

Zahrawiyya Program as a Model of Integrated Islamic Education for Women in Malabar

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Abstract

Traditional Muslim women in Malabar were striving to find appropriate avenues for Islamic higher education without being deprived of modern education in the late 20th century. During this period, boys had greater access to higher education through the system of Islamic colleges, while opportunities for Muslim women remained limited. This situation created a societal need for an educational initiative that could integrate Islamic teaching with modern education for women, which emerged in the form of Zahrawiyya. This study explores the development and significance of Zahrawiyya as an educational response to the needs of Muslim women in Malabar. Employing a qualitative approach, the study draws on both primary and secondary data collected through semi-structured interviews with concerned authorities, direct observations, and document analysis. It examines the program's historical significance, curriculum structure, teaching and learning methods, and influence on society and the academic world. The findings indicate that Zahrawiyya has provided Muslim women with opportunities to pursue higher education while maintaining Islamic educational values. The program also demonstrates the potential of integrating Islamic and modern education and can serve as a model of integrated education for Muslim women in Malabar.

Keywords : *Muslim women education, integrated education, Zahrawiyya, Malabar*

INTRODUCTION

Education is the key pillar in building enlightened, prosperous and developed society. Islam upholds a holistic view towards education¹ by encompassing the moral, spiritual and intellectual development to create all rounded individual without confining to gender as Prophet Muhammed (PBUH) once stated, "seeking knowledge is mandatory for all Muslim men"². Throughout the Islamic history, education was celebrated as a point

¹ Momen, "Education in Islam."

² "Sunan Ibn Majah 224 - The Book of the Sunnah - كتاب المقدمة - Sunnah.Com - Sayings and Teachings of Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم)."

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of pride among Muslims and they had been excelled in almost every field, reinforcing the inevitable role of education in the growth of individual, society and state³.

The significance of education becomes even more evident when it comes to women as an African proverb aptly states “if you educate a man, you educated an individual; but if you educate a woman, you educated a nation or society”⁴ which underscores the transformative role of women in producing and training the generations. The development of society can be possible through empowering women by education⁵. Women have occupied a remarkable position in the acquisition and transferring of knowledge as the history shows. However, the rich female legacy experienced gradual decline due to several socio-cultural and political factors, resulting in limited participation and visibility of women scholars⁶. Therefore, the female Muslim society require an innovative well-structured educational program for the revival of the rich scholarly tradition prevailed before which ensure the fostering of holistic development and empowerment of Muslim women.

The traditional Muslim community in Malabar had been enjoyed the privilege of Islamic education since the Islamic medieval period. The primary education of Islamic studies was generally based on mosques which later named as *othupalli*⁷ where both men and women could acquire basic education of Islamic studies. There were female scholars existed in that time in knowledge production and transmission with title of *mollachi*⁸ as well. The *Pallidars*⁹ system which was considered as a higher education in Islamic studies experienced the institutionalization which eventually led to the emergence of Arabic college which was confined to men only. The traditional female Muslim community had been craved for the ideal educational opportunity which doesn't exclude the modern education with Islamic studies. Eventually, there were professional courses and colleges aiming empowerment of Muslim women in higher education, emerged as the result of educational reforms brought by Muslim visionary leaders such as Arabic Colleges, Arts and science colleges and Engineering and Medical colleges. However, these institutions were purely offering modern higher education. Eventhough, the Afzal-ul-Ulama Program of the government universities, which was designed as a foundational course in Arabic language and literature with selected emphasize in Quran, *Hadith*, *Fiqh* and Islamic history along with modern subjects, it couldn't meet the criteria of traditional Muslim community of offering Islamic teachings in traditional Islamic educational method by focusing in textual analysis, supporting the Islamic attire and atmosphere. Additionally, similar Programs offered by the universities in the region, such as Functional Arabic, Islamic History were only focused the modern academic method of learning rather than

³ “Education in Islamic History.”

⁴ UNICEF Ghana.

⁵ Hossain and Kumar, *WOMEN EDUCATION AND ITS IMPACT ON CONTEMPORARY INDIAN SOCIETY*.

⁶ Bodoland University and Islam, “A Study on the Importance of Women Education in Islam.”

⁷ KUMAR.K and KUMAR.K.M, “HISTORICISING THE WOMEN EDUCATION IN COLONIAL MALABAR.”

⁸ ResearchGate, “(PDF) Kanpur Philosophers Volume-8, Issue-2, December 2021.”

⁹ ResearchGate, “(PDF) Kanpur Philosophers Volume-8, Issue-2, December 2021.”

religious approach with deeper understanding in Islamic studies. Yet, majority of Muslim girls from traditional Muslim families couldn't approach this completely due to several socio religious factors such as lack of availability of colleges, travel expenses, selected focus on religious sciences. There was a scarcity of educational model for women within traditional Muslim community which integrates scientific modern teaching with Islamic studies without violating the Islamic tradition and culture, even though, there were few integrated Islamic institutions exclusively for men. Addressing the gap, an exclusive Islamic institute for women named Fathima Zahra Islamic women's college was established in 1992 to promote quality education in Islamic studies and modern sciences to Muslim girls of Kerala.

