Is There an Islamic Epistemology? Role of HRD

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Abstract

Epistemology or knowledge of knowledge is a very old practice in the field of philosophy. But today it is not confined only in the boundary of philosophical practice. Epistemology is important for all kinds of research, from physical science to spirituality. Here our endeavour was to find epistemology in Islam or Islam in epistemology, i.e., to find whether there is an Islamic epistemology or is there any use of Islamic knowledge in epistemologies. Islam has become an interesting topic in recent times all over the world, both for its positive and negative image. On the one hand, Muslims are growing in numbers rapidly across Europe and the Americas (Pew Research Centre, 2011); on the other hand, a large percentage of terrorists are being labelled as Islamist. Yet, Islamic knowledge has remained largely outside of mainstream research. Hence, it has remained unknown to scholars outside of Islam. Therefore, our objective of this study is threefold: first, to know about Islam, not from the myth, rather from the proper documents; second, to search the origin and circulation of Islamic knowledge in order to trace the epistemology in it; third, finding its worldly use, especially in the field of HROD. This paper is based on a literature review of Islam, epistemology, and HROD. Mostly, the Quran and Hadith have been used here for Islamic knowledge, while other sources also are used to understand the Quran properly.

Keywords: Islam, Muslims, Quran, Hadith, HRD, Epistemology, Knowledge
What is Islam: A Brief Introduction

In the course of intellectual history and intellectual contributions of Muslim societies, Islam is considered as a unified, monotheistic, and independent religion having its own theory and reason. It provides doctrine as a fundamental principle with a complete code of life. Muslim societies having Islamic teachings at their core take guidance from its preaching at all levels as it overwhelmingly influences the very fabric of Muslim culture and routine life. The Islamic orientation starts right from childhood for a child who is born in a Muslim home. He/she starts to inculcate the crux of Islam, like faith in one Allah, belief in the sayings of the Quran, and pursuing the Sunnah, belief in life hereafter and leading a life characterized by simplicity and piety. Indeed, these are the basic rules that, if followed, can do wonders to transform Muslims’ lives for the better and help them to choose the righteous path.

The Muslim nations around the world (Indonesia, Bangladesh, Iran, Malaysia, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia), despite having different cultures, possess certain common characteristics that are underlined by Islamic teachings.

It performs a dominant role not only in Muslims’ lives, but also in areas such as economics, politics anthropology, and sociology in organizations.

Tayeb (1997) explained that Muslim nations have a predefined system where Islamic teachings, values, and guidelines are incorporated into their public and private sector organizations, including the military, media, politics, education, arts, and so on.

Zein (1977) explained that knowledge of Islam can be obtained through different approaches (theoretical and ethnographic), but all of these approaches define that “Islam as a particular instance is presupposed, invariable and incontestable as a religion which also provides the universal form of human experience” (p. 227). And when we look at the multifaceted experiences and understandings of different people, is it possible to think that a single true Islam can exist at all. How can we know the answer to this question?
Despite the availability of an extensive literature review on Islam, it is strange that the world view regarding Islam is marred by the limited knowledge about its origin and evolution. Further; literature review of empirical research work on Islam and its association with other philosophical paradigms is also very rare to find.

The main objective of this article is to examine, explain and compare the ideology of Islam with various epistemologies or paradigms of philosophy and explore the source of Islamic knowledge as well as find the use of such knowledge in the field of HROD.

**Knowledge and Its Sources**

Humanity is searching for knowledge, at least asking the question “what is knowledge” for hundreds of years. Still the search is going on. We can have a very good start here with Kant, “All our knowledge begins with the senses, proceeds then to the understanding, and ends with reason. There is nothing higher than reason” (BrainyQuote, 2013). But what constitutes reason is open to discussion.

Search of knowledge began at the dawn of civilization (or even earlier than that) to control and utilize the environment, mainly in the form of understanding the relationship between people and their environment; here environment may be the natural order, the ecological order or the socio-economic and moral order (Chowdhury and Nadwi, 1992).

