fight against the enemy and, in addition, to love their parents and obey them with respect.

The development process should take this into account and encourage consultation between I.R.E. teachers and parents in order that parents can advise the teacher what to do with their children and the teacher can show the parent what their children do at school. This supervision should be recorded for each child and a note made of the improvement she/he achieves. Chapter Seven will list a number of social duties parents ought to teach their children about from the religions point of view.

It is vital for Islamic religious education within the development process to build a solid relationship with society. This is because in a Muslim country, Islam is performing through society and people in society are performing Islam throughout their lives in all matters, large or small. This is what the Holy Quran indicates. The International Institute of Islamic Thought (1989) has identified this view and pointed out:

it is therefore the duty of the Muslim thinker to Islamize i.e. to define and apply the relevance of Islam to every single item in human living. The Quran has already done so in a number of human activities ... Today this lifestyle needs to be redefined, recrystallized, and complemented to extend to those activities that were not known or common.

(p.46)

The two foundations of the development process of I.R.E., parents and society, might not be covered enough in the textbook of I.R.E., whereas teachers of I.R.E. have a potential through their own teaching methods to make pupils collaborate with their country as well as with their parents. The unity of the family is part of the unity of society. This must be considered very carefully in order to keep Kuwait a place of peace not only for Kuwaitis but for anybody who lives in this small country, and co-operate with its regime to apply freedom and justice for everybody in the name of Islamic religion and the Kuwaiti institution which says:

1. Kuwait Arab identity
2. Kuwait and Islamic society
 - Islam is the religion of the state
 - Islam is a main source of legislation
3. Foreign policy secures independence and calls for peace
 - rejecting aggression and calling for peace
 - justice, freedom and equality among all citizens

(pp. 14, 15)

The conclusion of this chapter is that there is a great hope to see the development of the society and the people. Also to see the unity not only for Kuwaiti and Saudi society but also for all Gulf states as we saw it during the recent dark period of Kuwait. The whole world says Kuwait must remain Kuwait, without aggression or oppression.

This unity in I.R.E. between Kuwait and Saudi Arabia is the level of development the researcher aims to achieve, i.e. do I.R.E. teachers and organizations follow what is meant so as to recrystallize the aims of I.R.E.? The answer to this is in the following chapter.

CHAPTER SIX

CHAPTER SIX

The role of I.R.E. teachers in the development process in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia

Introduction

This chapter deals with the development of I.R.E. in both countries in terms of the teacher as, whatever the level of aims of I.R.E., it cannot work without teacher support. What is the role of the I.R.E. teacher in the Muslim world in reality today? Why do we have to discuss the role of I.R.E. within the development context? Do I.R.E. teachers need different characteristics from other teachers? This will be covered in Section A of this chapter.

The importance of the I.R.E. teacher in the Arab Muslim world comes from taking responsibility for teaching the Islamic religion to pupils. Therefore any misunderstanding or confusion in their work will be reflected negatively on the children. My experience in the field of teaching I.R.E. during the 1970s and '80s has shown the kinds of problems facing I.R.E. teachers and their teaching methods, and the textbook they use. As a result, this study has been carried out to explore the weak points of I.R.E. teachers and to what extent there is a possibility of development.

Many people might write generally about I.R.E. teachers and what their task is in general terms, whereas I have focused on two specific countries in order to examine deeply the problems of developing I.R.E. in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia as examples of the Gulf region. Both countries have a number of I.R.E. teachers

from other Arab countries and it is hard to develop during a short contract or to evaluate what they are doing.

Can they really assist in the development of I.R.E. if we assume they cannot know the aims precisely or the nature of the society, and that they teach in the way they learned in the 1960s in the rural areas? The question is, do they come to develop I.R.E. in the region, or to learn new training in these rich countries?

Section B of this chapter will study the teaching methods of I.R.E. in general in order to examine where the development must focus. This section will give the teaching methods of I.R.E. a comparative context in the past and present, as well as to outline the needs of the development in the future. Also this section will discuss the Islamic and Quranic point of view in teaching children about Islam. Therefore a number of writers and authors will be referred to so as to try to judge and make conclusions about teaching methods in the region.

Finally, the Kuwaiti and Saudi teaching methods will also give the reader a clear picture of what is going on in these two countries and what has been developed in I.R.E. so far.

SECTION A

What is the role of I.R.E. teachers in the Gulf Region?

Perhaps the role of the I.R.E. teacher was different in the past. In other words, the scholars in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia ran their schools by themselves because they were qualified to teach the basic principles of Islam to the children. Women also do the same when teaching girls at home but not as many as boys in the kuttabs. This type of teaching was not supervised by anyone, and the teachers had full authority to do whatever they liked in terms of the curriculum and teaching methods. They could accept or refuse pupils as they wished. People held them in great respect because they needed their children to be educated and the pupils themselves feared the teacher's punishment so they tried very hard in their studies.

The role of the mullah as I.R.E. teacher in the past seems hard, bearing in mind that there was no television, video or other mass media like today. This meant the teachers of I.R.E. could not teach pupils widely about religion and there was no challenge from outside the kuttabs.

Later on this role became less and people's lives changed during the 1960s. Both countries became familiar with formal education set by their governments and they found that the facilities in schools were much better than in the kuttabs. Added to this there were more subjects for pupils to learn and this development also affected the teaching of I.R.E., as well as the teachers (See Chapter Three for more details).

During the 1970s the role of the I.R.E. teacher became less and probably many teachers came from different Arab countries. They of course were searching

for a better life in the Gulf and they could make a great deal of money. Therefore they did not criticise or engage in any problems or try to change what was happening in society. Many of them taught day and night, but had nothing to do regarding the I.R.E. textbook or teaching methods. They simply taught what was required by the Ministry of Education. If they asked about the aims or objectives they might have got into trouble. No doubt there were some good teachers among them, but they were not able to do anything other than teach.

The former Education Minister in Kuwait Al Ebraheem described the case of teachers in the region openly in his book Kuwait and future, education and development face to face (1989). He says:

It was generally thought that no one came into this profession - teacher - except those who lost the opportunity to become doctors or engineers, or accountants or businessmen ... when you ask parents what they want for their children's futures ... you find it unusual for them to say they want them to become teachers...

(p. 15)

He discusses the situation between Kuwaitis and non-Kuwaitis:

The main problem of the education system we cannot ignore is the poor situation teachers are living in. Why can we not increase their salaries as we do with other jobs? ... this is not only in Kuwait but in all developing countries...

(ibid. p.16)

It is logical to me to agree and understand the extent the problems of the teachers in the region, and how far they are caused by the Ministry of Education. This indeed is part of the story of teachers in the region and it needs careful consideration from Al Ebraheem. Imagine that society is searching for development and the students are part of this project; then can the I.R.E. teacher in particular and the Ministry of Education accept the idea that students at school are like flowers in the garden? Can I.R.E. teachers collect some of these flowers and present them to society? The role of I.R.E. teachers is to apply the objectives

of religion within the curriculum and pupil's daily life. In the meantime teachers of I.R.E. are responsible for developing the picture of I.R.E. in the eyes of pupils through teaching the subject.

This requires the teacher to examine the pupils' problems in their daily lives and try to build a better relationship with them. Otherwise teachers can delay the development of I.R.E.

Religiously, the I.R.E. teacher's performance can be improved if they remember that they are teaching pupils to pray to Allah and bring them close to Him and His guidance in the Quran. Even if they are being paid for the job they should feel that they will be asked in this life, or in the hereafter, to co-operate in the development of the educational process.

The role of the I.R.E. teacher is to support pupils to have a better education and motivate them to learn and work hard to develop society in the name of the Islamic religious education because they will be rewarded by Allah, as long as they learn and learn with attention.

The role of the I.R.E. teacher is not easy. S/he has to build up the good person in society, often with support from other bodies, and parents. It is the task of the I.R.E. teacher to penetrate to the heart of pupils and thereby to the heart of society, to convey religious knowledge and values, to make a qualified person not for him/herself but for other people, and also to understand the value of our lives as Muslim, and to identify the importance of religion from an early age.

All these examples are needed to achieve the aims of I.R.E. in our schools in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia and to help teachers lead pupils along the straight path in their daily lives. Looking at the I.R.E. teacher in both countries they are not all

the same. Some are very strict while others are easy going and some fall between the two extremes. These different levels will give different outcomes in society. It is natural that people are not all perfect in their lives, even teachers. Some might need to develop themselves and their society and others not. Some take things easy and try to teach only to finish the textbook whether the pupils have learned or not. This type of teacher might fail to communicate well with the pupils. I assume that I.R.E. teachers have full knowledge of the subject and its aims so they can transfer this knowledge to their pupils. The problem is transferring religious knowledge to both heart and mind seems to me to be difficult. This is one of the hidden roles of the I.R.E. teacher. If this were not the case there would be no need for I.R.E. teachers, it would all be learned from books or television. Unfortunately in some cases pupils do learn more from outside school because there is no good communication between them and the teacher. The danger of this is that we need our pupils to follow the principles of the main sources, the Quran and the Sunnah, and to be aware not to follow everything they watch if it is wrong, such as smoking, foolishness, lying and so on.

In the Muslim society the teacher of I.R.E. is always required to be good in everything and at the same time society does not give them what they need. I.R.E. cannot work itself without support by the media and the people of the society. Whatever teachers do at school, the media can go against it in every way through, for example, television programmes. This is one of the problems facing I.R.E. teachers in their daily teaching when they study something at school and they find it is quite different in actuality.

In Bahrain there was a conference in December 1988 to discuss the teacher preparation in the Gulf states. One of the papers was introduced by Al Bazzaz (1989) and dealt with the actual preparation of teachers in the Arab and Gulf states. He discussed the point that although there are good publications, books and

dissertations about this subject, there is still a gap between what is written and what is happening. Added to this there are many activities run by the Gulf Educational Centre with regard to teacher training, e.g. the first Conference held in Saudi Arabia in 1974 about teachers. Also the Teachers' Union of Kuwait held a conference to discuss teacher training in 1984 and reached the following conclusion:

1. There is no one policy in teacher preparation in the Gulf states.
2. A shortage of local teachers in the region leads to formal requests for teachers from other countries.
3. A small number attend the colleges of education and teacher training.
4. There is no clear view about the evaluation of the aims of education.
5. Teachers' institutions are not familiar with modern experimental research.

(pp. 187-188)

Finally, Al Bazzaz talks about the role of the teacher in the past when they transferred their knowledge and memories to the pupils. They also directed pupils in values etc., while in the present the educationalist and the researchers agreed that a teacher's role was as follows:

1. The teacher is responsible for formulating pupils' thoughts...
2. The teacher is a guide and supervisor to the pupils psychologically, societally, morally and scientifically.
3. The teacher is a partner to parents in educating their children.
4. The teacher can play a role in studying the aims and evaluate the curriculum and teaching methods.

5. The teacher is a representative in applying the educational policy of the state.

(ibid. p. 194)

This article makes clear what teachers should give pupils and it seems that I.R.E. teachers should be even more involved at this level, to guide students to the right way. The teacher of I.R.E. also should develop pupils' thinking as the Quran asks a Believer to do. The teacher should behave well in school so pupils can follow his/her example, but this is not always the case. In many Gulf state schools it is hard to say but there is often no value placed on I.R.E. teachers who say one thing and do another.

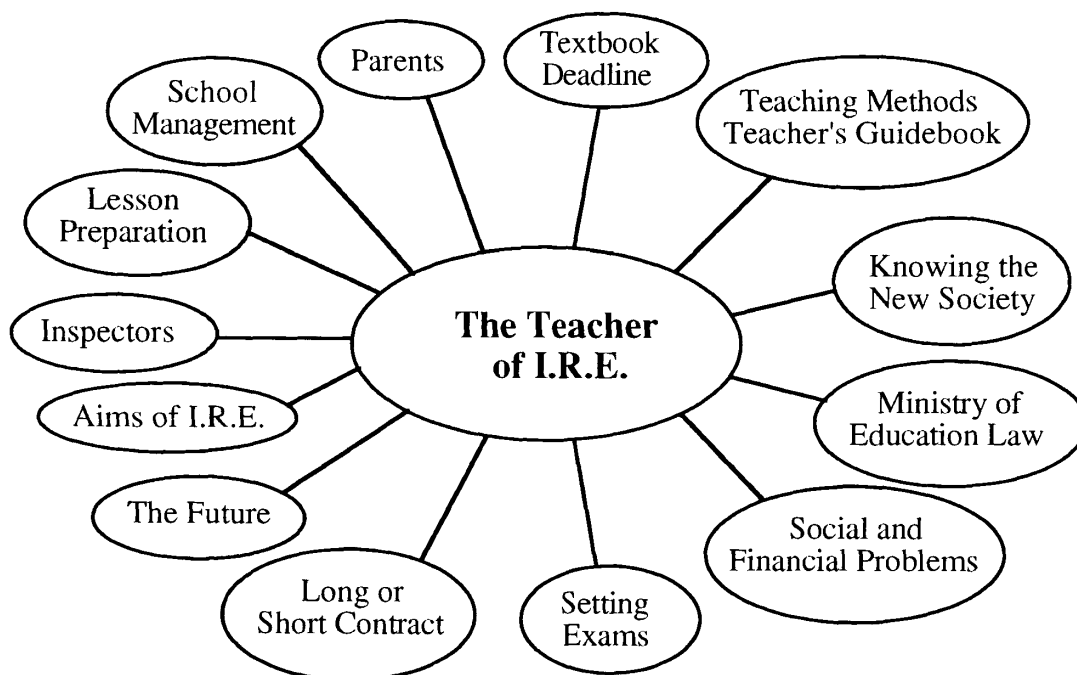


Figure 3: I.R.E. teacher surrounded by the education system

Figure 3 shows the I.R.E. teacher's daily life in the Gulf states as the researcher sees it. In the first part, which is a short term, one year contract, the teacher needs time to think what is the nature of life in the region and needs to

settle into and become familiar with society and the people's customs. The teacher can thereby build a picture, depending on their colleagues' help. Later the I.R.E. teacher has to understand a number of things, i.e. deal with the inspector, pupils and textbook curriculum.

The main thing is the financial problem because life in Kuwait or Saudi Arabia, or indeed any of the Gulf states, is expensive. Most of the teachers are paid below average wages and they need to send money abroad so as to safeguard their futures when they return there. Also they cannot do what they like because of the law so what they can do is look after themselves and do not think about their role in society in terms of the curriculum or aims, or even development.

There are so many things an I.R.E. teacher is supposed to be in their personal lives and the way they behave. Pupils in the Gulf region always watch I.R.E. teachers more closely than other teachers. They feel that I.R.E. teachers ought to be a model, a pattern of good behaviour and treatment for them. My experience is that many pupils follow the example of their I.R.E. teachers more than their parents. This is because they think that she/he knows more about religion than other people do and it is good to copy them and learn from them.

This no doubt is a great responsibility on the teacher of I.R.E. in society. However, it is dangerous to allow pupils to follow without a full understanding of the correct way. Teachers of I.R.E. themselves are not always on the right path, some are weak, the same as people in everyday life. They may make mistakes and then who will remind them? The answer is it could be another I.R.E. teacher, colleague, pupils or, indeed, anyone.

This study is aimed at helping teachers and supervising them correctly in order to find a better outcome of their teaching. I strongly believe that those

I.R.E. teachers could easily be directed not through the school inspectors who visit twice a year, but I would suggest a team of older I.R.E. teachers and psychologists as well as written guidelines to enable them to supervise themselves.

The second problem is in the policy of choosing I.R.E. teachers from anywhere as long as they are cheap. Surely this is wrong. The committee chosen to do this job must be careful because they might affect the customs of the country when bringing in teachers from outside. They must ensure that teachers from outside the country know what our society needs and they should bring with them a letter of recommendation. Many parents and even pupils criticise non-local teachers, and this will continue to be the case if the teachers teach one thing and do another.

Teacher Education in the Arab Gulf States Conference (1984) in Qatar outlined the situation and these are some of its recommendations:

TEACHER EDUCATION IN THE ARAB GULF STATES Conference Report

Recommendations

In pursuance of the basic goals of this conference on Teacher Education in the Arab Gulf States, and in light of the discussions of the conference committees and the desire for raising the level of teacher preparation and training in the Gulf States, the participants recommend the following:

1. Institutions and centers of teacher education must adopt means of attracting and selecting the most suitable candidates for the teaching profession.
2. Co-operation and co-ordination should be established between institutions of teacher preparation, educational research centers and ministries of education.
3. Lectures in specialized curricula, in terms of both materials and teaching methods, should be in accordance with teacher preparatory requirements.
4. Programs of teacher preparation must include environmental studies and means of utilizing environmental resources.
5. The Gulf States should encourage faculty exchanges between institutions.
6. The Gulf States must improve the social and economic status of their teachers.

7. All centers of teacher preparation in the Gulf States must encourage co-operation and the exchange of experiences and ideas between them.
8. Every Gulf State must study thoroughly the real conditions of its institutions, with special emphasis on existing problems and means to solve them. Case studies and evaluative criteria should be developed for self-assessment of teacher education in each Gulf nation.
9. Responsible Gulf State authorities must engender and implement innovations in teacher preparatory programs.

(pp. 106-107)

From the first recommendation one can say that I.R.E. teachers should be highly qualified and selected within a set criteria, not at random. The second recommendation is to encourage co-operation between the educational bodies, and it seems to me the region also needs co-operation between the religious bodies as well, in order to ensure that I.R.E. is developed correctly.

I have asked before why the role of the I.R.E. teacher is not discussed in the development process. Perhaps the answer is clear from the previous examples which insist that the teacher is the starting point, the curriculum second. If we have good teachers they can do magnificent work to educate pupils whereas if we have bad teachers but a good textbook then pupils will suffer more.

Thirdly, recommendation number seven probably helps teachers of I.R.E. in their new situation to focus on their teaching and educating children rather than anything else.

Fourthly, perhaps I could add that some parents should consider becoming members of the educational committees.

Number eight of the list of recommendations is to encourage researchers to work individually for each state of each curriculum subject to solve the problems

as a case study, to find a better way of developing. This thesis is working on this accordingly.

Finally, the researcher is very much in agreement with the last recommendation.

One of the publications of the Gulf States Educational Centre, Riyadh branch (1986) has discussed the issues of teachers in Some Educational Issues. It mentions that there are four tasks for teachers:

1. to organize the educational process in the classroom;
2. to interact with pupils to develop their personalities;
3. to participate practically in drafting the curriculum;
4. to participate practically in the comprehensive evaluation of the curriculum, both inside and outside school.

(p. 19)

These issues are important even though they do not go far enough. The role of the I.R.E. teacher is to participate with parents as well as other teachers of, say, Maths., or Science.

What are the characteristics of the I.R.E. teacher? Before answering this question the I.R.E. teacher has to ask her/himself what they understand by teaching religion. Of course, if they know the answer or even the aims of I.R.E. then they might know what they are doing.

In most Arab countries people view I.R.E. teachers as social reformers, models, religious people, gentle, far from problems etc. These may be some of

the characteristics if not all of them. Let us therefore examine what educators and thinkers feel about the I.R.E. teacher and teaching method in Section B.

SECTION B

Why we teach I.R.E.

This section will discuss what it means to teach religion, and what Muslim thinkers feel about the function of I.R.E. teachers. This section will also show different ways of teaching I.R.E. Firstly let us consider the ideas and concepts of I.R.E. teaching. Harris pointed out:

What does it mean to teach religion? Teaching about religion seems an easy concept. There is the history of religion, the sociology of religions and comparative study of religions, or religious beliefs and practices.

(Harris 1976, p. 65)

The question raised by Harris seems to me important to teachers of I.R.E., parents and others. This is because when teachers teach religion they should know what it means and not just teach the subject as a matter of habit or custom. It should not just be taught merely as a series of stories and history lessons. Parents might feel that teaching religion was more important if they knew what it entailed, how it was taught, and the development needed. It might even help them to understand the textbook or teaching methods. As a researcher I feel that all this is needed to achieve the objectives of this study which is to find out where the I.R.E. development process should take place.

It is vital for both Kuwait and Saudi Arabia to learn from each other's experiences. Even though they are both Gulf states I have made it clear that they have different approaches to the teaching of I.R.E. as well as different styles of textbook.

Teaching I.R.E. is continuously related to the history and culture of the Gulf region and we must remember this. However teaching religion as a way of life in the two countries seems to vary depending on the country itself. In some ways Kuwait is better than Saudi Arabia, in others the reverse is true. Harris wanted the teacher of religion to be clear about his/her functions. In addition to this, Ali (1982) deals with the functions of I.R.E. when he discusses one of the Islamic scholar's views (1495):

- I.R.E. teachers should offer advice to the learner generously and in an indirect way;
- look at the desires and interests of the learner;
- give a child more care than older pupils;
- be patient and kind, friendly, gentle and so on.

(pp. 187-190)

These are some of the duties of the I.R.E. teacher which she/he should know and follow.

In the past Al Gazali, a Muslim thinker, has investigated the teacher's responsibility and function. Let us look at some of these functions through Al Barjs' (1981) interpretations of them:

- A. The first function of the teacher is to be compassionate with pupils. By this he means that the teacher can take them away from the hell fire.
- B. Teachers must not ask for money for teaching.
- C. Teachers must advise the learner in everything.
- D. Teachers must use simple methods for teaching students good manners.

Al Barjs, who discusses Al Gazali's book and quotes these functions, does not agree with the second point as he feels it is an idealistic viewpoint. This view

may not fit with the present day because teaching today is a professional job the same as any other. Al Gazali also quoted from the Holy Quran that "the teaching profession is noble work and an honour." (pp. 103-113)

I think teachers of I.R.E. can teach and develop society and spend six hours a day in order to earn money for this job because it is not voluntary work. For instance, in Muslim countries the leader of the Mosque or Imam will pray with others and earn money because he does it as a job and cannot afford to reduce his salary. It seems to me that teachers do similar work in teaching pupils and students I.R.E. from the primary to the secondary stage. They earn money for this job and are rewarded by Allah at the same time. This is one of the characteristics of Islamic religion that doctors, engineers and even students can benefit in both ways. Many people in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia work in the afternoons doing voluntary teaching of the Holy Quran or religious matters.

In my opinion Al Gazali speaks as a religious thinker and his task is to encourage teachers to be close to Allah, because in the past teachers were the representatives of the Ulama and they took no money for teaching people about Islam. Added to this, Al Gazali talks about all teachers because all of them teach about Islam and they should not take money for that. This position has changed in Muslim countries and teachers now specialise in many and different subjects. Most of them are working full time so they have no other opportunity to earn money other than through their teaching. Many things from the past have changed and the role of teaching I.R.E. has also changed.

In comparing the past with the present, the situations in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia are similar because they have similar circumstances. The investigation shows clearly how I.R.E. teachers in both countries suffer from this task. As Al Tumi (1979) confirms:

a Muslim teacher is assumed to be a complete and mature person psychologically, mentally and socially; to be in full control of him/herself under most circumstances. He/she is expected to involve him/herself in people's happiness and sadness and to solve their problems with wisdom.

(pp. 100-105)

Nobody can deny that these are part of a teacher's personality and it could be that even more is expected of an I.R.E. teacher whom we assume has more responsibility than teachers of other subjects. On this point I would say that I have noticed that when some people have been teaching for a while they forget to continue with their own reading, writing or research. They become old fashioned, often use 'chalk and talk' rather than up to date methods, and generally stop learning or developing themselves. This means that their teaching becomes stale and out of date. This is a danger, particularly with people who have been teaching since the 1960s. It often becomes apparent compared with new, younger teachers who qualified in the 1980s who have a more modern style and mentality. The result of these differences in teaching styles may mean that the results of pupils will vary from teacher to teacher, e.g. pupils pick up the accent of the spoken word from their teachers and this can be an indication of where teachers come from. For instance, students with an Egyptian teacher will begin to speak Arabic with an Egyptian accent. Another example of the differences is when teachers come from rural areas and have not kept up to date with developing educational processes. They spend long hours learning to link the teaching of I.R.E. and society's problems, what are the main problems in society, what pupils like and eat, and what is the best way to cope with this new country.

Al Hashemi (1985) discusses I.R.E. teachers' preparation and development and says that I.R.E. is generally ignored in terms of teachers, curriculum and teaching methods. He thinks the reason for the decline in I.R.E.

lessons is due to the state of religion and how poorly it is regarded in schools, i.e. one or at most two periods a week.

Then there is the old fashioned and out of date textbook in some Arab countries, i.e. Iraq, Libya, Syria, which has not maintained its development in line with the new curriculum. Thirdly, with regard to the teacher of I.R.E., he points out:

The requirements for teachers of general subjects are different from what is expected of the I.R.E. teacher. Because teaching Islam is comprehensive and difficult, they should be good and suitably prepared and qualified in the following:

- A. Teachers of I.R.E. have to be knowledgeable in life's attitudes and understand how to relate Islam to this life.
- B. A strong personal belief in Islam and how to apply it; to show godliness in fear of Allah. I.R.E. teachers should also be smart, healthy, clever, open minded and experienced in life.
- C. Understanding of teaching methods.

(pp. 13-43)

Perhaps the writer feels that I.R.E. teachers are ignorant and confirms my view at the beginning of this thesis that the problem of teaching I.R.E. has been affected by factors inside and outside school. Society can play a major part in reinforcing the role of the I.R.E. teacher.

To summarise the role of the I.R.E. teacher; it is necessary to focus on what Mujawer has presented in his paper to the Seminar of Developing the Teaching of I.R.E. when he says:

the role of the I.R.E. teacher in the educational process is to orientate pupils and to guide them in a better way within their abilities and skills towards Islam and to fulfil the Islamic faith and commitment.