Despite the significant contributions of previous studies to the field of Muslim women education in Malabar, there is a noticeable lack of scholarly attention to the *zahrawiyya* educational system in integrated Islamic education for Muslim women. Scholars such as R. Embong¹⁰ discusses the concept of integrated Islamic curriculum and its implication in Muslim settings where M. Souad and Tahraoui Ramdane¹¹ discusses the implementation challenges of integrated education and Scholars S. Al-Hudawi¹², Ibrahim Badhusha Parakallil¹³, Hassan Shareef KP¹⁴, Shabeeb Khan P¹⁵, Unais Koduvayakkal¹⁶ were discussed the historical connection in the transmission of Islamic education and evolution of Islamic education in Malabar and its curriculum. Muhammed Haneefa¹⁷, M. CP and Augustin¹⁸ have made an attempt in educational status of Muslim women in Malabar and influence of political leadership in the empowerment of Muslim women. There are a gap remains in the literature as no comprehensive study has analysed on effective models of integrated education for Muslim women and the *zahrawiyya* program and its curriculum, educational philosophy, teaching methods and its role in promoting the intellectual and social empowerment of Muslim women in Malabar are remain underexplored. This study fills the gap by analysing the structure of *zahrawiyya* program and its impact in the society and women empowerment. Also, it seeks whether it model for integrated education of Muslim women in Malabar and evaluate its relevance in contemporary Muslim women education. This study is an attempt to investigate the *zahrawiyya* program which is an eight-year program in residential model preserving traditional scholarly system along with integrating modern sciences, provided in Fathima

¹⁰ Yaacob and Embong, "The Concept of an Integrated Islamic Curriculum and Its Implications for Contemporary Islamic Schools."

¹¹ Souad and Ramdane, *INTEGRATED CURRICULUM: SUCCESS AND CHALLENGES REVIEW OF THE EXPERIENCE OF THE INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC SCHOOL MALAYSIA (IISM)*.

¹² Al-Hudawi, "The Islamic Educational Tradition in Kerala."

¹³ "From Arabia to Kerala: Tracing the Early Transmission of Islamic Knowledge | HISTORICAL: Journal of History and Social Sciences."

¹⁴ Shareef Kp and Paramboor, "Tracing the Connections between Othupalli of Malabar and Kuttub of the Muslim World."

¹⁵ Kp and P, "The Traditional Islamic Curriculum of Pallidars in Malabar."

¹⁶ Koduvayakkal, "INDIAN MADRASAS."

¹⁷ "Analysing the Outwardly Developed-Inwardly Backward Paradox Surrounding the Educational Status of Muslims in Kerala, India."

¹⁸ C.P and Dr. Augustin. J, "FROM MARGIN TO MAINSTREAM."

Zahra Islamic Women's College, Chemmad¹⁹ which was the first institution under this educational initiative.

Furthermore, the objectives of this study are to explore the historical background of establishing this educational initiative, examine what are the educational philosophy and objectives of *zahrawiyya* program, how the curriculum was designed and what are the teaching learning methodologies and to evaluate this program as a model of integrated education for Muslim women in Malabar by analysing the innovative intellectual engagement among the students and the outcomes of this system into the academic world and society.

METHOD

This study employs qualitative research to analyse the system of *zahrawiyya* education as a model of integrated education for Muslim women in Malabar. A qualitative approach is effective for this study because it seeks to examine the curriculum structure, educational philosophy and teaching methodologies in fostering the intellectual and social empowerment of Muslim women. The study draws on both primary and secondary sources; the primary data were collected through the direct interviews with institutional head, faculty members, union students and graduates of the *zahrawiyya* program, combined with direct observation of academic and co-curricular activities. The secondary data were collected from the institutional documents, curriculum manual, annual report, published books and journal articles. A purpose sampling method was chosen to select people who have firsthand knowledge and experience of the *zahrawiyya* educational system. Data were collected through semi structured interviews, document analysis and observation. The collected data were analysed through thematic approach in which information was organized into themes including curriculum philosophy, curriculum frame work, teaching learning methodologies, co-curricular activities and educational outcomes. The findings were interpreted and evaluated against the existing literature to examine the significance of the *zahrawiyya* education system as a model of integrated education for Muslim women.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings indicate that the *zahrawiyya* program emerged as a response to societal needs of Muslim women education in Malabar aimed to multidimensional empowerment of Muslim women. The philosophy of this program is the adoption of integrated education combining Islamic and material sciences along with consistent language training. facilitating an academic environment which foster both Islamic and modern teaching to develop scholarly empowered female professionals without compromising Islamic ethics is the main objective of this program. Analysis of institutional documents revealed that, Training methods including *Murabbi* system, mentoring system, residential mode of learning and practical mentoring in implementing

¹⁹ "DHIU - Darul Huda Islamic University."

spiritual and moral awareness are the salient features which foster holistic development of students. Cocurricular activities on the behalf of union play a vital role in developing leadership quality, communication skills, confidence, multilingual proficiency, problem solving and critical thinking abilities among students. The alumnus of *zahrawiyya* serve a significant role in transforming society into morally and academically excelled society. These findings indicate that *zahrawiyya* program can be serve as a model of integrated education for Muslim women without compromising the traditional teachings.

Islamic Education for Women in Malabar; An Introduction

Islamic education in medieval Malabar can be categorized into *othupalli* and *pallidars* which were the early set ups of primary and higher Islamic education in Malabar. the scholars in *othupalli* commonly referred as *Molla* and *Mollakka*²⁰ meaning someone who has power to rule. The participation of Muslim women in the process of knowledge acquisition was comparatively limited, yet, there were some female scholars who known as *Mollatti*, the female term of Arabic word *Mollakka*, who has profound knowledge and participated in the transformation of knowledge and scholarly development of female Muslim community. The terminology of these female Muslim scholars varied across different areas of Kerala; *Mollachi*, *Alappumma* and *Usthabi*²¹ were the different terms used to refer them in northern, southern and central part of Kerala respectively. These female Muslim scholars played a significant role in building enlightened female Muslim society through teaching of recitation of Quran, *Mala*, *Moulid*, training for Arabic handwriting etc. In contrast, teaching of traditional Islamic works such as *Mahalli*, *Riyalusswalihin* and *Tafsir Al Jalalaini* were the core subjects of study in some areas. Khadeeja, daughter of Tattangara Kuttyamu musliyar was known as Ibn Hajar of Kerala who did a significant contribution in educating Islamic jurisprudence among the Muslim women by giving lectures through *dars*.²²