In the broad meaning, we understand that knowledge consists of cognitive and abstract elements around us and their understanding. Here the words cognitive and abstract have significant meaning in defining knowledge.

We can start from the cave age, when people got to know about his surroundings for survival. First techniques of hunting then weapons to facilitate hunting then discovering fire to process food and for safety and so on. Gradually people learned adequate knowledge to control the environment (at least they thought so).
Then Greek philosophers came into the scene, which actually is the commencement of modern knowledge search. Great philosopher Plato offers three analyses of knowledge, all of which has been rejected by Socrates. (Plato’s thoughts on knowledge, 2008)

We started this section by the thoughts of I. Kant; probably he is the most notable scholar in this field. He found two types of knowledge existing in this world, priory and posterior. Knowledge which is accepted as truth without observing or experiencing is priory knowledge. Kant thought that such knowledge were others experience at specific time and was true for then but necessarily not true for now. And knowledge gain through observation and/or experience is called posterior (Guyer, 1998). But from Plato to Kant an idea on propositional knowledge has conveyed unchanged, there are three independently necessary and jointly sufficient components for propositional knowledge, Justification, truth and belief. So, propositional knowledge is justifiable true belief. This view is called standard analysis (Moser, 2002).

And this search for knowledge is still continuing. Numerous schools of thought started to find the actual form of knowledge. Definitely there are hundreds of doctrine and counter-doctrine about knowledge and its evolution, such as occidental-oriental, positivism-post-positivism, relativism, religion-atheism and so on.

In this paper we are dealing with religious knowledge, to be more specific, Islamic knowledge, its source and its relation with other source of knowledge and look for the answer of the question “is Islam an independent source of knowledge?”

For the purpose of this study, it is important for us to understand the relation between God and creation. In other words, we need to define knowledge as a relationship between human and non-human of the world and relationship between God and worldly objects (everything in the world). The Quran gives some hints of that relation in several verses, such as: “Decidedly none is there (Literally: all that are there) in the heavens and the earth except
that he comes up to The All-Merciful as a slave” (Al-Quran, 19:93). This verse explains one of the relationships we mentioned earlier, God and creation; we will examine this relationship more in the rest of the manuscript.

**Knowledge in Islam**

“Read! In the name of your Lord who created - Created the human from clot. Read! And your Lord is Most Bountiful - Who taught (the use of) the Pen, Taught the human that which he knew not” (Al-Quran, 96:1-5).

To acquire knowledge is an *ibadah* in Islam; here knowledge means to know about God and creation, the purpose of creation, and their relation. In several verses, the *Quran* clearly explains the *primordiality* of Divine Law as the foundation of knowledge (Chowdhury and Nadwi, 1992). To explore knowledge, in Islam, we need to know what is that Divine Law, how it existed from the very beginning of the world.

For Islam and some forms of Christianity, Divine Law is an important religious term. According to *Catholic Encyclopaedia*, “Divine Law is that which is enacted by God and made known to man through revelation” (Slater, 1910).

The *Quran* indicates the existence of knowledge of Divine Law in the creations and its primordial nature in several verses, like: “Surely in the creation of the heavens and the earth and in the alternation of (Or: differences) the night and the daytime there are signs indeed for ones endowed with intellects” (*Al-Quran* 3:190).

“Say, [O Muhammad], ‘Travel through the land and observe how Allah began creation. Then Allah will produce the final creation. Indeed Allah, over all things, is competent” (*Al-Quran* 29:20)

