

Masudul Alam Choudhury

# Knowledge and the University

Islam and Development in  
the Southeast Asia Cooperation Region

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Cooperation Region

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# Foreword

Professor Masudul Alam Choudhury is best known for his outstanding contributions to the field of Islamic economics and finance and, in particular, for giving thorough attention to its ethical foundations by means of systems analysis. His book, *Money in Islam* (1977), has made a pioneering contribution to this subject and has been reprinted many times. Choudhury has contributed to academic scholarship and research for almost four decades, both while employed in Canadian universities and elsewhere.

He is a prolific author. He has published more than 30 books dealing with a wide range of subjects which usually involve underlying Islamic themes and the consideration of Muslim values. His new book, entitled *Knowledge and the University (Islam and Development in the Southeast Asia Cooperation Region)*, continues this tradition but does not focus on the economics of finance. Rather issues involving human capital are at the core of its coverage. The book displays a critical (yet constructive) approach to the economics of human capital and its philosophical foundations.

The economics of human capital (as presented in mainstream economics) is found by Choudhury to be wanting from the point of view of the Islamic perception of the unity of knowledge based on the monotheistic concept of oneness (Tawhid). He also finds that (from a Muslim perspective) it takes inadequate account of the desirability of moral inclusion. While education and knowledge are the most prominent forms of human capital covered in this book, some attention is also paid to health as a contributor to social capital. This includes a critical assessment of policies to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic. He has also recently written a book on this subject.

In his view, mainstream assessments of education as a form of human capital fail to take account of its impact on social inclusion/exclusion. Cost-benefit analysis of the value and economic consequences of education ignores this aspect. Choudhury points out that it overlooks social elitism associated with education. Both snob and bandwagon effects (factors stressed by Veblen, 1934) are present in the supply of education, and social and economic disparities arise as a result of access to education. In developing countries in particular, only well-off families can afford to invest significantly in the education of their children. This can result in social exclusion of the children of poorer families from an early age. Furthermore, snob effects arise

from education in class conscious societies. Often, these social effects are not based on the quality of the education received but on the social standing of the educational institutions involved. This in turn is influenced by the social standing of the families of children attending such institutions. Furthermore, the type of social networks established by students as a result of their education reinforces social and economic inequality given the structure of education systems. These factors are ignored in the mainstream of economics of education. They provide examples of its lack of holism. Many specific examples are provided by Choudhury himself, apart from my above illustration.

Choudhury is critical of the Muslim world for its pursuit of methodological individualism in mind and in matter. He argues that Muslims have mostly adopted the individualistic self-seeking attributes of Western societies. This selfish type of approach is at odds with the ethical and social obligations of Muslims as set out in the Qur'an. Sharing with the poor and the deprived is a fundamental Islamic ethical requirement for achieving moral inclusiveness. The self-seeking behavior referred to by Choudhury could be a result of social embedding within the capitalist market economy which has become pervasive globally (Tisdell, 2017).

Choudhury's book is filled with many different novel ideas, and it is bound to generate much further original thought. It will be of interest to both Islamic and non-Islamic scholars. Its coverage consists of three basic components: (1) systems analysis, (2) philosophical discourse, and (3) illustrations or empirical examples of relevant concepts. Readers can take account of one or more of these expositions depending on their particular interests.

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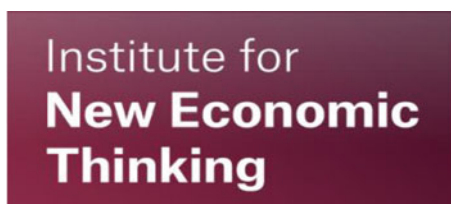
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- Tisdell, C. A. (2017) *Economics and Environmental Change: The Challenges We Face*, Edward Elgar Publishing, Cheltenham, UK and Northampton, MA, USA.  
 Veblen, T. (1934) *The Theory of the Leisure Class: A Study in the Evaluation of Institutions*, The Macmillan Company, New York.

# Preface

*“School choice” aimed to block the choice of equal,  
integrated education for Black families*

From Nancy MacLean (September 27, 2021), Economics  
Profession



“How Milton Friedman Aided and Abetted Segregationists in His Quest to Privatize Public Education”; printed from Institute of New Economic Thought Newsletter.