The front portion of house or a room often turned out as the classroom for such academic exchanges which termed as *othupura*²³. Several places such as Ponnani, Tirurangadi, Paravanna, Veliyangod were famous for such scholarly networks. Nadhapuram Jadyeri kallumma Haleema umma, Parappanangadi Nabeesa, Pulikkalakath Ruqiya Beevi, Veliyangod TK Fathima, Ponnani Aesha were few of them. Generally, Female students were the majority of the audience of *Mollattis*' lectures even though, both boys and girls were attended. Food items such as rice, coconuts, goat were offered to the *Mollatti* teachers as salary. this system employed not only transmission of knowledge but also, eradication of poverty in Muslim families as many Muslim women were self-employed and could meet the basic living expenses of life. The role of Arabic Malayalam language in the intellectual transformation of Muslim women was pivotal. They used to write books and poems themed women centric topic such as *nikah mala*,

²⁰ Ugrapuram, "Mollaachi ithamaarum muslim pourohithyavum."

²¹ Puthur, "Maappila sthreekal: paandithyathinte mudrakal."

²² Puthur, "Maappila sthreekal: paandithyathinte mudrakal."

²³ Vazhakkad, "Othupalliyil Poothulanja Penjeevithangal."

niskara mala which were famous among them played a significant role in educating common women. Most considerably, the selling of such books through kitchens was a culture in that time and even, the mentioning of such intellectual talks was common in the marriage proposal discussions²⁴.

The 19th century of Malabar witnessed educational backwardness among Muslims when compare with other religious institutions especially in modern higher education. The notion of educational reforms has started after the Malabar rebellion which facilitated the establishment of Muslim schools, colleges and scholarships for Muslim girls provided by government by pioneering efforts of Muslim reformers such as, Vakkom Abdul Qadar Moulavi, Sheikh Hamadani Thangal, Sayyid Sanaullah Makthi Thangal who strongly advocated the importance of modern education in the Muslim community through journals and newspapers²⁵. Later, the second half of 20th century experienced systematic structuring of Islamic education through establishment of series of madrasa under divergent community organizations which paved a way to synthesis of Islamic education in more organized way which accessible for both Muslim girls and boys²⁶. As well as, Establishment of Arabic collages that integrated Islamic sciences with modern scientific and secular disciplines brought remarkable social and intellectual impact in the society, by developing enlightened and intellectually conscious community. Consequently, modern Islamic universities, colleges, academies, and educational institutions emerged, contributing in shaping of socio- intellectual landscape of Malabar.

History and Emergence

The concept of integrated education for Muslim women in Malabar and to develop female scholars who have in-depth knowledge in Islamic studies was emerged in the early 1980s among the community leaders and Islamic scholars especially Attipatta Muhyudeenkutty Musliyar and P.A Said Muhammed Haji. Responding to societal need of such Islamic integrated higher education for women, Fathima Zahra Islamic Women's College was founded under the leadership of notable Islamic scholars and community leaders. At the time of establishment, it was managed by Majlisudda'wathil Islamiyya under Sunni Centre. From its establishment onward, the institution adopted to the syllabus, Pedagogical framework and admission policies of Darul Huda.

Darul Huda Islamic University which began as an Islamic academy in 1986 and later developed into a university in 2009 occupies a significant place in revolutionary change in Malabar²⁷. It was established as a culmination of extensive discourse among visionary community leaders and religious scholars such as M.M. Basheer Musliyar, Dr. U Bapputty Haji, Sayyid Umar Ali Shihab Tangal, Shaikh Cherussery Zainudheen Musliyar, Pro. Muhammed, concerning educational status of Mappila Muslims and the

²⁴ Puthur, "Maappila sthreekal: paandithyathinte mudrakal."

²⁵ C.P and J, "Pioneering Pathways."

²⁶ Kp, "The Transformation of Islamic Education in Malabar."

²⁷ "DHIU - Darul Huda Islamic University."

challenges faced by Muslim community²⁸. Their collective effort to promote integrated model of education led to the foundation of this institution, without compromising the traditional Islamic teachings by highlighting three fundamental principles; *ta'lim* (education), *tarbiyah* (guidance), and *da'wah* (propagation).

The role of Aboobacker Nizami who was president of Sunni Centre in the growth and development of Fathima Zahra Islamic Women's College cannot be overstated. As one of pioneering figures associated with the institution from its beginning, he dedicated almost ten years to its progress by serving as a profound influential leader who contributed to both academic and moral development of students²⁹. In 2011, the management and administration were formally transferred to Darul Huda managing committee, which became affiliate of Darul Huda; facilitated continuous growth and development and provided Islamic degree along with national education program such as higher secondary, under graduation³⁰.

The enrolment was open to those who successfully completed the public exam of 7th standard Madrasa education affiliated to Samastha Kerala Islam Matha Vidhyabhyasa Board without exceeding 13 and half years of old. An entrance exam including both oral and written tests is designed for transparent selection of students based on merit and intellectual potential to secure capable students to pursue the wide-ranging curriculum of *zahrawiyya* program. The program was designed for five years in its early time, later it expanded to seven years for better academic experiences. Darul Huda awards the title of Al Zahrawiyya after the successful completion of the program. Darul Banath Academy, Edappally is the second institution founded in 2021 under this educational initiative.

The Curriculum Philosophy

The curriculum philosophy of Fathima Zahra Islamic Women's College is rooted in an integrated vision of education by combining Islamic teaching, material sciences and social responsibility by providing advanced learning atmosphere to develop intellectual growth, research engagement, leadership, and active participation in wider society without missing the moral awareness. Educational goal behind establishing this institution is to produce academic oriented female scholars who are proficient in both religious and modern sciences³¹.