(1985 p.111)

Mujawer seems to me to be trying to push forward the development of I.R.E. in Kuwait and he has written about Islamic religious education and teaching

methods in the primary, intermediate and secondary stages. He tries to present this as best he can, particularly in the Kuwaiti I.R.E. textbook in education, and he succeeds to some extent in updating the I.R.E. curriculum as a whole. He also puts his finger on the problem of I.R.E. teaching in schools and points out:

One of the problems in teaching Islamic religious education in our schools is that pupils do not know why they are learning this. In Islamic Religious Education they focus on teaching pupils about punishment in Islam which makes them afraid when they are still young. This is an old philosophy and one we no longer need.

(ibid. p.114)

I strongly agree with him in the idea that teaching I.R.E. is not to make pupils afraid but to attract them and build in them a desire for Islam and the Holy Quran.

Everyone in a Muslim society is responsible for Islamic religious education because whatever they do will have an effect on their children, beginning with the teacher through the education system and ending with the family. All of us are responsible in some way for I.R.E. though it is impossible to measure this effect. The results will be seen in the new generation. Hopefully this chapter can give the teachers of I.R.E. some guidance and diagnoses of the problems they face daily.

I.R.E. teaching methods

Teaching methods is a wide subject. In I.R.E. there are several areas covered by the phrase "teaching methods", e.g. Holy Quran, Seerah, Tafsair, Al Tawhid, morals and other issues. As a result each section must have its own method for teaching. Each branch of I.R.E. takes a long time to cover deeply and this is not the aim of this chapter, but to focus on the development of I.R.E. in a general context and in the primary sector of education. The main purpose is to

examine the possibilities of developing new teaching methods in both Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

In addition let me make the point clear that the development of the *teaching* of I.R.E. is not the same as the *aims* of I.R.E. The previous chapter discussed the aims with regard to the development processes required for I.R.E. Teaching methods take place as a major element in assisting in the development of I.R.E., similar to the teacher of I.R.E. and the textbook. A part of developing I.R.E. is to examine the teaching methods from earlier times.

Historically teaching I.R.E. took place very simply, often by reading chapters from the Holy Quran. The Mullah always read first and the pupils repeated after him two, three or more times until they had memorised the chapter. There were no educational aids and oral teaching is still the most popular method of teaching in both Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

During the 1960s teachings methods began to improve, partly from the textbook and teacher's guide book. Before discussing individual teaching methods of I.R.E. let me try to give a definition of the meaning of teaching methods. Al Tumi has mentioned that there is no clear definition of teaching method in I.R.E. when he says:

From very old books of Islamic religious education we have seen there is no comprehensive and complete definition of the teaching methods. All we found was a general description of the way of teaching or other activities and some psychological and educational principles which should be observed in the teaching. Some illustrations of teaching generally using, for instance: inductive method, telling method, lecture method, discussion method, and anecdotal method.

(1988, p. 402)

Teaching methods means all the ways, styles and frames a teacher uses in the process of teaching I.R.E. from this definition. There is a need to concentrate

on the development of teaching methods in I.R.E. Some methods are still used today, i.e. telling and anecdotal, in many Arab and Gulf schools especially in primary education. Teachers of I.R.E. find it very simple to sit and tell stories in Islam.

The major objective of this study is to divert teachers and convert them to use not just one, but many and varied methods.

What kinds of methods can be used when teaching Islamic religious education? There is more than one answer to this question but there are also certain points of similarity. Planners must be careful in approaching I.R.E. in the primary stage, and be concerned about the methods of teaching I.R.E. Not all teachers can teach I.R.E. properly even if they are knowledgeable about religion. This is because the teacher of I.R.E. deals with the soul as well as the mind. They aim to change or improve pupils in every matter in this life to be ready for the life to come. It is a spiritual commitment and I.R.E. should focus on the hearts and minds of humankind.

Al Nahlawi (1988) discusses the idea that Islamic education has special teaching methods, although it can use any methods as long as they lead to the fulfilment of the aims of I.R.E. He pointed out the following methods of Islamic education:

1. Quranic dialogue method.
2. Quranic education stories.
3. Education by pattern and model.
4. Education by practice and work.
5. Education by warning and religious exhortation.
6. Education between freedom and religious oppression.

(p. 184)

These models of Islamic educational teaching methods are often derived from Islamic sources and they have been used from the time of the Prophet

Muhammad (p.b.o.h.) For Muslims he is the first teacher who taught them about Islam and took them away from the darkness to the light.

Both the Holy Quran and Sunnah used different kinds of dialogue, direct in some cases and indirect in other cases. Also there are many questions and reminders for people to follow and understand. All these dialogues are suitable for humankind, men and women, young and old, weak and strong, poor and rich, whatever the case there are examples to find and solutions to guide into the right path. More details on this will be in the next chapter.

I.R.E. teachers are supposed, and expected, to know all these cases and on the basis of them advise people how to behave in the present time. I.R.E. teachers must study the life of the Prophet Muhammad comprehensively and be encouraged to know current teaching methods so that past experience can be applied to present day problems through the teaching process. This is why it is important to be flexible in teaching as long as it does not go against religion.

The second method he mentions is teaching by stories. Of course it must be real stories without the exaggeration seen in the media. Islamic culture has so many stories that children in the primary stage can learn about.

Qutb confirms the education method through stories and says:

The Quran uses the story in all kinds of education and orientation including the Quranic education curriculum, i.e. education of the soul and mind.

(1981, p. 194)

Both Kuwaiti and Saudi textbooks have inadequate stories and therefore teachers of I.R.E. ought to be able to fill this shortage especially in the primary stage (see Chapter Four for more details).

The third method of teaching I.R.E. is education by model or pattern. This method is very specific with religion. Islamic religious education is a close pattern for pupils to follow through teachers in school and parents at home. Naturally pupils do what other people do, and behave in the same way that others behave. No one can easily blame pupils if they do wrong or behave badly for these reasons. Unfortunately in some Arab societies alcohol is available in shops everywhere, nightclubs and discos are available, and at the same time mosques are open. The thing is that pupils get confused about which way to follow, the good or the bad. From the Islamic viewpoint pupils see things in their lives going wrong and I.R.E. study tries to correct what is wrong. Perhaps the problem of our Arab Muslim society is that even if we teach pupils about the reality of Islam as it was in the past there is not always a good model to follow. The bad behaviour and bad model is wider in society than the good and this may show that society to some extent is not on the right path.

It is easy for the learner to follow what is popular in society without examining how it ought to be from a religious point of view. At that stage the I.R.E. teacher might be out of control with his/her pupils because the ways of evil are much easier than the ways of Allah. The Holy Quran confirms the issue of education through pattern and says to Muslims that "all of you have a good pattern to follow when Allah says - 'we have indeed in the apostle of God a beautiful pattern (of conduct).'" (33:21)

The role of the I.R.E. teacher and teaching methods must finally show the balance between theoretical and practical ways of religion. Also between the warning and exhortation as well as between freedom and oppression. This is because teaching I.R.E. is not like teaching other subjects. It is not just giving religious information about different issues, it is deeper than that. Pupils cannot

be guided toward Islam just by opening a book and reading. The teacher could do this by teaching history or geography. Teachers should show by example how to pray and follow the correct way to Islam. S/he is dealing with the soul which makes it important that I.R.E. is taught in the proper way so pupils should feel it is relevant.

In the Holy Quran the meaning of the verses should be simplest to primary pupils when talking about hell fire and paradise so pupils should feel a desire to do the right thing through learning about Islam in order that they may go to paradise. A teacher is in a position to lead pupils along this correct path.

The concept of punishment in the Quran is not always easy for young pupils to understand and therefore the I.R.E. teacher must graduate his/her teaching to enable this. It is exactly like training a child to swim, one can't take them into deep water until they are able to swim.

The question is does the teacher of I.R.E. in the primary stage know the simplest way to reflect the effect of faith and worship to improve pupils' behaviour? Al Marsafi (1989) in his book Islamic Religious Education and Famous Muslim Education has mentioned the educational effect of belief on the way people behave. He clarified this effect as being able to make people tidy and well organised. He also added that belief in the hereafter, for example, made people feel more responsible for their lives and they could act positively accordingly (pp.37-53).

From his viewpoint I can see that religion and education is strongly linked, particularly in Islam, and believe that education can be taught through Islamic religion and vice versa. I.R.E. for Muslim countries is always needed and any Muslim denying this should think again about his/her beliefs, as they might not be

correct, which means all the educational theories in our schools must be examined with or against Islam and it can be taught as theory only if there is nothing against Islam, which pupils and students must know about. For example, Darwin and his theory that mankind is descended from monkeys and other matters relating to science are there for teachers of science but must still not go against teaching of I.R.E., because the state religion is Islam and people cannot have education without clear proposals to teach I.R.E.

The fourth method within Islamic religious education is teaching by practical work which is always encouraged by Islam and I.R.E.. Using this method of education for example, the followers and companions of the Prophet Muhammad learned everything from his behaviour. They watched him pray and did the same. They watched him go to Makkah for hajj (pilgrimage) and they did the same. More than that he gave them a chance to learn by motivating them. At the present time the way of teaching I.R.E. is developed by different ways. In Saudi Arabia, for instance, the Ministry of Education supplies teachers from time to time with the latest structures of teaching I.R.E. and general principles or recommendations to be followed from the primary to the secondary stage and it seems they have no right to comment on this. Therefore part of developing I.R.E. is that teachers in both countries have to be involved in a proper way.

The Educational Documentation (1988) issues a report of these recommendations and teaching methods is one of the main points. However it seems to me that teachers are not always happy with this because they have not been supplied with equipment in order for it to be used in the classroom. As a report it seems to me very good and we do have a similar system in Kuwait with perhaps more meetings and training for teachers. Nevertheless, at the end the teacher must do everything by him/herself. Even if there are similar suggestions and recommendations written elsewhere in the Gulf states, we have not seen any

of the programmes made by the Ministry of Education and submitted to the I.R.E. teachers, such as videos, slides or even pictures and designs to assist pupils to understand the subject. Bear in mind that not all teachers have enough money to buy them, for that matter.

Finally education by warning and religious exhortation seems a very religious method of teaching Islamic education supported by numbers of verses from the Holy Quran. Al Nahlawi gave an example of this method that children can learn a lot and the teacher should direct pupils to think about the stories in the Quran and the questions around it and also to think about what God has created for us.

It seems to me that religious exhortation is similar to the Quranic education system using stories, and that one can simply say that this method and other methods seem the same but under different names. For example, this method can be achieved in different ways such as advice, orders, reminders and so on.

In the conclusion of this chapter I will look at how Mujawer describes I.R.E. at the present time compared with the past. He mentions that the nature of society in the past was more religious than it is today, which means that the I.R.E. teacher has more responsibility and s/he should not under-estimate this. Ultimately he suggests that the I.R.E. teacher must consider three dimensions:

- a. cultural preparation
- b. modern and scientific preparation
- c. deeply religious presentation

(pp. 54-56)

At the end I can see that the questions I have asked the I.R.E. teacher to think about are similar to those asked by Mujawer when discussing the criteria of I.R.E., and they are also what the I.R.E. teacher should be asking him/herself

when teaching I.R.E.. Questions need to be asked about the attitudes and values held by I.R.E. teachers - do they fit with I.R.E. or not? And to what extent can it help in teaching the subject? Am I strong and respected in my society? And can this affect my pupils? Am I happy in my work? Am I qualified to do this work... (ibid. 199-202) These are just some of the questions the teacher should be asking about teaching I.R.E..

Carr identified what is meant by 'quality' and pointed out:

The concept of 'quality' has two quite different meanings. On the one hand it can be used in a purely descriptive way - what the Concise Oxford Dictionary refers to as 'characteristic trait' or 'a mental or moral attribute'. When it is used in this way we may talk of somebody possessing the quality of courage, or qualities of teacher. On the other hand, 'quality' can be used in a normative sense to indicate a 'degree of excellence' - to talk of quality in teaching is thus to identify those qualities of teaching which constitute its 'excellence'.

(Carr 1989, p.2)

Indeed, the quality of choosing the I.R.E. teacher must be included in both ways as Carr says, otherwise anybody can do this work and the result will not be satisfactory because this task is really hard and needs advance programmes from Muslim educational institutions and universities. Badawi raised this point as seeking Muslim educational bodies to do something good and says in his article:

The Muslim educational institutions place moral and religious training highest on their programme for education per se in Islamic religious education. In contrast many modern educational systems in many Muslim countries have adopted a secular outlook, neglecting in the process that most important aspect of education.

(Badawi 1979, p.109)

To conclude this chapter I should say that Saudi and Kuwaiti Ministries of Education have tried to develop training for I.R.E. teachers in the last 10-15 years, but this still seems to be insufficient for both countries.

CHAPTER SEVEN

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Parents and I.R.E.

Introduction

This chapter will deal with the relationship between parents and I.R.E. in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. First of all I will discuss the nature of the relationship between parents and I.R.E. and its benefit, then what parents ought to know about the Islamic perspective in relation to children, family and society. This chapter will also deal with parents' duties towards their children, religiously and educationally.

Section B will focus on the effectiveness of parents and teachers upon the children, and a number of questions I want to address to make the subject clear to the reader. It will also examine the differences between the two cases, for instance can we in the region develop I.R.E. through parents? and ask how to achieve effective participation from parents towards I.R.E. Finally I will ask what kind of parents this study is looking for to develop I.R.E. in both countries.

Within Islamic religious education, parents play a vital role. Unlike other curriculum subjects, parents are in fact involved with I.R.E., particularly in Muslim countries, although not in a structured manner. In fact parents can assist their children at home with the basic foundations of I.R.E. as an essential job towards the development of I.R.E. if they come across reality and see how important it is to discuss and talk frankly and openly. There are so many things they want to say or write if it is really of benefit to their children. The researcher

has felt this and is sorry that some parents could not take part in the thesis' questionnaire. But there is always hope to reach the aims and objectives of this study and future studies for I.R.E. with parents.

SECTION A

The nature of the relation between parents and I.R.E.

During the 1970s the education system in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia gave little thought or consideration to parents, and they were not involved in schools except on open days or if there was a problem with their child in school. It is sad to see parents visiting school only for an educational emergency.

It does not mean that parents are not qualified to be involved, but the circumstances within the education system have not yet crystallised. The situation improved during the 1980s in terms of visiting school or attending the annual meeting, though this was not sufficient for developing education to a higher level. We in the region, I believe, need more co-operation between I.R.E. teachers and parents.

One of the purposes of this study is to examine the relationship between I.R.E. teachers in the primary stage, and parents. For instance, is it possible to develop the I.R.E. curriculum textbook with the co-operation of parents? Can the Kuwaiti and Saudi educational systems accept criticism or suggestions from parents without embarrassment?

In Chapter Three I mentioned that parents and I.R.E. teachers used to have good co-operation and that they sent their children to learn religion. The Mullah had full responsibility to deal with the children in the way he wished, and with confidence in their teaching. At that time people may have accepted the Mullah's education because he had more religious knowledge than parents in general, while the situation now is quite different, i.e. parents in many cases are qualified, expert

and hold a degree the same as a teacher or even higher. Therefore their opinions should be taken with respect for they might provide our education update from their own experience through their participation. Consequently the investigation with parents aims to compare the level of participation with I.R.E. teachers in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

What are the benefits of participation? I hope these are as follows:

1. For the teacher of I.R.E. the benefit is to follow to what extent I.R.E. affects pupils' lives at home.
2. Pupils can do better at I.R.E. in school if there is good co-operation from parents.
3. The I.R.E. textbook could be suitable, easy and complete for the children's ages if we had regular meetings with parents.
4. The I.R.E. development proposal in future will be wide and comprehensive if parental participation is well organised.
5. To have a united and settled society, home and school, it is important to work with each other.

It is obvious that education systems develop and improve if the authorities succeed in investing its programme in the proper way and decrease the disregard which often happens in spreading the money everywhere and calling it investment on education. My experience in education convinces me to say that parents must participate in many ways in developing children's education. It seems to me that not all teachers have time to read or follow the latest developments. There are some suggestions from parents which are worthwhile but this is no use if the country's Ministry of Education pays no attention. In addition, this study will discuss parents' ideas and proposals and they have been given more than 40% of the study sample to encourage and increase their contribution to I.R.E.

The question one might ask is why should we pay attention to parents? To answer this we have to see how many hours children spend in school and at home. They spend almost a third of their time in school and two thirds at home, often with parents, family and friends. In the Muslim countries traditionally children stay at home with parents from their birth until they grow up and marry. Some even stay with parents after marriage. This might seem naive but in reality there are many reasons for this fact.

First of all, it indicates how far parents are responsible religiously for their children. Secondly it shows that children have much to learn from parents, even as teenagers. Thirdly it saves them both socially and religiously from misbehaving. And it must be remembered that girls do not leave the parents' home until marriage.

The Holy Quran describes one example of parents and children :

Thy Lord hath decreed that ye worship none but Him, and that ye be kind to parents whether one or both of them attain old age in thy life.

(17:23)

The talk about parents and children in Islamic religious education will go on for a long time. I will make brief comments to emphasise the importance of I.R.E. for children.

Parents from the Islamic perspective

Islamic religion deals with parents and children from a very early stage, even before marriage, and also before childhood, i.e. Islamic traditions and

commitment is to choose a suitable religious woman to marry, as a first step. A woman must lead children and educate them in the ways of religion, and be sincere. Klein (1985) in The Religion of Islam clarifies this point in the selection of a wife. The Muslim is advised to look for the following qualifications in her: (1) piety (2) a good character (3) beauty (4) a small dowry (5) power to bear children and so on (pp. 184-185)

This first step shows that parents have to choose appropriately and be ready to apply Islam in the marriage. The second stage is when women are pregnant. She has no right to have an abortion in Islam, or to get rid of the baby in any way, because the baby is a gift from God as the Holy Quran says:

wealth and sons are allurements of the life of this world: but the things that endure, good deeds, are best in the sight of thy Lord. As rewards and best as [the foundation for] hopes.

(18:46)

Islamic religion gives the baby full rights before birth when still in its mother's womb. Parents and others have to appreciate this.

The third point is there is certain advice for parents to follow when they have a baby.

Alwan, (1981), Children's Education in Islam describes the ideal marriage in relation to education. One of the aims of marriage within Islam is to produce children, and the parents have to follow the procedures and rituals in Islam following the birth of a baby, e.g. to choose a good name for the child; to sacrifice two sheep for a boy and one for a girl; to say "God is most great... I testify that there is no God but God... I testify that Muhammad is the apostle of God... Come to prayer... Come to prosperity..." in the baby's ear - what is called 'Adhan'. This means repeating the name of Allah in different ways (these are

usually the first words a baby hears following its birth) so as to show that Islam has been given attention from the beginning of their lives.

In addition, Alwan indicates that faith, moral and physical education, is the responsibility of teachers and parents. He points out:

This faith education which has been discussed in detail in this book is the way in which educationalists and experts in the west seek to liberate their country from crime.

(Alwan 1981, p.161)

On moral education, he says:

We mean by moral education a group of principles and good behaviour with emotions of which a child should be aware and fulfil to make it a habit from an early age right through into adulthood.

(ibid., p.196)

I have made the previous points very briefly and in Islamic Studies more details seem inappropriate within this study. In fact, Alwan has indeed succeeded in describing children's education in Islam in both volumes of his book which is interesting for many Muslims to read and learn about their duties towards their children. This obviously shows that Islamic religion is implemented in every single part of life, and even in life after death. Of course not every Muslim has a chance to learn all these, and perhaps some of them do not care to follow or even understand what the Islamic religion has to offer them for their children. Some parents believe in western-style education for children as the best to follow. To some extent I do not agree with them, or with anyone thinking that religion should remain in the mosques only for worship and that it has nothing to do with education. I do not blame these people because the way they have studied religion does not show them a full picture about the concept of religion, or they might not read about religion and its relation to different parts of life.

However, I strongly criticise those highly qualified parents who have been educated in Western countries and think they have learned everything, who think they are better than other people because they hold high degrees compared with others. When you question them about the conditions for prayer, for example, they do not really know. This is a shame, and therefore this study strongly recommends that I.R.E. must remain a compulsory subject in Kuwait University and all colleges and polytechnics. If parents have not learned these simple things about educating their children and treating them in the Islamic way, how can they face the challenges which arise from educational theories, the media and so on?

An example of this is Al Hindi (1990), The Status of Childhood in Islamic education. In the past few decades there have been many conferences and seminars held regarding children's duties. In 1959 the United Nations clarified children's rights. They included more than 48 countries. Now what concerns me is that one of the researchers in Islamic education studied the UN proposals and says that all that was written for children's rights, and more, already exists in Islamic religions education. He agreed to gather all the concerns about children's rights and gather them together and publish them for all nations to know that Islamic civilisation has approved of this for more than fourteen centuries. The fact is that Islamic religious education has covered children's rights more than other cultures or religions because the Muslim has to know and understand that God knows His creatures more than they know themselves. The book also discusses the concept of motherhood and childhood rights in Islam:

1. Childhood right to a mother and father.
2. Childhood right to kinship to their father.
3. Childhood right to be a life.
4. Childhood right to comprehensive care.
5. Childhood right to a living.
6. Childhood right to justice, equality and freedom.

(ibid., pp.73-84)

Another stage of Islamic religious education for parents shows how babies have to be given such care when mothers breast-feed; it is a biological and religious matter and mothers are recommended to suckle for two years for those who want to complete the course. The Holy Quran confirms this and says:

The mothers shall give suck to their offspring for two whole years
if father desires to complete the term.

(2:233)

The previous description and the following clarifies that I.R.E. is a continuing process and grows with the child's age, and I.R.E. is never lost at any stage in the Muslim's life, even after death. In addition, it seems to me that parents have to follow and watch their children from age three to seven because they learn in an indirect way. By this I mean they perform mainly within the family and copy everything they see. However, I would criticise parents who force their children or punish them, or even frighten them with hell fire at this age because for them it is like a dream. They do not fully understand what religion means yet. Parents must be very careful when teaching religion to children. They should consult educationalists in the matter or the result might be negative.

Parents' duties towards their children

In his book Prophetic Education Curriculum for a Child (1990) Suwaid has nine chapters describing a childhood education in Islamic religion with many examples and quotations from the Holy Quran and Sunnah with clear ideas to help parents in their religious task. I will summarise these chapters. The first deals with faith construction, belief, love of God and the prophets, the second with worship construction, i.e. prayer, fasting, visiting mosque (note that I have not given examples on the concepts because there were so many in Chapter Four) and the third with social constructions.

The following points illustrate what I.R.E. advice was given to parents to help them deal with their children, i.e. parents are recommended to join their children - boys with men, girls with women - in their informal meetings, social gatherings, to learn from older people how to behave. They are also to encourage their children to shake hands and say 'Peace be with you, How are you?' to others. They are also to encourage visiting ill friends and praying for them. Parents have to know which are suitable friends for the age of their children, who would help them to learn easily and quickly. I.R.E. gives children happiness within a family and with friends, and children should try to do shopping and learn from this.

Fourthly, there is moral construction, that is I.R.E. in terms of morality demanding parents teach their children the Islamic way to deal with parents as a first step. After that how to deal with older people in general. It also shows them how to deal correctly with scholars and neighbours. Parents are responsible for teaching their children small things such as when and how to apologise. They must also give instruction in the tradition of seating and talking, and know the importance of permission from parents for certain matters.

The fifth chapter deals with emotional and psychological construction. Kissing children and being kind and friendly is one of the main things. It is also important to joke and play with them as the Prophet (p.b.o.h.) did. He asked Muslims to touch the heads of orphans and said parents must also take notice of children's talk and listen to them carefully. Islam has given special care to girls and orphans, and parents should not love boys more than girls or make any major difference between them.

The sixth chapter covers physical construction. I.R.E. naturally wants children to be strong and so children are to learn swimming, shooting and horse-riding. Playing competitive sports is also a good way to make children like physical exercise, as well as play between children or with older people.

The seventh chapter deals with scientific and thought construction. Parents must help their children to recite from the Holy Quran and study simple facts from the life of the Prophet Muhammad (p.b.o.h.), and teach children to love knowledge and bring them a good teacher, or take them to school. I.R.E. is linked with the Arabic language and parents have to recognise this. The importance of the Arabic language perhaps is seen more with Muslim communities living outside Arab countries, i.e. in the USA, Europe and the UK. Pupils find difficulty in learning the Quran because their mother tongue is not Arabic. For example in Bradford in the UK, where there are a large number of Muslim schools, the Local Education Authority chief told me how difficult it is for pupils to learn Islamic religious education because of the language. Parents in Arab countries might also have a chance to teach them a foreign language, bearing in mind children's abilities so as not to overload them. It is also useful to tell children stories and provide them with books at home (pp. 80-234).

The eighth chapter covers health construction. I.R.E. also leads parents when it comes to helping them guide their children to be balanced mentally, physically and religiously. For example, parents should urge their children to clean their teeth regularly and to shower, wash, clip their nails and so on. They are also required to show them the Islamic tradition for eating and drinking, i.e. to eat in the right hand and not to eat too much, and to say the name of Allah before eating and drinking and to thank God afterwards. Parents might also explain in the same manner about sleeping to their children, i.e. to go to bed early, say the name of

God, sleep on the right side and say so and so if they feel anxious or have a bad dream.

The ninth chapter covers rectification of children's sex education. I.R.E. has given much attention to sex because it is physical and natural. Islam tries to make it easy and give alternatives for the youth before marriage, i.e. to fast and avoid mixing with women, or make relationships with them. But for children there are certain points it is necessary for parents to know and follow. For instance children should not enter their parents' room at any time without knocking on the door. Boys and girls are not to sleep together in the same bed. Children must be kept away from the influence of sex, especially through the media. Also co-education is to be avoided. Chapter 24 in the Holy Quran (Al Nur) focuses on this matter and should be studied. Parents must also discuss sex matters with their children without embarrassment, and try to answer their questions and show them how a Muslim should act. It is highly recommended for young people to marry as early as possible (ibid., pp.245-270).

