

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

Thesis Title

THE DEVELOPMENT OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION
OF WOMEN IN THE EASTERN PROVINCE OF
SAUDI ARABIA - PROBLEMS & TRENDS

By

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Date of Thesis Presentation: August 13, 1968

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Nabila Abdulla Al-Bassam

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TO MY PARENTS

P R E F A C E

Even in the 20th century when man is reaching for the moon, Saudi Arabia's material and human resources lie, for the large part, untapped. The discovery of oil has brought wealth and riches into a country that has survived because of the sturdy character of its people and the aspirations of its leaders which have channeled a path for education and change. Formerly social customs were shrouded by the country's traditions and conservatism, its fatalism and zealotism.

Then suddenly like a ray of sunshine women began to make their presence felt in the Saudi Arabian environment. Full scale Government education program for women is only seven years old, but the surging desire and interest in a better education and future can be seen in the number of modern well-built schools, the rapid increase of students and improvements in the curriculum. A social revolution is at last transforming the new emerging Saudi society.

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Many others have contributed in various ways, - through interviews, giving me pamphlets and statistical reports - I am unable to mention them all - among them are Dr. Matta Akrawi, Abdul Muhsin Al-Mangoor, Saudi Cultural Attaché in Beirut, Dr. John Sorman and other members of Aramco Office in Khobar, and last but not least, the members of my family.

My thanks go to all the Saudi students at A.U.B. and B.C.W. who had put effort and time in filling out the questionnaires. I wish them all luck in their educational ventures.

ABSTRACT

This thesis indicates a particular concern and interest in the system and development of Elementary education for women in the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia, including future trends and prospects.

The subject however cannot stand isolated, since every aspect of women's education is closely linked with the country's culture and background. Hence it was found necessary to handle the subject from a broad and general viewpoint.

Part I of the thesis is concerned with the factual analysis of the situation. Chapter I commences by explaining the writer's aim, the method of enquiry and the limitations of the study. Chapter II is a historical sketch of Arabia from early times when the country was inhabited by Minaeans and Nabataeans until the present time. It relates the influence of the Prophet Muhammad and the expansion of Islam, also the effect of the 'Wahhabis' and the rise of the Ibn Saud who founded the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Chapter III gives a geographical account of the physical features of the land, the climate and the natural resources. It also gives a social and economical sketch of the Kingdom covering the tribes of the Eastern Province, the inhabitants, the settlement pattern, the arts and cultural institutions; a survey of the economy encompassing agriculture, mining and the oil industry; and the nature of the government and its political function., An important section of this Chapter includes the religion of Islam which is the prime motivating force of education. Emphasis has been made to indicate the many misinterpretations that have

arisen, pertaining to women's education and enlightenment.

Chapter IV covers the early type of education, its aims, the type of schools, the subject matter and the curriculum, the method of teaching and the type of education that was offered to girls within the home. This is followed by a factual and detailed account of the present educational system in the Kingdom and its development since the year 1960. An analysis of the role of women's education at the present time involved mention of the aim and system of education, the expenditure of the State on girls' education, the administration and organization of the schools in the Eastern Province and the significant role of Aramco. A description of the first Government and Aramco built SAG School for girls in the Eastern Province, includes the curricula of the schools and concludes with a summary of those innovations that can occur in the present educational system.

Part II of the thesis pertains to the social forces that have either hindered or promoted the education of women in the Kingdom. Chapter IV considers four factors - the religion, and the religious forces, the society and social customs and values, the Governmental forces and the influences of Aramco and other foreign elements.

Chapter VI is an opinion survey of the current attitudes, problems and trends in women's education in an attempt to come to closer grips with the issues involved, other than through book research. Two different sets of questionnaires was made out and sent to (a) the Saudi students

studying in the American University of Beirut and the Beirut College for Women i.e. girls and boys and to (b) Women teachers of the Eastern Province, both Saudi Arabs and foreign Arabs. The results of these questionnaires have indicated valuable information especially in regard to changes in attitudes towards girls obtaining an education and the problems that they are confronted. The women teachers spoke frankly and made useful suggestions for improvements in the school and the curricula.

The last Chapter concludes on an optimistic note, indicating trends and the future prospects of women's education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

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CHAPTER I

I N T R O D U C T I O N

A. The Purpose

The purpose of this study is exploratory and stems from my own personal interest and involvement in the subject - it is a quest for a deeper and more thorough investigation and understanding of the role of women's education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Research into the conditions of women's education before and since 1960 has led to an attempt to comprehend the interplay of socio-economic and political forces in the women's environment.

However, this thesis in no way pretends to have encompassed all the possible angles of the problem of women's education, nor does it pretend to have discovered a new formula or solution to the age-old issues of her role and status in society. A proper understanding of the forces of education in the Kingdom would entail delving into politics, religion, economics, social sciences, social psychology and other spheres of knowledge, an important one of which is "experience". Lack of sufficient information, has created problems in the field of research. Nevertheless, it is necessary that such a study be made since Saudi Arabia is experiencing a dilemma in women's education, as in all other fields of development; that of harmonizing between the traditional way of life and the demands of a modern industrial age. Hence it is important that

one attempt to collect all available information; analyze and clarify them; and, even if it might involve treading on precarious ground, to estimate or predict future trends and prospects.

Religion in Saudi Arabia plays an important role in determining all aspects of daily life. However, many misinterpretations of the Qur'an need to be clarified, especially those pertaining to the role and status of women. Traditions, customs and social values have also had a tremendous influence and need to be analyzed and sifted in order to adapt to the changes of the new emerging world.

Being a staunch feminist, I have full faith that the Saudi woman will realize her potentialities, given some encouragement and scope to prove her untapped abilities. Present conditions in Saudi Arabia show that the Government, by way of increasing the number of schools and doubling the educational budget, is encouraging women's education; and already several Saudi women have taken on responsible positions in their community as teachers, headmistresses, journalists, doctors, nurses and social workers. However, trends and prospects of the future of women's education need to be analyzed in order that one comprehends to what extent or degree our aims and purposes are being fulfilled.

B. Method

The choice of subject matter has demanded that the method of the research be varied. A survey of the Kingdom commences with, firstly,

a brief historical and geographical sketch which puts the area of study into focus; secondly, a brief social and economical sketch portraying the present conditions in the Kingdom; and thirdly, coverage on Islam, the dominant religion which is closely interwoven into every aspect of the culture and character of the Saudi Arab; concluding with a summary which attempts to explain the relevance and interplay of these environmental factors on education.

The next chapter is a review of the early or traditional system of education for women - its purposes, methods and content, which enables one to understand those elements that are playing an important role in the present educational venture. This is followed by a factual and statistical report on the development and current role of elementary education for girls since 1960, ^{It}describes and clarifies the present conditions and system of education and throws light on those higher levels of education that are available to girls in the region. It also enables one to see in what manner the demand for education is being met, and in which fields improvements are necessary.

The second part of the study is a sociological analysis and interpretation of the significant forces and factors which have both hindered and promoted the development of women's education in the Kingdom. At this stage it was necessary to conduct a selective opinion survey. Hence, two types of questionnaires were made up and sent to two different sets of people, (a) the teachers for the girls' schools in the Eastern province and (b) the Saudi Arabian students at

the American University of Beirut and at the Beirut College for Women. The questionnaires, being an opinion survey, were of the open-ended variety. Thus an attempt to tabulate them was considered impractical. The results were most interesting and indicative of present problems and possible solutions.

In the last chapter, the writer attempts to foretell future trends and prospects for Saudi Arabia, particularly in regard to women's education and emancipation, in the light of the social, economic and political changes that are presently taking place in the Kingdom.

Several problems have been encountered in the process of thesis writing. The attempt to narrow the field of enquiry to the Eastern Province has been mainly due to the scarcity and difficulty of obtaining adequate material of a statistical nature. Also, several discrepancies in numbers and other problems concerning the reliability of various sources are some of the many obstacles one has been confronted with. However, the accuracy of figures mentioned in the Government Statistical Yearbook have to be depended upon. Information obtained, not only from library research but from several discussions and interviews with prominent people has helped in filling up on the available data.

The writer is of Saudi Arabian nationality and has, in 1965, worked in the Eastern Province in the Summer Students' Program in the Training Department of Aramco on educational research.

CHAPTER II

SURVEY OF THE KINGDOM

A. Historical Sketch

Scholars have claimed that the Arabian peninsula has been inhabited by a Semitic-speaking people for at least three thousand years. Some have even asserted that Arabia was their original home and that the Islamic conquests of the seventh century A.D. were only the last of a series of eruptions which spread the semitic people beyond their original frontiers.¹ However, much is unknown of the early history of the region since Arabia had been isolated for centuries from the rest of the world. What is certain, however, according to George A. Lipsky is that "the area was very early settled by Semitic tribes who developed ways of life so closely adapted to desert conditions that only the overwhelming impact of new political and economic forces has brought any modification of them."²

Pre-Islamic history of Arabia recounts that the region was always fragmented and isolated into various kingdoms such as the Minaeans and the Sabaeans in the southwestern portions and the Nabataeans in the northwestern fringes. The peninsula as a whole lacked any kind

¹ George A. Lipsky, Saudi Arabia, Its People, Its Society, Its Culture, ed. Thomas Fitimmons, (New Haven, Hraf Press, 1959) p. 8

² Ibid

of political control and unity until the time of the Prophet Muhammad (A.D. 570-632) and his successors.³

Arabia, was a land that was segmented and inhabited by various tribes, which raided and plundered one another, knowing allegiance only to their tribal leader. Then suddenly, "out of this monstrous chaos was born a Great Man, preaching a Great Religion - the Prophet Muhammad preaching Islam ... (which) purified them, bound them into one people."⁴ The religion that burst forth from the desert was a powerful force which, under the Prophet Muhammad, united the warring desert tribes under one ideology. Tribal loyalties were discarded and the Arabs thus strengthened were able to expand beyond the frontiers of Arabia into North Africa and Spain; into Asia Minor and Constantinople and as far as the gates of Vienna; across the Black Sea into the Crimea and Russia: into Persia and India and as far east as the Great Wall of China. Hence it is true when G.E. Von Grunebaum says that,

"The spectacular success of the Arab Muslims in establishing an Empire by means of a small number of campaigns against the great power of the day has never ceased to stimulate the wonderment and the admiration of the Muslim world and Western scholarship."⁵

³Except for a brief period in the tenth century when the Carmathian sect controlled Arabia under the leadership of Abu Tahir, politic unity was unknown in the peninsula.

⁴H. C. Armstrong, Lord of Arabia, Beirut: Khayat College Book Cooperative n.d. p. XIV

⁵G.E. Von Grunebaum, Modern Islam-The Search of Cultural Identity, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1962) p. 1

The appeal of Islam and the growth of Arab civilization had far reaching influences in Europe and the Far East.

However, with the expansion of Islam beyond its original borders, Arabia itself ceased to be the center. After the Prophet's death the capital shifted from Medina to Damascus (under the Ommiads in A.D. 661-750) and then to Baghdad under the Abbaside Caliphates A.D. 750. G.E. Von Grunebaum mentions that the ability of the Muslim Arabs to absorb alien cultures, such as Persian, Hindu, Christian and use their superior achievements in science and technology, without a loss of identity indicated the "functional adaptation of religious belief to changing existential needs."⁶

The extension of Arab power far beyond its original boundaries caused the gradual but inevitable decline in the importance of the peninsula and made Arabia, once again, "a backwater that was to remain isolated for nearly a thousand years."⁷ H.C. Armstrong says:

"Out of the desert had come the faith and the driving force, but Arabia, having given birth to these, sank back into its old state. Once more it became a land of ignorance and violence, shut off from the outside world."⁸

⁶Ibid, p. 9

⁷Lipsky, op. cit., p. 9

⁸H.C. Armstrong, op. cit., p. XV

Many more centuries were to pass. The Middle Ages, the Crusades, the Byzantine Empire and the Turkish Empire did not affect the interior land of Arabia, cut off as they were by vast desert barriers. The people lived their own lives of tribal existence. The Turks claimed suzerainty over them but not in reality.

Late in the eighteenth century, rose another man, Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahab preaching the revival of Islam, in its original simple form. He called on the Arabs to purify themselves, forswear all worldly pleasures and devote themselves in the service of God with rigid ascetism. For a while he was persecuted until he took refuge in the Principality of Nejd and claimed the protection of one Muhammad ibn Saud, the Amir of Diriya and Riyadh.

Saud and Abdul Wahab together swore to bring the Arabs back to the true faith of Islam. They forbade smoking and drinking wine, destroyed all idols and gradually, tribe after tribe, was converted. Known as 'Wahhabis' they grew more and more powerful. Hence to combat their increasing strength, the Turks sent a force under Muhammad Ali, the Viceroy in Egypt, who invaded Nejd, defeated the 'Wahhabis' and captured Saud who was later beheaded publicly in Constantinople.

After that the country once again fell into decline, broken by tribal raids which persisted throughout the 19th Century.

It was not until the rise of Abdulaziz II ibn Saud, who was better known as Ibn Saud, the grandson of Saud, that Arabia was once again awakened to a new national consciousness. At the time, the

country was divided into a number of principalities independently controlled by various tribal leaders. The Hejaz was under the rule of Al-Shariff, Nejd was under Ibn Rasheed who was supported by the Ottomans, Asir in the West and Qatif in the East were emirates. Al Hasa in the East was under tribal rule and the Rub-Al-Khali in the South was inhabited by nomads.

Then in 1902, with a band of fifty men, Ibn Saud ambushed the Rashidi Governor of Nejd and was proclaimed the new master of Nejd and Imam of the Wahhabis. By gradual conquest he was able to unite the desert tribes with the assistance of the Wahhabis who established strong Ikhwan or Brotherhood communities. Finally in 1924 he was able to overthrow the Sherif Husain of Mecca who was under British control and was proclaimed King of Arabia.

Thus Saudi Arabia is about forty years old if one dates its existence from 1927 when the British Government recognized the independent sovereignty of Ibn Saud, although it was not until 1932 that the dual Kingdoms of Hejaz and Nejd were designated as the "Kingdom of Saudi Arabia".

The King Abdel Aziz Ibn Saud gave the country a unity and security that it had not known since the time of the Prophet Muhammad and his successors. In spite of a few rebellions, such as that of 1929 when Darwish, Sultan Ibn Biyah and other leaders of the Ikhwan staged an attack on Iraq and its British protectors,⁹ Ibn Saud was

⁹Encyclopaedia Britannica, XX, p. 114

able to control his people and at the same time attempt to "acclimatize" them to the use of Western instruments such as the automobile, telephone, radio, telegraph, air planes etc. that were essential for the development of the country.

Formerly the country depended upon revenues of the Mecca pilgrimages, but the discovery of oil in 1936 brought increased wealth and power to the new nation which contributed greatly to its survival and its "re-awakening". Some scholars believe that as a result of the improvements in communications which Ibn Saud had begun, the people of Saudi Arabia were becoming more fully aware of what was happening in the world outside, particularly in the technological field. George Rentz says that "Even if oil had not been found, it is likely that Saudi Arabia would have followed much the same course it did in fact follow, though at a considerably slower pace."¹⁰

From the beginning Saudi Arabia enjoyed full international recognition of its complete independence. In 1934 Ibn Saud was involved in a war with Yemen over a boundary dispute which was settled by the treaty of Taif.¹¹ During World War II Ibn Saud declared neutrality, but in 1945 he agreed to declare war on Germany and hence Saudi Arabia joined the U. N. Organization as a founder member.

¹⁰ George Rentz, "Saudi Arabia: The Islamic Island", Modernization of the Arab World, ed. J.H. Thompson & R.O. Reischauer, (Princeton, New Jersey: Van Nostrand Co. Inc. 1966), p. 117

¹¹ Encyclopaedia Britannica, XX, p. 114

In 1933 Ibn Saud died and was succeeded by his eldest son Saud Ibn Abdel Aziz el Saud, and his second son Feisal was made the Heir-Apparent. Further changes such as the building of schools, hospitals, new roads and international airports in Jeddah and Dhahran were the products of the new regime in Arabia. It has been said that, "The very character of the principal urban societies was transformed out of all recognition by a heavy influx of bourgeoisie from the neighbouring lands with its westernized outlook and apparel, though the court and all persons of Nejd origin still preserved their traditional garb."¹²

In March 1958 King Saud issued a decree transferring full executive powers to Feisal but retained his right of veto. Later in 1963, Feisal assumed all powers and prerogatives and was declared King of Arabia in 1964.

King Feisal began a new regime of austerity, and the currency position which was threatened by the extravagance and inexperience of wealth displayed in the Court, was quickly restored to equilibrium. The economy improved as attention was focused on developing the country's natural resources. Modern buildings, schools, hospitals, factories, a better communication system, broadcasting stations, etc. all indicate the advent of a new age - an age of modern technology. Although one can safely say that Saudi Arabia still remains "a

¹²Encyclopaedia Britannica, XX, p. 113

thoroughly Islamic society"¹³ the situation is undoubtedly going to change as the impact of the changes wrought in the environment begins to have a corresponding effect on the life of the people.

B. The Geography and the People

1. Location, size and population

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia occupies most of the Arabian peninsula between latitudes 15° and 30° and longitudes 35° and 60°: It is bounded on the north by Jordan, Iraq and Kuwait with two areas of neutral territories; west the boundaries are the Gulf of Aqaba and the Red Sea; east, the Arabian Gulf, Muscat and Oman, the Trucial States and Qatar; to the south lies Yemen, South Arabia and Dhofar.

The total area is estimated 872,722 square miles.¹⁴ However the forbidding desert wastes of the Rub al Khali reduces the habitable area of the country to between 150,000 and 250,000 square miles.¹⁵

There has been no accurate population census taken and the figures vary from 6 to 8 million; accordingly the population density

¹³George Rentz, "Saudi Arabia: The Islamic Island", Modernization of the Arab World, ed. J.H. Thompson & R.O. Reischauer, (Princeton, New Jersey: Van Nostrand Co. Inc., 1966), p. 122

¹⁴Encyclopaedia Britannica, XX, 1965

¹⁵George A. Lipsky, Saudi Arabia, ed. Thomas Fitzsimmons, (New Haven: Hraf Press, 1959), p. 19

ranges between 24 to 40 persons per square habitable mile. 90% of the population are Arabs of which 10% are of Negroid ancestry.¹⁶

2. Physical Features

A block of ancient crystalline rocks extending over the vast platform of Arabia from the Hejaz into Nejd contains many extinct volcanoes surrounded by lava beds. Sloping eastwards are the newer sedimentary rocks where the rich oil fields are found. There are no lakes or rivers in the entire peninsula but there is an adequate supply of underground water, especially near the Arabian Gulf. The largest sand deserts lie north in the Nafud and south in the Rub al-Khali connected by the Ad-Dahnan and Nafud Dahi sand belt and constitute barriers for tribal movement and migration.¹⁷

In general Saudi Arabia may be divided into four political-geographical regions.