From two verses above, it is clear that knowledge can be obtained through proper study of nature, i.e., God’s creation. Secret of the universe is hidden inside it; we have to endeavour to reach close to that knowledge. The *Quran*, a source of knowledge through
faith, also claims that God not only created them, but also put them in a harmony as a teaching for humans, teaching of the existence and oneness of Almighty God. As the Quran says, “It is Allah Who made the sun a shining thing and the moon as a light and measured out its (their) stages, that you might know the number of years and the reckoning. Allah did not create this but in truth and explains the Ayat (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.) in detail for people who have knowledge.” (Quran, 10:5). So, whoever looks for the knowledge can understand the secret of the creation. As deeper as we dig, we can go closer to the truth, as understood through faith. But there is a certain level of consciousness/wisdom that we can achieve; we cannot go beyond that in this temporal world. As Quran says,

This is the Book (His Divine Writ) let there be no doubt (that, it is) a guidance for God conscious people, who believe in (the existence of) that which is beyond the reach of human perception and constant in prayer and spend on others out of what We provided for them as sustenance. (Al-Quran 2:2-3)

From the above discussion, we found that concept of knowledge in the Quran came in two ways:

1. **Concept of absolute knowledge**, only God has the sole access to that. The knowledge, which cannot be fully known or understood in the temporal life, will be available or understood clearly in the Akhira (Hereafter).

2. **Concept of functional knowledge**, the evolutionary process of transmission of knowledge and experience gained in all sub-systems (all animate and inanimate things) of the universe.

The core idea of Islamic knowledge evolves from the concept of Divine Law or absolute knowledge as obtained through faith from the Quran. Its primordiality but inaccessibility in the fullest form is the main foundation of Islamic epistemology. Although
supreme truth cannot be fully understood, the worldly truth(s) are made from its essence. As we mentioned earlier, two forms of knowledge, cognitive and abstract realms of reality, come out of the Divine Law. And knowledge about this worldly reality can be gained through exploration. This primordial accessible knowledge necessarily not conveys consciously or explicitly, rather it springs from or spreads across all the sub-systems of the universe, especially exists in the original state of the nature.

Reason and cognition, however, are the secondary forms of knowledge and conscious state of realization. The worldly reality gained through reason and cognition change time to time, even depends on the space. Chance of confusion arises here, if one has no clear knowledge of the structure of the truth, that person can easily be misguided.

Two branches of knowledge discussed above cannot be explained through simple concept of complementarity. Here, the second form of knowledge, i.e., revealed knowledge might be explained by reason; hence, reason is the important part of revelation. But the relationship is one way; revelation is not complementary to reason.

Reason does not, therefore, hold any status of its own in the light of revealed knowledge. It is intrinsically incapable in totally comprehending the Divine Law. Thus, the human, and thereby, the systemic integration of knowledge in the universe, must proceed in an evolutionary form, from lower to greater levels of certainty, with the possibility of making mistakes and conflict in this process of moment-to-moment becoming of the Islamic personality. (Chowdhury and Nadwi, 1992, pp. 67)

The divine law or absolute knowledge mentioned above is only possessed by the supreme God, Allah; this strict monotheism of Allah is called Tawhid in the Quran. Tawhid is not a simple word to mention oneness of God; rather it implies the completeness and absoluteness of knowledge. Allah and his divine law is the first and unified source of
knowledge. It’s called *Ilm* (unity of knowledge) and this unified knowledge expressed by several practical terms for general understanding (Faris, 1962). Some of the terms manifested *Ilm* at all time are high morality of justice (*Adl*), compassion (*Ihsan*), balance (*Mizan*), Human solidarity (*Ikhwa*), and so on. Each of the terms mentioned above are a separate branch of knowledge; which are the worldly knowledge of Islam. We find the evidence of such worldly matters and solutions for the problems that arise in this world are in the Quran and *Hadith*.

About Justice (*Adl*) *Quran* says, “Indeed, Allah orders justice and good conduct and giving to relatives and forbids immorality and bad conduct and oppression. Allah admonishes you that perhaps you will be reminded” (*Al-Quran* 16:90). Islam is very keen about the business world as business is regarded the second best way of income (after physical labour). Very small issues of business are considered carefully in Islam, as one of the *Hadith* narrated by Hakim bin Hizam: Prophet Muhammad says, “The seller and the buyer have the right to keep or return goods as long as they have not parted or till they part; and if both parties spoke the truth and described the defects and qualities (of the good), then they would be blessed in their transaction, and if they told lies or hid something then the blessing of their transaction would be lost” (*Sahih Bukhari*, 3:34:293). This *Hadith* orders businessmen to be honest in their business, whereas warns consumer about their right. There are several *Hadith* and few verses in Quran like this which explain the proper way of doing business.