These nine elements are really demanded for parents to study deeply and to understand why and how I.R.E. is involved in every part of our lives. Of course, Islamic religious education proposes many ideas to create a good generation and to protect Muslim society from the changes which might lead to moral collapse.

There are many warnings from authors and experts in Muslim countries causing parents to rethink their responsibilities, and reminding them that their duties are not easy for implementing I.R.E. into their children's lives. Al Nashmi has discussed this and addressed every important point about parental resignation of their responsibilities because of the media. I strongly agree with him and also say that parents in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia have shown their concern about the

media, particularly in Kuwait. The dangers of the media in the Gulf region I call "the media invasion", and it comes from different sources.

Some parents are busy, but I would ask them to stop allowing their children to spend too much time in front of the television. Al Shantot in The role of home in education of a Muslim child (1989) has addressed the problem of television in the Muslim house and indicates that children from the age of two start watching television a number of hours a day. He also pointed out the reasons why there is an opinion that says we should avoid having a television at home, and these are:

1. wasting time and life
2. encouraging the mixing of the sexes
3. assisting pupils to be weak in their studies
4. weakening the family unity
5. making the forbidden probable and easy
6. aggrandizement of sport

(pp. 114-117)

At the same time he discusses the two views and agrees there are some good programmes on television which can help people gain knowledge. However, television is like any other machine in our lives, it has its advantages and its disadvantages and parents have to weigh these up before allowing their children to watch it. What he says is true, but what is coming from the media invasion is much more than this. For the Gulf states there are new broadcasting stations, e.g. M.B.C. from London, as well as many other foreign channels, and anyone having a television or satellite receiver at home will find it affecting the children sooner or later, and to some extent destroying their behaviour, because of the freedom they have to present whatever they like.

SECTION B

Effective participation between I.R.E. and parents in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia

What are the things that effect I.R.E. in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia?

This question is very important for developing I.R.E., because it is not working alone, but is surrounded by the influences of human society. Al Wai, in Islamic Civilisation compared with Western Civilization (1988), in Part One of his doctoral thesis in the Arabic language discusses the concept of the culture of Islam, the first element of which is faith. The second element is a complicated social system which applies to all mankind in Islam and has the following points:

- a. Equality for all people, men and women, black and white.
- b. Absolute justice without discrimination to nationality, e.g. justice between poor people and wealthy people; justice by punishing criminals.
- c. The freedom to be Muslim or not is the responsibility of each person, freedom of thought and speech, even freedom to criticise because God has sent a clear message to all mankind. Al Wai says:

A person has the freedom to do anything, firstly by controlling his or herself from forbidden things. Secondly a person's own freedom should be reflected on other people in society. So freedom in Islam depends on two dimensions - personally and socially by doing good things for yourself and others.

(Al Wai 1988, pp.211-236)

- e. Co-operation and unity within Muslim society.
- f. Moralities and ideals are important in the Islamic system.

He gives a definition of curriculum as "a clear path". This clear path comes from God through the Quran and Sunnah and is "divine". He points out that:

The purpose of Islamic 'Shariah' as it is known to Muslims has as its objective, through the curriculum, to achieve and preserve five things -

- a. preserve religion
 - b. preserve the psyche
 - c. preserve the mind
 - d. preserve honour
 - e. preserve money
-
- a. Islamic 'Shariah' wanted to preserve religion because religion organises people's lives. Thus no one should change the Islamic religion or add any legislation or law to the Holy Quran and "Sunnah".
 - b. Islam tries to preserve the psyche by, for instance, avoiding murder.
 - c. Islam forbids alcoholic drink and drugs because they affect and damage the mind and thoughts of people.
 - d. Islam preserves honour by discouraging adultery.
 - e. Finally, Islam preserves money by banning looting, cheating, stealing etc.

All these help keep people safe.

(ibid. p.273)

He discusses the reasons why some Muslims have neglected Islam. He uses many sources to find out the reasons for this and the effects. He makes the following points, amongst others, and tries to find an answer to the previous question:

1. abandoning the legislation and tenets of the Holy Quran
2. giving up the Prophet's tradition
3. losing the strong spirit
4. giving importance to minor issues instead of major ones
5. weakness in morality and behaviour
6. greater than normal love of life
7. laying down Islam in social and political life
8. separation of religion and science
9. depravity of rich people
10. depravity resulting from modern video, audio and other media
11. wasting money
12. following much of the western system
13. unclear philosophy in education
14. superficiality in thinking

(ibid. p.788-791)

These and other problems directly affect Islamic religious education in the Gulf region generally and Kuwait especially because what pupils learn in education they lose through being affected by the media without parents' control which causes them to treat social life carelessly instead of following the principles of Islam.

He seems to diagnose the weak points in all Muslim countries and people, whatever their position. I would say that no-one can deny this and if parents and I.R.E. teachers fully understand their task as members of society, this breakdown of Islamic application might not happen. This study strongly agrees with what he says and feels that most of what he says is true. Many people talk about it but have different reactions. Some know and carry on their work and take no positive action. Others know and think it is not their business to find a solution for every problem in society. But there are people who are concerned and try to think and examine and analyse what is going on.

Who is in charge? Where do the solutions come from? One of these people who is very concerned is me as researcher, and I say with confidence that teachers of I.R.E., parents and others will benefit from this study because it tries to put the problems of I.R.E. between parents and teachers under the microscope in order to explore, analyse and deal with the problem, as well as suggest a solution.

In Figure 4 I will attempt to analyse the effective participation between I.R.E. teachers and parents as well as children. For me these three working together will affect a change. To make this clear to the reader let us look closely at Figure 4 to show the two groups.

Group A includes parents and teachers of I.R.E. as two faces of one coin (I.R.E.) Group B is the children. Examining the first group will give some indication by which I mean if one assumes that parents and teachers are close at the levels of understanding, capabilities and level of education, then the effect might be strong enough to reach the children through the school-home line. At the same time, if parents and I.R.E. have the same attitude towards religion and culture this means they are getting close together through this connection to affect children or pupils. The last two points in Box A are co-operation and participation. These two aspects mean working together fully. I believe that if these conditions or points in Box A are accepted by both teachers of I.R.E. and parents then Kuwaiti or Saudi society will change to a better position in I.R.E. Before discussing this let us see Box B and its relation to Box A.

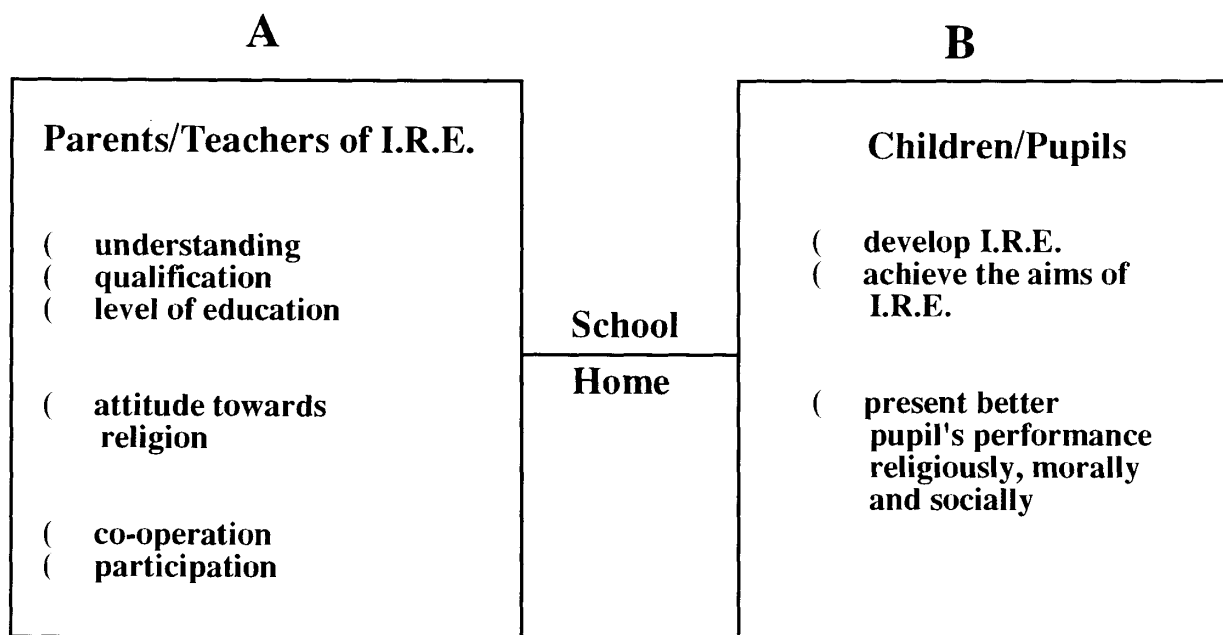


Figure 4: Effective participation between I.R.E. and parents

In Box B is the assumed outcome of Box A, which means achieving three major points in this study, i.e. developing I.R.E., achieving the aims of I.R.E. and presenting better pupil performance religiously, morally and socially. No doubt this study aims to develop I.R.E. in the region. This seems difficult to work for one side - teachers - but there should be support from the other side -parents - because each side seems to me might integrate in the way of teaching or educating pupils and children at home. As a result there has to be clear proposals for how to work together.

It has been pointed out:

Educating and involving parents is much more complex than giving directives. It requires that interactions go in both directions, with school or centre learning from the parent as well as the parent gaining from it.

(Berger 1981, p.17)

In Kuwait and Saudi Arabia there is a possibility to develop this interaction more in the future because the money is available from the authorities and they can ask parents seriously to give their suggestions and recommendations much more than they did before. In addition to this, under the supervision of the Ministry of Education they can have more than annual meetings on this matter. I will suggest a number of things to be clear and to answer the previous questions in this chapter, by which I mean that parents' effect towards their children differ from family to family.

For some, parents understanding is the first point. This understanding of the subject of religion is, of course, very helpful. Parents who understand their duties as Muslims will find it easy to reflect this back to their children even before those children go to school. For instance, some parents will teach their children the first chapter of the Holy Quran as well as the basic principles of Islamic

religion. So pupils come to school with varying degrees of religious education, depending on their family influences.

In my opinion, as a teacher of children in the primary stage a long time ago, a child's background is very helpful to their understanding the subject and cooperating with teachers. This also means that pupils with poor backgrounds need more attention in the classroom.

At the same time, parents' qualifications affect children in many ways with their learning of I.R.E. I will address this in both Kuwait and Saudi Arabia in order to help the reader follow the analysis of this study and measure to what extent parents can assist with teaching I.R.E. at home. As I have said, the home conditions can either help or hinder the teacher in his/her task. Parents who are undergraduate, graduate or highly qualified in general might help their children more to follow the I.R.E. textbook, or they may not and I think that no one can guarantee this, as Shalaby said before, because things have changed rapidly. So teaching of I.R.E. works from two ways - through parents and teachers. Any weakness from either side can reflect on the learning process.

Bryans (1989) in his article addressing parental involvement in primary schools, confirms that success or failure is related to school-home relations. The article then raises an important question which is:

What assumptions can be made about the value of parental involvement in children's primary education? The first thing is probably that more parents know about their children's school and the process of education there. Secondly, parental involvement will increase with greater equality of opportunity. Third, parental involvement could contribute more to the curriculum of school. There is also an assumption that parental involvement can give more access to the school in times of trouble.

(pp. 34-36)

The assumption he deals with seems to me adequate in the developing of I.R.E. which is much needed in the region. But it is very general involvement of parents towards their children. This leads me to say that the more involvement parents have in school, the better children's education will be.

Having said that, teachers' understanding of their duties, the objectives of I.R.E. and their qualifications for teaching I.R.E. as well as their own level of education would also have a direct effect upon children at home and pupils at school. The three elements can help to develop I.R.E. in an orderly process. My view is reaching a development of I.R.E. must pass through parents and I.R.E. teachers because they cannot handle this very difficult subject alone. For example, teaching prayer at school will not work if there is no encouragement at home. Also achieving the aims of I.R.E. will not take place comprehensively. Bryans confirms this at the end of his article and points out:

The issue is that if the curriculum aims and objectives have not been explained or discussed with parents, progress will not be understood by parents either. Most records of achievement and/or profiles of children during their primary years have a number of aims. These include:

1. To provide teachers with information about the effectiveness of their own teaching.
2. To involve parents in their children's learning.
3. To help identify pupils' strengths and weaknesses.

(ibid. p.44)

To go back to the question at the beginning of this chapter: "Can we in the region develop I.R.E. through parents?" the answer could be yes or no. In Figure 4 I have mentioned that it is necessary to know parents' attitudes towards religion and culture to measure what they can do. If parents have no desire for I.R.E. or that they feel unhappy with I.R.E. for any reason, their participation will be weak. In some cases one might see that parents have no desire to be involved in developing I.R.E. because they are busy and have no time to think about it. Sometimes they do not know how to express their views. In this study I strongly

support helping those kinds of parents and feel we should try to assist them to develop I.R.E. gradually. I do not blame them if they have not been asked or invited to meetings to develop I.R.E. Parents normally leave this matter to the Ministry of Education, feeling it is their business.

However, it seems to me that after the Gulf war Kuwaiti and Saudi parents feel more responsible towards their children and they have seen them affected during the war. This has brought them closer to religion, praying in mosques and so on. People feel the lack of religion more than at any time, and that is the nature of their difficulty.

Al Damkhi, in Invasion : Saddam Hussain's reign of terror in Kuwait (1992) confirms the role of mosques and points out that they were the focus for resistance. Residents of neighbourhoods congregated at mosques under cover of their religious observances, but also would share news and offer mutual aid. The mosques were also safe havens in which to distribute money. The sense of community generated in the mosques brought Kuwaitis closer together and made them even more determined to resist Saddam Hussain's imperial ambitions (p.102).

As a matter of fact, parents' attitudes towards religion will directly affect the I.R.E. development process. Parents' understanding and appreciation of the role of I.R.E. will speed up reaching the aims of I.R.E. and improve its curriculum. I think that within 5-10 years parents will act more in schools because, naturally, they will have been affected around the world and the number of qualified people will increase in the two countries.

Perhaps the Islamic associations will put more pressure on the authorities to act towards Islam in the education curriculum so the interaction between schools

and parents will be stronger. One reason for this analysis is the latest development in Saudi Arabia towards participation in the government. At the same time Kuwaiti society should have more chance for participation in government after the reopening of the Assembly by October 1992.

Figure 4 shows how co-operation and participation between teachers of I.R.E. and parents will assist children to have good performance religiously, morally and socially. Also to achieve effective participation from parents towards I.R.E. first of all we must be sure that parents understand the importance of I.R.E. in society and reflect this to their children. Even parents who have a poor education can still help their children morally and give them lessons from the past, or religious stories, and show them a clear way to follow. It is not surprising to say that grandparents' education in regard to I.R.E. in many cases is more effective than qualified parents'. The indication of this could be seen clearly in both Kuwait and Saudi Arabia where those who run society, the decision makers, scholars and those responsible in the kuttabs see that parents and grandparents have an effect on the Islamic religious education of children in spite of many parents having no qualifications except religious studies from the kuttab.

Secondly, parents can help children in the line of the I.R.E. curriculum, reading the Holy Quran and perhaps teach them lessons they do not understand. Besides this parents can evaluate to what extent their children like I.R.E., to see the development of their interest with or without the subject and the teacher.

Thirdly, co-operation from parents to teachers of I.R.E. could be done in different styles, by which I mean that when children are bored with teaching methods or I.R.E. classes, that indicates that something is wrong and needs to be examined. To make pupils happy both home and school have to find out the level of effect upon children's daily lives.

Finally, parents' participation in I.R.E. is needed to enable them to know what is going on; what are the problems from both sides, viz. home and school; do they have time to listen to each other and co-operate accordingly? These and many other questions need to be examined by researchers. What kind of parent is this study looking for? I have asked this question and know that the answer is not easy. No one can control parents' time with their children or be involved in their lifestyle. They have to be free to do whatever they want, depending on their belief and faith. The only possibility this study suggests is to open the door for parents to speak out or to think about what they can do to improve their children's education to a satisfactory level, and to the level of the aims of I.R.E. To make parents think means to keep their minds alive and feel the subject. In other words to draw their attention to the fact that they as father or mother have half the responsibility and the school has the other half. Do not ignore this and remember that in the name of religion, or by law, parents are in charge in case of any event or accident happening to their children. In my view it is equally important for parents to care as much about their children's minds and soul.

Traditionally in the Gulf region, if children caused problems people did not blame school, they blamed parents first. They would ask "Where are they?" "Why did they leave a child to do so and so?" "Why did they not educate their child better?" It brings shame and embarrassment because they give no care to their children. Islam has made this subject clear to parents and shown them what to do to deal with children.

This study aims to remind parents of their duties and support them. Also to provide them with advice and experience they might not have known about before. Parents may feed children's stomachs and fill their pockets with money but they often have no thought whatsoever for their behaviour or religion. This

study is very concerned about parents in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia who give children money without knowledge or guidance or even any enquiry as to what children will spend it on. It is mostly rich families whose lives are more westernised who act in this way. They have what we in the region call a "free life" which means religion is the last thing on their agenda. No matter how successful they may be they often fail in their social and religious lives. It happens everywhere in the Gulf region and I personally feel sad about it. I know that they try to use money to cover what they fail to achieve in normal life. I feel it is a tragedy to see this phenomenon happening with young boys in Kuwait who become more sexually explicit in their speech or dress.

Kuwait television a few years ago had an interview with some of these young boys and unfortunately they seemed proud to show themselves with make-up. One of them was in my first year, secondary stage class in 1986. I examined his case religiously and socially and understand clearly the reasons behind his problems, which were his parents. I wish I could examine more cases and interview them. Hopefully in the future I will keep in touch with new cases and study the situation.

PART III

CHAPTER EIGHT

CHAPTER EIGHT

Data Analysis and Discussion

Introduction

This chapter will discuss in detail the data of the study produced by both tools, questionnaire and interviews. First of all I will summarise the research tools I used in Kuwait and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in regard to the educational situation and study progress. Secondly I will show the questionnaire's validity and reliability as it relates to both teachers and parents.

Thirdly in this chapter I will analyse the study by presenting tables of the data for the parents' and teachers' questionnaires, with full statistics of the frequencies, means, and the levels of significance or probability for each item of the whole study fields. The T-test and standard deviations will be clarified in more detail (see Appendix 7). Finally I will discuss and analyse the data of parents, followed by the interviews with the inspectors.

Section B will present the analysis and discussion of teachers' responses and will be followed by the inspectors' interviews. In the conclusion of Chapter Eight there will be a comparative view between the major previous studies of the literature review and this study in order to examine the agreements and disagreements towards the development of I.R.E. in regard to the interview data and the review of literature.

The study's progress in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia

Kuwait:

A summary of the educational situation in Kuwait during the period of the research shows that it is nearly normal. This means schools have re-opened after the Gulf War and the university is running its courses, though with a lack of computers and some other equipment. Perhaps also there is a shortage of teachers and other staff. Of course there are many schools which are still closed in order for them to be rebuilt and cleared.

32 primary schools for boys and girls were chosen at random. The number of samples distributed was 175 questionnaires for teachers and 125 for parents, and the feedback was 147 from teachers and 117 from parents. At the same time I met ten supervisors of I.R.E. but seven are dealing with the primary stage of education. This may seem a small number, but these people have been involved in editing and publishing the I.R.E. textbook for a long time and also there is a shortage of inspectors. The College of Education, Kuwait University, and the Ministry have assisted the researcher and facilitated his mission. Finally, the study contained two different educational centres, i.e. Hawally and the capital (similar to British local education authorities), focussing on Kuwait City as a capital.

Saudi Arabia:

Referring to the letter of agreement from the Education Secretary in the Ministry of Education in Riyadh I started my mission in the education situation in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. I discussed the questionnaires and interviews from within the educational research centre. I found people helpful in facilitating my work and chose schools at random in different educational areas in Riyadh. As a result of this I met the Chief Deputy of the Educational Headquarters for Girls to

gain agreement to undertake distribution of the questionnaire to both girls' schools and to parents. They were very keen and helpful to me as I had to complete the task within a limited time. The questionnaire was revised by the Educational Research Centre and the revisions were acceptable. The number of samples was 175 questionnaires for teachers and 125 for parents, and the feedback is 153 from teachers and 83 from parents.

Although I met ten supervisors and inspectors dealing with I.R.E. in the primary stage, I found that some of them showed hesitation in answering all the questions in full detail for some reasons, in spite of their stated willingness to do so, and seven of them agreed to be interviewed. This was because they are not fully involved in developing I.R.E. or in re-writing the textbook. Also because the system in Saudi Arabia is different from in Kuwait. However the people in Saudi Arabia did try their best to assist me in my task and I appreciated what they could do. Finally, the study contained two different educational centres, i.e. the North and the Middle, focussing on Riyadh City as a capital.

Because Saudi Arabia has a separate education system from the Ministry of Education down to primary stage, the researcher took this into consideration as part of the I.R.E. education system and was interested to undertake this comparative study in the Gulf States. I received a great welcome from colleagues and friends, particularly academic people, and above all I am grateful for the opportunity to undertake this study from the UK. This has given me an opportunity to study two Islamic states and modify my original view.

Statistical treatment for results

The researcher has chosen the T-test as an appropriate test for analysing the data after consultation with the statistics department in Kuwait Ministry of Education and the University of Sheffield. The reason for choosing the T-test is to show the responses of the two groups of Kuwaiti and Saudi parents and teachers and to compare each other in their frequencies, means, and levels of significance. Lewis pointed out:

We have seen that when only two groups are involved, the significance of the difference between their means can be evaluated via that ratio.

(1973, p.141)

A. Validity and objectivity of the questionnaire

Two questions were constructed for investigating the opinion of teachers and parents, the first tool for teachers contains 30 questions and the second tool for parents contains 18 questions.

Both tools presented were evaluated and revised by experts in the field of curriculum teaching methods and evaluation measurement in Sheffield, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. The following items of the tools were analysed:

1. clearness of the items of the questionnaire;
2. suitability of the items of the questionnaire study sample;
3. comprehensive items for study fields;
4. precise items to measure the subject accordingly.

The teams' opinions were taken into account in changing some of the items on the questionnaires.

B. Reliability of the questionnaire

Testing study tools' reliability was conducted by the "spss" programme in a split half test. A sample of 30 teachers and parents applied the questionnaires and the reliability coefficient calculated between each question and the total items of the questionnaire. Odd question squares and even question squares were calculated with a reliability coefficient between two halves (see Appendix No. 7).

SECTION A

Analysis of Parents' Responses

Parents' responses were divided into four fields. Each field contains a number of items gathered together in order to give general responses to one idea or topic.

The four fields of the parents' questionnaires are:-

1. I.R.E. and society
2. Children and the importance of I.R.E.
3. Parents' co-operation with the I.R.E. teacher
4. I.R.E. curriculum for the primary stage of education

The data analysis of the study sample "parents' responses" have shown statistically what parents' responses are to I.R.E. in the four fields. In this section I will discuss the results in four tables and examine the reasons behind them; I will also focus on what parents say in their questionnaire comments. Then I will try to match the inspectors' interviews with parents' results to see to what extent the study can achieve development of I.R.E within the comparative views between Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

Section A contains four fields which reflect the general responses of the parents to I.R.E. Results mentioned in Table One show that parents support the I.R.E. role in society, regarding a total of the the items responses (mean of 3.98) and this is a high response. Also Table Two shows a high response to the field of "Children and the importance of I.R.E." and this reflects that children feel the importance of I.R.E. in their lives. The second table is higher than the first one (mean of 4.13) and Table Three is the highest in comparison with other fields.

This reveals the co-operation of parents with the I.R.E. teachers (mean of 4.46) so this result might give a sign that co-operation between parents and I.R.E. teacher is successful, so why not reorganise it officially and gain better education for children? Table Four is mainly similar to Table One and it has a mean of 3.99 which is a high response. This testifies that the I.R.E. curriculum for the primary stage is reasonable.