- a) The Nejd. This high plateau which forms the core of Saudi Arabia, slopes eastward from 5,000 ft. in the West to 2,000 feet in the East.¹⁸ Described as an open steppe, it

¹⁶ Thomas J. Abercrombie, "Saudi Arabia Beyond the Sands of Mecca", National Geographic Magazine, CXXIX, Washington, Jan. 1966.

¹⁷ Encyclopaedia Britannica, XX, 1965

¹⁸ George A. Lipsky, Survey of World Culture; Saudi Arabia, ed. T. Fitzsimmons, (New Haven: Hraf Press, 1959)

comprises of stony sandy deserts, smaller plateaux and depressions. Temperatures vary from as high as 130° F in the hot summer to almost freezing in winter. Average rainfall is 4 inches per annum. Riyadh is the capital and near it is the flourishing agricultural oasis of Al-Kharj.

- b) The Hejaz. An area of 150,000 square miles¹⁹ along the upper Red Sea Coast is a steep escarpment descending to the west. Its coastline stretches 700 miles along the Red Sea from the Gulf of Aqaba to Asir, extending inland from 100-200 miles. Mecca and Medina, the religious citadels, and the capital, Riyadh, are situated here. In the old port and city of Jeddah reside the foreign embassies.
- c) Asir, along the lower Red Sea Coast is the mountainous part of Saudi Arabia, with peaks rising to over 9,000 feet.²⁰ The region comprises of an area which has a width of about 180 miles. The climate is pleasant, annual precipitation is 10-20 inches. Asir is a regional emirate with Abha as its capital.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 22

²⁰ George A. Lipsky, op. cit., p. 23

d) The Eastern Province. Formerly called after the oasis of Al-Hasa extends along the Arabian Gulf for about 200,000 square miles. Its average width is about a 100 miles²¹ consisting of sedimentary rocks, gravel and sand. Both hot and cold springs have been found in abundance. Humidity is high during most of the year, often reaching 100° without rain. Annual rainfall is 4 inches or less per year. Heavy fogs occur in the early mornings in the winter season. Daytime temperatures may range as high as 120° F. This entire area is presently the oil producing region of Saudi Arabia. Damman has succeeded Hufuf as the capital of the Eastern Province.

3. Climate

Climatic conditions are hard and in general inhospitable. The temperatures vary from east to west with temperatures between 100° F to 120° F in summer and almost freezing in winter. Great variations in temperature also occur during the days and the nights.

Much of Saudi Arabia receives no more than 4 inches of rainfall annually, except in the Asir where the annual precipitation is from 10 to 20 inches.²² Long droughts are occasionally broken by

²¹ Ibid.

²² Encyclopaedia Britannica, XX, 1965

short but intense precipitation resulting in flash floods. Relative humidity is high along the coastal regions. However the flow of water from underground springs exceeds the total rainfall enabling the inhabitants to irrigate the land. Although the soils are fertile, irrigation and fertilization are a necessity.

4. Natural Resources

The most significant natural resource that exists in plentiful quantities is oil. Saudi Arabia is estimated to have 15%-20% of the Free World's oil reserves.²³ Other raw material resources are negligible or unexploited. Before World War II an old gold mine at Mahd-ad-Dhahab, ("Cradle of Gold") in Northern Hejaz was re-opened but proved unprofitable and closed down. Rock salt is extracted on the Qizan Coast of the Red Sea. Deposits of clay adequate for pottery manufacture are found on the Sea Coast. Near Dhahran, clay, limestone and crushed stone are available for brick-making and cement construction. Undeveloped areas which are believed to contain deposits of bauxite, iron and lead ores, sulphur, diamonds, gypsum and various low grade semi-precious stones have yet to be explored.

The coastal waters are rich with fish and provide valuable oil for export. Pearls are found in the Arabian Gulf and black coral in the Red Sea. Goats and camels provide hair for weaving. Palm leaves in the scattered oases supply material for mat and basket making.

²³Encyclopaedia International

Some lumber from the Asir mountains is used in the ship building industry of the ports on the Red Sea.

Fuel is available for industry in the form of petroleum, natural gas and potentially, solar energy. So far Saudi Arabia's exports consist almost entirely of oil which dominates 90% of the country's economy and provides a major portion of the Government's revenue.

C. Social and Economical Sketch

1. Tribes

Without going into great detail about the tribal groups in the whole kingdom. It will suffice to mention those of the Eastern Province. They are as follows:²⁴

- a) Saharnah are the settled Shiites who number over 100,000 and live mainly in Al-Hasa and Al-Qatif oasis.
- b) Awazim are divided into camel and sheep raising tribes roaming the southern region of Kuwait.
- c) Murrah are the camel tribes moving between the Rub al Khali from Al-Kharj to Al-Uqayr and north into Kuwait.
- d) Hajir and Khalid are both settled nomadic groups in the outer parts of the Eastern Province.

²⁴ George A. Lipsky, op. cit., p. 10

2. The Inhabitants

The great majority of the inhabitants are Arabs. Recent estimates²⁵ indicate, that 66% of the total population is nomadic or semi-nomadic, 12% settled cultivators and 22% urban dwellers. Small ethnic minorities exist, especially those who have entered the country on pilgrimage or work in the oil industry in the Eastern Province.

Although no records are available, Lipsky²⁶ says that "the birth rate is believed to be the highest in the world, but that it is counter-balanced by the very high infant, child and maternal mortality rates". He adds that the life expectancy is between 30 and 40 years and that "at present the majority of the population is under 20 years of age".²⁷ The majority of the people are Sunni Muslims who adhere to the Wahhabi interpretation of Islam and may be roughly divided into three groups:

- a) "Nomads", or as they are called "Al Badu" Bedouins, are mainly engaged in raising livestock and wander according to well established patterns. "These desert nomads have no specialized political institution, living wholly within a tribal structure which is governed by tradition rather than written law."²⁸

²⁵Ibid., p. 24

²⁶Lipsky, op. cit., p. 24

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸Morroe Berger, The Arab World Today, (New York: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1964), p. 8

- b) "Al-Hadar", or the settled people are those who practice agriculture and trade. A vast majority of them are centered around the towns and oases. They too are bound by tradition, with the family remaining the most important binding social unit (tribe and clan being secondary).
- c) "The Umal al Sharikah", or the Company workers, are a new class or social group of people who have appeared as a result of the oil industry. They are the new industrial working class, many of whom are recruited from the bedouin and settled people and their numbers are ever increasing. 1966 figures indicate that out of 12,664 Aramco employees, 81% were Saudi Arabs. Many Arabs from various parts of the Middle East, attracted by economic opportunities, pour into the country annually. These are generally persons with professional or semi-professional skills, such as merchants, contractors and specialists drawn by the oil industry. These Arabs differ from the Saudi in dialect, dress and social customs; are generally more educated and more westernized.

Figures of 1966²⁹ indicate that 11% of the Aramco employees are Americans and 8% are of other foreign nationalities. The American minority generally have a high social status in Arabia for they are the managers, technicians and specialists of the oil industry. They

²⁹ Aramco 1967, A Review of Operations, 1967, p. 12.

maintain, to a certain extent, social isolation from the Saudi Arabs and enjoy better economic and material advantages.

3. Settlement Pattern

Settlements roughly occur in 3 belts across the Kingdom. One along the Red Sea Coast; the other on the Arabian Gulf Coast and the third in the central oases and wadis where spring water is available and along overland routes across the deserts. The three belts are separated by stony and sandy deserts and no settlements exist in the Empty Quarter of the Rub al Khali.

Since the discovery of oil in 1936, the important commercial, financial, cultural and religious centers experienced a greater movement of people. Formerly Mecca with its large minority groups of Asians and Africans was the largest city in Saudi Arabia, but now the capital Riyadh has a larger population due to the importance of its administrative and political role to the Kingdom.

In the Eastern Province, urban growth has developed markedly with the rise of new towns such as Khobar, Dhahran, Ras Tanura and Abqaiq, all of which perform distinctive functions for the Arabian American Oil Company. Ras Tanura is the oil terminal port; Dhahran the administrative center; Khobar the commercial center and Abqaiq the refinery center.

The general movement towards the cities and towns resulted in the development of new urban centers that became the commercial, financial, political, cultural, and religious centers of their

respective hinterlands. These centers display a "patchwork of quarters", consisting of homogenous districts for commerce, various trades and crafts.³⁰

4. Economy

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia inherited the primitive tribal economy of Arabia and it has always been difficult for the country to be self-sufficient in the essential food stuffs. The principal products are oil, dates, hides, wool, salt and cement. Many of the necessities of life such as rice, flour, sugar, tea have to be imported.

Formerly the Kingdom was dependent on the pilgrim traffic to Mecca and Medina, and customs duties and taxes on crops and livestock, but, with the discovery of oil, there was a drastic change in the economy. The Government's income rose from 60 million to three billion Saudi Riyals in the early 1960's and with over 90% of it coming from the oil industry. Under the oil economy, trade in such commodities as coffee, camels and Arabian horses began to decline. In 1958 the Government formed an Economic Development Committee and trade agreements with various countries were negotiated.

According to F. A. Sudairy,³¹ Saudi Arabia's economy stands at a midpoint between two extremes - the Capitalistic and Socialistic

³⁰Morroe Berger, The Arab World Today, (New York: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1964), p. 8

³¹F. A. Sudairy, "Problems of Growth in Saudi Arabia", Journal, July 1966.

economies. It is operated by both the government and the private sector with the former predominating. He calls this economy "Islamacism" - for it is derived from the Islamic philosophy, which believes that private free enterprise should be encouraged to flourish; but at the same time bestowing the prime responsibility of the government to pursue and operate in those fields that are needed but not supplied by the private sector, such as Education, Health and Communications.

a) Agriculture. Although agriculture is necessary and important to the country not all lands can be cultivated for this purpose. The difference in the land utilization and its potentialities for future development is evident in the table below:-³²

Total area in square miles	930,000 ³³
Proportion cultivable (per cent)	4%
Proportion actually cultivated (per cent)	2%

Many imports such as machinery, vehicles and grain became increasingly important for agriculture. In spite of the Government's efforts to promote the development of agriculture, Saudi Arabia still falls short of self-sufficiency in the production of cereals, vegetables and fruits. However the Government maintains a model farm of

³² W.B. Fisher, The Middle East, (4th ed., London: Methuen & Co., Ltd., 1961), p. 192

³³ The Encyclopaedia Britannica quotes the area to be 872,722 square miles

3,000 acres in Al-Kharj, south of Riyadh and efforts are being made to encourage agriculture all over the Kingdom. Several dams have been built, water wells drilled, Al-Qatif drained and better techniques in agriculture demonstrated. At present agricultural production, which is for local consumption includes field crops such as wheat, barley, millet, maize, rice, broad beans; palm and fruit trees such as fig, apricot, pomegranate, apples, plum, citron, orange, mandarin, grapevine; and vegetables such as cucumber, tomatoes, onions, eggplants, green pepper, squash, pumpkin, okra, melons and watermelons.

- b) Mining. In 1934 the Saudi Arabian Mining Syndicate obtained a concession and after examination of 55 ancient mining sites work began in the Hejaz mountains. Gold and silver worth \$30,000,000 were extracted before the concession was relinquished in 1954 as no longer profitable.³⁴

Asir has rock salt and salt deposits especially in the Red Sea that could be further exploited. There are large deposits of iron ore (in Northern Hejaz), lime, salt and gypsum which are exploited commercially. The cement industry is an important manufacture of the country.

³⁴ Encyclopaedia Britannica, XX

c) Oil Industry. The discovery of oil changed the entire economic situation of Saudi Arabia. As early as 1923 King Abdel Aziz Ibn Saud granted an oil prospecting concession to a British Company, but these concessions were never exploited. In 1933 a large concession to terminate in 1999 was secured by the Standard Oil of California, which eventually shared ownership of the operating concern (the Arabian American Oil Company - Aramco) with Texaco, Standard Oil (New Jersey) and Mobil Oil.

Although oil was discovered in 1936, World War II curtailed activities, and it was only after the War that oil began to be exploited in quantities. In 1945 the Ras Tanura Refinery was completed. Abqaiq and Ghawar took their place among the world's largest producing fields. In 1950 Aramco put into operation the Trans Arabian Pipeline which runs over 700 miles from Saudi Arabia to Sidon in Lebanon. Crude oil not refined at Ras Tanura or pumped through Tapline is shipped from Ras Tanura or piped to Bahrain for refinery. In 1951 Aramco discovered the first off-shore field in the Middle East at Saffaniyah just south of the Saudi Arabia-Kuwait Neutral Zone. Oil reserves also contain enormous quantities of natural gas. Aramco has developed the capacity to re-inject gas to conserve it for future use and to reinforce the underground pressure needed for oil production.

5. The Arts and Cultural Institutions.

Since most of the people led a nomadic life, artistic expression was mainly in the form of rhetoric, poetry and prose. Intellectual expression in Saudi Arabia was confined almost exclusively to the elaboration of religious dogma, the study and exegesis of the Qur'an and the Hadith, the traditions and sayings of the Prophet. The richest libraries are in the Hejaz where some are attached to the mosques, containing many valuable Arabic manuscripts.

Saudi Art, is characterized by distinctive abstract and intricate design with floral and geometrical motifs and ornate calligraphy in mosaic work and painted decorations. Sculpture is wholly absent as a result of a religious ban which was inspired in part by an early desire to remove all evidence of pre-Islamic times, including carved idols and other objects of worship.

Interest in the Arab historic and literary heritage has led the Government to establish a museum to preserve the country's historical treasures. Traces of early civilizations are scattered throughout the peninsula; ancient settlements, tombs, inscriptions and fragments of pottery have been found in the northern part of Hejaz; in Asir are found numerous remains of the ancient Himyaritic culture; and various archaeological sites have been uncovered by Aramco in the Eastern Province.

The Eastern Province is the center of such crafts as exist in the country. It produces mainly textiles, brassware, copperware and jewelry. A variety of wooden articles are made in Al-Hasa. Carpenters,

however, usually specialize in construction and limit their artistic production to decorating doors, windows and gates. Medina and Asir are the most important pottery centers. Baskets and mats are made everywhere and leatherwork is done in several villages and in the tribes. Bedouin tribes weave rough cloth for their tents, camelbags and rugs.

Architecture in Saudi Arabia is simple and functional, square and flatroofed. Variations occur in the cities which have experienced the introduction of foreign styles. There have been Turkish and American influences in the Hejaz and the Eastern Province and African influence in the Asir. Government buildings, airports, palaces and homes of the wealthy and mosques stand distinctively apart from the local landscape. The increased wealth and the accessibility of Saudi Arabia to modern technology and ideas is causing a distinct change in Saudi architecture and various other aspects of artistic expression.

6. The Nature of the Government.

In the sovereign nation of Saudi Arabia, the King fills three important and traditional roles - that of (a) tribal leader or Sheikh, (b) religious leader or Imam and (c) Governmental head of state or Malik. The laws of Islam form the basis of the religious and constitutional law in the Kingdom and, wherever the religious law is not applicable, the King has the power to issue a decree. The King rules with the help of the Royal Court, his Cabinet or "Diwan", for his powers are primarily executive and not legislative. It has been

mentioned that "the people of Saudi Arabia actually enjoy a very high degree of personal liberty, unhampered except with regard to the commission of crimes, the payment of taxes and military and civil duties."³⁵ Any citizen, however humble, has the opportunity for a "voice" in Government and may obtain a hearing from the King or any of his subordinates.

Western influences have reflected changes in the political form of Government such as the establishment of a Council of Ministers, the designation of a Prime Minister and the setting up of various ministries to serve the different developmental programs of the country. Since 1958, the power of the King has been limited by the effective functioning of the Council of Ministers. Principal decisions of the Council, the Supreme executive and legislative body, are issued in the form of royal decrees. The Government is assisted by a consultative Council and by the "Ulema", a council of learned religious men.

Local Government is largely in the hands of officials appointed by the King. In larger cities, municipal councils are becoming increasingly active. There are no political parties and elections are held only at the municipal level. Public opinion, nevertheless, as set forth in the press and through other media has a strong influence on the Government's deliberations. "The average Arab is in his own way

³⁵ Aramco, Saudi Arabia, The Government, The People & the Land, compiled by Roy Leblicher, Part IV, Jan. 1950, p. 4

an inborn democrat. The old form of Arab tribal tradition, as well as the early Islamic Tradition, is involved with the ideals of equality among the members of the tribes or among Muslims, and matters are in the main decided not by individual autocratic methods but in Council."³⁶

With the influx of foreigners and Arabs from various parts of the Middle East, there has been a sudden awakening of political consciousness. According to George Lipsky however "the basic loyalties of a great majority of the people, remain remarkably stable and without the interference of unfriendly outside influences, present and political institutions will not easily be overturned."³⁷

D. Religion - Islam

Islam, the religion which is incorporated in Qur'an and whose chief spokesman is the Prophet Muhammad, is one of the three important religions of the world. It is a simple, direct and uncomplicated religion which was adopted quickly in the Arab world in which Muhammad preached but now embraces far more non-Arabs than Arabs.

The word Islam is significant in not only indicating a religion but a whole civilization built on its foundations. Morroe Berger analyzes the meaning of the word: "it is derived from a verb which means to be whole, unbroken and by extension to be safe, sound.

³⁶ Roderic Matthews & Matta Akrawi, Education in Arab Countries of the Near East, Washington, 1949, p. 534

³⁷ George A. Lipsky, Saudi Arabia, (ed. T. Fitzsimmons) (New Haven: Hraf Press, 1959), p. 4

Literally the verb form of Islam means to deliver over in a sound condition; and Islam, itself, means the act of giving one's self over, that is to Allah. In this way, the common definition of Islam, 'submission' is derived."³⁸

Islam, far from professing a new revelation, Muhammad insisted was but a restatement of the faith delivered to the Prophets before him, confirming their Scriptures and itself confirmed by them. Yet H.A.R. Gibb explains Islam's originality in the evolution of monotheistic religion:

"Yet the originality of Islam is nonetheless real, in that it represents a further step in logical (if not philosophical) evolution of monotheistic religion. Its monotheism, like that of the Hebrew Prophets, is absolute and unconditioned, but with this it combines the universalism of Christianity. On the one hand, it rejects the nationalist taint from which Judaism as a religion did not succeed in freeing itself; for Islam never identified itself with the Arabs, although at times Arabs have identified themselves with it. On the other hand, it is distinguished from Christianity, not so much (in spite of all outward appearances) by its repudiation of the trinitarian concept of the Unity of God, as by the rejection of the soteriology of Christian doctrine and the relics of the old nature cults which survived in the rites and practices of the Christian Church."³⁹

Thus in essence, the essential element of Islam is an uncompromising belief in the oneness of God. God is the Creator, the Protector, the Supreme Power, "He is the First and the Last, and the

³⁸ Morroe Berger, The Arab World Today, (New York: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1964), p. 32.