**Epistemology in Islam and Its Premises**

Epistemology plays a cardinal role in the history of philosophy. Different philosophers view the term epistemology in their own perspective as it focuses on nature, scope and the origin of knowledge. Over the time there have been great debate and contradictions found among the epistemologists regarding the analysis and sources of knowledge. As Moser (2002) explained, “Expecting agreement among contemporary
epistemologists is no more reasonable than expecting agreement between, say, the deductivist rationalist Descartes and the inductivist empiricist Francis Bacon” (pp. 8-9).

Epistemology is a Greek word that means the theory of knowledge and justification (McLean, 2013). It is derived from two Greek words episteme (knowledge) and the other word is logos mean reason, evidence, justification (Johnson & Duberley, 2000). Grix (2002) broadly defined epistemology as “knowledge gathering process” (p.177).

History of quest for knowledge in Islam is enriched with many Islamic scholars, whose research is accepted all over the world. Imam Gazzali is one of them. Premises of Islamic epistemology discussed below are essence of his famous work named “Ihya Ulumuddin” (Revival of Religious Science). According to his famous book, Quran and Sunnah are the foundation of Islamic epistemology (Faris, 1962). That means that the Quran is the main source of knowledge whereas Sunnah is the practical interpretation of that knowledge. And from this basic foundation of Islamic epistemology comes the science of living named Fard Ayn, obligatory activities, direct order for humans from God. There is another form of knowledge, which is highly recommended but not obligatory, called Fard Kifaya, which basically is the applied branch of knowledge (Hashim, 1999). Some core practical knowledge fields like mathematics, natural science, social science, commerce, medicine are included in this branch. There is a tertiary form of knowledge called Ijma, especially for the purpose of discussing specific matters of Quran and Sunnah. Ijma is mainly the knowledge gathered from the social consensus but cannot go against Quran and Sunnah (Faris, 1962).

Fard Ayn is the obligatory ritual activities every Muslim has to do throughout his/her life. Detail explanations of these activities are beyond scope of this paper.

Fard Kifaya is not obligatory but highly appreciated and recommended for the betterment of society. There are four kinds of activity in Fard Kifaya, sources, branches,
auxiliary and supplementary. Sources comprises knowledge of the Quran, Sunnah and Ijma, which in other way, foundations of Islamic epistemology. These three are the main sources of knowledge for sound social life. In branches, knowledge drawn from the sources is discussed. Here the word branch is allegoric, it literally does not mean branch of source, rather indicates applied knowledge field of Sources. The third one is auxiliary, mainly linguistic and syntax are consists of this kind of knowledge. Supplementary is the fourth kind, which discusses the issues like law, sociology, political science (Faris, 1962).

Although core knowledge of Islam came from the oneness of God and His divine rule, it would be worthless to gain this knowledge without implementation in the practical field. For that reason both the Quran and Sunnah are the bases of Islamic epistemology.

We discussed earlier about the core belief of Islamic knowledge. Tawhid, the prioritized teaching of Quran, is the central point of Islamic epistemology. There are three stages of Tawhid; we can also term this as the stages of self-consciousness. The first stage is to believe in the oneness of God, feeling the essence of Tawhid as an illumination inside one’s mind. Second stage is the utterance of the monotheism of only one God and his Prophet to confirm one’s belief. The third stage is implementation of the belief in practical life (Faruqi, 1977). That means doing whatever He ordered and avoiding things He forbade. In other words Islamic epistemology’s root is in Tawhid and stems the branches to manifest its core into practical action. Again practical actions in the temporal life are the investment for the life hereafter (life after death).