ITEM	Frequency						Total		Sex						Nationality						Qualifications													
	strongly agree		undecided		disagree		strongly disagree		mean	Std. Dev.	M		F		T		S		Kuwaiti		Saudi		T		S		High		Intermediate		T		S	
	agree	disagree	strongly agree	strongly disagree	mean	Std. Dev.	mean	std. dev.			mean	std. dev.	mean	std. dev.	mean	std. dev.	mean	std. dev.	mean	std. dev.	mean	std. dev.	mean	std. dev.	mean	std. dev.	mean	std. dev.	mean	std. dev.	mean	std. dev.	mean	std. dev.
	strongly agree	disagree	strongly agree	strongly disagree	mean	Std. Dev.	mean	Std. Dev.	mean	std. dev.	mean	std. dev.	mean	std. dev.	mean	std. dev.	mean	std. dev.	mean	std. dev.	mean	std. dev.	mean	std. dev.	mean	std. dev.	mean	std. dev.	mean	std. dev.	mean	std. dev.		
Q1 IRE teaching is encouraged	99	74	5	15	5	4.25	1.00	4.32	0.99	4.16	1.00	1.18	0.23	4.05	1.08	4.53	0.79	3.41	0.001	4.21	0.95	4.06	1.12	0.6	0.55									
Percentage	49.5	37.4	2.5	7.6	2.5																													
Q13 IRE teacher is qualified	49	78	38	21	11	3.68	1.13	3.63	1.14	3.73	1.11	0.58	0.56	3.59	1.18	3.79	1.05	0.24	0.22	3.52	0.98	3.96	1.18	0.64	0.53									
Percentage	24.9	39.6	19.3	10.7	5.6																													
Q14 The importance of IRE for future generations	179	19	0	0	0	4.9	0.3	4.91	0.29	4.9	0.30	0.27	0.79	4.86	0.35	4.96	0.19	2.45	0.01	4.93	0.26	4.9	0.3	0.38	0.7									
Percentage	90.4	9.6	0	0	0																													
Q15 IRE play an important role in society's progress	160	37	0	1	0	4.8	0.44	4.81	0.45	4.77	0.42	0.72	0.47	4.7	0.52	4.94	0.24	4.0	0.001	4.82	0.39	4.83	0.37	0.17	0.87									
Percentage	80.0	18.5	0	0.5	0																													
Q18 IRE effects upon children's daily lives	80	86	10	14	7	4.11	1.03	4.04	1.07	4.2	0.98	1.08	0.28	3.98	1.08	4.28	0.93	2.0	0.05	3.96	0.92	4.09	1.01	0.6	0.55									
Percentage	40.6	43.7	5.1	7.1	3.6																													
Total	437	347	79	84	39	3.98	0.81	4.01	0.51	3.72	0.61	0.07	0.94	4.23	0.51	4.53	0.41	3.77	0.001	4.28	0.46	4.24	0.51	0.39	0.7									
Percentage	44	35	8	8.5	3.9																													

Parents

IRE and Society

Table No. 1

Table One shows the response of parents to Field One, "I.R.E. and society", in five items. Parents in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia support and encourage teaching I.R.E. in society and feel that teachers are qualified to do their job. Also, Table One shows that parents understand the importance of I.R.E. for the future generation while at the same time they believe that I.R.E. plays an important role in society's progress. Added to this is the effect that I.R.E. has on children's daily lives. The result indicates that 44% strongly agree and 35% agree with the current role of I.R.E. in society.

Therefore analysis of these high responses shows that there is agreement for the five items in the field which indicates a high response and parents' acceptance of I.R.E.'s role in society. In addition to this the result represents that Saudi parents are more appreciative of the role of I.R.E. in society than Kuwaiti parents, and there is a statistically significant difference between the two groups.

In my view the reason for this result is because Saudi society applied part of Islamic Sharia (law) in the last few decades, and the people of Saudi Arabia are affected by this and so part of the Islamic religion is reflected in their social and educational life. Besides this, every Muslim knows that many people in Saudi Arabia visit the holy cities of Makkah and Medinah regularly, as all Muslims throughout the world do. Therefore, people look to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to respect the Islamic religion and to deal with it accordingly.

Many people I have met over the last few years feel that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia must remain under Islamic Sharia for ever and they should make the education system very close to Islam. To rectify and esteem the teaching of Islam and I.R.E. properly, I give one example of this in the present Saudi I.R.E. curriculum called "religious sciences", which means teaching Islam in more than

one subject with different stages. Let us see whether or not I.R.E. is working enough in society by searching through the total response of Field One.

The first item "I.R.E. teaching is encouraged" reflects that 49.5% of parents strongly agree and 37.4% agree (mean of 4.25). This is a very high response and it is significantly different between Kuwaiti and Saudi parents. Therefore Kuwaiti society clearly did encourage teaching I.R.E. in the primary stage, though perhaps not as much as Saudi society, and this means that the Ministry of Education in Kuwait has to carry out the same as the Saudi Ministry in encouraging teaching of I.R.E., in order to achieve a good status of the role of I.R.E. in society.

With the second item, "I.R.E. teacher is qualified", 24.9% strongly agree and 39.6% agree (mean of 3.68). This is a high response and there is no statistical variable effect on the response which is that all parents, Kuwaiti and Saudi, male and female, high and intermediate qualified, are agreed that the I.R.E. teacher is qualified. However, there are 10.7% of parents who disagree and 5.6% strongly disagree, and this indication ought to be examined to see why these parents are not satisfied, in order to improve teacher performance and provide an appropriate teacher training programme in both countries.

The following are quotations from parents' comments and remarks which they have written on the questionnaires to reveal at what level they evaluate I.R.E. teachers in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. I will refer to Kuwait as 'K' and Saudi as 'S'.

It is necessary for I.R.E. teachers to be more specific in the subject. (K.43).

Another group of parents wishes

that I.R.E. teacher were well qualified to make pupils like the subject. (K. 108, 42, 111, 7 and others).

All questioned the qualifications of I.R.E. teachers and asked for more training. On the other side, one parent pointed out:

Teaching any subject is to fulfil its principles and this could not be successful within the educational process if there is no agreement between home and school.

if the I.R.E. teacher is not qualified comprehensively the I.R.E. will never work (S.134).

Another believes that

parents have to be encouraged to apply Islamic Sharia (S.198)

and one said ,

To prepare I.R.E. teachers to be able to answer pupils' questions clearly, to help them to think, in God's gifts (S.189).

These parents' remarks perhaps did not reflect their views in full because parents need more time to talk or write frankly.

The third item was "the importance of I.R.E. for future generations". Data expresses that 90.4% parents strongly agree and 9.6% agree on the importance of I.R.E. for future generations and there is no one who disagrees. This result shows that parents agree up to 100% to reinforce the importance of I.R.E. for their children in the future and this view is very useful. However, Saudi parents see the importance of I.R.E. for future generations more than Kuwaiti parents and the differences are significant.

I believe that parents in Saudi Arabia care more that their children follow Islamic religious education because it is a better way to educate children morally. There are some Saudi parents who confirm that future generations are linked with I.R.E. and one of them says,

Dear researcher, I.R.E. is suitable for every time, everywhere, it includes good morality and justice legislation in all our life, either small or big. There is no need to add to it or develop it, as it has already developed since it came with the Prophet Muhammad. It needs to be applied to education in the Muslim generation if we

want to be proud of our nation ... There is no doubt that I.R.E. has a positive influence in educating children if there is sincere and careful teacher toward religion (S.165).

This might mean that Saudi parents are satisfied with the level of I.R.E. to be implemented in their lives. On the other side, Kuwaiti parents expressed their views to reach better I.R.E. in society. One suggests that

it is likely if there is a link between rebuilding the country and I.R.E. and so on.

This subject is a Dean of a college of education, who wrote to me personally that

choosing your topic is really needed nowadays because it is a good model to integrate religion with academic needs (K.52).

Obviously this type of parent understands what is going on and the best way to deal with it is through religion. In a very short statement he expresses his view

I hope that state authorities, i.e. information + education + private institutions, co-operate in distributing I.R.E. among our children (K.30).

This short statement also agrees with what this study stands for. At the same time it makes me confident that I.R.E. can really change society for the better.

The fourth item result shows that parents believe I.R.E. plays an important role in society's progress and 80% parents strongly agree and 18.5% agreed and this is a very high response. Saudi parents' response is however higher than Kuwaiti parents' response. This result is significant. So Saudi parents seem to feel the importance of I.R.E. more than Kuwaiti parents. To confirm this, Kuwaiti parents I have met in many cases suggest to me why not follow Saudi I.R.E.? One says,

I suggest that teaching I.R.E. subject should be the same as the Saudi I.R.E. completely (K.56).

Also another parent understands the role of I.R.E. in society's progress and asks

if I.R.E. can take pupils twice a month to visit different places to look at things around us, to look after the orphans and poor and so on (K.94).

All these suggestions, as well as remarks from parents to their children, will assist the Islamic society to take place through I.R.E.

There are many parents who prefer Saudi I.R.E. to Kuwaiti and said,

I like the I.R.E. curriculum in the Saudi Schools, I wish Kuwait applied the same

Please apply the Saudi I.R.E. curriculum. (K.11, 96 and others).

The reason why Kuwaiti parents admire the Saudi I.R.E. curriculum, as I understand it, is that during the occupation of Kuwait by Iraq, more than one hundred thousand families escaped to Saudi Arabia and lived there. Their children, of course, joined the Saudi children in school and found that I.R.E. is totally different than in Kuwait, and some people would like to copy or borrow what they have experienced in Saudi Arabia. Also they have seen the effect of the role of I.R.E. in Saudi society which is working as they would like.

With item five, "The effect of I.R.E. upon children's daily life". 40.6% parents strongly agree and 43.7% agree (mean of 4.11). This is a very high response, even though Saudi parents find that the effect of I.R.E. upon their children is more than Kuwaiti parents, and this is statistically significant. The reason for this, as I have said before, refers to the nature of religion in Saudi society. Item five indicates that I.R.E. has affected Saudi society clearly and this effect plays an important role in society's progress towards their children.

ITEM	Frequency					Total		Sex						Nationality						Qualifications					
	strongly agree	agree	undecided	disagree	strongly disagree	mean	Std. Dev.	M		F		T	S	Kuwaiti		Saudi		T	S	High		Intermediate		T	S
								mean	std. dev.	mean	std. dev.			mean	std. dev.	mean	std. dev.			mean	std. dev.	mean	std. dev.		
Q3 Children's interest in IRE is weak	55	88	8	33	10	3.75	1.2	3.68	1.3	3.83	1.04	0.88	0.38	3.58	1.24	3.99	1.08	2.39	0.02	3.46	1.23	3.86	1.18	1.49	0.14
Percentage	28.4	45.4	4.1	17.0	5.2																				
Q5 Children and importance of IRE	114	75	3	6	2	4.47	0.76	4.55	0.59	4.37	0.93	1.66	0.1	4.42	0.83	4.53	0.65	1.02	0.31	4.21	0.63	4.48	0.71	1.73	0.86
Percentage	57	37.5	1.5	3.0	1.0																				
Q6 Children and memorising the holy Quran	40	75	5	7	2	4.43	0.79	4.5	0.75	4.34	0.84	1.34	0.18	4.38	0.87	4.5	0.67	1.08	0.28	4.43	0.69	4.3	0.82	0.71	0.48
Percentage	55.3	37.7	2.5	3.5	1.0																				
Q11 Children like the subject of IRE	60	76	33	19	9	3.81	1.11	3.83	1.1	3.77	1.15	0.36	0.72	3.6	1.13	4.1	1.03	3.19	0.002	3.56	1.05	3.63	1.15	0.29	0.77
Percentage	30	38.5	16.8	9.6	4.6																				
Q17 Children and IRE teaching method	37	82	30	35	13	3.48	1.18	3.5	1.1	3.46	1.26	0.23	0.82	3.32	1.17	3.71	1.15	2.29	0.023	3.43	1.03	3.55	1.12	0.49	0.63
Percentage	18.8	41.0	15.0	17.5	6.5																				
Total	376	396	79	100	36	4.13	0.89	4.01	0.56	3.97	0.67	0.65	0.51	3.85	0.53	4.15	0.53	3.34	0.001	3.84	0.58	3.96	0.63	0.87	0.39
Percentage	38.1	40.2	8.0	10.1	36.5																				

Parents

Importance of IRE

Table No. 2

The result in Table Two is higher than Table One and this field "Children and the importance of I.R.E." contains five items. Results mentioned that parents support the importance of the I.R.E. to their children, regarding a total of the the items in the field. 38.1% strongly agree and 40.2% agree.

The analysis of parents' responses declare that there is agreement from the five items in the field showing a very high response of parents believe in the importance of I.R.E. for their children. The result points out that Saudi parents are more careful of the importance of I.R.E. to their children than Kuwaiti parents, and the result is significant between the two groups.

The reason for this is that probably many Saudi parents want their children to be more religious than Kuwaiti parents do, and they might feel a bigger responsibility for their children than some Kuwaiti parents. Examining the five items may justify this result. In the first item "children's interest in I.R.E. is weak" there is a sign that 28.4% strongly agree and 45.4% agree. This response is significant between Kuwaiti and Saudi parents.

Kuwaiti parents probably did not have the same sympathy with their children's interest as the Saudis have; or the Kuwaiti parents face more problems with I.R.E. towards their children and they try to solve these problems but feel the time has not yet come. The following comments and remarks tell us that some parents found their children have no interest in I.R.E., or it is weak. One of them says

Please make the I.R.E. easy for the first year,because some verses are difficult for them (K.60).

Another one

Please reduce the verses and poems for the first year (K.103).

I hope that memorising the Quran is to be on small chapters ... I wish that the I.R.E. teacher and curriculum gave interest to the children's behaviour and performance more than religious knowledge (K.23).

These cases might sense that children's interest in I.R.E. is weak. At the same time there were no comments from Saudi parents on this matter. Does this mean they are satisfied with the level of I.R.E. for their children? This will be clarified later on.

With the second item, "Children and the importance of I.R.E." 57% strongly agree and 37.5% agree. This is a very high response, and there are differences between male and female, and this means that males perhaps agreed that I.R.E. is important to their children's lives, as they provide the guidance in the Gulf region more than females. As the percentage is high this will be an optimistic view in both countries and my view is that if parents, male and female, feel the importance of I.R.E. for their children's lives and accept it then I.R.E. could develop their education and direct them to the right path. In the same time this will agree to what this study aims for in the development of I.R.E.

Some parents in Kuwait insisted that

Pupils must understand that I.R.E. is not confined to memorising the Holy Quran only, but they ought to have knowledge of the Seerah, faith and worship at the same level (K.40).

She also said teachers must avoid punishing pupils at this age otherwise they will hate the subject and be afraid of it. While a Saudi parent says:

I would suggest that studying the Holy Quran and understanding its decree is similar to what the prophet Muhammad's followers did.

He also says,

Why not decrease teaching science and maths and geometry because pupils study these to pass the exam and this will take place of studying I.R.E. (S.135).

One can see that parents have different views. Some might lead to misunderstanding so people in charge of developing I.R.E. must know how parents feel or they will not care. People in society will go in opposite directions, one with I.R.E. development and one without because they know nothing about it.

Item three, "Children and memorising the Holy Quran", shows this clearly. 55.3% strongly agree and 37.7% agree, which is a very high response, and there are no significant differences between the sex, nationality and qualification of parents, which suggests they all agreed their children are happy while memorising verses from the Holy Quran. Although there is no comment from Saudi parents towards this theme, there are probably unsatisfactory views from Kuwaiti parents. E.g.

Please reduce the verses for the first and second year. And illustrate the meaning to them if possible.

In the old I.R.E. curriculum memorising the Quran is more than now ... and my children have very little about Seerah of the prophet Muhammad (K.50, 61, and others).

In the same time other parents pointed out

There is no need for the poems and let us reduce the quantity of the verses.

Hopefully to increase the memorising Quran section in the primary stage because there is no sign of developing this, also there are many repeated lessons in the text book, especially in the first year (K. 65, 77, 92 and others).

All these remarks from Kuwaiti parents make me worried and the reason is because parents or people in society or perhaps in Kuwait do not have the wide knowledge of the meaning of teaching I.R.E. and its philosophy. This is one of the main points this study wanted to develop within parents' meeting and co-operation. There will be no solution to the problems of I.R.E. without such development, because there is no clear ideology behind it. Parents' views on I.R.E. have been ignored for a long time and this is the result.

The fourth item, "Children like the subject of I.R.E.", indicates that 30% of parents strongly agree and 38.5% agree. This is a high response saying that children like the subject of I.R.E.. The Saudi parents' responses are higher than Kuwaiti parents' and the result is significant between their differences.

The indication of this is that Saudi parents feel their children like the subject of I.R.E. more than other subjects. No doubt the general environment of Saudi parents reflects upon their children and makes them like the subject. The other possibility is that I.R.E. is still held in high esteem in Saudi Arabia, or they might feel that they have the best in the region so parents have no remarks to make on this.

I believe that Kuwaiti parents often think of future programmes and look forward to improving their style of life in everything, much more than Saudi parents do, and this ought to be considered as a general view. To give evidence of this, let us take some examples of Kuwaiti parents' suggestions and comments. One of them says:

Pupils should have many activities within I.R.E. such as cinema shows, trips outside school to mosques ... also to set meeting with pupils in school and giving prizes for those who read Quran more (K.91).

Item five is "Children and I.R.E. teaching methods". 18.8% of parents strongly agree and 41% parents agree that children are bored due to I.R.E. teaching methods, while 17.5% disagree, which shows a high response, and there is no statistically variable effect on the responses and this shows that all groups of parents are agreed to the response. The result seems to me important, because if children are bored by I.R.E.'s teaching methods this will put more pressure on the Ministry of Education in the two countries to examine the reasons, whether it is the teachers of I.R.E. themselves or that they have not been provided with suitable educational aids. Or it may be that the teacher training is not enough. In fact I feel

that all the reasons mentioned are possible and this problem is not new, it is always raised by the I.R.E. teacher. I will come to this in Section B.

One parent indicates that

There is a shortage in teaching Seerah. I suggest increasing this, because children like it, particularly the Prophet's stories (K.36).

And one says

Teaching I.R.E. in the present contains short verses which may not be fully completed as if they study a full and complete chapter. I wish this could be included in their daily life's behaviour (K.25)

ITEM	Frequency				Total		Sex						Nationality						Qualifications														
	strongly agree	agree	undecided	disagree	strongly disagree	mean	Std. Dev.	M		F		T		S		Kuwaiti		Saudi		T		S		High		Intermediate		T		S			
								mean	std. dev.	mean	std. dev.	mean	std. dev.	mean	std. dev.	mean	std. dev.	mean	std. dev.	mean	std. dev.	mean	std. dev.	mean	std. dev.	mean	std. dev.	mean	std. dev.	mean	std. dev.	mean	std. dev.
Q4 Co-operate with IRE teacher	142	43	6	4	3	4.6	0.78	4.59	0.76	4.61	0.83	0.17	0.87	4.57	0.81	4.63	0.74	4.58	0.57	4.39	0.88	4.58	0.87	4.39	0.88	4.58	0.87	0.98	0.33				
Percentage	71.7	21.7	3.0	2.0	1.5																												
Q12 Parents involved in teaching IRE to their children	92	76	6	12	10	4.16	1.09	4.19	1.1	4.13	1.08	0.33	0.74	4.06	1.17	4.31	0.94	1.58	0.12	4.37	0.84	4.3	0.97	4.3	0.97	0.33	0.74						
Percentage	46.9	38.0	3.1	6.1	5.1																												
Q16 Parents participation in development of IRE	141	43	12	2	0	4.63	0.79	4.59	0.85	4.67	0.78	0.46	0.43	4.46	0.83	4.8	0.63	1.63	0.11	4.71	0.66	4.55	0.77	4.71	0.66	4.55	0.77	1.34	0.13				
Percentage	71.2	21.7	6.1	1.0	0.0																												
Total	375	162	24	18	13	4.46	0.82	4.46	0.80	4.47	0.82	0.14	0.23	4.36	0.86	4.58	0.72	1.62	0.12	4.40	0.78	4.48	0.83	4.40	0.78	4.48	0.83	0.23	0.24				
Percentage	63.3	27.4	4.1	3.0	2.2																												

Table No. 3

Co-operation of Parents

Parents

Table Three clarifies the highest response (mean of 4.46) which reflects Field Three "Co-operation of parents" and the total sample response of this field discloses that the co-operation between parents and I.R.E. teachers is very high, which reveals that the level of co-operation is satisfied and this response has been agreed upon by all the groups. Therefore there is no significance between the differences, so all parents, Kuwaiti and Saudi, schoolboys' and girls' parents, intermediate and high qualifications are involved in teaching their children I.R.E. and participate in its development.

Item one, "Co-operation with I.R.E. teachers", shows 71.7% strongly agree and 21.7% agree. There is no significance between the differences of the response, and it manifests that all the groups, Kuwaiti and Saudi, male and female, high and intermediate, are agreed in this response. This of course is a very good result and one can see that it can work better if the educational authorities increase the meetings and communications between them. I have mentioned in Chapter Seven that there is a hope for good relations between teachers and parents in terms of I.R.E., but it really needs some consideration and a clear proposal. The reason for this high percentage, I think, is that parents are very keen to improve their children's performance, especially in religion, and it might seem that the best way to do this is to keep in touch with the I.R.E. teacher because he/she is the best and most suitable person to promote children's religious understanding rapidly.

In their comments parents have different views towards I.R.E. teachers.

One of them says

Some people in society do not care about teaching religious science (she means I.R.E.) because those people are curious and isolated and nobody cares for them. (S.177)

Also one parent's criticism of I.R.E. in Kuwait is that

It is obvious that Kuwaiti students are weak in I.R.E. and this is because the periods devoted to teaching the subject are too short. This subject is the basis of our existence between nations, and thus without Islam we have nothing. I think the answer is clear to everyone. (S.155)

Some parents participated and pointed out

The I.R.E. curriculum ought to be continuously looking at what is going on and the problems at home and in society. (S.137)

These comments and others clarify that parents can assist I.R.E. teachers in some cases, and make useful comments. I think there are many points which can be used for developing I.R.E. As Chapter Seven says, the responsibility for education is in two halves, the parents and the teachers.

With item two, "Parents involved in teaching I.R.E. to their children", 46.9% strongly agree and 38% agree, which means that parents agree to be involved in teaching I.R.E. to their children and this is a high response.. There is no significance in the differences between all groups, and the mark of this is that parents feel that children need some help to understand the I.R.E. textbook either in Kuwait or in Saudi Arabia. This could reflect their enthusiasm for the subject of religion for their children's future, morally and socially. One of the parents found difficulty with her child in the first year and pointed out

I realise that there is difficulty in illustrating some concepts to my child. (K.100)

Also there are a number of parents who criticised the I.R.E. textbook and the teaching methods, but they have done nothing to assist their children. Through the interviews some parents have said that unfortunately the weak pupils have nobody to help them in school, while the good pupils are mostly helped and supported by their parents. Very often this is the case and there should be a compromise between all levels of pupils, otherwise the weak will never become strong, so this study is trying to encourage parents to be more involved with arrangements in school and for the I.R.E. teacher to develop I.R.E. first and to keep up the standard of education to a good level.

Item three, "Parents' participation in development of I.R.E.", declares that 71.2% strongly agree and 21.7% agree and there is no significance in the differences between all groups. This result obviously shows that parents' participation in developing I.R.E. is necessary and the level of agreement is to be encouraged. It indicates that they can participate in developing I.R.E. if there is a good connection with school. The suggestion is made in Chapter Seven that parents might have ideas which are important for their children and I.R.E. teachers should know so that they can ensure that home and school are working together to achieve the aims of I.R.E. One of the benefits of this study are the comments gained from parents that they always try to develop I.R.E. but they sometimes miss the way to do it, or the appropriate place to discuss matters, e.g.

The I.R.E. curriculum should be linked with pupils' lives ... also the I.R.E. textbook for the first, second and third years in the primary stage simplified, and should not give them general information to be repeated but make them understand and work accordingly. (S.137)

This subject also says the textbook ought to take away some points which are unsuitable at this age. Clearly these are useful comments and there are many similar ones to this which have been discussed in this section which will assist in developing I.R.E. by parents' co-operation.

Another example pointed out by a parent is that

the curriculum can be developed to be better but who is qualified to do this? This point has not been addressed by the researcher. (K.53)

The comments from the Saudi and Kuwaiti parents delighted me because they are extremely useful points and they come from highly qualified parents who have academic careers. I want, if I can, to answer the question that these and other parents asked and assist other colleges in Kuwaiti and Saudi educational authorities to build better education for our children and ensure there are qualified people in both countries who can manifestly carry out this task.

ITEM	Frequency					Total		Sex						Nationality						Qualifications					
	strongly agree	agree	undecided	disagree	strongly disagree	mean	Std. Dev.	M		F		T	S	Kuwaiti		Saudi		T	S	High		Intermediate		T	S
								mean	std. dev.	mean	std. dev.			mean	std. dev.	mean	std. dev.			mean	std. dev.	mean	std. dev.		
Q2 The developed IRE curriculum is better	57	82	23	21	10	3.8	1.13	3.84	1.02	3.76	1.26	0.42	0.68	3.72	1.17	3.93	1.06	1.21	0.22	3.74	1.2	3.7	1.11	0.16	0.87
Percentage	29.5	42.5	11.9	10.9	5.2																				
Q7 Children and difficult lessons of IRE	103	82	3	8	2	4.39	0.80	4.44	0.73	4.33	0.87	0.98	0.33	4.32	0.87	4.5	0.67	1.58	0.12	4.46	0.88	4.33	0.81	0.71	0.48
Percentage	52	41.4	1.5	4.0	1.0																				
Q8 Suitable IRE text book for the first year	79	65	21	19	7	3.99	1.12	4.05	1.01	3.93	1.25	0.72	0.48	3.89	1.17	4.14	1.04	1.5	0.14	4.03	1.09	4.01	1.08	0.09	0.92
Percentage	41.4	34.0	11.0	9.9	3.7																				
Q9 Suitable IRE textbook for the second year	65	78	30	16	4	3.95	1.00	4.00	0.92	3.8	1.11	0.71	0.48	3.77	1.00	4.19	0.97	2.92	0.004	3.85	0.45	3.98	0.98	0.61	0.54
Percentage	33.7	40.4	15.5	8.3	2.1																				
Q10 Suitable IRE textbook for the third year	59	69	45	13	4	3.87	1.00	3.96	0.91	3.77	1.09	1.33	0.18	3.7	0.96	4.11	1.01	2.88	0.005	3.81	1.02	3.83	0.95	0.09	0.93
Percentage	31.1	36.3	23.7	6.8	2.1																				
Total	363	376	122	77	27	3.99	0.72	4.05	0.66	3.93	0.83	1.03	0.31	3.86	0.76	4.1	0.70	2.88	0.004	3.98	0.76	3.98	0.72	0.02	0.98
Percentage	37.6	39.0	12.6	8.0	2.8																				

Parents

IRE Curriculum for the Primary Stage

Table No. 4

Table Four discusses the field of "I.R.E. curriculum for the primary stage". The total sample response of this field indicates that parents' response to the I.R.E. curriculum is high (mean of 3.99) which shows that the I.R.E. textbook for the primary stage is suitable and there are significant differences between Kuwaiti and Saudi parents.