³⁹ H.A.R. Gibb, Mohammedanism, (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), 2d ed., p. 69

Outward and the Inward."⁴⁰ Who is "nearer to him (man) than his own jugular vein."⁴¹ "God is the Light of the Heaven and the Earth"⁴², to whom no partners may be ascribed. Hence "cry not unto any other god along with Allah. There is no God save Him. Everything shall perish save His Countenance."⁴³

Twenty-eight Prophets are mentioned in the Qur'an among them are Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus. The Qur'an also makes mention of many more messengers of God who were sent to preach the unity of God and to warn people of the Day of Judgment. Most were rejected and persecuted by the majority of their fellow-citizens. However, Muslims are required to believe in them all, without distinction, even if their names are not recalled in the Holy Book.

As a religious system, Islam requires of its communicants five acts, known as the "pillars of Islam". The first is the famous 'Shahada' or Profession of faith; 'la ilaha illa'llah Muhammadun Rasulu'llah, "There is but one God, Muhammad is the Apostle of God," (This statement is not found in this composite form but occurs separately in two halves in the Qur'an). The second pillar requires the observance of prayer in prescribed ways at prescribed times, facing the 'Qibla'

⁴⁰ Marmaduke Pickthall, The Meaning of the Glorious Qur'an, text and Explanatory Translation, V. II (Hyderabad-Deccan: Government Central Press, 1938), LVII, v. 3

⁴¹ Ibid., L, v. 16

⁴² Ibid., XIV, v. 35

⁴³ Ibid., XXVII, v. 88

in the direction of the Sacred Mosque of Mecca. The third enjoins the giving of alms, 'zakah' and obligatory contribution, one fortieth of the annual revenue in money or kind. H.A.R. Gibb mentions that this is not a tax but "to be exacted from all who, whether voluntarily or under constraint, enter into the brotherhood of Islam ... it to be regarded as a loan made to God, which He will repay many-fold."⁴⁴ The fourth pillar calls for fasting and abstentions of other kinds during the month of Ramadan, the ninth month of the lunar year. The last pillar requires all believers to make a pilgrimage (Hajj) to the Sacred Mosque in Mecca at least once during their lifetime. The sources of these and other rules in Islam are the Qur'an and the Hadith.

The Hadith, or the Traditions are those customs and practice of the old Muslim community, and hence those actions performed by the Prophet. Although the Hadith was begun 250 years after Muhammad's death "the extraordinary influence of his personality on his companions and associates created from the beginning a demand that believers should be informed what the Prophet had done and taught in various circumstances in order that the life of the community and the individual might be modelled on that of the revered leader."⁴⁵

Alfred Guillame⁴⁶ states that in spite of the fact that the Hadith literature, cannot be accepted at face value since it cannot be proven to have been taken from the memoranda of the Companions, they

⁴⁴H.A.R. Gibb, op. cit., p. 64

⁴⁵Alfred Guillame, The Traditions of Islam, (Beirut: Khayat, 1966), p. 13

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 12

are of inestimable value as a mirror of the events which preceded the consolidation of Islam into a system. Its importance is evident in the development of a system of law, theology, custom, and precepts regarding the whole duty of Muslim men.

Islam, united the Arabs by religious belief rather than by birth or lineage, as was the case in tribal communities. The new Muslim movement was so appealing and strong that it was not long before all Arabia was bound together.

Edwin E. Calverley⁴⁷ says "The Qur'an contains a verse gloriously true. It is known to all Muslims and should be known to all other people in the world. The verse says, 'There is no compulsion at all in religion' (II,257)". Indeed, false information about the advance of the new religion, has until the present time not been entirely removed. Although the Muslim armies, filled with religious fervour were able to overcome and control large areas of land, it has been mentioned that "in all this expansion, there was no forcible conversion of the Jews or Christians to the Muslim religion. There was freedom for the 'people of the Book', to continue in their own religious beliefs and practices. It was only required of them to yield civil and political sovereignty to the Muslim State."⁴⁸ One of the primary reasons why

⁴⁷ Edwin E. Calverley, "Islamic Religion", Near Eastern Culture and Society, ed. T. Cuyler Young, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1951), p. 100

⁴⁸ Ibid.

Islam was so readily accepted by the countries it occupied has been explained by G.E. Von Grunebaum to be due to the fact that "identification with the new faith and its objectives, cultural and political, was not impeded by a feeling that it was a foreign growth."⁴⁹ and that a sense of "super-national values"⁵⁰ replaced previous tribal loyalties. All this meant the facility of assimilating new culture and the acceptance of Islam.

However, popular misinformation of Islam, the Qur'an and Muhammad has reached the West, by way of the Crusaders. Edwin E. Calverley⁵¹ states that propaganda used religious motives to secure support for political and military objectives and that:

"False reports brought back by those who returned from the wars filled the West with popular misinformation about Islam that Western mass education has not yet been able to remove. One needs only to examine the early vernacular literatures of Europe from Italy to England to find innumerable instances of inaccurate statements about Muslim beliefs and customs in general and about Muhammad in particular.....This is the heritage in the West of the Crusade propaganda."

The society which Muhammad was born into was one in which the family and tribe embraced and exercised all the rights and duties of the individual. But with the coming of Islam, religion took the place of kinship as the social bond of the community, demanding both

⁴⁹ G.E. Von Grunebaum, Modern Islam, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1962), p. 18

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 6

⁵¹ Edwin E. Calverley, op. cit., pp. 102-112

civic and national loyalty. Morroe Berger observes:

"The special conditions under which Islam rose has left another legacy to the Arab world: a religion that recognized no separate spheres for 'church' and 'state' but unified religious doctrines, morality and legality into one inclusive system of the Islamic community. This community (the 'ummah') was at once a religious brotherhood, a political association, and a social order."⁵²

Regarding the universal appeal of Islam, Philip K. Hitti mentions that "Of all world religions, Islam seems to have attained the largest measure of success in demolishing the barriers of race, colour and nationality - at least within the confines of its own community. The line is drawn only between believers and the rest of mankind."⁵³ The absence of a clerical hierarchy means that there is no intermediary between the individual and God. There is no period of preparation, no examination which the individual has to pass in order to be accepted into the faith. His testimonial to the truth of the basic verities of monotheism and revelation through the person of the Prophet Muhammad is all that is required. Islam's appeal, on the ideological and sociological level has been explained by Von Grunebaum:⁵⁴

"The discarding of the intricacies of Trinitarianism... elimination of the idea of original sin...the optimistic outlook on human nature as needful of guidance rather than redemption and hence the discouragement of the more

⁵² Morroe Berger, op. cit., p. 14

⁵³ Philip K. Hitti, The Arabs, 4th ed. (London: Macmillan & Co., Ltd., 1960), p. 41

⁵⁴ Von Grunebaum, op. cit., p. 5

extreme forms of ascetism.. in short, Islam's more realistic.. adjustment.. to the world.. assisted in presenting the untutored with a system of beliefs that satisfied his primary religious concerns and relieved him of the typically Christian paradox of being in, but not of the world.."

The Shariah, (derived from a root having to do with opening a path or way), is the religious law based upon the Qur'an and the Tradition, and one that provides the Kingdom with civil, penal codes and regulates all aspects of social life.

According to Morroe Berger,⁵⁵ one of the foremost Western authority on the Islamic law of the Arabs, Joseph Schacht states that Muhammad sought not to change the customary law of the Arabs but "to teach men to act... in order to pass the reckoning on the Day of Judgment and to enter Paradise." For the early Muslim, there was little distinction between the 'legal' and the 'religious' since, in the Qur'an and in the Hadith, the two aspects are interwoven with each other.

It was during the middle of the seventh century A.D., at the time of the first great caliphate, and a generation after Muhammad's death, that the foundation of the Islamic legal system was laid. Schacht states that the task was not accomplished by legal scholars but by religious men who applied Qur'anic moral norms to the customary law of the time. Thus "Islamic law was created as a moral code directly out of religious precepts which later were to be put into practice by secular authorities."⁵⁶ It was much later that scholars

⁵⁵ Morroe Berger, op. cit., p. 14

⁵⁶ Morroe Berger, op. cit., p. 26

began distinguishing between such terms as 'ilm' , 'positive knowledge' to denote theology, and 'fiqh', 'understanding' to denote law. In essence, the Shariah's main sources were the Qur'an and the Hadith. However, its actual construction into a systematic body of legal provisions has laid the foundation stones of Islamic jurisprudence.

Islam's great contribution can be summed up in Professor H.A.R. Gibb's words:⁵⁷

"Islam is indeed much more than a system of theology, it is a complete civilization... It includes a whole complex of cultures which have grown up around the religious core... a complex with distinctive features in political, social and economic structure, in its conception of law, in ethical outlook, in intellectual tendencies, habits of thought and action... It includes a vast number of peoples, differing in race, language, character and inherited aptitudes, yet bound together not only by the link of common creed, but even more strongly by participation in a common culture, their obedience to a common law and their adoption of a common tradition."

E. Summary

This brief geographical and historical sketch of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and of its religion Islam, enables one to put the role of women and their education in the right perspective. Also it makes one aware of the great difficulties, environmental and other, which confront the Government in its efforts towards

⁵⁷ H.A.R. Gibb (ed.), Whither Islam, (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1932), pp. 12-13

progress and education. Indeed each problem or difficulty has philosophical, historical, social, political and economic overtones that bear directly or indirectly to the development of education. Each requires an investigation in itself employing specialists such as historians, anthropologists, social and political scientists and the like. In summing up, one can only mention briefly some main factors that bear relevance to education in the Kingdom.

The physical features of Saudi Arabia being, for the most part, a large expanse of desert wastes, with sparse vegetation and harsh climatic conditions induced nomadism as a natural way of life. Drifting from place to place in search of grazing land, there was for the Arab neither any real functional use nor any possibility of pursuing a systematic type of education. Difficulties of geographic isolation were one of the main problems of education.

For the most part the Arabs of the interior remained scattered and isolated in different regions with little or no communication facilities. Formerly the only large settlements of people were those located along the western coastal areas around Jeddah and the only cities of Mecca and Medina. Therefore, there was also a great deal of geographic inequality in educational opportunities between the towns and the villages of their hinterland.

As for the women who were restricted to the home, they had only private tutoring in their homes, if they were fortunate, but the difficulties in obtaining good teachers were great. (The next chapter analyzes in detail the type and content of the early education system that was available for women.)

Also, fifty years ago, conditions in Saudi Arabia were those of poverty, ^{and} near anarchy and the only type of loyalty or affiliation that existed was to the tribal head. Life under such conditions did not require much education either for the warrior men or their women; and therefore, there was neither a demand nor the means of providing a form of general and compulsory education for the children. What existed were a few Qur'anic schools or Kuttabs (open to the boys); those who were interested to pursue some form of higher education had to seek the guidance of the 'Ulemas'.

In the preceding chapter, one realizes that a proper understanding of Saudi Arabia means delving into its religion - Islam - for it plays a dominant role in every aspect of daily life and molds the very Arab character. The educational activity which was accompanied and accelerated with the rise of Islam during the life of the Prophet until even after the fall of the Abbaaside Caliphate in Baghdad, undoubtedly indicated the presence of a philosophy of education, which had a set of principles, purpose and aims towards which learning was directed. This philosophy of education was one which was oriented towards the culture, religion and the social set-up of the community. G.E. Von Grunebaum⁵⁸ mentions that Islam introduced at least three new fundamental questions, concerning (a) how to live correctly, (b) how to think

⁵⁸
G.E. Von Grunebaum, op. cit., p. 16

correctly and (c) how to organize correctly. The answers to these questions lay in Islam's emphasis on the "correct education of the individual". G.E. Von Grunebaum states:

"To make a man a useful member of the Muslim community required more than physical and soldierly training. Membership in the Muslim commonwealth required knowledge; knowledge of the revelation, the impositions of the law.. Ideally, each Muslim was to be equipped to be a defender as well as a missionary of the faith."⁵⁹

The tremendous impetus that Islam gave to learning and research can be recalled in the various phrases of encouragement, both in the Qur'an and in the Hadith. The Qur'an says: "Allah will exalt those who believe among you, and those who have knowledge, to high ranks.";⁶⁰ "Ask learned people if you do not know"⁶¹; "Are those who know equal with those who know not?"⁶² "Say (O Muhammad): My Lord! Increase me in Knowledge"⁶³. From the Hadith, there are such phrases as "Learned people are the heir of the prophets"⁶⁴; "Seek knowledge from cradle to grave and search for it even if you are bound to go to China";⁶⁵ "Seeking knowledge is as blessed as

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ The Glorious Qur'an, op. cit., LVIII, v. 11

⁶¹ Ibid., XVI, v. 43

⁶² Ibid., XIX, v. 9

⁶³ Ibid., XX, v. 114

⁶⁴ Al-Ghazali: al-Ihya' I p. 5 quoted in Shalaby, History of Muslim Education, (Beirut: Dar Al-Kashshaf, 1954), p. 162

⁶⁵ Haji Khalifah: Kashf al-Zunun I, p. 32 quoted in Shalaby, op. cit.

worship and any trouble in acquiring it is considered a 'Jihad' (holy war)"⁶⁶ and "Valueless is the Muslim who is not a teacher or student".⁶⁷ Hence one can say that religion was an important factor which motivated and contributed to the richness and dynamism of the Arab civilization. Indeed, it has been said "It is becoming more and more apparent that no people contributed so much to learning in the Middle Ages as did the scholars and scientists of the Muslim World."⁶⁸

Arab political solidarity disintegrated after the fall of the Abbasid dynasty in the thirteenth century and it was not until 1932 that there was any kind of political unity in Arabia. Under King Abdel Aziz Ibn Saud's sovereignty the desert tribes united to form the "Kingdom of Saudi Arabia". This founding of a nation has meant for Arabia a revival and 're-awakening' of national consciousness. The absolute power which the King maintained was, in the opinion of George A. Lipsky⁶⁹, well-suited to the conditions of the country, where formerly the sheikh was responsible for preserving order punishing crimes and settling disputes. However, the monarch's freedom is limited by the religious laws and the Shariah. Dramatic changes have been brought about by leaders of Saudi Arabia in 35 short years as their aspirations reconstructed the ideals of the society. An enlightened generation is now demanding equal educational opportunities. Efforts

⁶⁶Haji Khalifah, Kashf al-Zunun I, p. 13; quoted in Shalaby, op. cit., p. 162

⁶⁷Al-Isfahani, Muhadarat al-Udaba' I, p. 25; quoted in Shalaby, op. cit., p. 162

⁶⁸T.W. Wallbank & A.M. Taylor, Civilization Past and Present, 3rd ed. (Chicago: Scott, Foresman & Co., 1954), p. 272

⁶⁹George A. Lipsky, op. cit.,

are being made, through new agricultural developments, new housing and public works schemes and various programs of social and economic welfare to raise the standard of living.

The change in the economic life, from the simple, but often precarious one of the nomadic Arab to the complex, industrial and advanced one, has come about largely as a result of the discovery of oil. Oil which tremendously increased the Government's revenues, has helped Saudi Arabia to move rapidly into a new age. Substantial proportions of the revenue is being invested in re-settling the bedouins, developing the natural resources and organizing large scale social and welfare programs. New buildings, better roads and highways, international airports, new factories, agricultural farms and other technological achievements are evidences of an ever-changing environment. Moreover, since Mecca is the spiritual capital of half a billion Muslims all over the world, the Government's actions not only determine the country's course and development, but as the guardian of Islam's concepts and holy places, it affects the entire Muslim world.

The great influx of foreigners in companies such as Aramco, has caused a diversification and diffusion of cultures. The rapid expansion of communication facilities has brought about a corresponding increase of western goods such as books, radios, televisions, refrigerators and cars into the market. These are now available to the middle classes. It has been mentioned that "The East adopts quickly and easily without any mental strain the material civilization of the

West."⁷⁰ Nevertheless, the adoption of these goods is causing a definite change in the environment and in the people's attitudes.

Minority groups such as the Americans and the foreign Arabs are also helping to create new outlooks and ways of life in Saudi Arabia. There is a greater demand skilled labour, specialists and administrators. Some pressure groups such as the quasi-religious leaders resent the changes taking place and cling rigidly to the old traditions and customs, attempting to control certain aspects of the society - such as the emancipation of women. However, although at the present they exercise considerable influence and have managed to hinder the development of women's education, the rising wave of resentment is causing a changing of the tides.

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Ruth Woodsmall, Moslem Women Enter a New World, (New York Round Table Press Inc., 1936), p. 25

CHAPTER III

EARLY EDUCATION FOR WOMEN

In the preceding chapter it was pointed out that education and the search for knowledge were respected and encouraged by the true spirit of Islam. It is fair to say that this encouragement was meant both for men and women. However, there are no records of any school for girls open in Saudi Arabia before 1960. This does not mean, that education for women in Arabia was non-existent. It merely means that either the necessity and importance of keeping such records was not considered essential at the time, or that girls' education was conducted by other means. A few authors have mentioned names of some of the prominent women in Arab society who distinguished themselves by obtaining an education of some kind. A mention of their achievements will help in illustrating the type of education that was provided for women in early times.

Al-Baladhuri¹ has mentioned that, at the beginning of Islam there were five Arab ladies who could read and write: Hafsa, the daughter of Umar, Umm Kulthum, bint 'Uqbah, Aisha, bint Sa'd, Karimah, bint al-Miqdad and al-Shaffa', the daughter of 'Abd Allah al-Adawiyyan, who had taught Hafsa and whom the Prophet requested to continue teaching her after their marriage. Two more wives of the Prophet, namely Ai'sha

¹ Ahmad Shalaby, History of Muslim Education, (Beirut: Dar Al-Kashshaf, 1954), p.190; citing Al-Baladhuri, Futuh al Buldan, p. 458

and Umm Salamah, could read although they were unable to write. Shalaby² says that pre-eminence must be assigned to 'Aishah, since it was said that the Prophet told his followers to rely upon her for half of their religious instruction and she was credited with a thousand Traditions received directly from the Prophet.

The rise of Islam was to be accompanied by greater educational activity outside the boundaries of Saudi Arabia where science and learning were to flourish even more creatively than in the interior. Women enjoyed greater freedom and had greater opportunity to pursue an education. Hence writers have made several references to women who distinguished themselves. Shalaby mentions that there are biographical notes which indicate that there were 1543 women Traditionists who flourished in early Islam.³ Several stories also recall some exceptional women who, back in early Islamic history, went to battle with their men, participated in public life, composed poetry and held various positions of esteem in their society.

Nevertheless, in general, it is fair to mention that, in Arabia, education for women was not encouraged and that women enjoyed far less educational opportunities than those offered to men. Why this should be so, in spite of the fact that Islam did not consider sex a bar in the acquisition of knowledge, has been explained by Ahmad Shalaby,

² Ibid., p. 193

³ Shalaby, p. 193; quoting in, al Isaban fi Tamyiz al Shahabah, by Ibn Hajar

author of "History of Muslim Education". This, he said was due to "the difficulties which usually faced the seeker of knowledge."⁴ Among these difficulties he mentions journeys, which every earnest student was obliged to make in search of qualified teachers, and which was both difficult and inconvenient for the Arab women.