Acquisition of knowledge from core belief to practical life depends on the depth of belief and level of consciousness. That means to discover the inner secret of sciences we need high level of belief and self-consciousness. In order to reach that stage Islam urges to study and explore more and more, especially from the Quran. As the Prophet Muhammadsaid, ”The most superior among you (Muslims) are those who learn the Qur'an and teach it” (Sahih
Bukhari, 61:546). So, if we take *Tawhid* as the foundation of knowledge, it becomes easy for us to understand how Islamic epistemology explains the origin to maximum level of knowledge. There is one important assumption in *Tawhidi* foundation, the highest level of knowledge cannot be acquired in this perishable world, and rather it would be clear to us in the hereafter. We can explore the knowledge to reach closer to the *Truth*.

Figure 1: Distribution of Islamic knowledge

**Islam and Social Constructivism**

According to Nwafar, Naing, and McLean (2012), social constructivism is an epistemological approach widely used in social science defines that social phenomena develop and build in social environment where we believe that reality is based on assumption and human actions and knowledge comes to human from social context or environment.
through interacting and learning with environment and other components. It could be said that societal process is continuous whereby we continuously interact, communicate, learn and receive knowledge through participation in social context. Here social constructivism views that our knowledge depends on the nomenclature of society with each human being or individual has its own independent truth based on his individual’s experience, and social context. And can predict future on basis of their experience in society.

Nawfer et al. (2012) stated that social constructivism emphasizes the way by which meaning and understanding grows out of social interaction. Social constructivism is the way by which social phenomena are institutionalized and become tradition.

However from Islamic perspective; here we can sense some contradiction that Islam provides a complete knowledge in the form of principle, it provides stepping stones, complete guideline and code of life. It gives individuals the knowledge to select right or wrong path. Muslims build faith and believe based on the knowledge which comes from Holy Quran and Sunnah. The foundation of Islam relies on the nature of universe and not on the conventions, whereas the social constructivism is based on culture, culture carries societal conventions and culture and conventions are changing time to time and are differ from place to place. Although some ritual practices vary from nation to nation or country to country, the core belief and knowledge of Islam are same all over the world. As an example, we can tell here about the wedding program; the wedding program in African Muslim community is completely different from the wedding program in Bangladeshi Muslim community, but the obligatory part of a wedding, i.e., one priest (anyone can take this position without need for institutional recognition), two eyewitnesses, and spontaneous consent from both bride and groom are a must, and this is the same for all Muslims all over the world.

Nwafar et al. (2012) stated that in social constructivism knowledge is based on people where they learn it though language and cultural, whereas culture is based on symbolic
thoughts and carries societal conventions and that can be changed from time to time. There are different forms of cultural system (religion, art, common sense, philosophy, history, ideology, science) their world view is based on experience. So, philosophers proved that we learn through our experience. But Islam is based on Divine Law and independent where core knowledge does not change with cultural differences, whereas daily life activity may be influenced by local culture.

**Islam and Positivism**

The positivist philosophy was introduced by Auguste Comte (1798-1856) in the beginning of 19th century. The positivists believe in positivism philosophy system where knowledge is solely based on scientific methods (observation and experience). Positivism has been assigned different names, e.g., empiricism, logical positivism, logical, and empiricism due to the fact that a number of definitions have surfaced for positivism since 19th century (Mckelvey 2003). Sritanyarat, Kanjanajuta, and Tanawattanakorn (2010) described that positivists claim that the truth or real knowledge is scientific knowledge that could be proved with scientific methods and can be generalized. It also provides numerical results based on the data of human experience where human beings learn knowledge with the observation, experience and test by applying various senses (touch, feel, smell, hear, taste). In other words it could be deduced that positivism is inseparably associated with the strong form of rationalism.