Item one, "The developed I.R.E. curriculum is better", shows 29.5% strongly agree and 42.5% agree, and there is no significance in the differences between the responses of all groups. This may tell us that parents are not quite satisfied with the I.R.E. curriculum textbook in its new style, and both Kuwaiti and Saudi parents perhaps seek to revise the I.R.E. textbook, even if it is better than the old one. The reason for this result is that parents might not be quite sure about the new I.R.E. textbook in Kuwait as they feel they do not fully understand the aims of these developed I.R.E. textbooks and how they work. One of them says,

The disadvantage of the developed I.R.E. textbook is that many subjects are higher than children's level of education.

He and other parents suggested that

it would be better if teachers used educational teaching aids which could make the subject more suitable ... choosing a good picture for the I.R.E. textbook would make the subject more attractive. (S.118, 179, 187 and others).

Another parent says,

the curriculum in educational stages in Kuwait is very clear in comparison with the Saudi curriculum, (K.21).

Also a number of parents criticised the I.R.E. curriculum and pointed out,

please change the new curriculum for the old ... the disadvantages of the new I.R.E. curriculum is teaching pupils different verses from the Holy Quran ... please apply the Saudi I.R.E. curriculum, (K.101, 96, 93, 81 and others).

On item two, "Children and difficult lessons of I.R.E.", parents are agreed at 52% strongly agree and 41.4% agree, and there is no significance in the differences between all groups of parents. This may testify that a large number of parents are not quite happy with the I.R.E. curriculum textbook. As has been mentioned before, parents complain in different ways about the difficulty of the I.R.E. textbook in both Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

Item three, "Suitable I.R.E. textbook for the first year", expresses that 41.4% strongly agree and 34% agree. This result is high and could mean generally that parents accept the I.R.E. textbook for the first year to a certain degree. There is no significance in the differences between all groups of parents in their sex, nationality and qualifications.

Item four, "Suitable I.R.E. textbook for the second year", has a similar response. 33.7% strongly agree and 40.4% agree, and both of them give the same level of agreement or maybe less, but there are significant differences between Kuwaiti and Saudi parents, the Saudi parents showing higher than Kuwaiti in their responses.

Item five, "Suitable I.R.E. textbook for the third year", is less than for the first and second years, and 31.1% strongly agree, 36.3% agree, whereas 23.7% are undecided. This may reflect that a number of parents are not quite happy with the I.R.E. textbook for the third year. The Kuwaiti and Saudi parents have a significant difference between their responses, the Saudis scoring higher than the Kuwaitis in their responses. I will come to this later when discussing the views of the teachers of I.R.E. towards the I.R.E. curriculum and textbook.

One of the parents says,

The teaching methods of I.R.E. are not convincing, and the reason for this is teachers' treatment of pupils which might make them hate the subject, so preparing good and well qualified teachers who know how to teach and guide pupils, is important. (K.67)

Another parent pointed out,

The I.R.E. curriculum must link into pupils' lives and the other meaning of this is to ensure it is suitable to pupils' ages. At the same time I want to say that the aims are good but they do not serve the textbook contents, so I suggest the aims be reconstructed within the textbook (S.189).

The suggestions presented by parents are reasonable and discussing them with the educational bodies is important because it is often relevant to the development of I.R.E.

Conclusions

The conclusion of Table One discloses the effect of nationality on the parents' responses and reflects a very high response in general and shows that Saudi parents' responses are higher than Kuwaiti parents (mean of 4.53), and there is significance in the differences towards the role of I.R.E. in society. Also nationality has an effect on this response. The reason for this perhaps refers to the nature of education parents themselves had and it signifies that Saudi parents have been affected significantly by the kuttabs in the past, more than Kuwaiti parents (see Chapter Three).

Table Two also shows a high response to the field of importance of I.R.E. and the Saudi parents have a higher response than Kuwaiti parents (mean of 4.15). This result shows that Saudi parents see the importance of I.R.E. to their children more than Kuwaiti parents, and there is significance in the differences. Perhaps the reason for this is that Saudi parents want their children to be educated at the same level of religion they have studied when they were young and they know to what extent teaching religion is important in their children's lives.

Table Four indicates a high response (mean of 4.1). It shows that Saudi and Kuwaiti parents have a high response to the field of 'I.R.E. curriculum for the primary stage', and this represents that Saudi parents accept the I.R.E. curriculum more than Kuwaiti parents, and they feel satisfied more than Kuwaiti parents and there are significant differences between the two groups (see the many examples I have dealt with in Section B). The reason for this, I think, is that Saudi parents perhaps are not accustomed to criticising the I.R.E. curriculum or often talking about it because the I.R.E. curriculum in Saudi Arabia is designed along the lines of Islamic doctrine, i.e. Al Tawhid and Al Fiqh, so there is nothing to be discussed from the parents' point of view (see Chapter Four for more details).

Discussion of the Kuwaiti and Saudi interviewees regarding the four fields

- 1) I.R.E. and society
- 2) Children and the importance of I.R.E.
- 3) Parents' co-operation with the I.R.E. teacher
- 4) I.R.E. curriculum for the primary stage of education

The inspector's views will justify what has been said, so let us see what they have said in their interviews with regard to the four fields.

Field One: I.R.E. and Society

Saudi Arabia:

Interviewee No.10 confirms the effect of I.R.E. on Saudi society through the teacher:

There is no doubt that the I.R.E. teacher plays an essential role within the schools and society. The I.R.E. teacher tries to improve conditions in society. However, we could not say that he can do everything as there are some impediments such as the influence of the family, and if we have a stable family this helps the I.R.E. teacher with his duties. Otherwise there will be difficulties, particularly with the media because it has an essential role in developing society.

He seems to raise the point that the teacher of I.R.E. cannot work alone. The family holds the key to improving society just as much as the teacher does.

In regard to future generations and I.R.E., Interviewee No.8 stated his views clearly and linked them to society as a whole and Islam as the future when he pointed out:

Q: Do you have any suggestions or recommendations for better I.R.E. in the future?

A: The primary stage is really the foundation of the religious state from which we try to build the future in regard to Islam for

the sake of Allah, by preparing a good generation to rebuild the status of the Islamic community as it was before.

He himself had hoped that parents would assist at home in guiding their children towards Islamic principles.

All these cases together clarify that the items of field one, I.R.E. and society, have been considered by inspectors and will reflect the teacher of I.R.E. if they are encouraged to carry on.

Kuwait:

On the other side let us see what Kuwaiti inspectors' views are towards this field. Interviewee No.2 understands that society and the I.R.E. teacher can do something.

Q: What is your opinion of Kuwaiti society at the present time, and the attitude towards the I.R.E. teacher?

A: In fact, the general view towards the serious person is that of respect whenever he does his work precisely and sincerely. As long as the I.R.E. teacher lives with his subject within the school seriously the society will give him more attention and respect. I can say from my own point of view that society respects the I.R.E. teacher once he respects himself.

I do agree with him and I can read between the lines that he expects society to respect the I.R.E. teacher and surely they will gain much more from the teacher's work, because they are sincere in their duties towards changing society. Although I wanted him to say more about society and I.R.E., as I felt this from his general answer, I needed to know more about this issue and asked him:

Q: Does that mean that society has different views towards the science teacher or others, and can we say that any person can teach I.R.E.? What is your opinion about that?

A: We are living in a Muslim society, pupils learn about Islam from everywhere - in the mosque and from the T.V. - but they do not study religion as they study the English language.

This view might tell us that pupils learn about Islam from anywhere if they want, but learning from television seems ineffective, and this perhaps needs instruction from the Ministry of Islamic Affairs to improve this. At the same time

it might also need a qualified teacher who knows how to achieve his/her targets within society. Inspector No.1 disclosed the relation between I.R.E. and society.

Q: How does society deal with the I.R.E. teacher?

A: The answer might be about teachers in general. The teacher is more sensitive psychologically and if he/she feels bad this will affect their duties. We are looking for quality not quantity, especially in education. This cannot be achieved until the teacher feels he/she is protected from society. What we see in schools, in the classroom and in society, reflects badly upon the teacher.

He seems to me to be unhappy with society's views of teachers. Perhaps from his 3 years experience as an inspector he is still struggling and working hard to find a good quality teacher who may understand how difficult it is to go ahead on this road. For me as a researcher, I can appreciate what he said and would try to help; to make him strong to face more problems and impediments from society, otherwise the result will not be easy. I found later on at the end of the interview that he is quite confident to carry on his duties to I.R.E. teachers and society, and felt that he knows what is going on when he points out:

Finally, I want the I.R.E. teacher who is convinced and qualified for teaching the subject, otherwise he will do it mechanically. Many teachers, for instance, who have a good preparation for lessons are not able to put it over very well.

In addition I asked Interviewee No.5 two questions about society and the I.R.E. teacher to see the differences between the cases, and I found that the I.R.E. teacher is a good model to create a good society when I asked him:

Q: If we go back and talk about the teacher, how does Kuwaiti society appear to him?

A: Of course, the I.R.E. teacher is a model and he works hard to create a good society. Bear in mind that the teacher lives in a Muslim society and every child has to know his God, also how to treat with other people and then how to recognise the good and the bad in life. We need an active teacher who has an interest in building his society.

What makes me happy from this interviewing is that the interviewee recognises clearly what is going on in terms of I.R.E. after the Gulf War and what

I.R.E. can do to develop the society and rebuild the country to be better. The two elements he states are very important nowadays in the region, an active teacher and an interested teacher, because these two elements seem helpful to change society to be better. Also I asked him another question about I.R.E. and society:

Q: Does Kuwaiti society appreciate the I.R.E. teacher because you have talked about his role?

A: As you know, Kuwaiti society is divided into different communities and each community has different views. Therefore parents' views towards I.R.E. teacher differ from place to place. In addition, as long as the parents are educated they will appreciate the role of the teacher, but those who are not will not do so. The teacher now is educated and fully understands what he is doing. In general society understands the role of the teacher if the teacher understands the role of society. He knows what kind of society he lives in.

It is quite clear that interviewees in both Kuwait and Saudi Arabia are very concerned about the role of I.R.E. in society. This role comes by teachers, parents and many other institutions in society, and confirms what the researcher said in Chapter Five that all institutions in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia strengthen or weaken the role of I.R.E. in society (see Figure 1). Also parents' comments and interviewees in both countries show that I.R.E. and society development is working in the same direction.

Field Two: Children and the importance of I.R.E.

Saudi Arabia:

These are some examples and there are more which will be shown later on. Let me move on to discuss what are the inspectors' views towards this field. Interviewee No.8 says:

Q: Can you say that memorising the Holy Quran in Saudi Arabia is sufficient?

A: With regard to this question there are different views. Some people agree to increasing the number of verses of the Holy Quran for pupils at this stage. On the other hand some agree to reducing them. I can see that pupils under 12 years of age are not mature enough to appreciate what is going on around

them. Therefore if we have a chance to give them verses from the Holy Quran as much as we can, it would be better, but you have to acknowledge that not all pupils are equal; some have greater ability than others, and we hope because of this that parents will co-operate in supporting us at home.

This view seems to me quite reasonable because it considers two points. First, the ability of pupils in this age and second to save time before getting busy. Obviously the interviewee's years of experience make him take this decision, and I do agree with him, but let me examine more cases to compare the two situations in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, and bear in mind that the issues of memorising the Holy Quran in Saudi society is wider than it is in Kuwait because of the annual reciting competition of the Holy Quran held regularly in Makkah and Medina, and because of the Quranic schools all over the country.

No.12 has similar comments to this view:

- Q: Do you consider the quantity of the Holy Quran given to pupils suitable or not?
A: We are satisfied with the quantity given because we wish to make sure they have a good grounding in the Holy Quran before they advance and take responsibility in their lives.

I believe that many people I have met in Saudi Arabia, parents, inspectors and others working within schools and educational institutions, feel sorry that Saudi Arabia seems to be reducing the teaching of the Holy Quran in general, and this includes minimising the periods of teaching I.R.E. which will affect directly the importance of I.R.E. in the children's lives. Thus they try to keep a good standard and high level of teaching I.R.E. and Quran as much as they can, compared with many countries in the Gulf region.

No.11 has an idea that why not teach Holy Quran in place of some branches in the Arabic language:

- Q: Do we need to increase the number of verses of the Holy Quran for our pupils?

A: The Holy Quran nowadays is not treated as it was in the past. We are supposed to increase teaching of the Holy Quran in place of teaching part of the Arabic language.

One can see how important teaching the Holy Quran is from the inspectors' points of view in Saudi Arabia, where it is the main point of teaching I.R.E.

Kuwait:

On the other side examining the inspectors' views in Kuwait will show the comparison. No.3 tries to mix between the old I.R.E. and the new one, and shows the importance of I.R.E. for our children and gives views which do not agree with Kuwaiti parents.

Q: Do you think the new curriculum is better than the old one?

A: The new I.R.E. curriculum has retained the advantages of the old one. It is not totally against and, together with some of the old ideas, new ones have been formulated. They know the meaning of the verses. Therefore we can see that the new curriculum has taken the best from the old and added to it.

The point he talks about is taken from the development of I.R.E. during 1985 in order to teach the Holy Quran with the other branches of I.R.E., and this is a very advanced way of teaching I.R.E. by concept, but there are some disadvantages of this as has been mentioned in Chapter Four, and perhaps not all parents accept it yet. The other point I wish to make in this study is to keep the level of teaching and memorising the Holy Quran high and to improve other changes in the I.R.E. textbook.

No.1 seems exaggerated in his description because teaching methods and educational aids are not yet satisfactory to a large number of parents and children, as well as I.R.E. teachers:

Q: Does I.R.E. have an important role within the modern curriculum?

A: If we look to the Islamic thought and movement at the present time, we find that I.R.E. is one of those important things in society, not in terms of thinking only but in terms of

curriculum and teaching methods, textbook and teacher preparation.

His views seem to me useful if teachers of I.R.E. and parents co-operate well.

Field Three: Parents' co-operation with the I.R.E. teacher

Saudi Arabia:

The Saudi interviewees have different views perhaps than the Kuwaitis because of the nature of their social life. For instance, Interviewee No.10 addressed in a very simple way the participation of parents in I.R.E., when he said

-

Some pupils entering school in the first year cannot read and write, and the family sometimes tries to help them to memorise some verses from the Holy Quran and improve their morality. This of course helps pupils entering school at only the minimum standard.

During the 1990s it seems to me the level of participation passed this early and basic standard and widened out to become an important, wider and comprehensive way of working, possibly according to the parents' abilities. Interviewee No.12 gives some indication of disagreement from parents to the I.R.E. curriculum:

Q: Is there any problem confronting I.R.E.?

A: There are no problems confronting I.R.E. but sometimes pupils have difficulties with the textbook and the Ministry of Education holds meetings to discuss the subject of the content of I.R.E. as some parents are not satisfied with the curriculum.

Up to this point I feel that parents could do more and be more effective if there was an open door to the Ministry of Education. If this were the case then the development of I.R.E. aims would be reached more rapidly. To discover the amount of parental participation in Saudi society towards developing I.R.E. I asked the following direct question to Interviewee No.11:

- Q: Do parents have a chance to participate in developing I.R.E.?
A: Participation is not for anybody, only those responsible people and qualified ones who have the ability to answer a questionnaire if supplied.

In this short statement, as in many of the Saudi interviews, I can express that there are certain conditions which should be met for those wishing to participate in developing I.R.E. Firstly, they must be a "responsible" person. Secondly they must be "qualified" and able to "participate", and thirdly there must be something specific to enable them to participate, e.g. questionnaires. I agree with his views because developing I.R.E. in many cases needs a responsible person who appreciates the role of I.R.E. for society. At the same time, if the person is qualified, he/she can criticise or improve the education and his/her participation will be useful. I was also happy to find clear and honest answers to my questions, even if they were very short. It is much more positive than hesitation or people holding back their views.

I think that the policy of the Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia will change sooner or later, and that participation will take place one day. Saudi people were not at the same educational level during the 1960s and 70s and one can say frankly that there are now well-qualified people in Saudi Arabia in terms of medical and other professional areas, whose abilities are higher than most of the other Arab countries. Even internationally they have competence and they have raised their country's technology and the people are very proud of this. It is hoped that I.R.E., through parent participation, can grow similarly.

Kuwait:

Inspectors' interviews describe what kind of co-operation is possible with parents. Interviewee No.4 reveals the advantages of meeting with parents and says

A: We have plenty of meetings and interviews with parents in order to evaluate the teachers and the textbook. We have gained useful comments from parents in order to present the developed textbook.

Q: How do parents participate in the evaluation of I.R.E.?

A: Through the questionnaire and interviewing as well as meetings in schools and visits to schools from time to time; discussing and explaining our plan for development and I have personally met some female parents and explained to them what is needed for development of the process, particularly in the first year. We found that parents were always dependent on the pictures in the textbook because they were very effective, as well as the Holy Quran.

The issue of meeting itself can present many opportunities to develop the education system and this interviews tells us that there are different forms of meeting with parents. Some of them are at the academic level, i.e. questionnaires and interviews, and this step is quite useful. It would be good for all the Gulf states to follow the Kuwaiti methods of participation and throughout the G.A.S.E.R.C. they could exchange many ideas and experiences.

One can also look at the participation and co-operation with parents from another angle, i.e. social clubs, homes, mosques can do something as Interviewee No. 6 describes:

Q: Do you have any suggestions or recommendations for achieving better I.R.E.?

A: The primary stage is the foundation of education. Therefore we have to give more attention to our children and educate them towards correct Islamic thought and I hope they will be united in schools, social clubs, homes and the mosque. We do not want our pupils to be confused by learning something in school which is in opposition to what is found at home. All parties must be united.

There are many elements in this view which have been discussed in different parts of this study. For example, the role of social clubs and mosques has been discussed in Chapter Three of this study and shows that these bodies can play a part in developing I.R.E. and making society united. It can also take away the confusion which might be caused in society if there are clear objectives used

under supervision with sincere and qualified people. I agree with this interviewee's views and my wish is that Saudi society can play a major role in this issue and make the Gulf states in general united under the power of correct Islamic thought.

Field Four: I.R.E. curriculum for the primary stage of education

Saudi Arabia:

In this field I will focus on the I.R.E. curriculum in the primary stage. The Saudi interviewee shows that I.R.E. curriculum is developed, and Interviewee No. 9 specified Saudi rather than other Arab countries and said:

Q: Does I.R.E. in modern education gain better status than in previous times?

A: There is no doubt that I.R.E. today is much better in Saudi Arabia than in any other Muslim country because you can see that the religious sciences which includes all branches of I.R.E. teaching in this country has taken up a large part of the whole curriculum. In the past the curriculum of I.R.E. focused on the Holy Quran only, and there was no textbook for pupils as we have now. I would say that the Ministry of Education should be applauded when they set up the modern curriculum by co-operating with the team of experts in the field.

The idea of religious sciences in Saudi Arabia does not mean that the curriculum is developed by teaching I.R.E. in separate lessons, i.e. Al Fiqh, Al Tawhid and Quran, but to integrate them to achieve the aims of I.R.E. So the textbook now presents the I.R.E. curriculum generally and any improvement must give the textbooks and the teaching methods full consideration. Interviewee No. 11 says:

Q: Are there any suggestions or recommendations for better I.R.E.?

A: The I.R.E. subject must take the biggest share of the curriculum. It has to be easy and simple and include aspects of loyalty and trust and a correct faith. The committee of the I.R.E. department must revise the curriculum and take the teachers' opinions into account.

He considers the I.R.E. curriculum development gives teachers more participation and this steps is encouraging because it is reflected in what is going on in Saudi Arabia in terms of the I.R.E. textbook. There is another interviewee, No.13, who suggested we follow the Saudi I.R.E. style, especially for the Gulf States:

Q: Are there any recommendations or suggestions you might like to make'?

A: I hope that the whole Gulf States in particular and the Arab Muslim states become united to follow the I.R.E. curriculum as laid down by Saudi Arabia. I can see that we in the Gulf States have no differences, so why should we not teach the same curriculum, because sometimes you find there is difficulty when pupils come from Bahrain or Kuwait to stay in Saudi Arabia and they cannot catch up. Therefore I hope that the unification of the curriculum will be possible in the future.

Kuwait:

Interviewee No.3 expresses that the I.R.E. curriculum has good status in Kuwait:

Q: Do you feel that I.R.E. has a good status compared with the modern curriculum'?

A: You know that the State of Kuwait is giving more attention to I.R.E. in the Ministry of Education plans. This attention cannot be measured by the number of periods for teaching I.R.E. each week, but by the activities and the educational aids which we can give to our pupils. I.R.E. from my point of view has been given more attention than other subjects. You can see that through the personality of pupils.

The part of his comment I agree with is that the Ministry of Education gives attention to I.R.E. and no one can ignore this. But the second part of his comment I do not agree with because the educational aids and activities are not sufficient and many teachers and parents complain about this, so this is a negative point. The other point I consider is that if the I.R.E. curriculum has good status then why are there so few teaching periods? Perhaps it is because some inspectors

compare I.R.E. in Kuwait with other Arab countries and see that in Kuwait it is much better, and I would agree with this.

There is another opinion which describes the I.R.E. curriculum well because it focuses on the pupils and nothing else. The interviewee No. 4 pointed out:

Q: How do you see the old I.R.E. curriculum and the developing one?

A: The developed curriculum is better. The reason for this is the pupils in the past attached no importance to the three dimensions: cognitive, effective and psychomotor. Also pupils in the past just memorised the Holy Quran and that was it, while the present or modern education depends on the philosophy and foundation which they did not have in the past.

I have said before that Kuwaiti I.R.E. curriculum is developed and this development considers the Islamic values and principles in full, but the argument and criticisms I make in this study are to examine the best way of approaching the I.R.E. curriculum within the aims and philosophy of education, and to add some ideas which have not been used in the past. Interviewee No.3 reveals something in regard to I.R.E. curriculum and says:

Finally the curriculum is not Islam but it is made up by a group of educationalists choosing the part of Islam to be taught.

The answer he made is correct in my view and it is important for every teacher to hear what he says because when they want to develop I.R.E. they do not develop Islam. Islam is a complete religion from Allah and no one can criticise any part of it, while the I.R.E. curriculum is made by people and they try to reflect and present some Islamic principles in order to be an appropriate text for pupils. They try to do their best but they might be right or wrong.

Finally I would suggest that unity of the Gulf States' I.R.E. is needed. This does not mean simply to follow the Kuwaiti or Saudi I.R.E. textbook, but

both of them should be discussed so as to try to find out what is the best from each country. Other factors should be studied, such as the nature of their societies. In this way one could present something which can serve all the Gulf States.

SECTION B

Analysis of Teachers' Responses

A second analysis of teachers' responses was divided into six fields. Each field contains a number of items reflecting the fields and gives general responses to one idea or topic. The topic mainly refers to the research questions of this study (see Chapter One). Answering these questions could lead to solutions to the problems posed by this study. The six fields of teachers' questionnaires are:

1. Aims of I.R.E.
2. The role of I.R.E. in society.
3. Parents and I.R.E.
4. Teacher of I.R.E.
5. I.R.E. textbook.
6. Development of I.R.E.

In this section I will present the tables and analyse the teachers' responses. Then I will discuss I.R.E. teachers' comments and remarks and, finally, compare the result with inspectors' interviews and the review of literature.

First of all I will analyse all the fields of the study and then move to the effects of sex, nationality, qualifications and experience.

Section B contains six fields which reflect the general responses of teachers of I.R.E. Results show in Table One that teachers know the aims of I.R.E. and understand clearly the way to achieve them. Teachers' responses in this field of "Aims of I.R.E." are very high (mean of 4.08). Table Two indicates

that teachers of I.R.E. are agreed as to field two, "The role of I.R.E. in society", and it has the highest response in comparison to other fields (mean of 4.39). This result informs us that field two is accepted by I.R.E. teachers and that I.R.E. plays an essential role in keeping society united. Table Three declares a high response to the field "Parents and I.R.E." (mean of 3.94), and it shows that parents can cooperate with I.R.E. teachers to some extent, and that they acknowledge the importance of I.R.E. to their children. Table Four indicates a high response to the field "Teacher of I.R.E." (mean of 3.75), reflecting that teachers have different views towards teaching methods, educational aids and the future of I.R.E. Table Five implies a high response to the field "I.R.E. textbook" (mean of 3.75), showing teachers' opinions and views towards the text book, whether or not it is simple and complete in the first, second and third years of the primary stage of education. Finally, Table Six shows that teachers' responses to the field of "Development of I.R.E." are high (mean of 3.18) and this result is less than other fields' results, revealing that teachers' participation in developing I.R.E. is not sufficient. At the same time this has reflected on the nature and the level of the text as to its suitability.