Reasons as to why education for women in Arabia was not widespread, inspite of the fact that social equality is manifested in Islam, may be outlined in the following two points.

Firstly, there were the geographical and physical forces which discouraged women's education. For the majority of the people, life was nomadic and, considering the harsh climatic conditions and inhospitable environment, the inhabitants barely managed to survive above the subsistence level. Hence it was obvious that intellectual pursuits could not be entertained by the majority of people, but only by the wealthy few who lived in the large towns. In fact, it has been mentioned that there were no provisions whatsoever for women to pursue education after the Kuttab level in the Arabian peninsula. Only those who could afford it could obtain, through private lessons, some kind of higher education.

Secondly, there were the social and traditional attitudes of a conservative tribal society which controlled and violently disapproved of higher education for women. The kind of education that was available for women at the time was one which simply involved learning to read

⁴Ibid., p. 190

and memorize the Qur'an. Having done so, a woman gained considerable prestige and considered herself a worthy member of her society. But no motivation was afforded to women for the pursuit of higher education. Quite the contrary, such a quest was met with much disapproval.

The traditional society setting conditioned the Arab woman at that time to direct her sole attention to the function of being a good wife and mother. Such clichés as "a woman's place is in the home", "women are inferior" and "education is not necessary for the woman" had already set in and were accepted by the majority. Hence, conformity was the basic rule, since affiliation with the community was expressed by the performance of prescribed practices and the adoption of common ways of life.

The Arab Muslim community is essentially one which consists of groups, such as the family and the tribe and not of individuals. Hence the condition creates much tension in the manner in which it combines "a submergence of the individual within the group with a fierce equalitarianism."⁵ Since the assertion of individuality by women was not considered desirable, and freedom was suppressed, women remained secluded within the environment of the home and rarely projected themselves in their society. This forboding conformity and the restrictive conservatism of the Arab Muslim community brought about the gradual stagnation of the society in Arabia.

⁵ Morroe Berger, The Arab World Today, p. 33

A. Aim and Purpose of the Traditional Educational System

An analysis of the aims and purposes of the traditional educational system helps one to understand to what extent these aims encouraged women's education. It may be safely assumed that during the period presiding 1950 whatever education which was available for girls was not different in method or content from that available for boys. For this reason a discussion of the education of boys will shed light on that for girls.

The aim of the early educational system was primarily religious and the Qur'an was the source and foundation of all learning. The word Al-Qur'an is derived from "qar'a" which means "reading"⁶ and it has been recorded that when on Mt. Hira, the angel bade Muhammad "Read" though he was illiterate it was a clear indication of God's encouragement to learning.

"Read: in the name of the Lord who createth,
Createth man from a clot.
Read: And thy Lord is the Most Bounteous,
Who teacheth by the pen,
Teacheth man that which he knew not."⁷

Hence the Sacred Book is known as Al-Qur'an, "The Reading" or "The Lecture" - the reading of the man who knew not how to read and gave a tremendous impetus to Muslim education.

⁶ Khalil A. Totah, The Contribution of the Arabs to Education, New York, 1926, p. 85

⁷ The Glorious Qur'an, op. cit., XCVI, v. 1-5

It is a fact that one cannot truly understand Islamic culture without realizing the impact that the Holy Book had on a Muslim's daily life. The Qur'an was the primer that was put into the hands of all pupils and from it they studied reading, writing, the basics of the Arabic language-grammar and syntax, and other related subjects such as jurisprudence and ethics. Subjects unrelated were regarded as too secular to teach children.

According to Sajjad Rizavi⁹, the functions of the Prophet as detailed by the Qur'an were (a) to recite verses to them (People) (b) to purify them (yuzakkihum) and (c) to teach them the Kitab and wisdom (Hikmah). Hence Islam encouraged education by insisting that all Muslims, men and women, learn to read, recite and comprehend the Qur'an that they might be called "muttaqin (Pious ones) those who lead a just life."

Rizavi mentions that the ultimate aim of Islamic education was to prepare individuals to live in a society, in which the idea of God's omnipresence predominates. He goes on to add that individuals must not resign as ascetics in the wilderness, but must lead normal lives, performing all their worldly functions, orienting their lives to one goal-the Life to come (Hayat-ul-akhirah).¹⁰

Total¹¹ mentions that it would be stating only a partial truth to give the idea that the aim of Arab education was wholly

⁹ Sajjad Rizavi, Islamic Philosophy of Education, M.A. Thesis at A.U.B., June 1963, p. 149

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Khalil A. Total, The Contribution of the Arabs to Education, New York, 1926, p. 85

religious. He detects a social note in the word 'izz' which means prestige and aristocracy that is associated with learning and knowledge. Al-Namari quotes a line of verse "For learning not only helps one to get power but through it one attains glory or prestige (izz) and is led to piety."¹²

Having set an ideal as its ultimate aim of education, Islam nevertheless, gives due consideration to human weaknesses, laying down the minimum and accepting from a person whatever he may achieve if there be sincerity in motive. Rizavi¹³ mentions that Islam lays utmost emphasis on 'amal or deed', putting into action what we learn. This means that Islam accedes to the practical ends of education. Everything learnt has to be acted upon. The Prophet is reported to have said that "one of those who will suffer most on the Day of Judgment, would be a learned man whose learning is not utilized."¹⁴ He is also stated to have observed that "the artisan is a friend of God", emphasizing that one should earn one's livelihood in a just manner (Kasb ul-halal)¹⁵. The logical implication of these saying is that Muslims may fix immediate aims of education as may be necessitated by conditions of their particular environment and may change them from time to time, to fit the changing

¹² Ibid., p.87;citing "jami' Bayan al-ilm", p. 17

¹³ Rizavi, p. 153

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

circumstances. Whatever modifications or changes which might be made, however, must remain within the framework and teachings of the Qur'an.

Bayard Dodge, author of *Muslim Education in Medieval Times*, mentions that Islam is flexible enough to suit changes in the society for it only gives broad outlines and basic principles which are to be translated into action in the perspective of a particular era. "It was left to the people to develop on the lines suggested by the Qur'an and the Traditions of the Prophet. He mentions that the Qur'an laid down two important principles; "1) that education is of primary importance, hence to avoid following blindly rigid dogma and (2) that the end of all life activities is to seek God's Grace, everything else has to be oriented towards Him."¹⁶

Motive (niyyah) is also a serious factor influencing the acquisition of knowledge. In fact, Muslim law as well as several scholars and educators such as al-Ghazali, al-Namari, al-Zarnuju and al-Kinani believe that Islam judges all conduct according to its motives. They all assert that the chief function of learning is the service of God, that the object of teaching and studying is the preparation of humanity for another world, and that sincerity and purity of motive are required for the proper fulfillment of the aims of education.

¹⁶ Bayard Dodge, *Muslim Education in Medieval Times*, (Washington D.C., The Middle East Institute, 1962), p. 65-66

Al-Abdari's words are conclusive when he says "when we sought learning for a purpose other than that of God, learning refused to lend itself to anyone but God". (Talabna al-'ilm lil ghairillah fa'aba al-'ilm an yakun illa lillah)"¹⁷

B. Types of Schools

Most of the early schools were centered around the mosques. With the religious motivation, every mosque was a potential school where both boys and girls were able to acquire some basic knowledge in religion, reading, writing and arithmetic.

At the elementary level, these religious centers were known as "Kuttabs". There is, nevertheless, much disagreement among expoerts as to whether girls joined the Kuttab and whether there was co-education of any kind. Totah¹⁸ believes that girls did join the boys in the Kuttab. But Shalaby¹⁹ disagrees. He asserts that the example of al-Shafia's teaching Hafsa, the Prophet's wife, privately was taken as a model for the teaching of girls. Shalaby continues to back his statement by mentioning that "it is recorded that a group of women met the Prophet and asked him to appoint a weekly day for teaching ladies. The Prophet did so and met them regularly to teach and exhort them".²⁰

¹⁷ Totah, p. 86-87

¹⁸ Khalil A. Totah, The Contribution of the Arabs to Education, N.Y., 1962, p. 16

¹⁹ Ahmad Shalaby, History of Muslim Education, (Beirut: Dar al-Kashshaf, 1954), p. 190-191

²⁰ Ibid.

Some schools were held in private homes and in shops, thus supplementing the work of the mosques. These private schools, beginning from simple one-room classrooms to the higher grade school type, played an important role in promoting girls' education. In early times, centers of teaching would be started in a very informal manner Shalaby quotes from the introduction to Ibn Sanuun's *Idad al-Mu'allimin*, "Very often the father would teach his daughters as did Isa b. Miskin (d 278 A.H.) who was in the habit of sitting to teach his students until the afternoon prayer and then he would call his daughter, nieces and grand-daughters to teach them the Qur'an and other knowledge."²¹

Shalaby mentions that during the Middle Ages there were three principal types of classes.²²

- a) Lectures attended by large groups of students, where the teacher sat on a low chair, leaning against a column and facing Mecca, while dictating to the students with the help of his assistants. The students were accustomed to sit on straw mats spread out on the paved floor, forming an irregular semi-circle. Shalaby says that even if a scholar of this type was popular enough to have several hundred members in his class, he would encourage questions and discussion after he had finished dictating his material.

²¹ Shalaby, p. 191; citing Al-Ta'alim 'in al-Qabisi, p. 22

²² Ibid., p. 7

- b) The second type of class was a circle (Halka) which was small enough to allow the teacher to explain his subject in an intimate way and to encourage lively discussion while the students took down notes and asked questions. If the teacher was good, he took a fatherly interest in the moral and social life of his pupils, so that the personal nature of this form of instruction made it an especially valuable method of education. The teacher might meet his pupils in the mosque or in his home but always in an atmosphere of intimacy and sympathetic understanding.
- c) The third type of instruction may be described as discipleship. The boy (Al-Ghulam) lived with a scholar long enough to acquire most of his master's learning. Sometimes the pupil was well-to-do, paying for the privilege of studying with the scholar; while at other times the boy was like a servant who by copying manuscripts and helping his master with his work became a scholar himself. Often the pupil was a poorboy who performed domestic duties and copied manuscripts in return for the opportunity of associating with his patron and the learned men frequenting his master's house. It was not unusual for a boy of this sort to feel closer to his employer than he did to his own father, even calling himself by his master's name, such as the apprentice of the great scholar of Basrah, Ibn Durayd, who called himself al-Duraydi.²³

²³Shalaby, p. 7

In all these different types of instruction, Shalaby²⁴ mentioned that the students often helped their teachers to compile books, writing down what was dictated, comparing various notes, discussing their material and making numerous corrections. Finally when the work was approved by the teacher, the material was copied with good penmanship, so as to form a handwritten volume.

Since it proved to be so inconvenient to hold lectures and lively discussions in the mosques while pious worshippers were trying to pray, Shalaby²⁵ says that Muslim educators developed a new type of institution called in Arabic "Al-Madrassah". These madaress or theological institutions played a notable part in the development of scholasticism in Islam "ilm al Kalam"²⁶. Graduates from these colleges became clerks, judges, teachers and officials. These institutions, however, were not open to women. This type of school was more like a college, hence it did not bring to an end the educational work in the mosques, but existed side by side with the mosque classes. "Al-Mustansiriyah" in Baghdad is a good example of such colleges.²⁷

The more important mosques competed with the colleges and, especially in large cities, they became important centers of higher

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Shalaby, p. 19

²⁶ Khalil A. Totah, p. 85, citing "Ta'lim al Muta'allim", p. 10

²⁷ Shalaby, p. 19

learning. They are often referred to as "mosque-colleges"²⁸ and although most of them have disappeared, a few like the Mosque Al-Azhar in Cairo are still in evidence. These religious institutions provided residential quarters for foreign students.²⁹

C. Subject Matter and Curriculum

As already stated the purpose of Muslim education was to explain the divine revelation of the Qur'an, which, having been revealed in the Arabic language, necessitated the study of the language itself. Through the Qur'an, the medley of tribal dialects was given a definite form. Shalaby³⁰ says that "the official version was composed of the vernacular of Quraysh tribe to which Muhammad belonged; however, colloquialisms of other tribes also found their way into the Sacred Book which was compiled in the 7th century."

The core of the Muslim curriculum was the Qur'an, for students learnt not only how to read but how to act and behave. Both the theoretical study of the Qur'an and the traditions and the practical

²⁸
Ibid.

²⁹
In large settlements where there was an intermingling of different nationalities, several private schools were opened. Most of them were operated by foreign Arab teachers and many Saudi Arab girls have been known to have received elementary and secondary education in Arabia. With reference to the Eastern Province in particular, I was informed by the former Director of the Training Department of the American Arabian Oil Company, Dr. H.R. Snyder that there were only two private schools for girls before the year 1960. These were organized and run by two Bahraini sisters round about 1953, and were located in Dammam and Khobar. No other information of any kind was available on these schools.

³⁰
Shalaby, p. 31

aspect (of daily prayers Friday congregational prayers and fasting during the month of Ramadan) helped to instill the true spirit of Islam in the students which was the objective of Muslim education.

The theoretical study of the Qur'an included the study of the Arabic language. Dr. George Sarton³¹ has written "The discovery of the logical structure of language was as much a scientific discovery as for example the discovery of the anatomical structure of the body.", for the scientific study of language was considerably stimulated by the religious necessity to interpret sacred writings. Essentially, grammar came into existence in order to protect the language from being corrupted, and to help foreign converts to study the Qur'an and appreciate its spirit.³²

Ibn Khaldun also emphasized the importance of linguistic studies and is quoted to have said "A knowledge of them is absolutely necessary for the jurists because the articles of the law are derived from the Qur'an and the sunnah (the sayings and precedents of the Prophet) which are in the Arabic language."³³

As the science of language developed so did the science of rhetoric. According to Shalaby³⁴, rhetoric was divided into three

³¹Sarton, Vol. I, p. 7

³²Dodge, op. cit., p. 31-36 (Rizavi, p. 156-67)

³³Khaldun (Quatremere) Part III, p. 276: (Rosenthal) Vol. III, p. 130)

³⁴Shalaby, p. 36

main branches. Al-Ma'nia, which was concerned with clear meaning and expression of idea. It depended upon grammar for its method and gave the student a knowledge of phraseology. Al-Bayan, which taught the art of expressing ideas with accuracy and eloquence but without ambiguity. In connection with good literary style it also dealt with simile and metaphor and nonenclature. Al-Badi, pertained to the perfection and embellishment of speech. It taught the student to make one phrase suit another as in poetry, avoiding mixed figures of expression.

The study of the Hadith or the traditions was also an important part of Muslim education. The word Hadith is a noun formed from the verb hadatha³⁵ meaning 'news' or verbal communication. Alfred Guillaume mentions that the "Hadith enshrines has the sunna or 'beaten track' - the custom and practice of the old Muhammadan community. Inasmuch as Hadith was often invoked to prove that a certain act was performed by the Prophet, and was therefore to be imitated by all pious believers, it follows that Hadith and sunna are sometimes names for one and the same thing."³⁶ Hadith, or tradition in the technical sense, may be said to have begun, after Muhammad's death, for the extraordinary influence of his personality on his companions and associates created from the beginning a demand that believers should

³⁵ Alfred Guillaume, The Traditions of Islam, (Beirut: Khayat, 1966), p. 10

³⁶ Ibid.

be informed about what the Prophet had done and taught in various circumstances in order that the life of the community and the individual might be modelled on that of the revered leader. Guillaume continues to say "The Hadith literature as we now have it provides us with apostolic precepts and example covering the whole duty of man; it is the basis of that developed system of law, theology, and custom which is Islam..."³⁷

Jurisprudence was also an important subject in Muslim education. According to Sheikh Mustafa Abdur Raziq,³⁸ the Shi'ites took the lead in the compilation of fiqh or jurisprudence with a view to stabilizing the Sunna. By the time of the sixth Imam of the Shi'ites, jurisprudence had emerged as a separate branch of learning.

Totah has quoted Abu Yahya Zakariyyah as his source for the list of subjects that were taught in early Islamic times, it is most interesting to see the variety of subjects taught.³⁹

Legal Subjects (Shari'ah): Jurisprudence, exegsis, Traditions.

Literary Studies (Adabiyah): Philosophy, syntax, rhetorics, prosody, composition, reading, history.

Rational ('Aqliyyah): Logic, dialectics, dogmatic theology, metaphysics, natural science, medicine, chemistry.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Sheikh Mustafa 'Abdur Raziq, Tamhid li Tarikh-il-Falsafat-al-Islamiyyah.

³⁹ Khalil A. Totah, op.cit., p. 56 citing Abu Yahya Zakariyya "Al-Lu'lu' al Nazim fi Rawm al-Ta'allum wal-Ta'lim".

Miscellaneous: Surveying, veterinary, agriculture, magic, phrenology, astrology, interpretation of dreams.

Although the above list of the Arabic curriculum applies to the elementary, secondary and higher levels of education in early Islamic times, it is nevertheless interesting to compare it to the Medieval curriculum, as listed by Shalaby⁴⁰ and note the issuing changes and emphasis.

A. The Revealed Sciences and Sciences of the Arabic Language

(Al-Ulum al Nakliyah wa Ulum al-Lisan al-Arabi)

The Arabic Language	al-Lughah
Grammar	al-nahw
Rhetoric	al-balaghah
Literature	al-adab
Readings (Qur'anic)	al-qira'at
Exegsis (Commentary)	al-tafsir
Traditions (of the Prophet)	al-hadith
Law	al-fiqh
Sources or Principles of the Law	usul tawhid, al Kalam or
Theology	usul al din

B. The Rational Sciences (Al-Ulum al Aqliyah)

Mathematics	al-riyadiyah
Division of Inheritance	al fara'id
Logic	al mantiq

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 29

Shalaby⁴¹ mentions that the principal purpose of this Medieval education was to teach students to accept the truths revealed to the Prophet as interpreted by their forefathers, and not to seek truths through scientific methods. Hence it was inevitable that the curriculum began to change during the Middle Ages with much greater emphasis on the language of the Qur'an, the laws and the religious tenets of Islam. The Rational Sciences were taught in connection with the fixing of the times of prayer, fasting and religious feasts or else with the division of inheritance.⁴² Logic was included because it was considered useful for the defence of orthodox doctrines. There have been many individual scholars who studied philosophy, astrology, geometry, medicine, pharmacy and certain aspects of the natural sciences as well as alchemy but, as a rule, they studied them under private tutors in their homes or in the hospitals.

Understanding the historical development of Muslim education and the religious element which permeated the character of the schools helps one to understand why the basic nature of the school curriculum in Saudi Arabia, remains essentially the same.

Table I includes list of subjects taught in the Elementary and Primary schools in Arabia during the year 1958, as detailed in the Governments Statistical report.

⁴¹Shalaby, p. 29

⁴²Ibid.