As Islam is based on the principles of Divine Law and in that context the Divine Law is eternal and thus Muslims believe in two concepts of knowledge; absolute and functional knowledge which we discussed in the Islamic knowledge section of this paper.

Choudhury (2008) described the composition of Islamic knowledge as dependent on the totality of Divine Revelations (in which angels used to convey messages of Allah to his prophets) carrying the guidelines, values, and objectives since the key principles of learning
are drawn from the interpretation of the Holy Quran and Sunnah. Moreover the main driving force that stood behind much of the intellectual contributions in Muslim societies was the staunch belief in strict monotheism called Tawhid. Throughout the process, the centrality of the worldview was continually maintained, in addition to the social implications of Tawhid. All the diversity, wealth, history, culture, learning, and wisdom inherent within the civilization of Islam stems and derives from (Kalima) this shortest of statements

‘La ilaha illa Allah’

(There is no god but Allah) and in this manner, Tawhid is therefore the universal view of reality, truth, world, space and time, and history and destiny. So Islam primarily encompasses number of integrated blocks e.g. metaphysical, spirituality, belief, and world view, outlook of life, methods, theories, and objectives.

Sardar (1979) examined the epistemology of Islam and concluded that it emphasizes complete experience and reality and not only focuses on just one paradigm; rather, it explores different other ways to gain knowledge about nature:

The Islamic concept of knowledge incorporates almost all forms and types of knowledge ranging from pure observation to the loftiest metaphysics hence Islamic knowledge could be gained from the revelation as well as reason, from observation as well as intuition and also from tradition as well as theoretical speculation. (p. 19)

Here is some contradiction between Islam and positivism as Islam relies on one truth that is generalized, and that truth is based on metaphysical, spiritual, belief, and theological concepts. Moreover, Islamic knowledge focuses on the knowledge and reality that is beyond human observation skills. But positivism rejects metaphysical and theological knowledge.

**Islam and Post Modernism:**

Klages (2003) defined the post modernism believes in many truths but that are subject to time and place; where the truth is accepted on a limited scale rather than larger scale.
Nawrin and Mongkolsirikiet (2012) explained Post modernism sees truth as value for today and can be altered tomorrow which shows that truth can be temporal, no longer a worthwhile and situational and instable. Post modernism does not assume external reality and it rejects and criticizes the universal truth, grand narratives and believes in many truths.

As discussed earlier, Islam has its fundamental principles and practices that shapes up the life of many Muslim nations with its unwavering faith in the existence of one Allah i.e., Tawhid. Also, another key factor in Islam is belief in the Day of Judgment (Akhira), which is bound to happen and which makes Muslims to live a life based on strong doctrines of Islam. Islam enlightens them with the preaching of Holy Quran and Sunnah. This firm and unchanged belief is completely based on metaphysical factor and cannot be proved with the help of any scientific method. Unfortunately here we can grasp another contradiction between Islam and post modernism epistemology and that is Islam is based on universality, law of divine knowledge which is eternal and absolute truth and that the Islamic truth is not temporary and its doctrines are applicable to every era and time. On other hand in modernism; as we had discussed that it rejects one truth and focuses on existence of many truths since it was stated by Klages (2003) that post modernism does not claim stability, reason and single truth. Hence above discussion strongly upholds that Islam is the only source of knowledge.

Islam and Relativism

Keeping in the view the universality of Islam and its eternal existence, Islam preaches one single absolute truth and that is applicable to all Muslims in all times. Muslims do believe the Islam has its own history and has its own independent knowledge and this philosophical universality does not match with relativism.

Additionally, it is stated by McLean (2012) the relativism is philosophical view that defines that there is no single absolute truth and whatever truth, reason and warranted
knowledge is available; it is directly linked with some history, place, culture or some other aspect.

Here is the controversy between Islam and relativism because the existence of *Tawhid* and *Akhira* is about believing and following the doctrine of Islam and that Islam has its independent knowledge which is not derived from any other field or aspect whereas the relativism completely rejects and argues about the absolute or eternal truth.