ITEM	Frequency				Total mean Std. Dev.	Sex						Nationality						Qualifications						Experience						
	strongly agree	agree	undecided	disagree		strongly disagree	M		F		T		S		Kuwait		Saudi		T		S		less than 5 years		more than 5 years		T		S	
							mean	std. dev.	mean	std. dev.	mean	std. dev.	mean	std. dev.	mean	std. dev.	mean	std. dev.	mean	std. dev.	mean	std. dev.	mean	std. dev.	mean	std. dev.	mean	std. dev.	mean	std. dev.
Q1 Understanding aims of I.R.E.	107	109	30	18	9	4.0	1.15	4.06	0.93	0.71	0.48	3.78	1.14	4.31	0.86	4.35	0.001	4.1	0.98	4.01	1.06	0.6	0.55	4.13	1.02	4.06	0.93	0.38	0.7	
Percentage	39.2	39.9	11.0	6.6	3.3																									
Q2 Clear aims of I.R.E.	151	107	15	16	3	4.18	1.02	4.43	0.74	2.53	0.01	3.93	0.79	4.68	0.61	7.8	0.001	4.45	0.77	4.24	0.92	1.76	0.08	4.52	0.72	4.41	0.79	0.8	0.43	
Percentage	51.7	36.6	5.1	5.5	1.0																									
Q3 Suitable aims of I.R.E.	108	129	16	24	8	4.00	1.01	4.12	1.01	1.00	0.32	3.91	1.01	4.22	0.99	2.57	0.01	4.06	1.04	4.03	1.03	0.18	0.85	4.07	1.03	4.07	1.05	0.02	0.98	
Percentage	37.9	45.3	5.6	8.4	2.8																									
Q4 Achieve all the aims of I.R.E.	84	125	31	34	15	2.35	1.13	2.1	1.14	1.81	0.07	3.59	1.25	3.99	0.98	3.01	0.003	3.9	0.9	3.7	1.23	1.75	0.21	3.76	0.91	3.93	1.11	0.9	0.37	
Percentage	29.1	43.3	10.7	11.8	5.2																									
Q16 Teaching methods of I.R.E.	115	139	20	20	3	3.9	1.6	4.35	0.75	4.44	0.001	4.09	0.98	4.22	0.8	1.23	0.22	4.07	0.86	4.15	0.92	0.67	0.51	4.29	0.73	4.18	0.88	1.05	0.3	
Percentage	38.7	46.8	6.7	6.7	1.0																									
Total	565	609	112	112	38	3.98	0.78	4.2	0.67	2.32	0.02	3.91	0.82	4.29	0.55	4.39	0.001	4.15	0.58	4.06	0.77	0.86	0.39	4.19	0.54	4.11	0.71	0.61	0.55	
Percentage	39.3	42.4	7.8	7.8	2.7																									

Teachers

Aims of I.R.E.

Table No. 1

Table One contains five items in the field of "Aims of I.R.E." in which to clarify that the aims of I.R.E. are understood, exactly as laid down by the Ministry of Education in both countries. 39.2% of teachers strongly agree to this as well as 39.9% who agree, and there are significant differences between Kuwaiti and Saudi teachers' responses. Perhaps the aims are clear as to the general concept even if it is not published in a book and distributed to teachers. On item two 51.7% of I.R.E. teachers also strongly agree and 36.6% agree that the aims of I.R.E. are clear to them. The Saudi I.R.E. teachers show higher responses than Kuwaiti I.R.E. teachers, as well as females being higher than males, in knowing the aims and there are significant differences between the two groups.

Item three shows the fact that teachers of I.R.E. strongly agree at 37.9%, and 45.3% agree, that they think the aims of I.R.E. are suitable for primary education, which tells us that the Saudi response is higher, and the differences are significant. On item four, that I.R.E. teachers achieve all the aims of I.R.E., 29.1% strongly agree and 43.3% agree, and the differences are significant between Kuwaiti and Saudi teachers. Item five shows that 38.7% strongly agree and 46.8% agree that through their teaching methods they can achieve the target, and the differences are significant in teachers' sex and years of experience. The reason for the general response of this field is that the Ministry of Education during the 1990s felt that as long as I.R.E. teachers did not understand the aims fully they would never succeed in their duties, so they tried to make the aims as clear as possible and to do so gradually, through the textbook introduction and inspectors visiting. This does not justify believing that I.R.E. teachers know all details of the aims or they have them for further study, or maybe for criticism and alteration. This is what this study aims to achieve from this field. Bear in mind that teachers might have different views towards the aims. Some I.R.E. teachers might have no interest in knowing about the aims as he/she wants to know about the textbook or teachers' guide book.

ITEM	Frequency				Total mean Std. Dev.	Sex						Nationality						Qualifications						Experience							
	strongly agree	agree	undecided	disagree		strongly disagree	M		F		T	S	Kuwaiti		Saudi		T	S	Graduate		Under-graduate		T	S	less than 5 years		more than 5 years		T	S	
							mean	std. dev.	mean	std. dev.			mean	std. dev.	mean	std. dev.			mean	std. dev.	mean	std. dev.			mean	std. dev.	mean	std. dev.			
Q9 I.R.E. role in society unity Percentage	253	37	2	5	0	4.81	0.52	4.72	0.65	4.88	0.38	2.53	0.01	4.71	0.66	4.91	0.31	3.39	0.001	4.86	0.39	4.78	0.57	1.07	0.29	4.91	0.29	4.82	0.48	1.12	0.27
Q10 I.R.E. succeeded in present value Percentage	79	147	25	34	13	3.82	1.08	3.67	1.07	3.94	1.07	2.18	0.03	3.71	1.12	3.93	1.03	1.7	0.09	3.75	1.08	3.83	1.08	0.54	0.59	3.83	0.97	3.91	1.04	0.44	0.66
Q11 I.R.E. participated in developing society Percentage	210	73	9	4	2	4.63	0.68	4.57	0.38	4.67	0.67	1.38	0.17	4.49	0.79	4.76	0.51	3.49	0.001	4.65	0.63	4.59	0.71	0.68	0.5	4.63	0.64	4.61	0.69	0.13	0.89
Q27 I.R.E. future is responsibility of society Percentage	122	119	6	13	4	4.29	0.86	4.4	0.83	4.2	0.88	1.97	0.05	4.18	1.01	4.36	0.72	1.7	0.09	4.19	0.92	4.32	0.85	1.04	0.3	4.16	0.9	4.24	0.85	0.5	0.61
Total Percentage	664	376	44	56	19	4.39	0.79	4.45	0.39	4.53	0.36	1.55	0.12	4.37	0.44	4.58	0.30	4.48	0.001	4.38	0.41	4.39	0.46	0.1	0.92	4.50	0.29	4.48	0.38	0.34	0.74

Teachers

The role of IRE in Society

Table No. 2

Table Two contains four items. Item one shows that 85.2% strongly agree and 12.5% agree. This is the largest percentage in the whole study among teachers' responses and there are significant differences between the male and female, Kuwaiti and Saudi teachers towards the role of I.R.E. in society. This is a very helpful response and I am very optimistic and delighted that I.R.E. role in society seems strong because this will speed up the development of I.R.E. in the two countries.

Item two reveals that 26.5% strongly agree, and 49.3% agree that the primary stage succeeds in presenting Islamic values through the I.R.E. curriculum and there are significant differences between male and female teachers.

Item three shows that 70.5% strongly agree and 24.5% agree that I.R.E. can contribute towards developing society in the modern education system. This result is significantly different between Kuwaiti and Saudi graduate and undergraduate teachers. In my view this is another indication that I.R.E. can develop society and that is what the researcher has said in Chapter Six. This result will give more chance in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia for this study to apply in practical terms.

Finally, item four marks that I.R.E.'s future is the responsibility of society, and it is shown that 45.9% of teachers strongly agree and 44.7% agree. There are significant differences between teachers as to sex and qualifications. The reason I understand for the high response is that there is an effect from Islamic institutions in Kuwaiti and Saudi society to be close to Islam. The other reason perhaps, as everyone can see, is that communism and socialism are no longer acceptable in a Muslim society, as well as many other ideologies which have been brought from the West, particularly from the I.R.E. point of view.

ITEM	Frequency				Total mean Std. Dev.	Sex						Nationality						Qualifications						Experiences					
	stro- ngly agree	unde- cided	dis- agree	stro- ngly dis- agree		M		F		T	S	Kuwaiti		Saudi		T	S	Graduate		Under- graduate		less than 5 years		more than 5 years		T	S		
						mean	std. dev.	mean	std. dev.			mean	std. dev.	mean	std. dev.			mean	std. dev.	mean	std. dev.	mean	std. dev.	mean	std. dev.				
Q6 Parents visiting IRE teacher	132	10	13	4	4.29	0.84	4.17	0.88	4.37	0.8	1.88	0.06	0.82	4.26	0.86	0.48	0.63	4.15	0.76	4.3	0.9	1.3	0.2	4.11	0.94	4.26	0.82	4.93	0.35
Percentage	44.9	3.4	4.4	1.4																									
Q7 IRE is important to parents	149	27	20	9	4.19	1.05	4.16	1.0	4.21	1.09	0.39	0.7	1.15	4.4	0.9	3.59	0.01	4.15	0.96	4.14	1.11	0.06	4.07	1.0	4.19	1.06	0.63	0.53	
Percentage	50.5	30.5	6.8	3.1																									
Q21 Parents are happy with IRE	44	104	61	57	3.27	1.21	3.24	1.26	3.28	1.18	0.33	0.74	1.2	3.57	1.14	4.56	0.001	3.27	1.17	3.27	1.23	0.00	0.99	3.37	1.06	3.41	1.08	0.23	0.82
Percentage	15	35.4	20.7	19.4																									
Q23 Parents can help to teach their children	154	9	19	6	4.3	0.95	4.27	0.93	4.32	0.96	0.4	0.69	1.02	4.42	0.83	2.2	0.03	4.49	0.67	4.21	1.03	2.14	0.03	4.46	0.81	4.34	0.92	0.73	0.47
Percentage	51.7	36.9	3.0	2.0																									
Q28 IRE future is responsibility of parents	129	4	12	6	4.31	0.89	4.32	0.91	4.30	0.88	0.17	0.86	1.06	4.46	0.70	3.1	0.002	4.35	0.79	4.26	0.93	0.74	0.46	4.34	0.78	4.36	0.81	0.11	0.92
Percentage	41.5	43.2	1.5	2.3																									
Q32 Parents have clear idea of the role of IRE	43	120	47	60	3.33	1.19	3.22	1.17	3.42	1.2	1.39	0.17	1.19	3.53	1.16	2.88	0.04	3.13	1.21	3.32	1.19	1.19	0.24	3.29	1.16	3.3	1.2	0.06	0.95
Percentage	14.6	40.8	16.0	20.4																									
Total	651	674	158	181	3.94	1.12	3.93	0.52	3.99	0.57	0.9	0.37	0.57	4.1	0.50	4.55	0.001	3.92	0.51	3.94	0.57	0.24	0.81	3.95	0.49	3.98	0.55	0.20	0.84
Percentage	37.4	38.7	9.1	10.4																									

Teachers

Parents and I.R.E.

Table No. 3

Table Three contains six items, and it is about "parents and I.R.E.". Teachers strongly agree at 37.4% and agree at 38.7%, and the Saudi teachers are higher than Kuwaiti teachers in their responses, the differences being significant. Item one shows that 44.9% strongly agree and 45.9% agree that I.R.E. teachers have met some parents and discussed their children's performance. Item two shows that 50.5% of I.R.E. teachers strongly agree and 30.5% agree that the importance of I.R.E. is clear to the parents and there are significant differences between Kuwaiti and Saudi teachers. Item three also shows that 15% strongly agree and 35.4% agree that parents are happy with I.R.E. and 20.7% are undecided, and this is not quite such a good response. There are significant differences between Kuwaiti and Saudi teachers, which reflect that parents are not too happy with I.R.E.

No doubt there is a lack of examination as to why 19.4% of teachers disagree that parents are happy with I.R.E. and this confirms what Chapter Seven has said about building a strong relation between I.R.E. teacher and parents to carry on the development of I.R.E. through clear way between home and school. Item five shows that 41.5% of I.R.E. teachers strongly agree and 43.2% agree that I.R.E. is the future responsibility of parents, and there are significant differences between Kuwaiti and Saudi teachers in their responses. This might indicate that teachers of I.R.E. need parents' support, as they cannot work alone and this result agrees with my view in this study that teachers hold one half and parents the second half of responsibility for I.R.E. The last item in field three clarifies that 14.6% of I.R.E. teachers strongly agree that parents have a clear idea of the role of I.R.E. in society, and 40.8% of I.R.E. teachers are agree. This response has significant differences between I.R.E. teachers, Kuwaiti and Saudi. The 14.6% result is not a satisfactory result in my view, because it is necessary for parents to know the role of I.R.E. in society as teachers do in order to co-operate together for the aims of I.R.E. Comparing this result with high parents' results in

Section A, might highlight the fact that teachers of I.R.E. need to know more about parents' views towards I.R.E.

Table Four contains five items. The first item is "the importance of I.R.E. is clear to teachers of other subjects", and 50.5% strongly agree and 30.2% of I.R.E. teachers agree with this item, although there are significant differences between male and female Kuwaiti and Saudi teachers.

The justification of this result is that I.R.E. teachers have an effect on other teachers by making them understand the importance of I.R.E. or they feel this through society, and if this is the case it will be to the credit of I.R.E. teachers. The second item in field four is that I.R.E. teachers are specialists in I.R.E. teaching methods, and 14.7% strongly agree and 30.5% agree that they studied I.R.E. teaching methods. What concerns me is that 28.7% disagree that they are specialists in I.R.E. teaching methods. This needs more attention from both the Ministry of Education in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. The result is significant between male and female teachers, and male teachers are higher than female teachers.

Item three in field four shows that I.R.E. teachers feel pupils are enthusiastic and interested in I.R.E. lessons and 36.6% strongly agree, 47.9% agree to this response, and all groups of teachers are agreed. My view is that if this is the real situation in the classroom it is what this study aims to achieve and if there is an exaggeration then all of us, teachers, parents and inspectors in the region need to be more realistic in this matter. Teachers seem to me not to please anyone if they do not tell what they have seen.

Item four expresses that 47.1% strongly agree and 37% of I.R.E. teachers agree to use educational teaching aids within I.R.E., and there is significance in the differences between Kuwaiti and Saudi graduate and undergraduate teachers. The result indicates that many I.R.E. teachers use the educational teaching aids and it will help pupils to like the subject more and also assist the development process

of teaching I.R.E. The important question is, what are the educational aids they have been using, if most of teachers and inspectors complain of the shortages of the educational visual aids? I will return to this point later on when I compare this result with inspectors' viewpoints.

Item five has 25% strongly agree and 34.1% agree that I.R.E.'s future is the responsibility of the teachers. Male and female teachers agreed on this response, though there are significant differences, the female teachers' results being higher than the males'. It is disclosed again that teachers of I.R.E. feel the responsibility of I.R.E. but they are not alone. There ought to be other bodies who share the responsibility with them such as society and family. I can see that their response is reasonable and this view has been dealt with in Chapters Six and Seven, that parents' resignation from responsibility for their children is not accepted. Also I.R.E. teachers' responsibility is not limited and the I.R.E. textbook is part of their task. Finally, the result also reveals that both male and female teachers feel their responsibility, with female teachers showing this more.

ITEM	Frequency					Total		Sex						Nationality						Qualifications						Experience					
	stro- ngly agree	agree	unde- cided	dis- agree	stro- ngly dis- agree	mean	Std. Dev.	M		F		T	S	Kuwaiti		Saudi		T	S	Graduate		Under- graduate		less than 5 years		more than 5 years		T	S		
								mean	std. dev.	mean	std. dev.			mean	std. dev.	mean	std. dev.			mean	std. dev.	mean	std. dev.	mean	std. dev.	mean	std. dev.				
Q17 Easy IRE text book for the first year	133	113	29	14	8	4.18	0.97	3.25	4.33	0.87	3.25	0.001	4.08	0.99	4.26	0.95	1.6	0.11	4.15	0.90	4.16	0.99	4.17	0.95	4.27	0.84	0.63	0.53			
Percentage	44.8	38	9.8	4.7	2.7																										
Q18 Easy IRE text book for the second year	123	107	37	18	8	4.1	1.02	3.97	4.18	0.99	1.78	0.08	3.91	1.06	4.26	0.94	2.99	0.03	4.00	1.01	4.10	1.00	4.18	0.97	4.00	1.06	0.96	0.34			
Percentage	42	36.5	12.6	6.1	2.7																										
Q19 Easy IRE text book for third year	110	102	50	24	6	3.98	1.03	3.8	4.13	0.93	2.69	0.007	3.79	1.03	4.15	1.01	3.0	0.003	3.92	1.03	3.97	1.01	4.00	1.03	3.95	1.03	0.29	0.77			
Percentage	37.7	34.9	17.1	8.2	2.1																										
Q33 Complete IRE text book for the first year	55	106	61	53	15	3.46	1.14	3.26	3.61	1.09	2.65	0.008	3.28	1.18	3.63	1.08	2.61	0.01	3.50	1.05	3.41	1.16	3.71	1.00	3.55	1.05	0.87	0.39			
Percentage	19	36.6	21	18.3	5.2																										
Q34 Complete IRE text book for the second year	55	117	56	49	15	3.51	1.13	3.34	3.64	1.09	2.25	0.03	3.28	1.2	3.73	1.01	3.48	0.001	3.51	0.99	3.47	1.16	3.61	0.97	3.65	1.04	0.19	0.85			
Percentage	18.8	40.1	19.2	16.8	5.2																										
Q35 Complete IRE text book for the third year	52	105	69	51	13	3.46	1.11	3.32	3.56	1.11	1.8	0.07	3.16	1.16	3.73	0.98	4.5	0.001	3.54	0.95	3.38	1.14	3.64	0.82	3.51	1.08	0.73	0.46			
Percentage	17.9	36.2	23.8	17.6	4.5																										
Total	528	650	302	209	65	3.75	1.04	3.63	3.91	0.72	2.92	0.004	3.56	0.81	3.99	0.76	4.50	0.001	3.79	0.79	3.75	0.81	3.91	0.75	3.83	0.75	0.53	0.59			
Percentage	30.1	37.6	17.2	11.9	3.71																										

Table Five contains six items reflecting what I.R.E. teachers did in school with the I.R.E. textbook, and the result shows that 30.1% strongly agree and 37.6% agree, but this response seems to me not quite enough in spite of the fact that it is high, and female teachers give higher responses than male teachers, and Saudi teachers higher than Kuwaiti teachers, and there is significance between the differences. This field contains six items dealing with the three stages in primary education.

In item one, "is the I.R.E. textbook easy for the first year", 44.8% strongly agree and 38% agree. This result reveals that a large number of I.R.E. teachers agreed that the I.R.E. textbook is easy and there are significant differences between the groups of teachers male and female. The reason for this response is that I.R.E. teachers found that this is the latest I.R.E. textbook published and perhaps from their point of view there is no criticism or suggestion to be made yet. Also our normal education system in the Gulf region does not encourage teachers in general to make comments on things they deal with, because it might upset the people in the education authorities. However, I feel sure that the time is coming when this sort of thing will change, and criticism will be encouraged.

In item two, "is the I.R.E. textbook easy for the second year", teachers express similar results to the first year. 42% strongly agree and 36.5% agree and there are significant differences between the groups of teachers, Saudi and Kuwaiti. Item three expresses less than the two first and second years and the differences are 37.7% strongly agree and 34.9% agree. But 17.1% of teachers are undecided and this might reflect that I.R.E. teachers are not in agreement about the third I.R.E. textbook. There is a significant difference between the Kuwaiti and Saudi teachers, and in both items Saudi teachers show higher responses. I noticed

this also through the inspectors' interviews and I will return to this point later in the chapter.

Item four also is about the textbook and it examines a complete I.R.E. textbook for the first year, but the result is quite different. 19% of I.R.E. teachers strongly agree and 36.6% agree to this response. This implies that all groups agree with this response and the textbook content is not fully integrated, which means that more work and development is needed to reach a better level. One notices that 21% are undecided and 18.3% disagree which shows that the I.R.E. teachers are not quite happy with the I.R.E. textbook for the first year. For item five, which looks at the case of the second year of the I.R.E. textbook, teachers of I.R.E. have the same result as 18.8% strongly agree and 40.1% agree and there is a significant difference between sex and nationality of teachers, and it is clear that item five has a similar result to item four.

Finally, item six shows a similar result to items four and five and 17.9% are strongly agreed and 36.2% agreed that the I.R.E. textbook for the third year is integrated, but there are 23.8% of I.R.E. teachers who are undecided and 17.6% who disagree. Kuwaiti and Saudi teachers show significant differences in their responses, with Saudi teachers' responses being higher than Kuwaiti teachers'.

A general view of field five indicates that I.R.E. textbooks are not fully integrated and it might need revising and improving. This result mainly agrees with what this study has illustrated in Chapter Four in examining the three textbooks of the three stages in the two countries and in suggesting the need for improvement throughout the development of I.R.E. in both countries.

Table Six contains four items. In the first there are 5.6% who strongly agree and 9.8% who agree that they have participated while 41.8% strongly disagree and 31.7% disagree that they have participated in this result. This clearly reveals poor participation from I.R.E. teachers in developing I.R.E. and there are significant differences between male and female teachers. This might imply that female teachers are more active than male teachers, especially in the primary stage. This result is only a moderate response which must disappoint many I.R.E. teachers in their work, because I believe that the less participation there is the more problems there will be. So the Ministries of Education in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia should take this into consideration when they prepare the next five year plan of education. In addition this study which, for obvious reasons, is encouraging parents in participating in I.R.E. shows there should clearly be more participation from the I.R.E. teachers.

On item two, 25.2% strongly agree and 35.5% agree that the I.R.E. textbook for the first year is suitable for the future, and there are significant differences between Kuwaiti and Saudi teachers, male and female.. The result reveals that I.R.E. teachers agree to the convenience of the I.R.E. textbook to some extent because there are 23.8% undecided and 18% who disagree and this result cannot be ignored. At the same time there are similar results in item three in which 21.2% strongly agree and 33.3% agree to the second I.R.E. textbook, but also 25.7% are undecided and 13.5% disagree. This is a significant result between Kuwaiti and Saudi teachers, male and female. The last item shows that the I.R.E. textbook is suitable and 21.1% strongly agree and 31.5% agree with this. Also the disagreement becomes more as the result shows 27.6% undecided and 14% that disagree, and there are significant differences between Kuwaiti and Saudi teachers, male and female. So there is a general remark I could make which is that the I.R.E. textbook for the third year is not suitable. The first and second year

reflects the same result in field five, that is that the third I.R.E. textbook is not as easy and complete as the first and second ones.

So field six generally discloses that development of I.R.E. is not at a satisfactory level and this may lead one to ask this question - what the development of I.R.E. has achieved from the aims of I.R.E., if the result in Table One shows that the I.R.E. teacher has a high response in understanding the aims and can achieve them.

It is clear to me that teachers of I.R.E. might agree to the concept of the aims in general but they might not know what is beyond this point or how to achieve the aims in the correct way with a clear proposal. This is the main point of this thesis, aiming to investigate how to help I.R.E. teachers, inspectors and parents to cooperate with each other and to know precisely and clearly the right road for developing I.R.E., and what stage they have passed and finally what comes next.

Conclusions

In field one the female teachers have higher responses than the male teachers, and there are statistically significant differences which reflect that female teachers have a better understanding and clearer idea about the aims of I.R.E. than male teachers. Perhaps this is because they are enthusiastic about I.R.E. lessons and know more about the aims, or there could be other reasons not shown at this stage which need more investigation.

Table Four implies that the result is high towards the field of "Teacher of I.R.E." and the female teachers show higher responses than male teachers. There is statistical significance between the differences, and perhaps this reveals that female teachers are more successful in their teaching of I.R.E. and make the

subject more effective for pupils and other teachers. It may also indicate that they take the responsibility of I.R.E. more seriously than their male counterparts.

Table Five deals with the I.R.E. textbook and clarifies that male and female teachers have a high response, though female teachers' responses are higher than male teachers'. There is statistical significance between the differences which may indicate that female teachers accept the I.R.E. textbook more readily than male teachers. This could be because they are more flexible in their teaching than the male teachers.

Table Six is the smallest result in comparison with other fields, and indicates the male and female teachers show high responses to the development of I.R.E. There is statistical significance between the differences, which reflects that female teachers participate in developing I.R.E. more than male teachers which could take place through the different ways of expressing their views towards the I.R.E. textbook.

The effect of nationality is shown by the various responses between Kuwaiti and Saudi teachers to the six fields of the study. Table One indicates a high response to "Aims of I.R.E." and obviously the Saudi response is higher than Kuwaiti response to this field. There is a statistical significance to this response which reflects that the Saudi teachers understand and know the aims of I.R.E. more than Kuwaiti teachers. I have said this because they might know clearly what they are doing through their small textbook as compared with the large textbook in Kuwait. Added to this, the nature of Saudi society makes teachers of I.R.E. mainly feel that they are to place an emphasis on religion and Al Tawhid in many aspects of the curriculum and because I.R.E. has given a third of the general curriculum which makes teachers feel they know the aims of I.R.E. more than Kuwaiti I.R.E. teachers.

In the second table the Saudi and Kuwaiti teachers' responses mark the highest agreement compared to other fields and there is statistical significance between the differences. Again this shows that the role of I.R.E. in Saudi Arabia is more significant than it is in Kuwait and we must bear in mind that Kuwaiti society is more democratic than Saudi, so the role of religion may be the same in spite of the fact that the Kuwaiti I.R.E. teachers imply a very high response. As a result of this the I.R.E. in Saudi Arabia plays a vital role in developing society, as the society at the same time takes responsibility for religion.

Table Three indicates a high response towards the field of "Parents and I.R.E.", but less than the first and second field. Saudi I.R.E. teachers have a higher response than Kuwaiti I.R.E. teachers to this field, which leads them to say that parents in Saudi Arabia feel the importance of I.R.E. more than Kuwaiti parents, and the differences between the two groups are significant.

My view of this response is that perhaps Saudi parents have taken the responsibility of I.R.E. more seriously than Kuwaiti parents because, as I have said before, the general environment of Saudi Arabia is closer to religion.