The idea of education is always intended in empowering the human with expertizing in multi languages, knowledge acquisition, building confidence and leadership quality as well as developing ethical consciousness in decision making³². First world conference on Muslim education tried to define the Islamic perspective of the concept of education as developing comprehensive personality through awareness of spiritual intelligence, intellectual growth, physical development and linguistic proficiency

²⁸ "DHIU - Darul Huda Islamic University."

²⁹ Malayamma, *Malayalathile Sufism Shaduli Saraniyum Athippatta Muhyudheen Kutti Musliyarum*.

³⁰ Malayamma, *Malayalathile Sufism Shaduli Saraniyum Athippatta Muhyudheen Kutti Musliyarum*.

³¹ "DHIU - Darul Huda Islamic University."

³² Shahid and Nauman, "Need for Integrated Islamic Schools in a Muslim State-Perspective of the Heads of Islamic School Systems of Karachi."

to serve as obedient and humble individual at every level which Allah has commanded³³. Quran commanded to read in its first verse ‘Iqra’³⁴ and it mentioned not only Islamic sciences but also different areas of sciences such as: astronomy³⁵, natural science³⁶, mathematics³⁷, embryology³⁸, etc. in the discussions which promotes the holistic approach in the learning.

The vision behind the integration of education of *zahrawiyya* program underscores this point of view. The curriculum designing strategy strongly ensures and encourages the establishment of academic atmosphere in the institution which facilitates the multidimensional developments and advancements across diverse domains of students through various methods and approaches. Women empowerment in the means of this curriculum highlights not merely creating scholarly expertized women but also, developing academically competent women scholars and professionals capable to address contemporary social challenges, proficient academicians with knowledge, skills, and ethical values necessary for nation building, social reforms, and family management through peaceful and constructive approaches. Thus, this curriculum is not contributing to growth of individuals but, it has prominent role in producing highly efficient youth as they play major role in the development of the country and society³⁹.

Despite the curriculum’s strong emphasize on integrated education it does not marginalize the indigenous Islamic scholarly tradition. Rather, it facilitates the engagement with classical texts, preservation and transmission of traditional Islamic culture enabling students to develop direct understanding of Islamic intellectual tradition by maintaining a balance between contemporary academic requirements and societal needs⁴⁰.

Content of the Study

The curriculum of *zahrawiyya* is categorized into secondary, senior secondary and degree for high school, higher secondary and degree level students respectively. The Islamic subjects such as Quran, *Fiqh*, *Hadith*, *Tarikh*, *Aqidha*, and *Tasawwuf* along with correspondent material subjects such as English, Malayalam, mathematics, science, social science as well as basic level language training in four languages including, Arabic, Urdu, English, Malayalam are the subjects matters of curriculum.

The curriculum is designed in accordance to students’ comprehension capacity by allocating adequate timing to each subject to reflect the teaching and effective assimilation of knowledge. Subjects like Quran and related sciences such as *Uloom al Quran*, *tafsir*, etc. scientific subjects as well as social studies including history,

³³ Saqeb, “Some Reflections on Islamization of Education since 1977 Makkah Conference.”

³⁴ Quran.Com, “Read Full Surah Al-’Alaq - Listen with Translation, Transliteration and Tafsir.”

³⁵ Quran.Com, “Read Full Surah Ya-Sin - Listen with Translation, Transliteration and Tafsir.”

³⁶ “Surah Al-Imran Ayat 190 (3.)”

³⁷ Bakar, *Mathematics in the Holy Quran*.

³⁸ Deuraseh and Yaakub, “The Development of Human Embryo in the Quran, Surah al- Mu’minun (23).”

³⁹ Rehmath A. Ahmed, “Personal Interview with Headmistress of Fathima Zahra Islamic College.,” June 14, 2026, In-person.

⁴⁰ “Syllabus of *zahrawiyya* 2026-27, secondary & senior secondary and Degree.”

geography, etc., language studies consisted of Grammar, comprehension, vocabulary are designed in horizontal integration. The majority of subjects, follow the vertical integration, which a new learner can easily adapt and understand the studies and it continue to the next class. The combining of both vertical and horizontal integration can be seen in certain subjects by focusing continuity and progression in the studies. The emphasize on conceptual learning and encouragement on critical thinking to foster the problem-solving capacity, scientific temper and social consciousness in the growing students can be considered as eminent factor of this curriculum designing.

In the secondary and senior secondary level, the core subjects involve Qur'anic studies, including memorization, *Tajveer*, *tafsir*, *Uloom ul Quran* by ensuring student centric learning and practical methods while *Hadith*, *Aqedah*, *Tasawwuf*, *Fiqh* encompasses the moral teachings and spiritual consciousness of students. Darul Huda itself created specific Islamic history syllabus consists of Islamic civilization of caliphate, dynasties and other Islamic movement across Asian African and European continents as *Tarikh*. Apart from that, equivalent school subjects along with self-reading book list also included in the syllabus to respective classes according to students learning capacity. syllabus ensure that continuity of these subjects with in-depth learning by ensuring the conceptual knowledge and analytical skill among students by providing of classical texts, such as *Matnussafeenatu Najah*, *Fat'hul Mueen*, *Al Mahalli*, *Mishkatul Masabih*, *Riyaluswalihin*, *Arba'een annavaviyya*, *Jamiutirmudhi*, *Fat'hul Qayyum*, *Ayyuhal Valad*, *Hidayatul Adhkiya*, *Ta'leemul Mutaallim*, classical tafsir works, Etc. Evaluative, critical and student-centric learning occur in the degree-level, student can choose their interest area by selecting one of the two departments; Quran and related science and Fiqh and *Usulul Fiqh*. Advanced learning including self-analytical and evaluative learning to get majored in a specific area of study ensures by implementing thesis, research and paper presentations⁴¹.