TABLE I
PROGRAM OF COURSES REQUIRED FOR PRIMARY AND ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS
IN 1958

NUMBER OF WEEKLY PERIODS FOR EACH CLASS

<u>Subject</u>	<u>1st year</u>	<u>2nd year</u>	<u>3rd year</u>	<u>4th year</u>	<u>5th year</u>	<u>6th year</u>
The Qur'an	-	6	6	5	2	2
Qur'an Chanting (Tajwid)	-	-	-	1	1	-
Monotheism (Tawhid)	2	2	2	2	2	2
Islamic Jurisprudence (Fiqh)	2	2	2	2	2	2
Prophet's Traditions (Hadith)	-	-	-	-	1	2
Reading & Writing	6	8	3	2	2	2
Dictation	-	-	2	2	2	2
Penmanship	-	-	1	1	1	1
Recitation & Anthems	2	2	2	2	1	1
Composition & Stories	-	-	2	2	2	2
Fundamentals of Grammar	-	-	-	1	2	2
Arithmetic	6	6	6	5	4	4
Geometry	-	-	-	-	1	1
Geography	-	-	-	1	(3	3
History	-	-	-	-		
Physics	2	2	2	2	3	3
Drawing & Hand Work	4	4	4	4	3	3
Athletics	4	2	2	2	2	2
T O T A L	30	34	34	34	34	34

Although Table I pertains to the program of boy's schools, education for girls which at that time was under the auspices of private and religious schools, was basically the same. The first five subjects, (The Qur'an, Qur'an chanting, Monotheism, Islamic Jurisprudence and Prophet's Sayings) involved the study of both the Arabic language and religion. Reading, writing, dictation and penmanship most often would involve the use of the Holy Book either directly or indirectly. Thus the Qur'an was incorporated into most of the subjects taught to girls and boys in the schools. Indeed it has been mentioned that in 1951, 82% of the weekly teaching hours were devoted to religious education⁴³ and it very well might be true. Moreover the method used for the education of girls were identical with those used for boys.

D. Method of Teaching

According to Shalaby⁴⁴ the method of early Muslim teachers was to make the pupil memorize and copy passages from the Qur'an. Between the ages of six and ten the child had little choice of subject. The pupil also used proverbs and verses of poetry as models for his penmanship. He was also taught basic arithmetic.

⁴³ S. Khaled & H. Kasparian, Report on Educational Problems of Saudi Arabia, A.U.B., 1961

⁴⁴ Shalaby, p. 3-4

Before reaching adolescence, the pupil was obliged to learn the rules for ritualistic ablution, the words and movements of prayer and the essential ordinances of Islam. When a boy was at least ten years old and had completed the elementary school course and had memorized the Qur'an, he was obliged to spend three additional years studying supplementary subjects. These included some vocabulary and penmanship, grammar, rhetoric and literature, as well as the history of the period in which the Prophet lived. Most girls who had enlightened parents would, under private tuition, reach as far as the elementary level. Although there were during those times no secondary schools, there were other opportunities for boys seeking higher education. Teachers held informal classes in the mosques on a variety of subjects from philosophy to astrology and as there was no regular schedule, the student was free to continue his studies as long as he wished and shift from teacher to teacher. Time was not an important factor, the principal aim of the system being thoroughness.

Although no women had access to the above informal classes held in the mosque, it is nevertheless interesting to describe the manner of teaching, which, whether in group or under private tutoring, was basically the same. Shalaby⁴⁵ says that the professor starts his course by giving an outline of the material to be studied, follows by a general explanation of the subject and the ways in which the authorities differed about it. Finally there is an exhaustive study

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 21

of every aspect of the material. In order to avoid confusion the student was advised to study one subject at a time to refrain from using too many sources. He was also encouraged to learn logic and rhetoric so as to know how to avoid ambiguity of language and thought. However the bright students were too ambitious to limit their efforts to studying one course at a time and it was not long before it became the custom for them to study a number of subjects every day.

It would not be exaggerating to say that the teacher was the most important factor in the education system. He enjoyed a position of respect and authority, for in the beginning educated persons were religious leaders as well. There was no disparity between education and religion and no group of theologians existed. Later on, during the Abbaside period, Rizavi⁴⁶ mentions that with the rise of jurists, Muslim society began to distinguish between a pious person and a scholar, and their opinions were considered to be more religious as compared to the scholars. Thus the system gradually got crystalized as well as the gulf between theological and non-theological studies increased.

Muslim thinkers have always given great importance to the selection of teachers. He was to be selected not only on the basis of his educational qualifications but also on his ability to teach, his general behaviour and character.

⁴⁶ Sajjad Rizavi, Islamic Philosophy of Education, M.A. Thesis at A.U.B., June 1963, p. 144

E. Education at Home

The importance attached by Islam to the rearing of children entails the important role of the home and responsibility of the family. Madame Abbasi⁴⁷ observes that "it is in the individual man and woman and in the home, the basic life-unit of human social organism, that qualities essential for nation-building, for achieving a permanently cohesive and progressive national existence, must be created and fostered. And herein lies the vital importance of the very special function that Islam assigns to a woman as administrator and governor of the home.... to model the life of the community according to Islamic principles through training the children to the standards of excellence and piety, courteous manners, efficiency and dynamism as demanded by Islam."

As mentioned previously, education for girls was largely the responsibility of the individual family, for without their approval, a girl was unable to achieve any kind of education. Apart from private tutoring (which was usually three to four hours daily), another type of education - learning the household duties under the supervision and authority of the mother. It was necessary for girls to learn cooking, sewing, embroidery and the other home arts. Education at home also meant the learning of proper social habits.

It is true to mention that changes in the Arab family are coming about through the women's own demand for emancipation^{and} education.

⁴⁷ Madame A. de Zayas Abbasi, "Woman in Islam", Islamic Literature, Lahore, IV, p. 227

In traditional Islamic practice women were prevented from assuming full individuality by their seclusion and by the practice of polygamy, (though both are declining), they still retain some force to keep women in subjection and within the environment of the home.

CHAPTER IV

THE DEVELOPMENT OF SCHOOLS AND A SYSTEM OF EDUCATION

SINCE THE YEAR 1960

In comparison to the neighbouring Arab countries, the educational movement in Saudi Arabia is very new.

Abdel Aziz united the whole area and established the Kingdom in 1932. Two years later the first school was opened in Riyadh to educate the princes in religious teachings. It was only in 1935 that the first Governmental Public Schools for the common people opened in the country. These first schools were primarily channeled to teach Islamic religion, laws, customs, traditions and culture. According to H. St. John Philby, the best schools were probably those built for the education of the young royal princes at Taif and Riyadh, sponsored by Emir Abdullah and King Feisal.¹

A. Aim and Purpose

The present educational system is still religiously motivated and thus its aim is fundamentally the same. The Qur'anic encouragements are now actively over-riding any traditional objections to women's education. Islam mentions that education is the right and duty of every Muslim man and woman - and the present educational scheme tries

¹ Author unknown, Report on Evolution or Revolution, 1955.

to enforce this principle.

However, the modernization that has been brought by the industrial era in Saudi Arabia, has caused a visible change in the aims and attitudes towards education. The realization of the importance of producing skilled technicians, economists, doctors, educators and other specialists, and of having educated and efficient men and women who are better able to adapt to the new demands of a changing environment, has made the Government take immediate steps to raise the level of education.

The participation of Saudi Arabia as a member state in the United Nations in October 24, 1945 has meant the infiltration of many western educational concepts such as "Education shall be free at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit."² The competitive spirit of catching up with the other countries is one of the Government's prime motives in speeding up education at all levels. At the 1965 Geneva conference the Ministry of Education mentioned that the Government was inclined "to reconcile between quantitative and qualitative education" in the Kingdom³. The elimination of illiteracy is now the chief intellectual aim of education.

²United Nations, Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Art.26

³Ministry of Education, "Brief Report on the Ministry of Education for the Year 1964-65", submitted by the Saudi Arabian Delegation to the 28th International Conference, Geneva, 1965.

B. The Educational Budget

Although the Government started its first elementary school in the Eastern Province at Hofuf in 1936 - it was open only to boys. It took another 23 years before a Government decree authorized the establishment of girls' schools.

The Government has made education free for all although it has still not enforced compulsory education. Free books, transportation facilities are provided, (formerly even bonuses to parents who sent their boys to school) are all efforts on the part of the Government to encourage and stimulate education. Education no longer caters to a select group and social discrimination has been reduced by the establishment of girls' schools. Those people who voiced any particular concern or conservatism regarding the education of women have been pacified by the Government's step of placing the education of women under the responsibility of the Office of the Grand Mufti.

In 1960, for the first time in the history of Saudi Arabia, the Government granted a special budget for the education of women in the Kingdom, and in October, of the same year the program was begun. This necessary step on the part of the Government insured the recognition needed to encourage women's education, although at the same time it implied the intervention of the state in the organization, control and supervision of the girls' schools.

The sum of two million Saudi Rials (about \$45,000) which was granted for the realization of the program on women's education in

1960 was insufficient to handle the needs of the country and the extent of the territory to be covered. Consequently, the extension of Government subsidies have, doubled and tripled since then to meet the demands of the people. The table below indicates the increase in the state budget:

TABLE 2

THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE EDUCATION OF WOMEN

<u>School Year</u>	<u>Amount in Saudi Rials (\$1 = S.R. 4.5)</u>
1959 - 1960	2,000,000
1960 - 1961	4,400,000
1961 - 1962	7,664,000
1962 - 1963	12,415,000
1963 - 1964	25,220,000
1964 - 1965	32,375,000
1965 - 1966	45,588,000

The figures are no doubt encouraging. However, from a study carried out in the summer of 1965, the percentage spent on the entire Government educational system was 10.81% of the total national expenditure, and out of this^{total} just below 1% went to girls education, as indicated in the following table.

TABLE 3

1963 - 1964 EXPENDITURE OF THE SAUDI GOVERNMENT ON EDUCATION⁴
IN SAUDI RIALS⁺

	<u>Education Expenditure</u>
Ministry of Education's General Offices	227,530,000
Riyadh University	14,441,000
Engineering College	1,900,000
Girls Schools	25,220,000
Ath Thaghr School	1,640,000
Institutes and Colleges	15,220,000
Dar Al-Hadith	177,800
Islamic University	4,210,700
	<hr/>
T O T A L	290,239,500
	<hr/> <hr/>

Percentage of National Budget spent on education: 10.81%

Percentage of National Budget spent on girls' education: just below 1%

Percentage of Educational Budget spent on girls' education: 8.7%

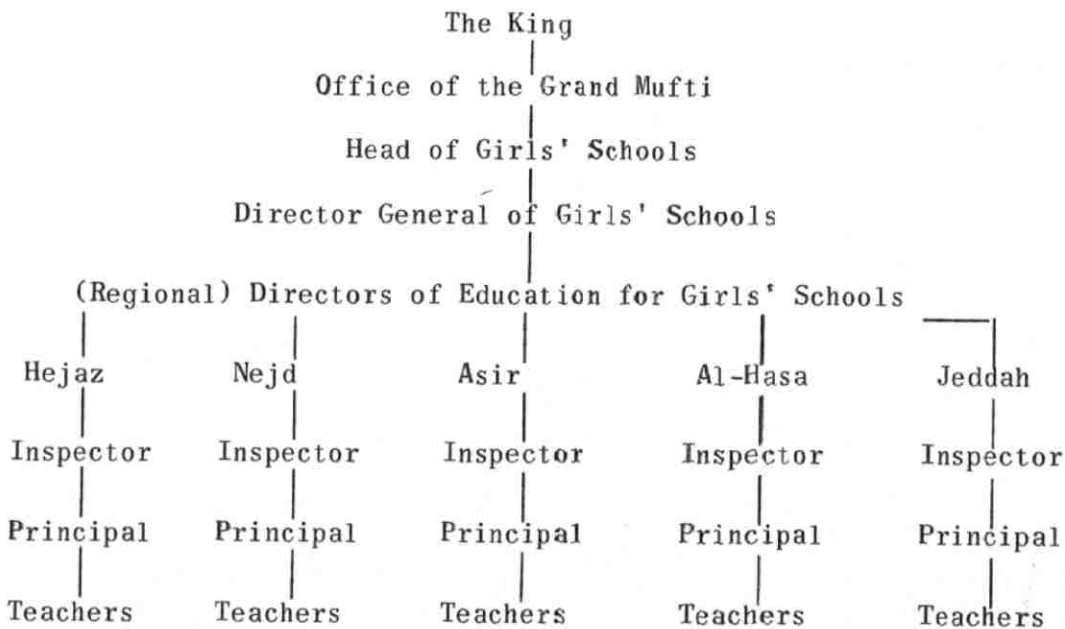
+ \$1 = 4.5 S.R.

⁴ From my research in Aramco on "Higher Education in Saudi Arabia", August, 1965. Figures were obtained from Official Government Reports.

C. The Administration and Organization

The general organization and administration of the girls' schools is completely separated from the Ministry of Education which is concerned solely with the education of boys in the Kingdom. The organization of the girls' schools in the country falls directly under the control of the Office of the Grand Mufti which reports to the King on all matters pertaining to women's education. This was done for the approval of the religious leaders so that by their encouragement, girls' education would be acceptable to all communities. The general hierarchy of the educational system for girls is as follows:

TABLE 4
THE GENERAL HIERARCHY OF THE EDUCATION SYSTEM FOR GIRLS



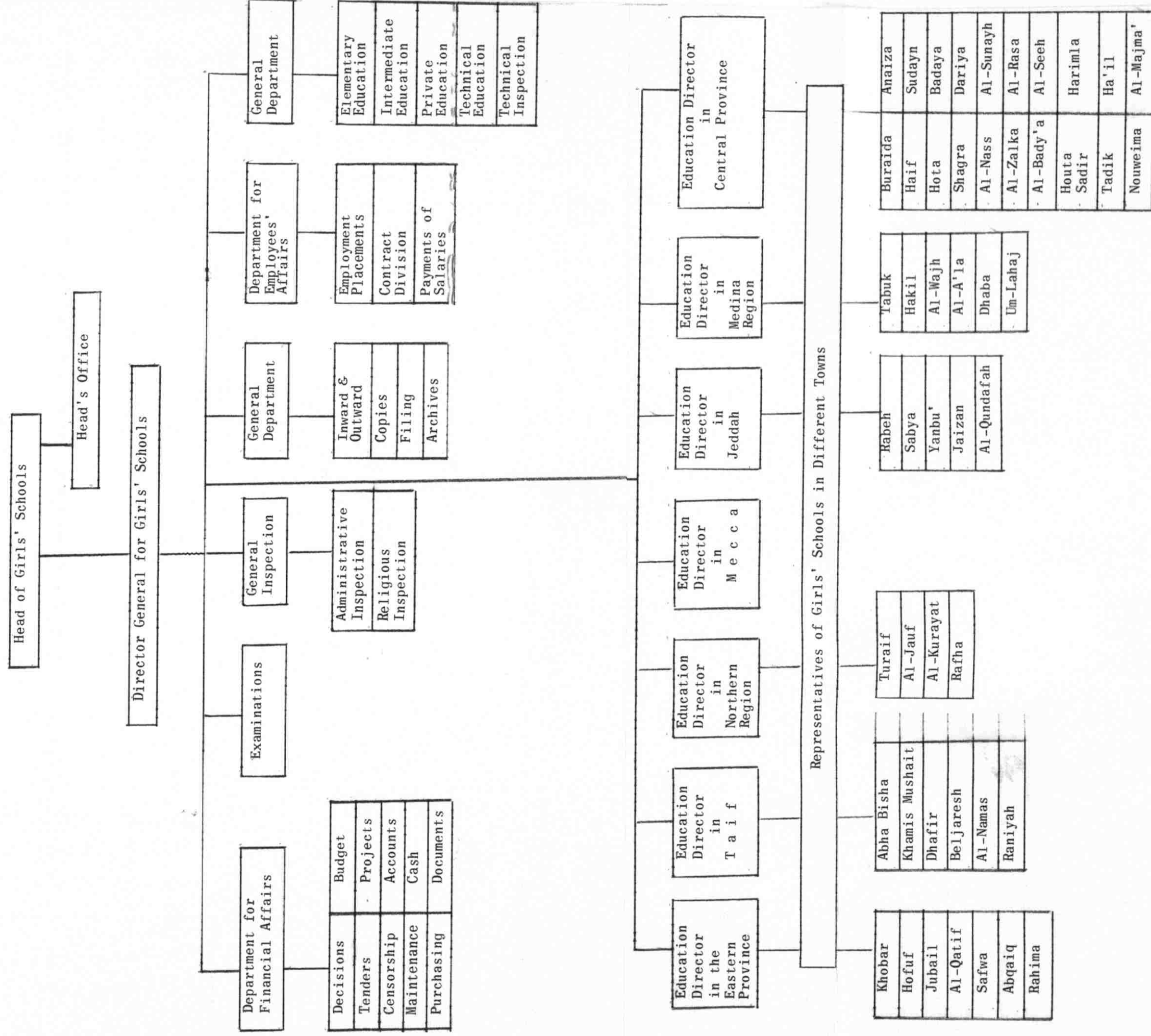
It is interesting to note that although the Royal Proclamation of October 23, 1959, stated that all girls' schools were to be under the direction of the Office of the Grand Mufti, a provision was made in the agreement of September 3, 1961, between the Ministry of Education and Aramco, whereby the girls' schools to be built by Aramco in the Eastern Province would be under the supervision and control of the Ministry of Education. H. R. Snyder, former Coordinator of SAG, Aramco Educational Services, states:

"The confusion and uncertainty over control of women's education illustrate the tension and conflict that occasionally arise between the progressivism of young groups in the Government and the orthodoxy of religious leaders. The Government has always found it expedient to proceed cautiously in developing its system of public education alongside the religious schools operated by the Office of the Grand Mufti, and His Majesty's decision to assign to the Office of the Grand Mufti responsibility for supervision of the girls' schools (other than those built by Aramco) may have been a concession that had to be made at that time. There could be no other justification for splitting administration of a centrally organized school system."⁵

⁵ Harry R. Snyder, Community College Education for Saudi Arabia. Ph.D. Dissertation, Columbia University, (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University Microfilms, Inc., 1963), p. 21

TABLE 5

THE GENERAL ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEM OF GIRLS' SCHOOLS



D. The Educational Ladder

The present 6-3-3 grade system is clearly indicated in Table 6. The child spends six years in the Elementary school (Grades 1 to 6), then three years in the Intermediate School or Elementary Teachers Training Institute (Grades 7 to 9), followed by three additional years in the Secondary School (Grades 10 to 12).

TABLE 6⁶

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Educational Level</u>
12	Secondary
11	
10	

9	Intermediate & Elementary Teachers' Training
8	
7	

6	Elementary
5	
4	
3	
2	
1	

	Kindergarten

E. The Type and Number of Schools

1. Kindergartens:

Until 1965 there were no formal Government Kindergartens.

Those that existed were privately run, but operated under the

⁶H. R. Snyder, op. cit., p. 46

supervision of the Ministry of Education and the Head of Girls' Schools which assisted them financially. In 1965/66 there were 32 Private Kindergartens all over the Kingdom. That same year the Ministry of Education opened two experimental Governmental Kindergartens in Riyadh and in Jeddah. The Kindergartens are co-educational and comprise a two-year period, first year Nursery and second year Kindergarten.