Table Five shows that Kuwaiti and Saudi I.R.E. teachers have high responses to this field, "The I.R.E. textbook", and the Saudi I.R.E. teachers reveal higher than Kuwaiti teachers in this field and there are statistically significant differences between them, which could show that the Saudi I.R.E. textbook is easier than the Kuwaiti I.R.E. textbook. Of course this result is very clear because the Saudi I.R.E. textbook contains two parts, Al Tawhid and Al Fiqh which is easy to cover in the whole. Both of them are not more than 27 pages and even if the language of the textbook is difficult in many lessons, it is still much easier than the Kuwaiti I.R.E. textbook which contains so many

concepts and headings, sub-headings and sub-sub-headings and so on, and the teacher should go through all 275 pages in the textbook approximately to cover the whole subject. On the other hand the Saudi I.R.E. textbook is shown complete, because it focuses on the very general aspect of Islamic religion and makes statements of it to pupils so they can memorise them and repeat them, while the Kuwaiti I.R.E. textbook deals with the very small details in Islamic religion in order to emphasise pupils' behaviour and performance.

Table Six indicates that the response to this field is the smallest one compared to the other fields and it implies that the Kuwaiti and Saudi development of I.R.E. is not quite high compared with other fields. Although there is statistical significance between the differences, the Saudi development of I.R.E. clearly is higher than the Kuwaiti. The reason for this is perhaps that Saudi I.R.E. teachers feel that their textbook is suitable because it has covered the aims of I.R.E. as they have been set, so their participation is not as significant as the I.R.E. Kuwaiti teachers.

Kuwaiti and Saudi I.R.E. teachers' remarks

At this point I want to draw attention to the fact that Kuwaiti I.R.E. teachers have shown more participation in their questionnaires than the Saudi. This reflects that the I.R.E. teachers in Kuwait are not in full agreement with the I.R.E. textbook, so they try to express their feelings towards it. Or it might show that the Kuwaiti I.R.E. teachers have participated in different ways, but have received negative responses. In order to make this subject clear the following section will describe and compare between the Kuwaiti and Saudi I.R.E. teachers in regard to their questionnaire comments.

Kuwait:

One of the I.R.E. teachers does not agree to the aims of I.R.E. in Kuwait and she believes that the curriculum is not yet suitable, e.g. as the foundation of primary stage pupils need to have more from the Holy Quran (K.171). Following this opinion so many I.R.E. teachers say that the Ministry of Education should increase the subject of the Holy Quran for this stage (K.35, 36, 170, 172, 168, and others).

They also say that there are too many pictures in the I.R.E. textbook and some of these pictures are repeated for no reason. The particular suggestion they have offered is that the poems are not needed at all in the textbook so it would be better to replace them with texts of the Holy Quran (ibid.). Clearly this reflects that they have criticised the aims of I.R.E. and made some suggestions.

An I.R.E. teachers said to me that he wanted to give a sincere word to everybody who loves religion that I.R.E. must have full consideration.

This new I.R.E. textbook does nothing!! It is all pictures, photographs, and neglects the Quran. The textbook has bad organisation and presentation in terms of the concepts and so on. Also I have not participated in this curriculum and bear in mind that I have 19 years' experience in teaching I.R.E. (K.177)

Added to what he says there are large groups of I.R.E. teachers who complain about many repeated lessons in the I.R.E. textbook, many poems, and the concepts are not clear, as well as the textbook being too big (K. 55, 72, 8, 59, 36, 170, 249, 151, 9 and others). All these cases show that the I.R.E. textbook in Kuwait needs to be revised.

One teacher also compares teaching I.R.E. with music and says,

The aim of I.R.E. is not clear ... i.e. the periods devoted to teaching I.R.E. are similar to the periods of teaching music and physical education. (K.14).

This perhaps means in Kuwait music and I.R.E. has one or two lessons a week and so it seems that the subjects' values are the same and this is incorrect. Another group of teachers of I.R.E. complain about the same thing and ask the Ministry of Education to increase the teaching lessons of I.R.E. and reduce the poems as well as add some stories which relate to the Prophet Muhammad (p.b.o.h.) (K.13, 70, 28, 49, 17 and others).

Some I.R.E. teachers say the reason for changing the poems is because poems are unlikely for teachers, parents and pupils and others also suggest that teaching the Holy Quran should emphasise Chapter 30 because it is easy and simple for pupils. On the other side pupils in many times get confused and mix the Quran with the poems (K. 112, 23, 6, 75, and others).

These teachers in my view are correct because they can see something the Ministry of Education may not see. For example, a group of I.R.E. teachers testify that parents found difficulty in teaching their children some of the Quranic verses (K.91, 15, 92, 99 and others).

One of the I.R.E. teachers suggested some interesting points:

The I.R.E. curriculum should be run by educationalists within the Gulf region. (K. 85),

while someone else says

It is sad that the Ministry of Education does not let the I.R.E. teacher get involved in writing or participating in setting up the textbook. (K.3, 20, 170 and others).

Consequently, teachers of I.R.E. discussed the possibility of providing I.R.E. educational aids such as films, charts, videos and so on. (K.108, 190, and others).

My analysis of all I.R.E. teachers' comments is that many I.R.E. teachers, and perhaps teachers in general, want someone to listen and discuss with them, to say yes or no, but not to ignore their professional opinions. This study gives them full support and encouragement in what they say, because I know to what extent they are suffering by teaching what they have no control over.

Saudi Arabia:

The Saudi I.R.E. teachers' comments expressed their views toward the six fields in different ways. One of them says

The aims of I.R.E. are not clear in detail for each subject within I.R.E. such as Al Fiqh and Al Tawhid, but I doubt that many teachers have any idea about the aims ... I do not know how you are going to analyse the situation between Kuwait and Saudi Arabia because each one is different from the other (S.231).

This teacher held a high degree and perhaps tried to say something about the aims. He seemed to me to try to develop I.R.E. but he found no way to do this. He and many other teachers in Saudi Arabia asked me to do something to develop or assist in developing I.R.E. in Saudi Arabia. For instance one of the teachers said,

The development of I.R.E. must take place in the first, second and third year in the primary stage to be clear, simple and better. (S.191).

Add to this a group of I.R.E. teachers who pointed out

We need to revise the I.R.E. curriculum,

I.R.E. should be developed to cope with modern life. (S. 142, 204, 139, 196, 295 and others).

Some I.R.E. teachers emphasise that the educational aids should be provided by the Ministry of Education (S. *ibid*). At the same time teachers noticed that the I.R.E. textbook in Saudi Arabia does not get involved in the actual life of society (S. 255, 222, 143, 291 and others).

These remarks clearly show a certain level of dissatisfaction by the I.R.E. teachers in Saudi Arabia towards the I.R.E. textbook and I agree with them that certain improvements should take place. It is not known, of course, what the Saudi Ministry of Education might feel about these remarks.

In terms of I.R.E. teacher training, one of the teachers suggested:

I hope that some training courses can be provided by the experts in I.R.E. to refresh teachers of I.R.E. by some ideas and opinions so as to discuss the possibilities of developing the I.R.E. curriculum in the primary stage. (S. 291).

Her suggestion is quite reasonable and if the Ministry of Education does not plan to do this then my study should remind the Ministry. If the plan is already set then it should be altered so as to encourage and support the teachers of I.R.E. first, and Saudi society second.

Similar suggestions came from another teacher when she pointed out,

The I.R.E. textbook in Saudi Arabia was neglected by the Ministry of Education and I suggest that teaching morality is a very important thing which is missing in the curriculum. Add to this it is noticed that the I.R.E. textbook has no attractive points to be affected by pupils, i.e. stories and short texts of daily prayer the pupils might learn. Finally the textbook has no relevance to the needs of our lives and it seems separated from our life. (S.222).

As a matter of fact, I strongly agree with her view and the reason is that the general aims of education as well as the aims of I.R.E. are not clearly reflected in the textbook and it sounds as if the I.R.E. textbooks are only for religious information. This problem has been dealt with in Chapters Four, Five and Six and the main aim in I.R.E. is to change pupils' behaviour and minds, so they are good Muslims first and know about the religion second, otherwise there is no meaning for such information in religion if it does not create and lead to better pupils.

Inspectors' response to the teachers' fields

Field One: "Aims of I.R.E."

Kuwait:

The general impressions of interviewees in Kuwait is that the aims of I.R.E. are reflected in the present time but they might need revising from time to time, particularly to match the needs of Kuwaiti society. Interviewee No. 6 revealed that the aims of I.R.E. had been set at a high level for people:

- Q: Do you find that the aims of I.R.E. in the primary stage are relevant to the present time?
A: The aims reflect present-day life and there are teachers of psychology from Kuwait university and teachers of developed psychology who have set up these aims in the light of children's needs and attributes.

Perhaps what he says is right but this will give more responsibility to psychologists to examine more cases of pupils being affected during the Iraqi occupation and their need for long term treatment. If there are clear and suitable aims which need to be achieved I think pupils' needs become more complicated than a few years ago. Interviewee No. 3 gave a general answer to the question of aims:

- Q: Do you think that the I.R.E. aims are relevant to our life?
A: The aims of I.R.E. issue from the general aims of the state. The state, as you know, is a Muslim, Arab and modern state. These three dimensions are related to the aims of I.R.E.

It seems to me that these three dimensions are more obvious in the I.R.E. textbook and this is one of the advantages of the Kuwaiti I.R.E. aims. My view is there should be a clear idea of what is meant by "modern state" because this could mean many things.

Interview No. 7 :

- Q: Does this mean the aims of I.R.E. can cope with the present times, or do they need improvement or change?

A: Well, as you know, the curriculum is always based on the foundations and nature and circumstances of modern life which surrounds the learner, and therefore I can say that the aims of I.R.E. are closer to actual life.

She believes that the aims of I.R.E. are closer to actual life, but would not say directly what she meant by "circumstances". It could be good or bad because both will surround the learner. To make sure what the worst thing surrounding the learner was I asked Interviewee No. 2 directly:

Q: What are your opinions about the aims of I.R.E.? Are they relative to our lives particularly with regard to Kuwait after the invasion?

A: I.R.E. is in keeping with our lives both in the past and the present. It describes what has happened in our history through the Holy Quran and the Prophet Muhammad's life, peace be upon him. The purpose of the aims of I.R.E. is to be continuous for the future because children today are not like children of the past ... so the aims of I.R.E. must be up to date with our lives at the present time in order to be accepted.

I do agree with this viewpoint and it shows that the interviewee agreed to revising the aims of I.R.E. to some extent, added to which he pointed out that, whatever the times, I.R.E. must remain and keep our lives with Islam. Updating the aims ought to be within the shadow of Islam as well.

Interviewee No. 6 had an answer to the second question about the aims of I.R.E. when he said that psychologists had participated in the aims, so I asked him:

Q: If those teachers have participated in setting up the aims do you think such aims will need some revision?

A: The aims will always be in need of revision because they are affected by the ever-changing style of life and because change takes place so rapidly nowadays. We want the learner to understand this situation and to follow what is going on around him. The changing situations of modern life directly affect the education system and curriculum. As a result there is a lack of revision, particularly after the Gulf crisis which has affected the Arab states as well as Kuwaiti society in particular. This crisis was horrendous, the like of which has not been experienced before.

This description from the non-Kuwaiti inspector reveals how big the crisis is for the children and the effect on the education system and curriculum. Of course I

strongly agree with this view and the point has been addressed in more than one chapter of this study.

Saudi Arabia:

Moving towards the Saudi inspectors and Field One, there are some similarities in the responses and they have raised interesting points. For instance, Interviewee No.10:

- Q: Do you think that the aims of I.R.E. are relevant and suitable to our lives, or do they need alteration for the future?
A: I assume that the aims and formula do serve society in general, the roots of which spread to the younger people, which does not exist in many societies.

He thinks that many societies did not have the same aims as Saudi Arabia and this is true from my point of view, especially in terms of I.R.E. Another interviewee identifies this subject more and accepts there is a small change which might be needed but in general most of the Saudi inspectors gave very brief answers to the questions and preferred not to go into detail. Interviewee No. 8 pointed out:

- Q: Are the aims of I.R.E. in this country sufficient, or do you think they might require some changes to fit in with modern society?
A: The aims of I.R.E. have been set up by the state to create a good Muslim in this society. Therefore they contain the desired ethical standard to help pupils gain a better understanding of Islam and I think that the aims can serve for a long time, though there may be small things that may need change.

The point I have realised is that most of the inspectors believe that the aims can serve for a long time and there is no need to change for two reasons. First, they might really accept the aims and find they work properly, so there is no need to change and the aims can serve for a long time. Secondly, they may not see any reason for changing the aims if the society is not affected badly by what happened in Kuwait. Interviewee No. 13 agreed that the aims of I.R.E. are suitable:

- Q: Can you see that I.R.E. aims are suitable, or do they need revising in the future?
A: In fact the aims laid down by the Ministry of Education are solid and they can be applied in the long term, and bear in

mind that they are derived from the general aims of education in this country and I can see that there is no need to change them yet.

He also describes the aims as solid and there is no need to change them yet and this is exactly what No. 9 said. The question is, have they seen any aims from other states or are there other reasons they do not want to reveal? Interviewee No. 11 also felt that the aims were suitable, but he added an interesting point:

The aims of I.R.E. in the primary stage are suitable to the child's growth and understanding in order to achieve the benefit of education, especially if it is accepted by the families.

Linking the aims with family acceptance indicates that the family can play a role in achieving the aims with I.R.E. teachers and this is quite understandable. Perhaps the level of satisfaction is addressed by Interviewee No. 12:

Q: Regarding the aims of I.R.E., do you see that it is suitable for the next stage?

A: You know that the Ministry of Education is always revising the curriculum and reformulating the textbook in order to be kept abreast with Islam. As you know, Islam as a religion is valid from the past and for the future, and we are living in an advanced style which means that the aims of I.R.E. might need some adjustment in order to achieve some sort of balance to meet the new situation. The main thing is how to reach the pupils and identify them with Islam either through the oral and visual media or through the schools.

His statement shows agreement with many issues dealt with in this study, i.e. the validity of Islam as a complete curriculum for the education system. Secondly, to achieve some sort of balance to meet the new situations and what might happen in the near future. Thirdly, to reach pupils and affect them in the right way. Fourthly to co-operate between home and school through the media or any other method and to make sure that the aims of I.R.E. really exist and will lead society in the right way.

Field Two: "The Role of I.R.E. in Society"

Kuwait:

The general view of this field is that inspectors' viewpoints in Kuwait focus on the teacher of I.R.E. as a major key to society and they understand the role of I.R.E. As Interviewee No.2 says:

The I.R.E. teacher is supposed to be a pattern and a model because everyone asks him about the Quran and religious matters. ... In the meantime it is a great responsibility when dealing with I.R.E. teaching.

This interviewee agrees with the idea that the I.R.E. teacher is representative of society in having a great responsibility towards I.R.E. The task is not easy for anyone to do but most inspectors feel the same thing and it seems to me their experience with Kuwaiti society leads them to say this. Interviewee No. 6 confirms this view:

Without doubt this role is important because the teacher is a representative in the pupil's home and his example will be copied, and we say that good behaviour as seen in the home and outside is a reflection of the teachers of I.R.E.

It is an important role if there is interaction between home and teachers of I.R.E. as this study indicates, and a better way to improve society is to maintain the role of the I.R.E. teacher. Interviewee No. 3 says:

- Q: What is the main problem of I.R.E. from your point of view?
A: Education always has problems as long as it is serving human beings. Even the holy books work towards educating people. Our first problem is the teacher. The solution of this problem would be very helpful because they can develop the curriculum and the textbook.

He sees that the role of I.R.E. in society is not easy because it is serving human beings, as the prophets did with people. So his opinion agrees with mine, as has been discussed in Chapter Six. Although I have said that whatever the level of the textbook we have, if there is no qualified teacher, there is no way of using the textbook.

Saudi Arabia:

On the other hand the Saudi inspectors found the role of I.R.E. in society insufficient. This role takes place through the following:

1. the periods devoted for teaching I.R.E.
2. the role of scholars
3. the Saudi educational authorities

Interviewee No. 11 says:

Q: Do you find that I.R.E. has a good status in the modern curriculum?

A: All the I.R.E. subjects have a good status in the eye of the authorities in Saudi Arabia because they take up one third of the educational curriculum.

The first point shows the role of I.R.E. in Saudi society that it takes up a third of the educational curriculum, but the question is for how long? Because there are many indications that they will reduce this amount year by year and there is no doubt it worries the people of Saudi Arabia.

Interviewee No. 10 focuses on the role of I.R.E. from the other point which is the scholars:

The I.R.E. teacher in Saudi Arabia is respected and accepted in schools and outside schools. The scholars in general hold high status in Saudi Arabia because people ask them always about their religious issues concerning their lives. They often need the I.R.E. teacher and keep a continuous relationship with them.

In fact this study shows in Chapter Three the role played by the scholars and Mullahs within I.R.E. from the early 1950s and 60s. It is the same now, with scholars directing people towards Islam. They must be respected by both authorities and people as other societies respect their academic scholars. In fact the Holy Quran states this, as I have said before. The inspectors also draw people's attention to I.R.E. and keep a good relationship with I.R.E. teachers, and this is

an encouragement to my study. Interviewee No. 14 made the role of the I.R.E. teacher very clear when he said:

- Q: Does that mean the role of the I.R.E. teacher in Saudi Arabia is a success?
A: The role of the I.R.E. teacher is that he has a message for children to follow and must teach them new things within the Islamic Sharia and yet in an up to date way.

It is the message to pupils to behave well and to be good and to remember whatever they study about Islam. I can say that the role of I.R.E. in society is clear and hopefully not being reduced.

Field Three: "Parents and I.R.E."

Kuwait:

In Kuwait the inspectors seem to me to deal with parents occasionally and they found some difficulties when they tried to change their minds to new ideas.

Interviewee No. 3 confirmed the participation from parents within I.R.E.:

- Q: Do you find that the evaluation of I.R.E. considers parents, teachers and others?
A: Of course, evaluation is subject to academic procedure, i.e. doctors from university in a curriculum-evaluation measurement, some committees from educational research centres from the Ministry of Education, teachers from schools, supervisors and parents. All of these are participating in the evaluation of I.R.E. The conclusion of this is sometimes done by seminar.

For me this is good news and whatever the level of differences between the two views it will make the education system better. This has been stated in Chapter Seven and what is needed is more and more meetings with parents because I believe it is for the benefit of our children in the Gulf region.

At the same time it seems to me that parents should not be blamed if they refuse or reject any proposal from the Ministry of Education, because later on they will be more easy to understand and convince in the way of teaching their children.

Interviewee No. 6 reveals the sort of difficulty they have with parents and says:

In my opinion parents want to educate their children in the same way as they were educated themselves, using an old-fashioned teaching style which is a subject curriculum, and this curriculum has been neglected in many countries. Kuwait is one of those countries which has neglected this type of teaching method, and we have to inform parents about the latest developments in regard to the textbook.

I do agree with him that parents should be informed about the latest developments, as they are part of the educational system and that is exactly what Chapter Seven tries to achieve.

Interviewee No. 2 in his comments on the textbook mentions that we can help parents to work with their children and teach them I.R.E. through the textbook:

... and the pupil textbook might need a little bit more reinforcement, which would help the parents to see the pupils' textbook and work with them. Otherwise, if they do not find the pupils' textbook adequate the parents will find difficulty in explaining lessons to their children. Particularly in the first stage we see that pupils are more dependent upon teachers than parents in reading the Holy Quran and understanding religious matters. Although we are worried that some parents may not be able to read the Quran correctly.

Obviously this type of thinking will push the education system a step forward because it gives parents much thought so they can assist I.R.E. teachers in their task. On the other hand this inspector would help parents if they are unable to be involved in teaching their children in the correct way. So from these ideas one can see that interviewees agreed to parents' participation and this could lead to wider changes in the Ministry of Education policy in Kuwait.

Saudi Arabia:

The Saudi interviewees' responses seem different from the Kuwaiti, and some inspectors may not encourage parents to participate in I.R.E. Interviewee No. 13 says:

- Q: In your opinion do you find it worthwhile for parents to share in the development of I.R.E.?
- A: The development of I.R.E. is not open to any person but only to those who are qualified in this matter such as scholars "ullama", and if there are plans for development we have no idea about it. They often come to us from the authorities in education and I say that parents might participate within the school itself when they have the annual meeting.

Participation in school could be the first step in Saudi Arabia which could be extended in the future. The reason for this is that Saudi educational authorities involve one or two scholars of religion as Kuwait did. In fact the Saudi I.R.E. textbook clearly reflects the involvement of Islamic scholars. As a result this some inspectors address clearly and frankly what the development is of I.R.E. Interviewee No. 9 reveals this and says:

- Q: Do parents participate in the process of developing I.R.E. as a whole?
- A: They do not have anything to do with development because the whole curriculum is revised from time to time by the Ministry of Education. Therefore we could not say that we have a developed textbook or curriculum, and you can see that from time to time the revision of the textbook has been to simplify it regarding certain words and the structure of sentences. Bear in mind that the textbook in Saudi Arabia was written 10 years ago and there has been no major change except for a small amount of revision as I have told you, and perhaps in this case the situation in Kuwait is different to ours.

Actually more than one person has said this to me in different forms, and my understanding is that there are differences between the Kuwaiti and Saudi I.R.E. methods of development. Inspector No. 9 also said that parents' participation can take place at home, to protect children from the media and so on.

- Q: Are there any problems facing I.R.E. from your point of view?

A: The main problem facing I.R.E. is the contribution that parents might make in guiding their children in view of the influence of the media, e.g. TV, because the media does not conform to the curriculum of I.R.E. at all times.

In regard to the media's influence, the inspector's view is in agreement with my views and feelings that the best way to deal with it is through parents. As interviewee No.14 says:

Q: Do you have any suggestions or recommendations about I.R.E. development?

A: The teacher should seek Allah in his work and be sincere. He should also seek co-operation between home and school to maintain the level of education for children to gain and avoid any conflict that might happen between home and school because parents' level of religion may not be the same.

Field Four: "Teachers of I.R.E."

Kuwait:

In Kuwait there are different views towards the I.R.E. teacher from the interviewee. Some inspectors support the I.R.E. teachers, such as Interviewee No. 6:

Q: Are there any problems confronting the teaching of I.R.E.?

A: The main problems we are facing is the teaching of the Arabic language and I.R.E. at the same time because this weakens I.R.E. and we ask the Ministry of Education to offer more motivation to teachers and to have more training. At the same time we should not force them to teach a subject they do not like, otherwise we will probably be faced with unfortunate consequences relating to pupils.

Most of the inspectors agree to the role of I.R.E. teachers in society but they feel that teaching it as another curriculum subject is one of the problems many teachers do not like because, as he said, it weakens the teaching of I.R.E., and the reason for this is because the teacher must prepare for three subjects: Arabic, history or geography and I.R.E. In this case I criticise the Ministry of Education

for their decision, as many other I.R.E. teachers do. In fact some I.R.E. teachers and inspectors complained to me about this situation. I strongly agree with them and think that the Ministry of Education may want to reduce the number of teachers and inspectors so they combine them as Arts teachers and Science teachers, mostly for financial reasons, which happened four or five years ago.

Interviewee No. 7 has different views towards I.R.E. teacher. She feels that society gives no care to I.R.E. teachers, not only in Kuwait but in most of the Arab countries:

- Q: From your point of view how do you see the value society places on the I.R.E. teacher?
- A: We as a society, I mean the Arab society, does not respect the teacher as it is supposed to do. Two days ago I read an article in the Kuwait newspaper talking about the importance of showing respect for the teacher in general, because he or she guides the younger generation in our society. I could not say that society is showing enough respect towards the teacher, and even the teacher himself, when someone asks him: "What is your job?" gives a very timid response: "Teacher."
- Q: That is for a general teacher. How about the I.R.E. teacher in particular?
- A: I am terribly sorry to tell you that the I.R.E. teacher's skills are not satisfactory to me. That is because he/she is teaching the Arabic language and religion at the same time but in any case a good teacher can handle any subject.

There are two reasons for her view, first that she has an impression many teachers do feel the same to say I am a teacher, and during the periods I was a teacher I felt the same. Secondly because she feels that teaching I.R.E. and other subjects is a real problem for I.R.E. and to some extent this is true.

Saudi Arabia:

Saudi inspectors have a different view from those in Kuwait, because the focus is on teaching I.R.E. alone. Interviewee No.11 expresses his view to this field and says:

- Q: What is the Saudi view towards the I.R.E. teacher?
- A: In this country the I.R.E. teacher is considered and appreciated because he is a representative of his subject of religion. Therefore his behaviour should be exemplary.
- Q: What is your evaluation of the role of the I.R.E. teacher?

A: If the I.R.E. teacher has full understanding of the subject he has an influence over the pupils, but if he does not there is no value in what he purports to teach.

His answer in brief implies that teachers of I.R.E. have a good status because of the subject he/she teaches. At the same time I tried to find out his personal reaction to this and he says, as many others say, it depends on the personality of the teacher to make anybody decide whether they are good teachers and people or not. To make sure of his response I also asked Interviewee No. 12 the same questions:

Q: How does Saudi society evaluate the I.R.E. teacher?

A: The view of our society towards the I.R.E. teacher is excellent because he is a respected person, even though he may not be Saudi.

When he says excellent I understand that it is a high response so followed with the second question:

Q: How have you arrived at this conclusion regarding I.R.E.?

A: We have come to this conclusion after evaluating the I.R.E. teacher, his personality, commitment and dignity and appearance, even if he is not specialised in the subject. We know this through experience.

Again it is clear that there are certain criteria which makes them justify which teachers are excellent. Interviewee No. 8 clarifies the regard of I.R.E. teacher from themselves:

Q: How does Saudi society regard the I.R.E. teacher?

A: This society in general respects the teacher but we do look forward to gaining more respect for the teacher himself and he can choose the way that people can judge whether he is good or not.

To make sure and receive precise answers I asked him:

Q: Could you say that the role of the I.R.E. teacher is important?