Language learning methods and its implication is another significant feature of the curriculum designing. LSRW method implemented to language learning by allocating specific literary books, grammar books, handwriting practice books, and speaking practices to each classes according to students' comprehension. For Arabic language learning, *Al Arabiyya baina Yadaika*, *Nahv*, and *Swarf* provided in each level while grammar books from basic to advance levels along with state syllabus texts of English and Urdu ensures the proficiency of such languages in students. Apart from this, special coaching for translation studies in Arabic, English and Urdu languages by designing specific syllabus for each level as translation and composition enhance the students' linguistic efficiency⁴².

Teaching, Learning, and Evaluation Methods

⁴¹ "Syllabus of zahrawiyya 2026-27, secondary & senior secondary and Degree."

⁴² "Syllabus of zahrawiyya 2026-27, secondary & senior secondary and Degree."

The word “education” often gives the meaning of induction of a subject by teacher to the heart of student. so, he could imitate if from teacher and learn to repeat it⁴³. The word education derived from Latin word-*educare*, *educere*, *educio* and *educatum* which means to bring, nourish, to draw out, to lead out and the act teaching respectively. The Sanskrit term ‘*shah*’ denoting to discipline, to control, to order, and to direct which later became as ‘*shisha*’ in Hindi conveying the concept of teaching. According to the view of the British educationalist and professor sir Thomas Percy Nunn, education is the complete development of individuality of the child so that he can make an original contribution to human life according to best of his capacity⁴⁴. From these perceptions the word education has significant meaning in modifying and transforming individual into its pure form which should contains the process of transmitting and receiving as well as continuous and consistent training and evaluation⁴⁵. The role of teachers is indispensable in the educational process which have remarkable impact in the growth of individuals as they serve as primary facilitators of learning and remain fundamental to the student development⁴⁶. The teacher is the person who is accepted as eligible for education and upbringing of children, youth, and adult by the educational authority and society. He should be aware of social goals and tasks of education in instructing students⁴⁷. The curriculum of *zahrawiyya* program strongly prioritizes the role of teacher in an educational journey in upliftment of the individuals. The teaching learning methodology fundamentally concentrated on student-oriented training, character formation and the holistic development of learner. Several schemes and methods are used to implement these factors.⁴⁸

Mentoring system which plays an integral part in fostering student orient approach by allocating each student to distinct teacher who are responsible to give training and support in their academics by developing confidence and leadership skills as well as guiding both emotionally and spiritually. The student who are known as mentee can choose their Menter through casting a vote by ranking the preference order thus, systematic preferential selection and allocation process can be executed which also helps to smooth functioning of mentor system without getting burden to both teachers and students. By this model mentor would interfere in the overall growth and progress of mentees. Strengthening of mental well-being and ensuring of academic support by giving adequate instructions and guiding for those who are backward in academics and spiritual training through regular religious instructions, faith-based training and character-building activities.⁴⁹ The mode of residential of this program facilitates the effective functioning

⁴³ Tousi, “Education in Islam.”

⁴⁴ Patra, *MEANING, AIMS AND PROCESS OF EDUCATION*.

⁴⁵ Pixel, *Conference Proceedings. The Future of Education*.

⁴⁶ “The Importance of the Teacher’s Role in the Learning Process | Jurnal Gentala Pendidikan Dasar,” accessed July 16, 2026, <https://online-journal.unja.ac.id/gentala/article/view/16603>.

⁴⁷ Potkonjak and Šimleša, *Pedagoška enciklopedija*.

⁴⁸ Khoiroh et al., “The Traces of Al-Ghazali’s Philosophical Thought in the Fiqh Framework of Sheikh Nawawi al-Bantani’s Kasifatussaja in the 19th Century.”

⁴⁹ Wahyunitasari and Sopingi, “The Influence of Islamic Fundamentals Analysis on the Interest and Profitability of Sharia Stock Investors in KSPM-S East Java.”

of this system. similarly, it provides emotional support to student by reducing feelings of loneliness and emotional distress experienced by students due to prolonged separation from family. The mentoring book which records all details of students, progression report, observations and evaluation on mentee is the major communicative element between mentee and mentor which ensure efficient functioning and continuity without violating privacy of students⁵⁰

The Murabbi system which exerts a significant impact in fostering and nurturing newly admitted students to get adapted to the academic and spiritual atmosphere of the institution. selected senior students who are trained and capable in moulding and cultivating process, nominated by teacher carry out this system. Distributing distinct number of new comers to each student, and instructing the training methods by monitoring them are the primary role of teacher. Thus, 6 months structured training would be performed in an effective way. the major role of students is to instruct and guide the daily Islamic principle from dawn including; dhikrs, Islamic way of practicing rituals such as performing ablution, prayers, eating food, cleaning until bedtime. This training provides practical training to install Islamic values in everyday life, and self-reliance to perform things independently. similarly, it helps to adapt the environment of institution as well as eliminating undesirable habits that had been practiced before. Moreover, certain essential dhikrs and duas which a Muslim should be memorized, keeping them away from general congregation prayer which have been performing in common hall and separate practical training for performing congregational prayers and giving instruction also conducted to get familiarity with these things. The formation of sister-hood between training students and their alternative students creates a positive bond which they can share with them their concerns and doubts as well as feeling of belonged to the institution provide them emotional support as well. This primary training plays a crucial role in maintaining academic and moral atmosphere in collage also it acts as the training of guiding for the senior student who will graduate in the coming years⁵¹.