This is a work on the methodological foundation of knowledge as the praxis of the shared worldview of distributive and social justice to all through education and human resource in their meaningful goods for well-being of all. In this sense, education and human resource as traditionally studied under the framework of human capital theory are argued to be merit goods that is acquired and enjoyed for deepening the elitist class in the technological age. Thereby, a critical examination is made of such sheer human capital elements as their technological and elitist acquisition by the individuals and national planning for economic development is pursued and withheld as national privilege in power, politics, economics, and an opaque teaching of an exclusive model of science and society. Contrary to such visages of elitist conception and pursuit of education and human resource for economic development, which have always benefited the privileged elitist class against the teeming underprivileged, the poor and disempowered, this work derives and develops a model of moral inclusiveness

of economy, science, and society. To attain the resulting moral/ethical embedding of socioeconomic development by participation and dissemination with adaptive appropriateness to learning for participated well-being in society at large, this work invokes the reconstruction of education and human resource conception and planning on the premise of the theory of unity of knowledge.

The theory of unity of knowledge derives its conceptual foundation of moral inclusiveness with complementarities between the objectives of morality/ethicality and economic attributes in respect of the multivariate interrelated entities that characterize these goals and sustains them through the evolutionary learning process. The domain of such purposeful attainment is knowledge, space, and time to maintain the complementary design between the good things of life bestowing well-being to all through the participatory learning processes and both within systems and across systems over time. Knowledge here means the premising of education, human resource, technology, and socioeconomic development on the pervasive complementarities between the good things that ensue in attaining the consequential objective of well-being. This work continues on to develop the formal objective function of well-being and then empirically and quantitatively analyze the well-being function in the framework of socioeconomic development via the medium of education, human resource, and technology that are embedded by multivariates in the generalized formalism of the well-being objective criterion. This work is an academic analytical study that formalizes many inner properties of the epistemic model of moral inclusion in science and society that ensue for the characterization of the well-being objective criterion in the scope of socioeconomic development by way of education, human resource, and technology planning.

The idea of episteme is similar to that of phenomenology. It comprehends the totality of the conceptual, formal, and applied analytical study of the ontology and epistemology upon which the theory of knowledge stands in respect of the moral/ethical inclusiveness of unity of knowledge between materiality and belief that ought to prevail in education, science, society and socio-economic development as foundational epistemic attributes for Islamic countries in general and the SEACO-OIC region as an example, the qur'anic origin of theory of knowledge and thus the epistemic worldview, is invoked and used within the conceptual, quantitative and sustainability context. The critical study of this epistemic premise of knowledge and its context in education, human resource, technology and socio-economic development is to establish the moral inclusiveness of economics, society and science, the objective criterion function of wellbeing is used contrary to the sheer and exclusive predominance of economic growth and technological advancement. The Muslim world in totality and the SEACO-OIC region as an example have grossly failed in these areas of developing and implementing their own self-reliant perspective of moral inclusiveness with economy, society, and science in holistic socioeconomic development.

The socioeconomic development outlook that is presently charting the future of the Muslim world in general and the SEACO-OIC region as exemplar is grossly borrowed and therefore skewed toward the urbanization structure, power, and supremacy. The participative development by integrating the rural and urban sectors, the public and



private sectors, and the privileged and underprivileged ones has not been the rudder of their industrialization. The trickle-down failed idea prevails. Subservience to western socio-scientific ideas deepens. The Islamic worldview that should be evidence of the Muslim socio-scientific worldview remains lost to a disinherited remnant of Qur'anic understanding of unity of knowledge, self-reliant socioeconomic development, industrialization, technology, economy, science, and society in the episode of global human future.

The emergent, deeply conceptual, analytical, and sustainable methodology of Qur'anic episteme of unity of knowledge in the context of moral inclusiveness model of well-being as the participative holism between entities of economy, science, and society has remained abandoned by Muslim countries and the SEACO-OIC region in particular. The particular example taken in this regard is of Bangladesh in a lost well-being model of a new industrial age. Furthermore, Indonesia and Malaysia are also critically examined on the same picture.