A: Yes, the role of the I.R.E. teacher in this society commands a prestigious position and therefore teachers must be close to Islam if they want to educate for a better generation, and people affected by him in school or outside, or even in our social activities and gatherings.

Obviously these responses are similar and all of the interviewees linked Islam and the personality of the I.R.E. teacher. There was the same response

from Saudi parents, and if this is the case one can say that Saudi society gives more respect to I.R.E. teachers than Kuwaiti society, and the important point beyond this is that I.R.E. teachers often are Saudi only.

Field Five: "I.R.E. textbook"

Kuwait:

This shows that inspectors in Kuwait have different views towards the I.R.E. textbook. Interviewee No. 3 says:

Obviously the I.R.E. textbook is not a holy book, so this means that it might need some change from time to time. But we might make some slight alterations in order to have a better education. The textbook in the primary stage has now been re-issued in order to be in use for a long time and we could not say that we are better than others, but I believe that the standard of our books is very good. For instance, some Arab countries have ordered the Kuwaiti I.R.E. textbook in order to follow and apply in their schools. This indicates that it is an advanced book and I can say that education in Kuwait is really advanced.

This is a high recommendation for the I.R.E. textbook in Kuwait and I do agree with him that in general the style of the textbook is very advanced. Compared with many Arab countries the I.R.E. textbook is competent, but this does not mean it might not need revising and altering from within Kuwaiti society and its natural social life. One feels very proud that I.R.E. in Kuwait has been followed by other Arab countries and perhaps this will put more pressure on I.R.E. headquarters in Kuwait to keep the standard high.

Interviewee No. 2 also agreed that the I.R.E. textbook in Kuwait was much better than the old one and the reason for this is clear in the connection between religion and our lives.

Q: What is your opinion about the developed I.R.E. textbook?
Do you see it as better than the old one?

A: The new textbook seems to be better because it has made a connection between our lives and religion, so when you are

looking to I.R.E. from the first up to the fourth stage you will see the whole subject is integrated.

What he said is agreed to some extent by what the I.R.E. teachers said, that the I.R.E. textbook is complete in general. Interviewee No.6 participated in writing the textbook and says that the new I.R.E. textbook fulfils the aims and provides pictures for the first year:

Perhaps this textbook has been written in haste because some of the pictures do not reflect the subject and the meaning. It needs specialised staff who understand the subject to produce more appropriate illustrations.

Q: Do you think that the I.R.E. textbook for the second year has similar problems?

A: Yes, I do.

Q: How about the third year textbook?

A: I believe that this one needs revising in some aspects and for this we have to take into account parents' opinions as well as teachers'. As you know, the majority of textbooks need updating from time to time.

He might focus on the third year more because the textbook needs more care and this result is something similar to I.R.E. teachers' result. In addition there are many teachers complaining about the poems. Interviewee No.2 remarked on this point, saying:

Q: There is an opinion that there are a lot of poems in the I.R.E. textbook. What is your opinion about this?

A: The poems, from my point of view, are giving pupils an activity especially in the morning to alert them and these poems are different from the poems of the Arabic language. Also I think that pupils have a desire to memorise these poems because they deal with a lot of subjects which make a strong impression on their emotions. Therefore I would say that pupils should memorise and memorise and memorise. After that they can understand or perhaps they can memorise some of these poems, if not all of them.

I do not know why this inspector insists on the importance of poems at this level, and of memorisation. Perhaps it is because he, or someone he knows, has written them, but for me it is a question which needs further investigation. Because the main point the I.R.E. teachers criticise in the textbook is the large number of poems, I will deal with this later in this chapter. I questioned Inspector No. 3 on this matter:

- Q: Regarding the poems in school, there are some opinions expressed that we have a large number of poems and we have a small number of verses from the Quran. What do you think about it?
- A: The amount of verses of the Holy Quran which have been tested between the past and the present, I mean the old I.R.E. and the developed one, can be calculated statistically. I mean, if we calculate the verses from the past compared with the present we will see that the present is more than the past, even though pupils could not memorise the whole verses or the whole poems. The poems themselves were accompanied by instructions. The teachers might ignore these instructions. In the meantime we give teachers a free hand to choose appropriate poems for his/her class. Unfortunately teachers do not know how to deal with this.

This interviewee indicated that the Quranic verses in the textbook were enough, but he may forget that the way of distribution of the verses within the textbook is not in appropriate places. Also the difficulty of choosing the verses perhaps makes no meaning of what he says. Besides this he said one thing about poems many I.R.E. teachers are missing, which is to know that they have a free hand to choose from the poems for the classroom.

Interviewee No. 7 agreed with what I have said in Chapter Four to change a number of the pictures in the I.R.E. textbook and pointed out:

I do agree with you that there are some pictures needing to be changed; better pictures should be found.

Generally the poems and pictures as well as the verses from the Holy Quran are three major points in the I.R.E. textbook in Kuwait which are in need of revising.

Saudi Arabia:

The Saudi I.R.E. textbook has fewer mistakes from the inspectors' point of view than the Kuwaiti one. I do not agree with this view, but let the inspectors say what they thought in regard to this field. Interviewee No.11 said:

- Q: How do you value the I.R.E. textbook for the first year?
- A: From my point of view the book is good and if there are any mistakes we should go and change them. I would not mind

rectifying any mistakes if necessary. The case is the same with the second and third year textbooks.

In this short answer I feel that he tries not to reveal any mistakes because he may not want anyone to blame him for them.

Interviewee No. 14 is another example of an inspector who thinks it is a suitable I.R.E. textbook without mistakes:

Q: Do you think the I.R.E. textbook for the first year is good or does it need improvement?

A: The I.R.E. textbook is suitable if it is applied and used correctly. It must be used in a practical way and not just for reading.

Q: Is this a similar case for the second and third years?

A: Yes, it is similar.

The point he raises is that the way in which to apply the textbook is more than reading, which means to practice religion with the pupils' lives.

Interviewee No. 8 feels that the textbook needs to be simple even if we focus on teaching the Al Tawhid. He pointed out:

As you know, the very nature of the first year of primary stage means that no firm direction can be established. Consequently we have to teach the faith as best as we can in order to guide them in Islamic principles and we endeavour to correct the mistakes in regard to the faith which we observe in many Arab Muslim countries, and teaching the Quran is suitable in the number of periods available, while the Al Tawhid and Al Fiqh is little, but the book needs to be simple.

The second and third year textbooks are being dealt with by the same strategy.

His view is the same as those I have dealt with in Chapter Four of this study, that the language of the I.R.E. textbook in Saudi Arabia is difficult for the age of pupils in the primary stage.

Interviewee No. 12 confirms this suggestion and gives an alternative to the textbook when he says:

The information given to pupils is suitable, but some alteration of words may be necessary to simplify it, i.e. if we put the "wudu" and other subjects as a story it would be easy for a child to understand. This would be better than copying certain words from the old sources and giving it to pupils.

No doubt that what he says is correct from my view because educationally pupils must learn gradually and if we want them to learn about Islam it ought to be step by step and not necessarily by copying from the old sources of Islamic books but to give pupils the simple way of teaching and learning. This will make them love Islam and have a desire to attend the I.R.E. class.

The important thing in the Saudi I.R.E. is that the Ministry of Education agrees with some parents' opinions to reduce teaching the Holy Quran, and in my view if this is the case then Saudi society will face many problems in directing pupils in the coming years towards Islam. Interviewee No. 9 reveals this:

- Q: Are sufficient chapters memorised from the Holy Quran in the primary stage? Do they need increasing?
- A: In fact this subject is not quite in agreement with parents who feel that the I.R.E. curriculum must reduce a number of verses from the Holy Quran in the primary stage. As a result of this the Ministry of Education has taken this matter into account and reduced the number of verses from the Holy Quran as well as reducing the periods of teaching I.R.E. Although we can see that the I.R.E. curriculum in Saudi Arabia has given enough attention to teaching faith and worship as well as other branches of religion in the primary stage, more than many other Arab Muslim countries.

I believe that the best way for Saudi society to be successful socially and educationally is to maintain the level of teaching I.R.E. at a high level and not try to reduce it in the coming years. The Primary Education Curriculum (1968) indicates:

the periods devoted to teaching I.R.E. are 12 per week from the general plan study (p.3),

and during the 1980s it reduced to 9 periods (ibid. 1988, p.3),

and now it is 7 per week.

Field Six: "Developed I.R.E."

Kuwait:

The Kuwaiti inspectors show the development of I.R.E. has taken place in certain ways. Interviewee No. 5 discusses one of them and says:

Q: Do I understand that the developed I.R.E. is better than the old one?

A: Of course it is much better, and the headquarters has kept teachers abreast of the latest developments each year and set up meetings especially with the new teachers informing them about the I.R.E. aims and textbook as well as the foundation of I.R.E. and its teaching methods.

First of all the development considers new I.R.E. teachers by an annual meeting with them. Secondly it considers the I.R.E. textbook evaluation, so I asked him :

Q: Is the evaluation oral or written?

A: It often takes place orally and sometimes by writing comments on the I.R.E. textbook.

These two methods seem inadequate to some inspectors in Kuwait so they want to make the development wider and deeper. Interviewee No.6 pointed out:

I suggest that the media be involved, ... and this must be done for instance by interviews on TV. ... We should not write a new textbook without identifying the textbook with the public. Finally I would like to confirm that the developed curriculum needs more explanation and identification with the public.

His suggestions seem to me quite good and effective because the media can help many people to give ideas and also assist many people in society to be familiar with I.R.E., so I do agree with this suggestion.

Interviewee No. 7 said there were very clear dimensions of developing I.R.E. and she felt that there were advantages and disadvantages for the new and old I.R.E. curriculum.

In the old curriculum pupils reached a satisfactory standard from the Holy Quran besides gaining the values of I.R.E. and the skills of reading. The new curriculum is focusing on how to build one's personality and we are aiming to achieve this target in all the curricula. The personality of pupils towards Islam in the three dimensions: effective, psychomotor, and cognitive, is very clear in the new curriculum.

The three dimensions are really advanced in the Kuwaiti I.R.E. textbook because it makes a balance between pupils and society's needs and that religion is not affecting one side of pupils' lives but all aspects. Then she said:

We do have some of the Holy Quran in the textbook which is suitable to the educational standards, but now we reduce the number of verses from the Holy Quran. The Ministry of Education from time to time reduces the number of verses because we are not aiming to give pupils a quantity of verses of the Holy Quran but to create a good person within the Quranic criteria.

Saudi Arabia:

This view is not quite satisfactory to many I.R.E. teachers. The Saudi I.R.E. development is not the same as the Kuwaiti. One of the differences is that in Kuwait inspectors are aiming for more participation from the pupils while in Saudi they do not. Interviewee No. 13 clarified this:

- Q: Can you identify to me what sort of development has occurred in the primary education in relation to I.R.E.?
- A: Nobody knows about the subject of development, because it comes from the Centre of Educational Development which gives final approval to any suggestions or recommendations submitted.

Perhaps this kind of response reflects that the interviewee is trying to give the exact answer to what is going on and at the same time avoiding further details for certain reasons. When I tried to get a fuller answer, he said:

In fact, I find that the curriculum is suitable to our lives in the kingdom and is better than many other Muslim countries.

Generally he tried to express the view that the I.R.E. curriculum is suitable for Saudi Arabia and the reason for this is that many Muslim countries have not

reached the Saudi level. As a result of his response I asked Interviewee No.10 a clear question about the development process of I.R.E. :

Q: Who undertakes the evaluation process of I.R.E. - parents, teachers or the educational development department?

A: Renewal is always taking place from the educational development department within the Ministry of Education, and expert people have always participated. Also scholars and some publishers have also participated in this matter. They usually re-write the I.R.E. textbook and make some alterations.

He reveals that expert people and scholars, also some publishers, have participated in developing I.R.E. and this shows that neither *parents* nor *teachers* of I.R.E. have any clear participation. This study tries to give them more opportunity to contribute in this matter. The interviewee added:

In primary education there is renewal but it might not be comprehensive. There is a future plan to develop I.R.E. education in general, and entering a new subject such as Seerah and morality.

In regard to the future plans for developing I.R.E. in Saudi Arabia there is hope to increase teaching I.R.E. and make the subject more desirable and simple to pupils.

In addition to this it seems important to me to teach Seerah and morality within I.R.E. in Saudi Arabia, because it makes it easy and suitable to the age of the children in the primary stage. Interviewee No. 8 confirms my view and says:

Q: Can you say that the developed I.R.E. is better than the old one?

A: We do not have a developed I.R.E. but the same textbook is being altered from time to time and all the branches of I.R.E. are to be taught in a comprehensive way and it may be necessary to add some subjects, e.g. Seerah.

In fact if teaching I.R.E. has no part of Seerah, stories or morality it looks very hard for pupils at this age. So can authorities in Kuwait take this into consideration as Interviewee No. 9 suggests?

Q: Have you any suggestions or recommendations to make for a better I.R.E. for the future?

A: a) I hope there is more care shown towards developing I.R.E. in Kuwait because it is a responsibility of the authorities. b) I

would suggest that I.R.E. in Kuwait gives more attention to teaching the skills of reading the Holy Quran. c) I wish that I.R.E. teachers would supply educational visual aids in order to help the pupils in their studies.

It is a very good step to hear criticism or suggestions from outside your country to improve the education system and I think this is the level of co-operation needed between the Gulf states. I also agree with these suggestions and have already begun working towards more development, not only for Kuwait but all the Gulf states and Saudi Arabia and Kuwait in particular. It seems to me we can complement each other, and that neither Kuwait nor Saudi has reached the ideal I.R.E. development. This is what this study is working for.

Conclusion

In the conclusion of this chapter I will give an overview of the results achieved by this study and the previous studies done in the Gulf region, in order to summarise a clear proposal for the development of I.R.E. In the meantime it may be useful to remind the reader about the limited studies for this theme.

The first study, 1980, study and the current one are agreed that some of the aims of I.R.E. are not sufficient, and also that the differences between the Gulf states' aims are larger than the similarities and show specific examples of the case of Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

Both studies also agree that there are different thoughts from state to state, and indicate that Kuwaiti I.R.E. focuses on social and economic life, while Saudi I.R.E. focuses on religious knowledge. In addition to this the recommendations made by the 1980 study are similar to this study, and I think that it has not been

covered yet in spite of the improvements between the 1980s and the 1990s (see Chapter One).

The second study, 1984 (see Chapter One) aims to identify milestones in developing I.R.E. for the primary and intermediate stages for the Gulf region in general, and it was carried out by the G.A.S.E.R.C. The problem the study found was to examine to what extent the I.R.E. development is working, and in what aspect does it include teacher training and educational aids?

The result this study achieved is the same as the current study, that there is a prevailing belief that it is necessary to develop I.R.E. and this might reflect that examining the development of I.R.E. through the fields of this study is reaching the same result. The two studies also agreed that the aims and objectives of I.R.E. have not yet been achieved in full. Another agreement between the two studies is that both are working to increase the role of I.R.E. in society which might reflect that the role of I.R.E. in Muslim society can lead to better education.

The third study, 1985, agrees with the many points made in this study, for instance increasing the period of teaching I.R.E. in some Gulf states, so this study can confirm that Kuwait lacks an increase in teaching I.R.E. to develop society more closely to Islamic principles. Also the 1985 study recommended the improvement of teacher training, developing the textbook and more relevant aims, and this shows another agreement between the two studies which means that the developmental process is not enough (see Chapter One).

Finally, the latest study made in Kuwait in 1987 for the primary stage clarifies that the aims of I.R.E. textbook are co-ordinated and linked with the aims of I.R.E. The data shows 82% of the sample interviewed had no notification about the foundation of the I.R.E. textbook, whereas in this study teachers

showed a very high response (mean of 4.08) to the field aims and I.R.E., and 39.2% strongly agree and 39.9% agree that they knew exactly the aims of I.R.E.

The previous study shows that 89% of the sample agreed to the aims of the I.R.E. textbook, but this study reveals that the general response toward the I.R.E. textbook is high (mean of 3.75), and this is less than expected.

At the same time, 67% of the sample in the previous study see that the aims of I.R.E. are not difficult to achieve, but this study shows that 29.1% strongly agree and 43.3% agree to achieve all the aims of I.R.E.

The previous study indicates that 93% of pupils like the subject of I.R.E. while this study clarifies that pupils do not show a high interest in the subject of I.R.E. The result shows 30% strongly agree and 38.5% agree to this (see Chapter One). It is obvious that the results of this study and the previous studies show certain agreement towards the need for the continued development of I.R.E.

CHAPTER NINE

CHAPTER NINE

Conclusion and Recommendations

In this chapter the researcher will present the study findings in the light of research questions (see Chapter One). The study recommendations will be summarised for developing I.R.E. in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia as a result of the fieldwork, the data analysis and the discussion in the chapters.

In Chapter One I mentioned ten questions to be investigated, and these questions are included in the whole fields of the study. The answers to these questions are as follows:

1. Is there any statistically significant difference between Kuwaiti and Saudi parents in their views of the role of I.R.E. and society?

There are statistically significant differences between Kuwaiti and Saudi parents' views of the role of I.R.E. and society and the Saudi parents' responses are higher than Kuwaiti parents (at level 0.001).

2. Is there any statistically significant difference between Kuwaiti and Saudi parents in their views of the importance of I.R.E. for future generations?

There are statistically significant differences between Kuwaiti and Saudi parents views of the importance of I.R.E. for future generations, and the Saudi parents show higher responses than Kuwaiti parents (at level 0.001).

3. Is there any statistically significant difference between Kuwaiti and Saudi parents in their views towards co-operation with I.R.E teachers?

There is no statistically significant difference between Kuwaiti and Saudi parents in their views towards co-operation with I.R.E. teachers.

4. Is there any statistically significant difference between Kuwaiti and Saudi parents in their views of I.R.E. curriculum textbooks in the first, second and third years in primary education in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia?

There are statistically significant differences between Kuwaiti and Saudi parents' responses towards the I.R.E. curriculum in the three years, and the Saudi teachers come out higher than Kuwaiti teachers (at level 0.004).

5. Is there any statistically significant difference between Kuwaiti and Saudi I.R.E. teachers in their views about the aims of I.R.E. in primary education in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia?

There are statistically significant differences between the Kuwaiti and Saudi I.R.E. teachers' responses towards the aims of I.R.E. and the Saudi teachers represent higher responses than Kuwaiti I.R.E. teachers (at level 0.001).

6. Is there any statistically significant difference between Kuwaiti and Saudi I.R.E. teachers' views of the role of I.R.E. in society?

There are statistically significant differences between the Kuwaiti and Saudi I.R.E. teachers towards the role of I.R.E. in society, and the Saudi I.R.E. teachers reflect higher responses than Kuwaiti I.R.E. teachers (at level 0.001).

7. Is there any statistically significant difference between Kuwaiti and Saudi I.R.E. teachers' attitudes towards parents' role in I.R.E.?

There are statistically significant differences between Kuwaiti and Saudi I.R.E. teachers' attitudes towards parents' role in I.R.E., and the Saudi teachers' responses are higher than Kuwaiti teachers' responses (at level 0.001).

8. Is there any statistically significant difference between Kuwaiti and Saudi I.R.E. teachers' role in I.R.E.?

There is no statistically significant difference between the Kuwaiti and Saudi I.R.E. teachers' role in I.R.E.

9. Is there any statistically significant difference between Kuwaiti and Saudi I.R.E. teachers' views of their I.R.E. curriculum textbooks in the first, second and third years in primary education in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia?

There are statistically significant differences between the Kuwaiti and Saudi I.R.E. teachers' responses towards the I.R.E. curriculum textbook in the first, second and third years in primary education in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, and the Saudi I.R.E. teachers show higher responses than Kuwaiti I.R.E. teachers (at level 0.001).

10. Is there any statistically significant difference between Kuwaiti and Saudi I.R.E. teachers' views towards developing I.R.E.?

There are statistically significant differences between Kuwaiti and Saudi I.R.E. teachers' responses in developing I.R.E. and the Saudi I.R.E. teachers have higher responses than Kuwaiti I.R.E. teachers (at level 0.004).

Recommendations

1. I would suggest the subject 'philosophy of I.R.E' be taught in Kuwait University as a required course as well as in Saudi Universities in order to keep students close to I.R.E. in every level of their studies.
2. Also it is recommended that the time devoted to teaching I.R.E. must be increased, particularly in Kuwait, in order to fulfil the aims of I.R.E., taking into account the changes and developments happening in the two countries, and responding accordingly.
3. In this case the researcher suggests that the aims of I.R.E. ought to be revised every five academic years by an expert in the field. As a part of developing I.R.E. the authorities should give more power and support to I.R.E. within different institutions in order to have a better education.
4. It is recommended that the media in the region must edit the programmes which are unsuitable for pupils, especially regarding morality and behaviour.
5. The researcher also recommends that teaching methods of I.R.E. ought to be revised from time to time in order to consider the new styles of teaching, and updating if necessary.
6. It would be recommended that both Kuwaiti and Saudi societies unite in developing a shared successful I.R.E. curriculum which can assist in solving their social and educational problems.

7. Further studies may also be needed to examine the aims of I.R.E. in the light of further developments to the social and political fields in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

I.R.E. curriculum textbook

Kuwait:

8. The researcher has reached the conclusion that there are many advantages within Kuwaiti I.R.E. if they are reformulated to suit the new circumstances in Kuwait.
9. It will be very useful if the Kuwaiti I.R.E. textbook reduces the huge amount of pictures and poems it uses and just uses the relevant ones. The authorities might emphasise the quality of the textbook rather than its quantity.
10. This study also recommends that a team of qualified Kuwaiti I.R.E. teachers, parents and inspectors should share in the writing and editing of the I.R.E. textbook.
11. I would suggest that a regular evaluation of the I.R.E. textbook ought to take place with suggestions from I.R.E. teachers to be discussed and analysed.
12. It is recommended for future researchers to carry on examining the I.R.E. textbook in Kuwait from different viewpoints.

Saudi Arabia:

13. With regard to the I.R.E. textbook in Saudi Arabia, the researcher found it would be more effective if the education authorities for both boys and girls studied a suitable model for the I.R.E. textbook, using more pictures to make the I.R.E. textbook more desirable for pupils.
14. It is recommended that such a small number of pages for each stage of the textbook is insufficient to include all the important concepts of Islamic social life. Although giving pupils religious information in regard to the Al Tawhid and Al Fiqh is important, teaching the Prophet's life as well as religious stories will make pupils enjoy the subject more.
15. The researcher recommends that simplification of the language of the textbook will make the subject easier and more acceptable to pupils at this age.
16. It is also recommended that pupils' daily lives should be involved in the I.R.E. textbook and show the Islamic viewpoint in very simple ways to pupils (such as dealing with parents, friends, neighbours and so on).
17. Researchers might undertake further studies on the Saudi I.R.E. curriculum to be sure that they are fulfilling the aims of Islamic religious education.

I.R.E. teachers

18. The suggestion I would recommend is that I.R.E. teachers in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia should know what their tasks are by being sent a monthly or

quarterly reminder, informing them about what is going on, i.e. a newsletter, in order to give them motivation. As Figure 3 shows, reaching the aims of I.R.E. is not easy.

19. I am very concerned about the importance of developing teachers' status and position in the two societies by giving them a chance to share in the teachers' union and express their feelings and, in the case of Saudi Arabia, to set up their own association if possible, or to have a teacher magazine.
20. I recommend that I.R.E. teachers in both countries record pupils' behaviour towards the subject and supply the Ministry of Education and I.R.E. headquarters with precise details of what they have achieved, and whether or not they are able to achieve the subject's aims.
21. From what I have seen in both countries, educational visual aids are vital for teachers to improve I.R.E. teaching, and it would be very helpful if the Ministry of Education could implement this.
22. I would recommend that the Ministry of Education in Kuwait particularly should study the reasons for teachers' resignations, as they increase daily and revise the conditions of appointment of I.R.E. teachers from other countries.
23. I suggest that each school in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia should have their own collection of books and research on I.R.E. for teachers to follow in case some of them have no means of getting to libraries in the area.

24. As I.R.E. has its own teaching methods I would suggest that each school videos excellent lessons and sends them to the educational headquarters of I.R.E. in order to set up what would be called an "I.R.E. Video Centre."
25. I recommend, as part of developing I.R.E. and teachers' performance, that various I.R.E. Administration headquarters should set up an annual prize for 5 to 10 teachers to honour them for their excellent work.
26. The role of I.R.E. teachers in the two countries should be investigated in depth by the researchers, in order to reinforce their vital position.

I.R.E. and parents

The conclusion of this is that there are certain things parents have to know about, as well as the teacher of I.R.E., in order to keep society close to Islamic and Arabic tradition. I would suggest and recommend the following:

27. Ministries of Education in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia must have clear proposals for dealing with parents, more than the annual meetings held between schools and parents, as well as supplying an outline or report to parents for discussion regularly.
28. There should be more publicity through the daily newspapers to clarify the role of parents in schools and to encourage them to keep in touch with schools and not hesitate to speak or write about anything which happens within the schools. This should help to avoid problems.

29. I also recommend a Ministry of Information and a Ministry of Religious Affairs to participate in television programmes, focussing on the role of parents and I.R.E. teachers in order to maintain Islamic values between home and school.
30. In Kuwait and Saudi Arabia there are many Islamic associations that can play a vital role in strengthening the relations between parents and I.R.E. teachers. They could assist with problems where parents feel they cannot express their views to the educational authorities, and act accordingly.
31. This study recommends that Kuwaiti parents should give more attention to their children's behaviour to enable them to follow Islamic religion.
32. I suggest that further studies be made to find out the role of parents towards their children, focussing on sociological and psychological factors to achieve unity in I.R.E. between Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

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