Effective implementation of Continuous and Curriculum Evaluation (CCE) is another notable teaching strategies of this program. According to Carol Tomlinson, Assessment is today's means of modifying tomorrow's instructions⁵². Assessments play crucial role in educational process providing valuable insights and comments into the students' learning⁵³. It plays a major role in helping the teachers in taking decision in teaching instructions. Both summative and formative assessments include in this curriculum. Application of continuous and comprehensive evaluation for formative assessments and exams in two semesters; Rabee'a semester and Ramadan semester are the assessment methods in the curriculum. The CCE of zahrawiyya facilitates the effective execution of learning through both students centric and teacher centric learning practices to develop leadership quality, confidence, critical thing, problem solving,

⁵⁰ Ahmed, "Personal Interview with Headmistress of Fathima Zahra Islamic College."

⁵¹ Ahmed, "Personal Interview with Headmistress of Fathima Zahra Islamic College."

⁵² Zhou, "Significance of Assessment in Learning."

⁵³ *The Importance of Assessment in Education – Valerie Hoffman, Psy.D.*

multilingual proficiency and conceptual understanding. The teaching methods of CCE facilitates covering of different cognitive learning level such as memorization, comprehension, analysis, evaluation and creation. The techniques of applying and implementing CCE are categorized into four levels. Level one contains activities such as map analysing, pre class open ended questions, role play, error correction, debate, group discussion, MCQ test, note making and postcard while Level 2 consists of much more time needed activities such as demonstrations, interview, elocution, document analysis, paper presentation, article reading and video creation and the level 3 and 4 comprise the learning activities which enhance analytical and evaluative domains such as survey, article publishing, projects, case study, ppt presentation, conferences and graphical representation. Through these different levels the method of instruction and teaching became productive and result oriented also it transforms the students into high performing and future ready graduates⁵⁴

Co-curricular Activities

Cocurricular activities (CCAs) or extracurricular activities (ECA) are the components of non-academic curriculum that help to develop problem solving, reasoning, critical thinking, communication and collaborative abilities which are essential for the personality development of students. These activities play a vital role in the academics which facilitates in the development of various domains of mind and personality such as intellectual development, emotional development, personal development and aesthetic development⁵⁵. *Zahrawiyya* curriculum highlights these activities mainly through in the collage union *GAZVA* which functions as a corner stone of student development. *GAZVA* which formed in 2013 to facilitate students in cocurricular activities such as speaking, writing, development of arts and sports through different programs and competitions by giving membership to those who enrolled to the *zahrawiyya* programs. The main committee of seven including president, vice president, general secretary, joint secretary, program secretary, Pro and finance secretary are responsible for the administration and functioning of the union by appointing executive committee of chair persons of sub committees and two representatives of each class. The working committee consist of members from both the executive committee and the main committee is constituted through a proclamation by the advisory board during the annual general body meeting⁵⁶.

The vision of *GAZVA* is to nurture a vibrant student community driven by leadership, creativity and unity. Empowering every voice to shape a better campus behind the wings such a PKV (*Prasanka Kala Vedhi- Speech and Oratory Forum*) which aims to eradicate stage fear and promote public speaking skill among students through speakers' forum, OC (organizing committee) which is responsible for planning and executing college events, LB (library board) to encourage reading habit, GD (*GAZVA* debates) to develop problems solving skill and critical thinking through debates in various

⁵⁴ "CCE & Mentoring Book - for Teachers."

⁵⁵ Padhi, *Importance of Co-Curricular Activities in Education*.

⁵⁶ "GAZVA CONSTITUTION."

languages including Malayalam , English and Arabic , IIC (Islamic information cell) which established promote Islamic studies, history and faith based discourses through various spiritual activities and events,⁵⁷ SRDP (Students Resource Development Program) to focus on students' skill and intellectual development. The clubs in various language such Arabic, English, Malayalam, Urdu, science, math's art, translation and intellectual conduct various programs to develop communication skills and expertise in multilingual efficiency. EDB (editorial board) which created to promote writing, literature and creative expression and media wing to handle all visual and digital content of *GAZVA* ⁵⁸.

Boosting communication skills and gaining multilingual proficiency is promoted by *GAZVA* union mainly through language club of Arabic, English, Malayalam, Urdu which conduct various activities to develop communication skill in students. The language day which celebrates each day of week as a day for specific language which student should speak using the language of that day is the notable activity in the enhancement of communication skills. It ensures rapid growth in speaking and writing abilities of students through various activities and events conducted in language day. Apart from that GD (*GAZVA* Debates) organizes debates in different languages which students can foster their critical thinking ability, problem solving skill, communication as well as knowledge acquisition. The intellectual hub promotes awareness in contemporary affairs and general knowledge⁵⁹.

PKV wing ensures the public speaking ability of student by conducting programs in each week which each student has to perform of any of programs; speech, presentation, singing, microteaching, group program which gradually make student confident in public speaking. Moreover, the speech activity after *Zuhr* and *Isha* prayer which compulsory to participate each student strengthen the public speaking ability. The fostering of reading habits conducted by EDB and creates a reading community among student by facilitating a resource-rich library, digital library and department library which acts as an assistant for academic purpose for degree students. Also, newspaper, monthlies, weeklies in different language serve a key factor in building reading habits and perspective developing in students⁶⁰.

The college art fest which has been conducted annually promotes development of skills and capabilities of students through various programs both stage and offstage. These programs cultivate skill and examine the talents of students. All programs conducted by each wing will evaluate by executives in the upcoming meeting to ensure smooth function of this system. The college magazine which published by EDB promotes artistic, literary

⁵⁷ Wahyunitasari and Sopingi, "The Influence of Islamic Fundamentals Analysis on the Interest and Profitability of Sharia Stock Investors in KSPM-S East Java."