2. Elementary Schools

The Elementary School consists of six years of schooling with the pupils entering at the age of six. In 1965/66 there were 160 Government Elementary Girls' Schools which enrolled a number of 50,870 students, 33 of which were located in the Eastern Province with a total of 9,378 students.

3. Intermediate Schools

The Intermediate School consists of three years of schooling after the Elementary Certificate. In 1965/66 there was a total of nine Government Intermediate Schools for girls in the Kingdom with an enrollment of 775 students. Only two Intermediate Schools for girls exist in the Eastern Province with an enrollment of 53 students. Private Intermediate Girls' Schools located all over the Kingdom have a total enrollment of 782 students.

4. Teachers' Training Institutes

Because of the shortage of teachers, the Teachers' Training Institutes also consist of three years of schooling after the

Elementary Certificate. Figures indicate that in 1965/66 a total of 17 Government Teachers' Training Institutes with 1,161 students existed in the entire Kingdom. There were four Institutes with a total number of 219 students located in the Eastern Province.

5. Secondary Schools

The Secondary School is three years of schooling after the Intermediate level. After the second year, students select between two sections - the Arts or the Sciences. At present there is only one Secondary Girls' School in the Eastern Province. Government statistics indicates that in 1965/66 there was only one public secondary school located in the Riyadh with a total of 81 students. There are, however, private secondary girls' schools in various parts of the country with a total enrollment of 223 students in 1965/66.

The following table indicate the development of the number of schools, classes, students at the different levels of education during the last six years in the Saudi Arabia:

TABLE 7

GIRLS' EDUCATION, GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS, 1960/1961 - 1965/1966
NUMBER OF STUDENTS, CLASSES, & SCHOOLS IN THE TEACHER'S TRAINING
INSTITUTES, ELEMENTARY, INTERMEDIATE & SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THE
EASTERN PROVINCE

Year & School District	Teachers Training Institutes			Secondary			Intermediate			Elementary		
	Stu- dents	Cla- sses	Insti- tutes	Stu- dents	Cla- sses	Sch- ools	Stu- dents	Cla- sses	Sch- ools	Stu- dents	Cla- sses	Sch- ools
1960/1961	20	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5180	127	15
1961/1962	104	7	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	11812	291	31
1962/1963	261	15	7	-	-	-	-	-	-	18880	531	60
1963/1964	443	23	8	21	3	1	235	13	4	31984	1002	124
1964/1965	710	34	13	32	3	1	544	22	7	40896	1274	135
1965/1966	1161	53	17	81	5	1	775	29	9	50870	1623	160

Source: Cinquieme Panorama Sur la Situation de l'Enseignement Au Royaume
d'Arabie Seoudite, Etude et Recherche des Delegates 1965-66

F. The Role of Aramco

An agreement was signed between the Ministry of Education and Aramco in February 7, 1953, (amended in 1959 and 1961) set the Company's commitment as follows:⁷

1. The Company will build elementary and intermediate schools (grades 1 through 9) to accommodate a number of students equal to the number of sons and daughters of the Company's Muslim and Arab employees of school age (between 6 and 14 inclusive) residing in Saudi Arabia.
2. Specialized facilities such as laboratories and shops will be provided as required in the curricula.
3. The Company will contribute to the Government's educational budget for the Eastern Province an amount sufficient to cover the cost of operations (including teachers' salaries) of the schools constructed by the Company. "Budgets will be similar to the budgets for other schools of comparable size in Al-Hasa Province, except that any subsidies to children or parents to induce children to go to school shall not be required in contributions by the Company".
4. The SAG/Aramco Education Committee, consisting of representatives of the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Finance and Aramco will determine the location, number, and rate of construction of the schools to be built by the Company. The schools will be built in location where most of the employees' families reside, that is, in the general area between Jubail and Al-Hasa. The schools built by the Company will become an integral part of the school system of the Al-Hasa Province. The Government will have the entire responsibility for operating the schools, determining the curriculum, the hiring and control of teachers, etc. The Company, however, will be glad to help, if requested to do so, in the form of technical advice, assistance in locating teachers, etc.

⁷ Harry R. Snyder, report on The Role of Aramco, Dhahran, 23 March, 1964

Thus, according to the agreement with the Government, the role of Aramco is to build and equip schools to accommodate all the daughters of the Company's Muslim and Arab employees that are of school age. All constructional and operational costs, including salaries of teachers are to be born by the Company. Once the school building is built it is handed over officially to the Saudi Arabian Government. At present there are eight Aramco-built Girls' Schools that have been built between the area of Jubail and Al-Hasa.

The Saudi Arabian Government is responsible for the curriculum, employing teachers, printing and supplying books. However, Aramco pays for their costs.

G. The First Government and Aramco School for Girls

In October 6th, 1960, the first Government Girls' School was opened by Sheikh Ali Sugair, the Education Director of Girls' Schools in the Eastern Province. The Government decree which sanctioned the opening of Government Girls' Schools had been passed that same year. Hence, without any further delay, immediate steps were taken to start girls' education.

In Dammam a building was rented to serve as a school until proper school plants can be built and teachers from the neighbouring Arab countries were employed. Hence in 1960/61 itself the first school year began.

Four years later on September 15th, 1964, the first Aramco-built Saudi Girls' School was completed and turned over to the Government's Head of Girls' Schools, Sheikh Nasir Ibn Hamad Al-Mubarak. These schools, (there were two) were located in Al-Khobar and Rahimah and were acknowledged as 'model' schools. They were single-storied, E-shaped to combine the elements of both an elementary and intermediate school campus. They were well-designed and attractive. Of course, in relation to other schools in the area, their costs in construction were considerably higher. Their dimensions and constructions costs were as follows:⁸

Capacity: 300 in 12 classrooms; 25 per classroom.

Size : 20,714 sq. ft.; classrooms 520 sq. ft.; 20.8 sq. ft. per pupil.

Cost : Rahimah-- \$443,000; \$21,38 per sq. ft.; \$1,474 per pupil.
: Al-Khobar, \$390,000; \$18.82 per sq. ft.; \$1,300 per pupil.

These expensive and modern Aramco-built schools also contain the following facilities:⁹

- 10 acre plot and playground area (with swing, see-saw, slide, jungle-jim, basketball court and a hockey field).
- canteen.
- library.
- a general activities room that contains ovens and stoves, refrigerators, iron boards, wash basins, locket space etc.
- an animal shelter.

⁸ Report on 'Education in the Eastern Province', by Dr. Harry Snyder, Dhahran, 1964.

⁹ Ibid.

- a first aid clinic.
- moveable partitions to enlarge classrooms when needed.
- an outdoor stage of 575 sq. ft. with curtains and a public address system.
- individual-sized desks.

TABLE 8

THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS AT ALL EDUCATIONAL LEVELS IN GOVERNMENT
& PRIVATE SCHOOLS DURING THE LAST SIX YEARS

1960/1961 - 1965/1966¹⁰

Y e a r	Government School Students	Private School Students	T O T A L
1960/1961	5200	6553	11753
1961/1962	11916	5232	17148
1962/1963	19140	5973	25113
1963/1964	32683	5458	38141
1964/1965	42182	5883	48065
1965/1966	52886	8799	61685

¹⁰ Statistical Yearbook of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia compiled by the Ministry of Finance & National Economy and the Central Department of Statistics, 1966.

TABLE 9

THE NUMBER OF TEACHERS IN THE GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE SCHOOLS DURING
THE LAST SIX YEARS 1960/1961 - 1965/1966¹¹

Y e a r	Government Schools Teachers	Private School Teachers	T O T A L
1960/1961	113	-	113
1961/1962	283	170	453
1962/1963	597	187	784
1963/1964	1166	215	1381
1964/1965	1534	259	1793
1965/1966	2023	327	2350

¹¹Statistical Yearbook of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia compiled by the Ministry of Finance & National Economy and the Central Department of Statistics, 1966.

H. The Curricula of the Elementary Girls' Schools

The study of Religion and the Arabic Language form the major part of the curriculum. Arithmetic is also an important subject. Physical education and the study of a foreign language are excluded.

In the first year the total number of hours per week is 28, gradually increasing to 34 hours in the second, third and fourth grade, until 36 hours in the fifth and sixth grade. Students go to school six days a week from 8:30 a.m. till 1:30 p.m.

Slightest innovations in the curriculum is considered with the greatest of concern, so that the education of girls is kept "within the sanctions of the Islamic tradition."

On the following page is the program of studies in the Elementary Government Girls' Schools, and its distribution according to the school years.

TABLE 10

PROGRAM OF STUDIES FOR THE GIRLS' SCHOOLS ¹²

	School Subject	Number of Periods per Week in the School Years						Percentage of the Subjects Taught
		1st Year	2nd Year	3rd Year	4th Year	5th Year	6th Year	
Religion	Qur'an	10	11	9	6	4	3	36%
	Interpretation of the Qur'an	-	-	-	-	-	1	
	Recitation (Tajwid)	-	-	-	1	1	-	
	Islamic Jurisprudence (Fiqh)	2	2	2	2	2	2	
	Monotheism (Tawhid)	2	2	2	2	2	2	
	Prophet's Sayings (Hadith)	-	-	-	-	1	1	
Arabic Language	Reading and Comprehension	4	4	4	3	2	2	27%
	Dictation	-	3	3	2	2	2	
	Writing	-	1	1	1	1	1	
	Memorization	1	1	1	1	1	1	
	Expression of the Language	-	-	2	2	2	2	
	Grammar	-	-	-	2	2	2	
	Arithmetic	5	5	5	4	4	4	37%
	Geometry	-	-	-	-	1	1	
	Social Studies	-	-	-	-	2	2	
	Science and Health	2	2	2	2	2	3	
	Art	2	3	3	3	3	3	
	Home Economics	-	-	-	3	4	4	
	T O T A L	28	34	34	34	36	36	100%

¹² Cinquieme Panorama Sur la Situation de l'Enseignement Au
Royaume d'Arabie Seoudite, Etude et Recherche des Delegates, 1965-1966

The following subjects are taught in the Government Elementary Girls's Schools:¹²

Religion

1. Qur'an : Explanation and recitation. Memorization.
2. Interpretation of the Qur'an : The study of vocabulary; explanation of the meaning in terms of moral behaviour and daily life; reading; understanding of the background of the Qur'an; questioning of the meaning and purpose; discussion and criticism.
3. Hadith or the Sayings of the Prophet : Reading, explanation of the different interpretations and translations of the Hadith, study of words, memorization, explanation in reference to Islamic laws, morals, virtue and practical worship.
4. Tawhid or Monotheism : Study of the pillars and foundations of Islam; reading, understanding and explanation and the application of worship in daily life.
5. Fiqh or Islamic Jurisprudence (Rules) : Study of the rules of Islam; manner of prayers, worship and respect; emphasis on the importance of religion in character building.
6. Tajwid or Grammar of the Qur'an : Study of vocabulary, pronunciation and understanding of words and meanings of the Qur'an.

¹² Cinquieme Panorama Sur la Situation de l'Enseignement Au Royaume d'Arabie Seoudite, Etude et Recherche des Delegates, 1965-1966

Arabic Language

1. Reading and Comprehension ; Reading aloud, silent reading and listening; spelling; encourage reading in library on various subjects.
2. Dictation and Writing : Study of correct writing and spelling; study of different Arabic scripts.
3. Memorization : Memorization of easy verses that help build character, religious feeling and national spirit.
4. Grammar : Study of Arabic grammar.
5. Expression : Discussion and speaking of the native language; encourage oral expression of personal experiences; story-telling; writing compositions.

Arithmetic : Addition, subtraction, multiplication, division; currency; weights, decimals etc.

Geometry : Squares, rectangles, triangles and circles, areas and theorems; constructions etc.

Social Studies

1. History : History of the Arabs before Islam; history of the Prophet Muhammad; history of Saudi Arabia; world history - a comparative study; appreciation and understanding of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia; study of leaders and heroes.
2. Geography : Study of the physical features, natural resources and geography of the country; environment and the role of the individual.

Science and Health

1. Health and Hygiene : Care of the teeth, eyes, hair, ears, foot and clothing; study of the importance of water, air, food and sleep; nutrition and mal-nutrition; insects and diseases.
2. Science : Study of rearing domestic animals and birds; study of plants, vegetables and cereals; practical experience in the school.

Art and Handwork

1. Art : Imaginative drawing and painting; figurative drawing and painting in oils and water colours.
2. Handwork : The use of paper, plasticene and clay; needlework and embroidery; book-binding.

Home Economics : Study of personal hygiene; practical housekeeping; cooking, washing and pressing; study of child care.

I. Summary

The need for developing girls' education in Saudi Arabia was expressed, in the press and by several important personalities, many years before 1960. A report of the UNESCO Mission to Afghanistan, in 1952, forcefully stated that:

"Either the country must educate its girls in elementary and secondary schools, must train women teachers, must provide adult and technical education for women, and must give some of its outstanding women university education at home or abroad; or it must resign itself to a backward status economically, socially, and culturally, in relation

to its neighbours, to other countries of the Islamic world, and to modern States everywhere. There is no other solution."¹³

Saudi Arabia has not resigned itself but chosen to stand among the newly-developing nations of the world. A more liberal attitude is being taken by Government and the people towards girls' education. The growing middle class have seen that education is a means of improving their economic and social status. Harry R. Snyder¹⁴ remarks that "the rapidly increasing liberal elements in the country will not tolerate maneuvers from any source that will deny or delay opportunities for girls to receive modern education on an equality with boys." By comparing the present advances in girls' education in the Kingdom to the early educational system, one realizes that the basic philosophy and aim of education is primarily the same - that of inculcating a true Islamic spirit of knowledge and research, through a proper understanding of the Qur'an and the Hadith. Only the method and approach is different. Proper schools with modern equipments have been designed to be efficient teaching units. Harry R. Snyder mentions that "several of the educational developments and curricular revisions... had long been considered by officials of the Ministry of Education, especially by the Director General of Education. Curricular revisions were not, therefore, contingent upon the advent of American activities in the Eastern Province."¹⁵

¹³United Nations: Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization, Report of the Mission of Afghanistan, Paris, UNESCO, 1952, p. 14

¹⁴Harry R. Snyder, Community College Education for Saudi Arabia. Ph.D. Dissertation, Columbia University, Michigan, 1963. p. 22

¹⁵Harry R. Snyder, op. cit., p. 52

He believes that the people of the Eastern Province are ready for educational improvements. "Economically, socially, and psychologically the time is opportune to promote ... innovations and procedures designed to provide a balanced educational system for the development of the human resources of the Eastern Province."¹⁶

Summing up the present educational system on an optimistic note, it is interesting to list some of the innovations as^{needed} changes mentioned by H. R. Snyder:¹⁷

1. Establishment of a comprehensive school system, 5-5-5 grade pattern; five year elementary school, five-year intermediate school, and five-year community college.
2. Establishment of elementary schools in mobile units that would follow the seasonal migrations of nomadic tribes and seminomadic groups.
3. Subsidies, scholarships, or part-time employment to be given to students otherwise qualified but prevented from attending school for economic reasons.
4. Language of instruction in elementary schools to be Arabic; in intermediate schools to be Arabic, with English as a second language beginning in the fifth grade; in the community college to be English except for Arabic studies, religion, history, and geography, which shall be taught in Arabic.
5. Curricula for the entire school system to be comprehensive; that is, to include both academic and vocational courses, together with courses on Saudi Arabia culture, sound health habits, self-discipline, good citizenship, and community service.
6. The curricular are not to be "terminal" at any level; Opportunities for self-development will be limited only by the individual's abilities, aptitudes, and interests. Emphasis to be placed upon lifetime education and training.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 53

¹⁷Ibid., p. 53-60

7. Educational counseling to be started in the elementary school and to be carried on continuously throughout the student's educational career. Tests and measurements to be utilized to ascertain the individual's innate skills and physical capabilities, together with his mental and social potentialities.
8. Experiments are to be conducted to decrease the number of drop outs (25.6% in grades ten through twelve, 66.7% in grades seven through nine, and 84.4% in grades one through six.) Some of the drop outs result from the economic necessity for many students to become breadwinners at an early age, but the largest number of drop outs is a result of severe examinations.
9. School personnel, curricula, school plants to be integrated with programs and facilities for adult education, community development, and military training.

PART II

CHAPTER V

THE STATUS OF WOMEN AND THE SOCIAL FORCES THAT INFLUENCED THE EDUCATION OF WOMEN IN THE KINGDOM

In the traditional male-dominated society of Saudi Arabia, a woman is considered to be socially of secondary importance. Her status and participation in the community has been largely determined by the tradition and social customs of the Kingdom, which has in turn, resulted in the degree or extent of Governmental support she was given in educational and social fields.

The dramatic impact of the new oil economy has caused a change in all spheres of life. The old simple, traditional and homogeneous society of the Eastern Province has been shaken by an advanced industrial and heterogeneous social groups - and since old customs and values seem no longer to be adequate to cope with the complexities of modern life, new ones have to be found in order to adapt Arab society to the new needs and demands of the twentieth century. To bring about such a change it is necessary to analyze those aspects of Arab society that have hindered or promoted change within that particular society.

In the Eastern Province there are four important forces to consider:

- A. Religion and Religious Groups
- B. Society and Social Customs and Values

C. Government Influences

D. Aramco and Foreign Influences

A. Religion and Religious Groups

It is necessary to re-emphasize and clarify any misconceptions that Islam might have hindered and discouraged the education of women. Islam greatly encouraged the pursuit of knowledge and clearly states that there should be no distinction between the sexes in regard to education. In fact, Islam represented a social reform movement against the existing practices of the seventh century such as the abolition of infanticide, limitation of polygamy, protection of widows and orphans, granting of a marriage dowry, inheritance rights and equal educational rights to women. Without violating the prevailing concept of the superiority of men, for "men have a degree above them"¹ and thus "men are in charge of women, because Allah hath made the one of them to excel the other and because they spend of their property for the support of women",² he gave women status, more rights and freedom than they had ever had before.

The reason why they did not enjoy the freedom they were entitled to was due to the fact that traditional conservatism, values and customs overruled and overshadowed their privileges granted by Islam.

¹The Glorious Qur'an, Text and Explanatory, trans. by Marmaduke Pickthall, Hyderabad-Deccan (India), 1938, Surah IV, (Women), No. 34, pp. 104-105

²Ibid., Surah II (The Cow), No. 228, p. 45

The "Ulema" and religious leaders sought to control society and preserve their status quo by opposing any new changes and attitudes towards women and rigidly enforcing traditions and obsolete social customs. The extent to which they heeded the Qur'an's call was by teaching some of the women simply to read and memorize the Qur'an - but that was the limit of their education and enlightenment.

Woodsmall mentions that "the identifications of religion with social customs has precluded any idea of change for orthodox Islam".³ This undoubtedly resulted in the veiling and seclusion of women and the lack of creativity or spirit of initiative in the society.