**Islam and HRD**

HRD is becoming the very important part of modern business. To survive in the fast paced corporate world, knowledge in HRD is indispensable for the corporations. Although HRD is a western idea and mainly developed in US, it has its roots several other sources, especially in the Asian cultures. Currently most of the theories, tools, methods, even the experts are US made, but for globalization, it’s important to develop theories, models etc on other cultural and contextual background (McLean and McLean, 2001).

Finding roles of Islam in HRD and including Islamic rules in HRD for Muslim countries are really important to make it effective in these countries. If we adopt some practice from US and want to implement them in a Muslim country without making any change in it, definitely it will bring chaos there. But to edit HR rules for Muslim countries require knowledge on the history of Islamic contribution and Islamic support for modern HRD practice.

There had been common practice of making efficient employee for the organization and HRD was evolving that process. But scholars are currently showing their concern on that issue; as such practice can lead the total HR to be unethical, immoral and heartless. So, importance of training on character and morality is increasing day by day along with other vocational/skills training (Stiglitz, 2010; Brown, 2010). It is worthy to quote Bertrand Russell (1954) here, according to him, increase in wisdom is really important, while there is an
increase in knowledge and skill; as increase in knowledge and skill can enhances our potential capacity for evil. As an instance, invention of nuclear power can be used in both productive and destructive way. But what we see in today’s world? Everywhere we find growing tension over the use of nuclear power. This is one of the reasons why we need moral teaching along with technical teaching.

Such moral teaching is the part of human development, HD. Scholars are advocating for HD as a better policy of HRD. As McLean and McLean (2001) said, “human resource development is any process……has the potential to develop adults’ work-based knowledge…………. For the benefit of an organization, community, nation or, ultimately, the whole of the humanity” (p. 322). So, HRD is no more only for the benefit of the organization but also for the betterment of the society, humanity.

Persuasion of knowledge is divine duty for every Muslim; some people misguide us telling that it is only learning Quran, i.e. reciting Quran. But if we have a deep insight into Quran, we find that understanding of the Quran is badly needed for a person to be a good Muslim. As the Quran says, “There has come to you enlightenment from your Lord. So whoever will see does so for [the benefit of] his soul, and whoever is blind [does harm] against it. And [say], ‘I am not a guardian over you.” (Al-Quran 6:104). Understanding the Quran has a twofold purpose: to know about the ultimate God and to know how to lead own life in this world. The second purpose includes relationship with human being and personal and social development. Quran emphasize on wisdom and guidance rather than following old tradition illogically (Quran 2:170, 17:36 and 6:148). Wisdom along with its three components: logic, knowledge and emotional control are equally important (Bagheri and Khiosravi, 2006).

According to Halstead (2004), education in Islam includes three concepts, knowledge, maturity and good manners. Knowledge indicates firstly Tawhid, the strict monotheism of
God it is the source of other knowledge. Maturity means level of consciousness, through that one can get the essence of the “Truth.” Good manners are for both this temporary world and hereafter. Good manners are very important for good relationship; good relationship is important factor for success. According to Islamic scholars, knowledge, learning and education are the centre of Islamic view of work and life. They also emphasize on lifelong learning, individual and social development for a civilized society and proper transmission of knowledge (Siddiqui, 1987; Akdere et al., 2006).

Training is a part and parcel of any HRD programme and training manual or material is indispensable component for training. In several places in the Quran, it claims that this is the solution for the problems of the world people will face before the Day of Judgment. In Islam Quran is main training manual for Muslims. Everything one need for the whole life is embedded in Quran.