⁵⁸ Zahra Mehtab et al., "personal interview with Union Main Committee of Fathima Zahra Islamic Women's College," June 14, 2026, In-person.

⁵⁹ "GAZVA UNION PROFILE."

⁶⁰ Mehtab et al., "personal interview with Union Main Committee of Fathima Zahra Islamic Women's College"; "GAZVA CONSTITUTION."

aspects of students is another key factor in developing the writing abilities of students.⁶¹ The hand written newspaper under EDB (editorial board) plants the notion of journalistic curiosity and content writing skill in the student. LTTP (ladies trainers training program) which is a training course for public speaking is another significant factor in developing skills in presentation and public speaking. this course exclusively designed for senior students who are going to graduate next years. Apart from this, pre-marital classes, and teachers' training are conducted to senior students. The organizing committee takes the responsibility of conducting all these programs and handle everything without interfering of teachers. This culture enhances leadership quality among students⁶².

International and national conferences, seminar, state level competition on various themes are conducted by *GAZVA* which aids the exchange of knowledge from different academicians and scholars of divergent fields. Also, courses on Islamic jurisprudents which provides basic *fiqh* teaching for women in different places which enhances the social confidence for the smooth propagation of Islamic teachings which was vision of *zahrawiyya* curriculum. The spiritual talks and discussions to get spiritual awareness and moral understanding along with faith related group prayers in each Friday nights and special days of Islamic calendar are conducted to nurture spiritual consciousness in students. Audit committee who checks the running of programs, evaluates, critically analyses its impact, relevance and outcomes and gives feedback which ensures the effective functioning of all committee is the integral part of union. These activities and programs enable students to build confidence, community linking ability, and all-round experts as well as it develops multifaceted scholars which *zahrawiyya* system upholds.⁶³

Outcomes of the Program

The curriculum of integrated education, effective teaching methodology and cocurricular activities brought the holistic development of students which generated a lasting impact on students, institution and the community⁶⁴ which made a revolutionary change in the education of Mappila Muslim women education by facilitating the emergence of series of the institutions providing similar curriculum of integrated education for Muslim women across Kerala. Students could participate in international and national programs and conferences; conducting of debate championship with the collaboration of Qatar debates and receiving the title of best debater is one of the notable achievements. Similarly, several students published their works in different publications and won in the state level competitions proving the capability of *zahrawiyya* students⁶⁵.

Apart from this, Zahra; association of *zahrawiya* graduates made a significant impact in the intellectual transformation of society and academic world. The graduates contribute in diverse roles as scholars, educators, researchers, administrators, community

⁶¹ Wardani and Nasrulloh, "The Role of Hadith in Shaping Digital Spirituality."

⁶² Mehtab et al., "personal interview with Union Main Committee of Fathima Zahra Islamic Women's College."

⁶³ Yunita and Syakur, "Abu Hanifah Thoughts on Ownership and Wealth Distribution."

⁶⁴ "PRO. DOCUMENT."

⁶⁵ "Outreach Report."

leaders, trainers, and professionals in various field which serve as the social engineers in making academic revolution in the society. Several activities and programs aimed to community development and training as well as the revival of Islamic teaching are being conducted under Zahra. *Riwaya* hadith course occupies major role in the revival of Muslim women in the Islamic teaching especially in hadith studies which is the 3-to-4-month short term course designed for women audience who have no deeper understanding of prophetic tradition. *Ya Ilahi* course which conducted in Holy month of Ramadhan to foster the spiritual awareness, Islamic transcendence of the ego and establishment of inner peace through Islamic teachings and historical narrations. Rabee'a conclave is another notable program which had huge impact in academic society, as it's a venue of intellectual engagement in diverse themes about prophet which conduct in the moth *Rabeeul Awwal*. This program highlights discussions, paper presentation and cultural program which notably enhance the intellectual enrichment in the community. Fiqh pulse Fiqh course is other prominent course designed with the collaboration of Department of Fiqh and Usul-ul-Fiqh to plant the comprehensive understanding in Islamic jurisprudence in the basic affairs. These courses are primarily designed for general audience. Teenage hut, and *Shalabham* camp are the programs conducted specifically targeting the adolescent girls who are prone to mislead in today's world. These programs contribute to transform them into Islamic way of life through training and insightful talks. Several graduates are perusing the higher education in both international and national universities such as IIUM, Malaysia, UAE University, Al Ain, Al Qasimiyya University, UAE and Delhi University serving an impactful contribution to the academic world⁶⁶.

Furthermore, the engagement of graduates in employment is noteworthy. Majority of them serving as Islamic instructors in Islamic and other schools, colleges, online academy, and Islamic preschools. Also, many of graduates are engaged in conducting training sessions and public lectures that contribute to social, moral, spiritual development and foster Islamic awareness among community members. The graduates enjoy a higher employment rate and a wider range of career opportunities are much compered to others due to their competence across diverse field. Alumnae community serves as significant contributor of intellectual and moral transformation of society through diverse programs and activities.⁶⁷

Zahrawiyya Program as a Model of Integrated Education.

The findings of curriculum structure, teaching methodology cocurricular activities and educational philosophy of *zahrawiyya* program indicates its role in representing a distinctive approach to Muslim women education in Malabar. Adopting of integrated model of education to develop both Islamic and material sciences this institution seeks to ensure educational experiences that was absent in the society for a long time. As for the topic of integration, *zahrawiyya* program ensures excellent conveying of Islamic

⁶⁶ Naja Fathima, "Personal Interview with zahrawiyya alumnae association main committe," June 21, 2026, online.