With the increase of industrialization, the powers of the "Ulema" are lessening and a new outlook towards education takes shape. This has urged them to re-interpret the Qur'an and it is interesting to note that many of the religious leaders who formerly held extremely conservative views towards women's education have now broadened their outlook. The following example will indicate the change in attitude towards women's education:

On January 3, 1965, a Saudi Arabian newspaper "An Nadwah" asked a question to leading writers and thinkers in the Kingdom. The question was "Should girls content themselves with secondary education or continue their studies to University level"? The answers were as follows:

³Ruth Frances Woodsmall, Moslem Women Enter a New World, New York, 1936, p. 64

⁴Educational Review, 1965, pp. 15-17

- Sheikh Mohammad Ibn Hasan Ash-Sheikh, Director General of Religious Inspection in the Western Province, mentioned that the Shari'a said that it was the duty of both men and women alike to be educated but that it was best to prevent girls from pursuing their studies beyond the secondary level. Only if the state needs girls to participate in public life, should a few girls be selected to study medicine and teaching at Universities in Muslim countries.

- Jamil Ahmad Husayn admitted that when the idea of education for women was first mentioned he was shocked and was one of its strongest opponents. He went on to say that he now realized that his attitude was unjustified and that "It is in fact possible to educate women without corrupting them". Girls have shown that they are capable of developing strong personalities and are not without ambition. He expressed the hope that Saudi girls whose ambition drives them to seek higher education will be in a better position to serve their country and help bring up an enlightened generation. He advocated the establishment of a local university for girls, but insisted that co-education should be avoided and that traditional attire be maintained.

- Sheikh 'Umar Abd-Al-Jabbar, founder of the Az-Zahra School for girls in Mecca points out that Islam calls for the education of women and that there was no religious barrier for women from becoming doctors or social workers. He went on to say that Muslim jurisprudence indicates that women cannot be treated by male doctors - and that this was a sure proof that the education of women should be encouraged. He proposed the establishment of a medical college for girls.

- Muhammad Ibn Nasir, Director General of Girls Schools in Mecca had no objections to higher education for girls, especially in the field of medicine provided, however, that they do not have to go abroad to get it.

- Sheikh Muhammad Ahmad Shatla, Director General of the Saudi Broadcasting Station, maintained that it was the right of Saudi girls to pursue advanced studies at University level especially in Medicine and Teaching but that co-education was dangerous and therefore should be avoided.

- Sheikh Mahmud Qari, Director of the Social Education Center in Mecca said that although he had no objection to some girls attending medical schools and taking sociology courses, he believed that for most girls secondary education was sufficient after which she should devote herself to her home. For women to study arts, commerce or engineering would be inconsistent with their social and religious role in Saudi society.
- Abdallah Baghdadi, Director of Education in Mecca, said that there was no doubt that University education would help meet the country's need for qualified instructors and that due regard should therefore be paid to turning out sufficient female instructors.
- Husayn 'Arab maintained that more important than the pursuit of knowledge is the way girls are brought up. "We must differentiate" he said, "between true knowledge and that overwhelming tendency evident abroad, to reduce women to objects of exhibition and to give them a freedom which is even denied to men. If education leads to moral degeneration and disintegration of the family, then ignorance is bliss. If on the other hand, education means that girls will be brought up in accordance with the traditions of Islam to become doctors, teachers and educators, then it is to be encouraged".

It is interesting to see that the leaders of the community are so guarded and concerned about the prospect of higher education for women. The more liberal-minded groups are emphasizing upon the necessity of having qualified Saudi women teachers and doctors. Regarding the small minority who disapprove, H. R. Snyder states "The conservative elements in the country will undoubtedly oppose either openly or covertly, any developments that may enable women to share societal functions that are prerogatives usurped by men"⁵. However, in spite of certain reservations and conservatism, co-education is also being accepted

⁵ Harry R. Snyder, op. cit., p. 22

in the higher levels of education. Hence by working under the general principles laid down in Islam, changes in society and its attitudes can take place. Rizavi says, "Islam assigns to women duties of building up the individual and thus, the over-all development of the society."⁶

B. Society and Social Customs and Values

The dominant relationships in Saudi society are of a personal nature. Allegiance to Islam, loyalty to the family and loyalty to the tribe are the strongest bonds felt by most Saudi Arabs. These bonds have helped to strengthen the influence of the society on the individual.

Social and traditional values such as pride in lineage, loyalty to kin, respect for authority and devotion to tribal leaders and to Saudi rulers are still strong and, to a certain degree, have acted as a force that has hindered women's education. It has been observed that the more conservative the family the more the pride of ancestry and the less susceptible they are to change. However, new social groups are now appearing and old ones are gradually loosening their traditional allegiances through the development of more diffused interests and less exclusive loyalties.

⁶ Sajjad Rizavi, Islamic Philosophy of Education, M.A. Thesis, A.U.B., 1963, p. 166

The social forces of change that are taking place in Saudi Arabia and especially in the Eastern Province are the inevitable result of the new technology. Those that have been drawn away from their tribes to work in the oil industry have been subjected to the full force of western culture and science. Many are becoming acquainted with and interested in new tools and machines; and foreign wares, such as refrigerators, cars, and foodstuffs are flooding the markets and are being readily accepted by the people. The radio and television are not just furniture items, but a means by which educational and cultural programs can reach the home.

The impact of the West has fallen most heavily upon the towns and villages although even the nomads have not entirely escaped it. Since the beginning of the twentieth century, such innovations as the telegraph, telephone, gramophone and later radios and televisions which appeared first in the Aramco area, in Jeddah and in the royal palaces were faced with some opposition from puritanical elements. Extreme conservatism is still present in a group called the "Ikhwans" who number about 70,000 living in various agricultural settlements all over the Kingdom. They are also referred to as the "Mujahadin" (sons of the holy warriors) and have exerted a tremendous influence that in many ways has retarded progress.

Veiling is still customary in most parts of Arabia, and goes hand in hand with social status. A lady of a prominent family usually adheres more rigidly to the veil than the bedouin women who are mostly

unveiled. The inner meaning of the veil is strangely paradoxical and has been described as "a sign of utter dependence and also of freedom from responsibility; a handicap to real progress and a symbol of special privilege".⁷ Thus the subtlety of this dual purpose of the veil is one of the reasons why some women, especially the older generation, hesitate to discard it since it gives them both moral protection and freedom from responsibility. In fact, it has been mentioned that veiled women are not personalities to be criticized for individual action, as they are merely masked figures whom no one recognizes and thus often it is said veiled women do things that other women could not do".⁸

There is considerable debate about whether Islam advocated veiling or not. The veil, however, is not a requisite of Islam. Devout Muslims even perform Hajj (the pilgrimage to Mecca) unveiled. The only verses that refer to the use of the veil are the following:

- "And tell the believing women to lower their gaze and be modest, ... and to draw their veils over their bosoms, and not to reveal their adornment ..."⁹
- "O Prophet! tell thy wives and daughters and the women of the believers to draw their cloaks close round them (when they go abroad)".¹⁰

⁷Ruth Frances Woodsmall, Moslem Women Enter a New World, New York, 1936, p. 64

⁸Ibid., p. 65

⁹The Glorious Qur'an, op. cit., XXIV, v. 31

¹⁰Ibid., XXXIII, v. 59

Thus, one can only conclude from the above verses that respectability and modesty in attire was advocated and not the covering of the face.

It is interesting to consider an investigation made on the degree to which education is effecting attitudes towards veiling. (See Table 11). It must be remembered, however, that discrepancies in the numbers given in Table 11 might occur from the fact that this study conducted by Halim Barakat was done on a small group of men Aramco employees. Also one should take into consideration the fact that until 1960 there were no Government Public Schools for girls. Table 11 taken from Barakat's study indicates the degree to which veiling is accepted according to the level of education.

TABLE 11

ACCEPTANCE OF VEILING BY MEN, IN RELATION TO THE DEGREE
OF EDUCATION^{11 +}

Level of Education	Strongly Agree	Agree	Do not Agree	Dis-Agree	Strongly Disagree	Mean Score	TOTAL
Illiterates	32	8	-	-	-	1.20	40
Lower Elementary Education	23	9	2	3	3	1.85	40
Upper Elementary Education	10	11	2	8	9	2.88	40
Higher Levels ⁺ of Education	2	7	4	16	11	3.68	40
Secondary Education	1	6	1	10	7	3.64	25
University	1	1	3	6	4	3.78	15

+ Includes both secondary and University educated.

¹¹ Halim Barakat, Relationship between Degree of Education and Dissatisfaction with Traditional Family values among Saudi Employees of Aramco, M.A. Thesis at A.U.B., Beirut, August 1960, pp.49-50

From the table above one can note a positive relationship between education and the acceptance of veiling. One may assume that after a period of seven years with the rising level of education these figures have been considerably changed. The reason being that there has been an increased number of employees who have realized the importance and need for pursuing an education.

Society has delegated certain functions to the women. Her role is primarily in the home - as wife, mother and housekeeper. Children are essential to the family, and although infant mortality is high in Saudi Arabia, large families are common. In the patriarchal family system the man stands as the responsible and aggressive member in society whereas the woman remains an integral part of the background. Until now this situation has remained unchanged.

Movement towards the larger towns is causing a break in the family unit, as individuals leave the extended family to settle into apartments near the oil industry. However, family considerations and responsibilities are still strong. The larger family continues to play an important role in the identity of the individual and accordingly family obligations take precedent over all others.

Polygamy is gradually disappearing as the cost of living rises and education bears its effects on the people of the Eastern Province. On polygamy, it is in reference to orphans and widows, that the Qur'an says: "And if you fear that you cannot do justice to orphans, marry such women as seen good to you, two, or three, or four; but if you fear

that you will not do justice, then (marry) only one or that which your right hand possess. This is more proper that you may not do injustice." According to Maulana Muhammad Ali¹², this passage permits polygamy under certain circumstances; "it does not enjoin it, nor even permit it unconditionally marriage with orphan girls and widows was only sanctioned."¹³

C. Government Influences

Since 1960 the Government has done a great deal to improve the education of women - which has indirectly, caused an improvement in her status in society. The brilliant maneuver of placing girls' education under the Office of the Grand Mufti, has undoubtedly won their support of the Government's policies, and encouraged the parents to send their daughters to school.

With Government encouragement of agriculture and industry, and modernization efforts in health and social affairs, various private groups have been stimulated to engage in new enterprises in the Kingdom. The growth of the new social group of importers, contractors and technicians have caused a perceptible change in social values.

¹²The Holy Qur'an, trans. Maulana Muhammad Ali, 5th ed., (Lahore, Pakistan: Ahmadiyyah Anjuman Isha'at Islam, 1963), p. 187

¹³Ibid.

It is admitted that this Surah "Women" was revealed under the conditions which followed the battle of Uhud, since many men were killed leaving behind a large number of orphans and widows who had no means of support.

Also, the influence and aspirations of the King and the leaders of the community have directed the course of women's education. Leaders are expressing the idea that the retarded development of women has been a real handicap to the development of children and hence to the progress of Saudi Arabia. Several international organizations such as UNESCO, ILO, U.N. are assisting the Ministry of Education with their technical experience, at the request of the Saudi Arabian Government.

The primary impetus for general progress in Saudi Arabia - which of course effects the educational progress of women - has come through the vigorous spirit of nationalism. This nationalism has awakened the public consciousness to the need for education and the necessity for the emancipation of women. The divided provincial and tribal loyalties of the past are being supplanted by national loyalty and pride, which demands that Saudi Arabia no longer remain undeveloped.

D. Aramco and Foreign Influences

Aramco has undoubtedly played a significant role in encouraging girls' education in the Eastern Province. As mentioned in Chapter IV the schools that it built were 'model' schools that urged many girls to attend. The Arab employees of Aramco have also come under this influence of modernization. For the first time in the Eastern Province many people are earning regular incomes from the oil industry and the class called the "Ummaal Al-Sharikah" or the company workers, enjoy additional fringe benefits, retirement pensions and several material benefits

that have made them economically secure and able to acquire cars, radios, washing machines, cookers etc. which were formerly considered as luxury items.

Minority groups have always held a certain place in society. Whether Europeans, Americans or non-Saudi Arabs, there has been little intermingling between them and the Saudi Arabs. They stand apart as a select group holding on to their own customs, attitudes and values. They have, nevertheless, helped to effect a change in attitudes, especially towards women. The difference in the status of American women in their environment has been noticed and, almost imperceptibly but surely affected the Saudi women.

Also, the great number of Saudi men who are married to Egyptians, Jordanians, Palestinians and Syrians has compelled the Saudi parents, and particularly the fathers to realize that illiterate girls are no longer in demand. Thus they desire to improve their daughters' prospects in the marriage market by sending them to school. Moreover the girls themselves, are sensing these changes in attitudes and are now competing in the field, aware of the fact that only education will improve their chances and promise them a good future.

With increase in wealth, travel has become easier. Formerly, the pilgrimage to Mecca was almost the only opportunity of the Muslim lady to travel. And although communications were extremely poor, it was the only chance she had of meeting different nationalities. This once-in-a-lifetime trip was her right and was a unique social and

religious experience which thereafter gave her prestige and thereon her title was "Hajjiya". Now with great improvements in transportation and communication, an increasing number of Saudi Arabians are being able to travel to neighbouring countries such as Lebanon, Egypt and Iraq and even to Europe and have been coming into contact with ways of life that differ from their own. They notice the equal and casual relationship between men and women, and invariably this effects their behaviour at home.

Other influences in the schools occur from the great number of foreign Arab teachers such as Egyptians, Jordanians and Palestinians who dominate the school environment. Also, American educational ideas and concepts are more pronounced in the schools of the Eastern Province, than in other parts of the Kingdom, as Western and American concepts have not been found to be incompatible to the Region.

There has been a gradual increase in the number of scholarships available for Saudi students to study abroad. Both the Government and Aramco have offered scholarships to several male students (only few have been made available to women) to study in Egypt, Lebanon, Europe and the U.S.A. It has been mentioned that "Foreign education has probably contributed to provide one of the biggest elements of dissatisfaction in Saudi Arabia today."¹⁴

This statement is largely true, for the Arab student is experiencing a social dilemma, in trying to conform to the traditional

¹⁴ Report on Evolution or Revolution, 1955 (Author unknown)

customs and values of his society on the one hand, and adopting western technology and science on the other. His environment and the political developments around the world serve to exaggerate the gap which exist between him and his people and between him and the foreigner.

In conclusion, one may add that the effects of the social forces (in religion, society, government and foreign affairs) play a dynamic role in determining the status of women in the Kingdom. This chapter has attempted to briefly point out some of those forces that have both hindered and promoted the attitude towards women's education and her status in society. This enables one to get a better picture of the role of the early educational system and the development of women's education in the Kingdom. The intricacies of the interplay of these social forces, however, require a much deeper investigation by experts, so that future changes and improvements might take place.

CHAPTER VI
AN OPINION SURVEY

A. Type of Questionnaires

In order to get a clearer picture of the present situation of women's education other than through book research, it was considered necessary to conduct an opinion survey. Questions were set to permit free expression of ideas. No names were required. Two different questionnaires were posted to (a) the Saudi Students at the American University of Beirut and the Beirut College for Women, and (b) the Women teachers of the Girls Schools in the Eastern Province. 50 questionnaires were sent out to the students, 35 of which replied. To the Women Teachers, approximately 100 questionnaires were sent out from Beirut via the Aramco Office in Dhahran. Hence the actual number that reached the teachers is unknown. However, 32 replies from teachers were received, bringing the total to 67 replies.

B. Results of Questionnaires

1.. Students' Interest and Purpose

There is no doubt about the fact that the majority of Saudi girls are genuinely interested in going to school and obtaining an education. Every one of the 67 teachers' and students' replies received, confirmed this belief. The purpose or reasons for going to school were varied, but the three principal reasons were (a) to gain knowledge, (b) to be an understanding wife and mother and (c) to gain prestige. It is interesting to see the interplay of these three reasons and to note the general order of preference. It is significant that education carries with it a halo of prestige, hence more girls will undoubtedly try to claim it.

Of course there are other minor reasons that might motivate the Saudi girls to attend school, such as a natural curiosity, or a desire to escape the home routine or make new friends of their own age, or just to be adequately competent enough to write letters or to read magazines and books. It seems, however, that very few girls ever consider education as a means of earning a livelihood and being independent of the family which indicates the fact that the Saudi girl still conforms to the general tendency of being dependent on the family for her identity and support.

2. Parents' Interest

Most of the replies indicated that at present the majority of parents were eager and interested in educating their daughters. Awareness of society's changing values - such as desiring educated wives, is apparently giving the required impetus to girls' education.

3. Careers

In general, Saudi girls still place more importance on marriage and home life than on pursuing a career. Those girls who are ambitious for a career, choose teaching as a profession. Several made it clear, however, that teaching was selected because it was the only available and "respectable" vocation for women. Nursing and social work were the second choice, which was not as enthusiastically approached. Some girls wanted Governmental

work but usually ended up as teachers or inspectors for the Government. The problem of the scarcity of reputable careers for women in Saudi Arabia needs a solution for the country is in dire need of trained women doctors, dentists, psychologists, social scientists, civic welfare leaders, administrators and the like. And if Saudi women are not available, for these trained professions, foreigners will have to be brought to fill in the need.

4. Public Opinion

The fact that the majority of the people still do not approve of women working outside the home is the prime reason for the shortage of jobs for women. All the teachers and students expressed the opinion that the general attitude was one of disapproval of women working outside the home. It was generally considered that a woman's role and duty was in the home, and there was no remarkable regional differences regarding this point of view. Those women, who managed to perform both their functions, at home and at school, were generally the educated women with enlightened husbands. Under such circumstances (where the husband approves of his wife working outside the home) the women maintain their prestige and position in society. The situation is much more difficult and complex for the unmarried teacher. However, by and large, teachers, whether foreign or native, married or unmarried, had prestige and were respected members in most communities. A few mentioned that

teachers were appreciated and respected since it was an honour for them to be able to serve the youth and the country.

5. Forces that have hindered Girls' Education

Both teachers and students were asked their opinion on the forces that have hindered the development of women's education in their community, and it was interesting to note both the resemblances and the differences of opinion. The teachers emphasized the role of the family as being the major factor in hindering girls' education. A girl was often prevented from attending school by a narrowminded and domineering father who perceived no good from educating his daughter. Complaints were that ignorance on the part of the family and the society has caused an under-estimation of the value and importance of education for girls. The general attitude was of giving priority to the son in all matters, with the feeling that the daughter was in no need of education since she was to marry and rear children.

On the other hand, the majority of the students' replies stressed the fact that the religious forces and influences of "muttawas" and the conservative religious men, as the major hindrance to girls' education. All of them were emphatic in differentiating between the principles of Islam and its mis-interpretation by some religious groups who tried to enforce

tradition and social morals rather than the true doctrines of Islam.

Many deplored the Government's delay in opening girls' schools and felt that the lack of sufficient schools was a barrier to the development of an important segment of the population. They felt that the Government's lack of cooperation and interest in girls' education was caused by the fear of offending sensitive social traditions and customs.