But the problem is interpretation; same Ayat (verses of Quran) can be interpreted in different ways if there is no proper guideline. Again it’s not easy to follow Quran for everyone, as most of the verses are written allegorically. So, a role model is also provided for Muslims, Prophet Muhammad. Quran has been sent to Prophet Muhammad by Gabriel, verses are revealed at specific time and for specific purpose. So, to understand the real meaning of the verses, we need to know the time and situation of that specific time along with their proper interpretation. Besides life of Prophet Muhammad is also an accurate interpretation of Quran. To follow him is apparently following Quran. In this sense he is a role model for Muslims. (Quran 33:21)

We can see the behaviour model in Wegner’s “Social Learning Theory” (Wegner et al, 2002), through this model Wegner shows us how learning in the society can be improved. He suggested a role model for any specific task. For Muslim community Prophet Muhammad is that role model. Prophet Muhammad used to sit in the mosque with his disciples and fellow
countrymen to give them solution of worldly problem, to teach them how to conduct in the society. Later on different disciples of Prophet Muhammad shows us the way to solve some other problems arises after his death.

Looking for *Halal Rizk* is *Ibadah* for Muslims. The concept of *Halal* is frequently mistaken by the people, even sometimes by the ignorant Muslims. *Halal Rizk* for an employee is to perform the duty properly for what he is being paid. If anyone earn money without performing due duty, the income will become *Haram* for him/her. Islam made business as one of the best ways of income, but the business should be of *halal* products. Here *Halal* products means, goods and products which are not forbidden to buy or sale or not fake/counter freight. Beside the *halal* criteria being firm and consistent in honesty is another important task for a Muslim in the business. “And give full measure when you measure, and weigh with an even balance. That is the best [way] and the most advantageous in the final determination.” (Al-Quran, 17:35)

Equality is a very important component to manage HR in the organization. To maintain equality one should be just whatever the situation is. Quran says, “O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm for Allah, witnesses in justice, and do not let the hatred of a people prevent you from being just. Be just; that is nearer to righteousness. And fear Allah; indeed, Allah is Acquainted with what you do” (Al-Quran, 5:8). That means even if a Muslim must be just, even if it goes against his/her interest.

From the discussion and the evidence from Quran and *Hadith* above clearly shows that proper utilization of Islamic rules in HRD can improve the experience in that sector.

**Conclusion**

Authors in this paper tried to find the source of Islamic knowledge and evolution of that from the very beginning of this world to modern age. Practicable usability is also considered in this paper as it has written on HROD purpose. Findings of this paper lead us to
the unification of knowledge and its implication on the daily life. Study of the knowledge is enriching day by day by the contribution of notable scholars. Different theories, paradigms and epistemologies are coming into scene. Islamic scholars are claiming it (Islam) as a separate field or source of knowledge for a long time. Essence of their thoughts also discussed here to check their arguments on its favour. It is quite possible that one day in the book of epistemology, Islam would be considered as a separate epistemology. But further researches are needed for that purpose, especially every details of the fountain of Islamic knowledge, usable in this world, from the very beginning of its roots called *Tawhid*.

The authors of this paper believe that we have our answer for the question, “is there an Islamic epistemology?” and the answer is positive. But we also believe that further research is needed to use Islam as an independent epistemology, especially by the non-Muslim researcher. Otherwise risk of confusion and dispute remains.

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**Glossary of Arabic Terms**

*Akhira*: Hereafter

*Allah*: Islamic word for Almighty God

*Ayath*: verses of Quran

*Fard Ayn*: Obligatory performance for Muslim

*Fard Kifaya*: Non- obligatory but recommended tasks for Muslim

*Hadith*: Books on Prophet Muhammad’s speech and practical life

*Hajj*: Pilgrim

*Halal*: Everything permissible for Muslim

*Ibadah*: Prayer

*Ijma*: Social consensus of Islamic scholars

*Quran*: (the Scripture of Islam) revealed book to Prophet Muhammad as guidance for Muslims

*Resalah*: Prophecy

*Rizk*: Sustenance

*Salah*: Obligatory prayer for all Muslims, five times a day

*Sunnah*: Practical life of Prophet Muhammad

*Tawhid*: Monotheism of God, as Creator and Sustainer of the universe.

*Zakat*: Obligatory donation, due once a year.