

Issues in Education

Ratnawati Mohd Asraf

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CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT AND ISLAMIC CIVILIZATION IN UGANDA: IMPLICATIONS FOR MUSLIM EDUCATORS'

Ssekamanya Siraje Abdallah

Abstract

Using the spread of Islam in Uganda as a case study, this paper illustrates the fact that character is a key element in the rise and fall of civilizations. It demonstrates how the simple Arab traders who introduced Islam to the Uganda managed to transform Ugandan society in a very short time because of their emphasis on good character. Traditional education in Madrasah (religious schools) emphasized character development. This emphasis, however, has been challenged by the now dominant secular world view. One way of dealing with this challenge is not to turn back the clock, but to practice a progressive, practical-oriented, reflective approach to religious education and character development, coupled with professional training in strategic disciplines.

INTRODUCTION

Many scholars have discussed the causes of the decline of Muslim civilization and what Muslims should do to recover their lost glories (e.g., al-Salih, 1982; al-Attas, 1993; Ibn Khaldun, 1968; and Ssekamanya, 2006). There is a consensus among all those works that character was a very important factor in the rise of Muslim civilization and in its eventual decline and fall. When Muslims were the beacons of virtue, they led the way and the entire world trailed behind them. The purpose of this paper is to illustrate this using Uganda as a case study.