⁶⁷ Fathima, "Personal Interview with zahrawiyya alumnae association main committe."

teachings based on Quran and sunnah, along with modern secular subjects without compromising ideal faith and traditional Islamic text-based learning. The new educational policies of 2025 emphasize building of lifelong learners who can sustain their own learning by mobilizing three essentials; will; the curiosity, skills and means which cultivating both habits and learning in the individuals⁶⁸. The framework of bloom's taxonomy reinforces the six levels of learning includes; remembering, understanding, applying, analysing, evaluating, and creating which foster the students' cognitive development⁶⁹. *Zahrawiyya* program strongly prioritizes these hierarchal learning levels to create the highly efficient and result-oriented scholars who are capable in today's world. Moreover, encouragement of research culture, conferences, seminar and workshops promote the culture of academically Enlighted scholars who have profound knowledge in academic writing and research in divergent field of study. Students gain international university level academic experiences through creating such atmosphere in the institution which other Islamic educational institutions' curriculum designers can adopt as a model of integrated learning.

The active promotion of cocurricular activities and its impact in the academic development of students in building self-confidence, leadership quality, community responsibility, moral awareness and ethical guidance which are essential in the growth of a learner to apply and reflect his knowledge into society. Moreover, the continuous practical training method to develop both skills and Islamic guidance has significant role in planting habits and spirit of learning in students' mind which may last throughout their life also it plants a seed in their mind and build foundation for further studies or career choices.

Mentel health is the prominent factor in nurturing an individual which influences in productivity, coping ability, building self-esteem, positive connections and improvement of physical health of students⁷⁰. The Murabbi system creates sister bond between students as well as the efficient implementation of mentor mentee system facilitates students share their feelings, problems and complaints as well as the residential system automatically create we-feeling among students and make them self-sufficient. The constant active atmosphere of college engages students in different activities. Also, the rewarding system motivates them to participate. The evening playing and sports activities help both physical health and mental well-being as it has important role in the development of social, emotional, and behavioural health as some research shows. The CCE and its recording helps to identify students understanding and comprehension level which promote the student centric learning which is essential to the growth and upliftment of the community.

Despite its immense contribution to integrated education, this program needs some changes in academics as the absence of science lab limit students' quest in experimental

⁶⁸ OECD, "Education Policy Outlook 2025."

⁶⁹ Nancy E. Adams, "Bloom's Taxonomy of Cognitive Learning Objectives," *Journal of the Medical Library Association: JMLA* 103, no. 3 (2015): 152–53, <https://doi.org/10.3163/1536-5050.103.3.010>.

⁷⁰ "The Role of Mental Health in Education and Well-Being."

sciences as well as inclusion of training for competitive exams which influence in long term acceptability and wider applicability of this program in society. As a conclusion, *zahrawiyya* program can be place as a model for the intellectual transformation of Muslim community which laid a foundation stone in the academic revolution in Malabar.

CONCLUSION

This study analysed the education system of *zahrawiyya* as a model of integrated education for the Muslim women in the Malabar by examine curriculum Educational Philosophy teaching learning methodology cocurricular activities and institutional outcomes. The findings demonstrate that the *zahrawiyya* program serves as an integrated educational model by blending Islamic sciences with contemporary Academic disciplines without compromising the traditional Islamic scholarly Heritage. the *zahrawiyya* program facilitates the comprehensive development of the students by integrating a well-structured curriculum, Murabbi system, Mentor-mentee culture, system of continuous assessment, practical methods and Holistic educational environment effectively promote students intellectual, moral, spiritual and rational development. This study reveals that *zahrawiyya* program has significantly contributed to the empowerment of Muslim women by nurturing Scholars, educators, Research and community leaders who contribute to the both Academic and the wider Community. beyond academic achievement this program fosters ethical values, critical thinking, research-oriented learning, multilingual competence, problem solving and leadership skills and lifelong learning reflecting its comprehensive value based educational approach. Overall, the *zahrawiyya* system provides an effective Framework for integrated education that can guide other institution in combining religious and contemporary academic disciplines. Although, this study is limited to a single educational initiative. therefore, Future research could compare the *zahrawiyya* model with other integrated educational models or evaluating its sustained impact on the graduates and society such studies would further enrich the understanding of integrated education and its relevance for Muslim women education across the different context.

DECLARATION OF GENERATIVE AI AND AI-ASSISTED TECHNOLOGIES IN THE WRITING PROCESS

During the preparation of this manuscript, the authors used AI-assisted tools, including ChatGPT, Claude, Grammarly, and DeepL, to support the writing process, improving language and readability, and refining the structure and clarity of several paragraphs. These AI tools were not used to generate research data, develop the core arguments, conduct the analysis, or produce the findings of the study. All content generated or refined with the assistance of AI tools was carefully reviewed, verified, and edited by the authors to ensure its accuracy, relevance, and consistency with the research. The authors also independently checked all references and citations. The authors take full responsibility for the content, accuracy, and integrity of this publication.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

This manuscript was prepared collaboratively by three authors. The first author was primarily responsible for conducting the research process, including data collection, data analysis, data verification, and the preparation of the manuscript. The second author contributed to the research by providing academic guidance, reviewing the research process and manuscript, and offering constructive feedback to strengthen the academic quality of the study. The third author contributed to the critical review and refinement of the manuscript, particularly in improving the clarity, coherence, and presentation of the arguments. All authors participated in reviewing and revising the manuscript and approved the final version for publication.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data used to support the findings of this study are derived from publicly available sources. The study primarily relies on scholarly literature obtained through Google Scholar and other relevant academic databases and open-access sources. All sources used in the research are accessible to the public and can be consulted for verification and further academic inquiry.

DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

The authors declare that there are no financial, professional, or personal interests that could have influenced the conduct of this research, the interpretation of the data, or the conclusions presented in this manuscript. The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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