6. Forces that Encouraged Girls' Education

Several mentioned that the influence of the radio and televisions, improvements in the health and community services, travel and contacts with foreigners have had a significant effect on changing the attitudes of the traditional rigid society, and have inadvertently encouraged the outlook toward the education of the girls in the Kingdom.

7. Major Problems of the Saudi Girl Student

The Majority mentioned that the major problem many Saudi girls were confronted with was within the family. Often because of divorce or polygamy the family lacked stability and unity. The lack of encouragement in the home was emphasized by the fact that fathers did not appreciate the value of learning for their daughters; that there was differentiation in the approach towards girls and boys. Complaints that girls were not treated as individuals, equal in their own rights to boys were often

mentioned. This lack of appreciation for girls' education was displayed by the fact that they were not provided the opportunity of doing their school work at home and often they were unable to attend school regularly because they were expected to help their mothers in the housework and care for their younger sisters and brothers.

Forced early marriages was another familiar problem that the students were faced with - especially when a choice between marriage and education had to be made. Such family conflicts and difficulties were a hindrance to successful education.

Some teachers mentioned that, with the rigid conservatism of the community added to the lack of freedom at home and in society, the Saudi Arab girls became dependent on the members of their families and lacked a sense of self confidence in their own abilities. Also, this was due to the lack of entertainment facilities for young girls and the lack of their participation in conventional women's gatherings.

Replies indicated that the Saudi girls were not faced with any acute economic problems, especially at the elementary level.

Few mentioned that some difficulties were confronted in pursuing higher education because of the insufficient scholarships available for girls.

8. Teachers' Problems

There was no unanimity of opinion about the teachers' major problems. Foreign Arab teachers complained that the differences

in the environment and the change in customs, attitudes and habits constituted the primary difficulties that the teachers faced. A few mentioned that they lacked appreciation for their efforts and that they were faced with the general attitude that they were merely teaching for financial benefits. There were no real economic problems since they were generally well-paid. A minor, but significant complaint, was the lack of cooperation with the parents, whom the teachers felt, were for the most part ignorant and uninterested in their daughter's progress. At present very little teacher-parent contacts exist.

9. School Problems

All the teachers were particularly concerned with this subject and there seemed to be several pressing problems in the schools. In brief, one can summarize the following important and relevant problems, as expressed by the majority of the replies:-

- a) Books: Several complained about the scarcity of books at the beginning of the school year which caused innumerable problems for teachers in conducting classes.
- b) Teachers: There were also several complaints (from the teachers themselves) about the late arrival of teachers. They mentioned that this was mainly due to the fact that teachers were not contracted at an early date. This often resulted in a delay in commencing the school year and hence a strain and an inability in completing the school syllabus

by the end of the year. Also, several mentioned that the perpetual changing of teachers disrupted the unity of teaching and confused students with the various methods of teaching and the different accents of teachers of various nationalities.

- c) Cooperation: The lack of cooperation between the families of students, the teachers and the school administrators was a problem which caused many difficulties and resentments.
- d) Differences: There seemed to be between schools in the curricula and the teaching methods which caused difficulties in transferring from school to school. Several advocated an identical curricula for the boys and girls schools so that brothers could assist their sisters in their homework.

10. Solutions to Problems

The following solutions to the problems already mentioned were suggested by several teachers:

a) In the School

- (1) Ordering a sufficient number of books to be printed in advance in order that they may be ready at the beginning of the school year.
- (2) Employing teachers at the right time. Avoiding too many changes in the staff by contracting teachers for at least one entire academic year; and by employing as many local teachers as possible since they were more likely to stay on in the school.

- (3) Improving parent-teacher relationship by having joint meetings and get-togethers whereby they could discuss student's problems and other issues.
- (4) Introducing equality of educational opportunities in all parts of the country. Also, uniformity in teaching methods and curricula to facilitate transfers.
- (5) Opening more secondary schools, Teacher Training Institutions and Colleges for girls so that students will be encouraged to further their education above the elementary level.

b) In the Curricula

- (1) Many advocated improvements in the school subjects by such suggestions as (a) lessening the hours devoted to religion and the Arabic language, (b) broadening the science and other arts courses, (c) introducing physical education and music in the curricula, (d) balancing the distribution of subjects, (e) co-ordinating the courses with the mental age of the student and (f) introducing English Language in the Elementary and Teacher Training Levels.
- (2) Introducing modern techniques in teaching methods.
- (3) Having more practical applications of the courses through field trips, workshops etc.

- (4) Having a library in each school for the students and community use.

The questionnaires have indicated the more prominent problems and issues of concern in the school. They also bring out the fact that education is affecting a social change in the environment, and that the schools are major social agencies in the Saudi community and society. Problems that confront the Saudi girls students require a proper analysis of the entire educational system, in reference to the particular background, culture and experience of the area, in order that definite solutions can be found.

CHAPTER VII

TRENDS AND PROSPECTS

It has been wisely said that "the tragedy of the present Arab awakening lies in the fact that political and economic problems are pressing so urgently on the Arab mind that the deep psychological and moral implication of the process of modernization have not been given the consideration which they deserve. The Arabs need social scientists, they need a Socrates, a Plato or an Aristotle, they need a Luther, to help them synthesize the best in their past with the demands of the present and tide them over the present critical transitional period in their history."¹ Saudi Arabia also needs dedicated leaders both men and women who can direct the course of its development and can efficiently solve the problems of the new industrial age.

Halim Barakat described the impact of western civilization upon the social values of Saudi Arabia as "zealotism" and defines it in Toynbee's words as "a state of mind and pattern of behaviour which adheres to the traditional way of life with great scrupulousness and rigidity in the face of pressures of western culture."² But this century has not been experiencing this great rigidity in existing social values. The dynamic changes taking place in Saudi Arabia may be

¹ Lecture by Dr. Habib Kurani, 1960.

² Halim Barakat, Relationship between Degree of Education and Dissatisfaction with Traditional Family Values among Saudi Employees of Aramco., M.A. Thesis, A.U.B., August 1960, p.

described as a revolt of the individual against the medieval system of thought and organization which had been supported by a great deal of conservatism and authoritarianism.

Social unrest and conflicts in the Kingdom, at the present moment, can be attributed to the lack of understanding of the religious, philosophical, psychological, moral and social implications of modernization. As education opens the frontiers of the intellect and offers prospects, without differentiation between sex or social class, greater dissatisfaction with the society and its traditions are likely to occur. Hence change becomes inevitable. G.E. Von Grunebaum, author of "Modern Islam, the Search for Cultural Identity", says:

"As the experience of the community changes, the power to formulate and answer new questions in terms of the traditional values and the decisions previously arrived at will indicate a culture's ability to continue. Once internal or external experience creates intellectual, emotional or organizational needs that cannot be met by the insights or the hypotheses evolved within the particular closed system, this system, its basic values as well as its doctrinal, ethical, artistic, and intellectual solutions, will command less and less unquestioning adherence. The door will be opened for its transformation, or even displacement."³

Several trends are already distinguishable on the Saudi Arabian horizon:

Firstly, the Kingdom is experiencing that universal phenomena, "The revolution of rising expectations" and education has been the prime

³ G.E. Von Grunebaum, Modern Islam, The Search for Cultural Identity, (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1962), p. 13.

motivating force behind it. **Everyone**, everywhere, has a keen desire to realize his intellectual potentiality and to improve his condition. **Women**, too, are no longer content to accept an inferior social status and role by remaining ignorant and incompetent. They now expect, and indeed demand, a change for a better education and desire to actively participate in their society. **Morroe Berger** states, "The Arab's growing familiarity with countries enjoying a high standard of living, and the promises of improvement their leaders have freely made, have aroused expectations... The Arabs want change but they disagree to some extent on the kind of change and to a greater extent on the method by which change is to be introduced."⁴

Secondly, there is a trend towards greater industrialization and modernization in all spheres of development. Modernization, which **Morroe Berger** defines as "a process that combines Western influences with native impulses toward change."⁵ has produced serious social strains on the environment. The Government is under a continuous strain of building new schools and is unable to keep up with the ever increasing demand. However, the situation in the girl schools is such that the majority who have been attending schools find, upon graduation less freedom and less opportunities for obtaining jobs in their communities. This is, undoubtedly, causing a great deal of tension and conflict with the traditional way of life.

⁴Morroe Berger, op. cit., p. 11

⁵Ibid.

It has been said that if **one** part of modern industrial methods works its way into a culture, all other aspects of life must duly change.⁶ Imitations and **borrowings** from the West cannot go unheeded often cause tensions **because** of certain inadequacies within the society. What is necessary is "a reformation of the content and institutions of the traditional **national** culture to accommodate the expansion of scientific knowledge and technology and their consequences."⁷ It is therefore, necessary that **the** entire framework of the culture be altered to adapt to the new **concepts** and environment. For example, the modern 'model' school buildings and equipment of the Aramco-built girls' schools cannot operate **efficiently** and effectively with the traditional school curricula and **outdated** teaching methods. Modern school designs incorporate **modern** educational concepts. Educational concepts of 'self expression', '**scientific enquiry**', 'individualized program of study', 'learning **while** playing', etc. can be adopted and are necessary in these school **surroundings**. Adoption evitably calls for adaptation.

Hence, the third **important** trend has been an increase of foreign goods and influence. **As a** result of modern means of communication, Saudi Arabia no longer remains **on** the periphery of the Near East, secluded and unknown. **As a** newly developing nation, its future has

⁶Lecture, Prof. Joseph Lawreys, A.U.B., 1967

⁷H.A.R. Gibb, "Present **and** Future", Near Eastern Culture and Society, ed. T. Cuyler Young, (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1966), p. 234

become intrinsically connected with that of the Arab World in general. Relations between the Arab and the Western world have also assumed new significance in this century. Morroe Berger observes that with the rise of the United States and the Soviet Union as new world powers, Western economic and military influences have considerably weakened and taken on the form of technological assistance to the Near East, and that, "new standards of international relations, the spread of industrialization and communications, and the training of native elite groups by the West itself, have made it more and more difficult to justify one nation's control over another's destiny."⁸ He continues to write about the paradoxical relationship between the West and the Arabs, that of resenting the West politically but nevertheless reflecting Western social and ideological influence.⁹

It is true that the younger generation is now beginning to put greater faith in science and education than did their forefathers. They readily make use of foreign equipment and are eager to travel and exchange ideas. They are already showing signs of attempting to free themselves from the shackles of dogma, superstition and authoritarianism. Their growing interest in politics is awakening in them a spirit of national consciousness. Nationalism is urging the constructive development of the country's natural resources and manifests itself in a spirit of patriotism and a desire for widespread reform.

⁸ Morroe Berger, The Arab World Today, (New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1964), p. 4

⁹ Ibid., p. 11

Fourthly, there is a trend towards the emancipation of women. This is evident not only in the Government's encouragement of female education throughout the Kingdom, but also in the active women social welfare organizations that are working in all large communities. Three large women's organizations are presently located in Riyadh, and Dammam. Although they are separate from one another, they maintain contacts and jointly publish articles in various local newspapers and magazines about the role of women. They have a large membership and are operated by school principals, wives of prominent businessmen and various other enlightened women leaders. Morroe Berger observes that

"The rising status of women and their emergence into the world of affairs is one of the most powerful forces for change not only in the Arab family but in Arab society in general. If forces already set in train are permitted to work out their potentialities or, as is likely, even to become more pronounced, there is no doubt that women's aspirations, demands and successes will transform Arab society profoundly and permanently."¹⁰

Another aspect of emancipation can be seen in the changing attitudes toward veiling. A gradual step by step process of unveiling is taking place. For example, Saudi women are unveiled when they come to the Aramco Dhahran Quarters accompanied by their husbands. Saudi men and women university students work side by side during the summer training programs in Dhahran. Saudi women travel abroad nowadays unveiled and are becoming more and more conscious of Western fashions. Morroe Berger also observes that

¹⁰ Morroe Berger, op. cit., p. 134

"the most profound changes in the Arab family are the result of emancipation of women through education and their growing freedom to move outside the home. Though it would be premature to speak of equalization of status between the sexes, there is no doubt that Arab women are moving toward equality. There is still resistance, especially among the men, to the more obvious concomitants of equal status for women, such as freedom to move about in public, adoption of European dress and manners, and employment outside the home. The basic processes leading to the emancipation of women however are not opposed but are enthusiastically embraced in the strong desire for national strength. These are education and industrialization, through which the role of women is changing rapidly in and outside the home."¹¹

The prospects for women's education are indeed optimistic. The Government and the public now realize the necessity and importance of education for girls and are taking great steps to keep pace with the increasing demand for more schools. Classrooms are crowded and teachers are over-worked. Parents clamor for admission of their children, even enrolling their daughters at the age of five. Secondary Schools and Teacher Training Institutes are being opened for the graduates of the Elementary and Intermediate Schools. Students are demanding scholarships for higher studies abroad. All these facts indicate the general direction of girls' education in the Kingdom. It is true that "just one generation is going to cause a tremendous change in attitude in Saudi Arabia."¹²

Definite changes are taking place in Saudi Arabia. The question that arises is "How fast can women's education and emancipation

¹¹ Morroe Berger, op. cit., p. 125

¹² Interview, Harry R. Snyder, 1967

go?" Since the religious leaders are in control of women's education, a certain degree of restraint is practiced. There is a trend towards placing Girls' Education under the Ministry of Education instead of the Office of the Grand Mufti. This will improve the present situation of girls' education and greater progress will undoubtedly take place. However, the small body of 'Ulemas' and "Muttawas" are still strong enough to stop developments if they feel that their power is weakening. Every now and then there are resurgents of restrictions from their side (such as the recent ban on music being played in the schools) which are retrogressive steps to control female education. Popular resentment to such decisions shows encouraging signs of progress in education in the near future.

The challenges that face the schools are indeed great. On them lies the prime responsibility and burden of reducing the social, moral and psychological tensions in the new emerging Saudi Society. As an agency of social change, the schools play a vital role in developing a system of new adaptable values and attitudes. However, before schools can effectively participate in changing social attitudes, several important issues and questions must be settled. Such questions as: What elements of Western civilization need borrow and what elements of strength within our own culture and civilization need we preserve? How can education contribute effectively towards developing the country's natural resources and help towards raising the standard of living? Should we aim for quality or quantity in public education? What type

of elementary school curriculum will best prepare students for the future? How can education create good responsible citizens, maintain social order and at the same time permit individual freedom and creativity within the society? Questions such as these need to be answered and require the assistance of various social scientists, educators and other experts in the field.

At present the authoritarian culture and educational system in Saudi Arabia is one wherein the individual leans towards conformity rather than creativity. In order to prevent inert mediocrity from settling in, the schools have to train their students to take the initiative in making their own decisions in the face of public opinion. Some attitudes which can be developed in the classroom by a good teacher are necessary for the students in order to adapt to the new demands of the society. Inculcating such attitudes as:

- (a) A spirit of scientific inquiry and methodology
- (b) A spirit of intellectual freedom of thought and expression.
- (c) An appreciation for individual differences in the society.
- (d) A respect for manual labour and the dignity of work.
- (e) A sense of civic responsibility in the community.
- (f) An appreciation and pride in the country's cultural heritage.

These are some of the more important aims that need to be achieved, since much of the success of the school depends upon how many worthy individuals who bear some sense of objectivity, creativity and social obligations, they produce. These educated individuals will prove to be the leaders of tomorrow who will best be able to solve problems with fearlessness and determination.

Hence the present educational system needs to be re-studied and re-cast into a new mold - one which does not reject out Islamic culture and philosophy of education, but which, under the guiding spirit of the Qur'an, remains creative, flexible and capable of accepting the challenges of the present and the future.

A P P E N D I X

A. Questionnaire For An Opinion Survey to Saudi Students

I Introduction

- a. What part of Saudi Arabia do you come from?
- b. What year and major at A.U.B.?
- c. Where did you have your secondary education?
- d. Do you have any sisters? How many?

II Education

1. Do you feel that the majority of the girls are genuinely interested in going to school?
What, in your opinion, are the major reasons?
 - a. To earn a livelihood
 - b. To gain prestige
 - c. To gain knowledge
 - d. To learn simply to read and write
 - e. To be an understanding wife and mother
 - f. To occupy their time
 - g. Other reasons
2. Are the parents interested in sending girls to school?
3. What careers or fields of learning are preferred for Saudi girls?
 - a. Teaching
 - b. Nursing
 - c. Social Work
 - d. Journalism and writing
 - e. Government work
 - f. Secretarial or office job
 - g. Others
4. Do the majority of the people in the Eastern Province approve of women working outside the home?
 - In the Western Region
 - In the Central Region

5. Are there any class distinction in the type of students that attend the schools?
 - In the Eastern Province
 - In the Western Region
 - In the Central Region
6. Are there any parent-teacher contacts outside the school?
7. Do the teachers have any social prestige in the community?
8. What, in your opinion, are the major forces that have helped and promoted the education of girls in your community?
 - a. Governmental forces
 - b. Economic factors
 - c. Social factors
 - d. Others
9. What, in your opinion, are the major forces that have hindered the development of women's education in your community?
 - a. Governmental forces
 - b. Social factors
 - c. Religious factors
 - d. Others
10. What, in your opinion, are the major problems that confront
 - a. The Saudi girl students
 - b. The women teachers
11. What are the major improvements that you could suggest that might render the school a more effective and constructive influence on society?
12. What changes or improvements would you like to see in the curriculum, teaching method and organization of the girls schools?
13. What are the general attitudes of the
 - a. Student toward the teachers
 - b. Teachers towards the students
14. How much freedom do the women teachers have?

B. Questionnaire For An Opinion Survey To Women Teachers in the Eastern Province

Kindly answer the following questions with reference to the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia.

1. What, in your opinion, are the major reasons for the girls' coming to school?

(Are they compelled to attend school or are they interested in knowledge for knowledge's sake, or for a livelihood or for prestige, in order to achieve independence, to be an understanding wife, or just to occupy their time etc.?)

.....

2. What careers or fields of learning are preferred by the Saudi Arab girl student?

(Teaching, social work, nursing, science, law, secretarial or Governmental career etc.)

.....

3. What are the influences which have tended to hinder and promote the development of women's education in your community?

.....

4. What are the major improvements you could suggest that might render the school a more effective and constructive influence on society?

.....

5. What are the problems that are most prominent in the Saudi girls' schools?

.....

6. What are the possible solutions to these problems?

.....

7. What, in your opinion, are the major problems that the students face?

(in the family, in society, economic or individual problems)?

.....

8. What are the major problems that the teachers face?
(in the family, in society, in the environment economic or individual problems)
.....
9. What are the attitudes of the teachers towards the students, and the attitudes of the students towards their teachers?
.....
10. What changes or improvements could you suggest in the curriculum, and teaching method in the girls' school?
.....
11. What student groups or clubs exist in the girls' school? How do they function?
.....
12. Do the majority of the people in the Eastern Province approve of women working outside the home?
.....
13. Kindly mention any further opinion or criticism you might have on this subject?
.....

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