Briefly, the post-COVID-19 times, the Fourth Industrial Revolution, and the questionable scenario of sustainability in the Sustainable Development Goals have darkened the morally inclusive spectrum of the human future. The principal reasons for this dark and untenable human future are the destructive belief on the methodological individualism by self, institutions, society, and other in and by the model of moral exclusiveness. This work has exemplified this despair and despondency by the inescapable linkage of liberalism and neoliberalism to social Darwinism, neoclassicism, and the belief solely on materiality of rationalism. These are bequeath of Western civilization to the unsustainable human future. Rejecting and replacing them and all such emanating consequences in the domain of “everything” by and for sustained human well-being are the Qur'anic worldview for all and “everything” in knowledge, space, and time dimensions. It is a profoundest message for all the worlds. In it survives the inextricable message of inter-causal relations between God, man, world, and the future (hereafter). This comprises the socio-scientific domain of consciousness premised on the Qur'anic law of oneness—unity of knowledge—between belief and materiality in the context of the well-being objective criterion.

*The Qur'an (22:10) declares:* [and he shall be told:] “This is an outcome of what thine own hands have wrought—for, never does God do the least wrong to His creatures!”

*The Qur'an (14:1) declares:* “A. L. R. A Book which We have revealed unto thee, in order that thou mightest lead mankind out of the depths of darkness into light—by the leave of their Lord—to the Way of (Him) the Exalted in power, worthy of all praise!”

*The Qur'an (2:31–32) declares:* And He taught Adam the names—all of them. Then He showed them to the angels and said, “Inform Me of the names of these, if you are truthful.”

They said, “Exalted are You; we have no knowledge except what You have taught us. Indeed, it is You who is the Knowing, the Wise.”

*Qur'an (36:36) declares on universal complementarities in the order of ‘everything’ sustained by the episteme of Unity of Knowledge:* “Exalted is He who created

all pairs—from what the earth grows and from themselves and from that which they do not know.”

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	with its embedded interrelationship with all other sectors having the community meaning; <b>PRIM:</b> Primary sector including life-sustenance, environment, and progressivity of wellbeing; <b>SEC:</b> Secondary sector including life-sustenance, environment, and progressivity of wellbeing; <b>RENEW:</b> Renewable resource as shown to progressively enhance the stock of all resources by the richness of sharing in complementarities; <b>NON RENEW:</b> Non-Renewable resource as shown to convert into renewable resources, thus converting all resources into renewable resources in the primary productive and wellbeing generating sector; <b>AGRIC:</b> Agricultural sector existing in continuous complementarities with all other sectors and activities; <b>MFG:</b> Manufacturing sector existing in continuous complementarities with all other sectors and activities; <b>SERV &amp; TERT:</b> Service sector and Tertiary sector existing in continuous complementarities with all other sectors and activities; <b>END OF SCARCITY</b> is gained progressively along the evolutionary learning processes of sustainability in terms of moral/ethical complementarities as embedded in science-society and inter-sectoral ensemble; <b>EVALUATION:</b> by means of the processes of the wellbeing functions that are compounded together across processes of evolutionary learning in diversity of events comprising history, as earlier explained	156
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# Chapter 1

## The University



**Abstract** The principle of education and human resource based in the episteme of unity of knowledge is explained in its Islamic monotheistic context. The global approach to knowledge, education and human resource training in the Muslim World and in SouthEast Asia Cooperation of the Organization of Islamic Conferences (SEACO-OIC) (e.g. Bangladesh) are critically examined as not to comply with the ontological premise of knowledge, education and human resource training. This absence of the true Islamic worldview has caused demise of any productive development of education for peoples' wellbeing as the most important objective criterion of socio-scientific and socio-economic future of moral inclusiveness along with economy, science and society.

**Keywords** Episteme of unity of knowledge · Wellbeing contra economic growth as principal objective · Outlook of the moral inclusiveness in education and human resource development · Formal modeling of knowledge and the complementary world-system

### The Future of Knowledge, Education and Human Resource in the Islamic Institution and Practicum

An insightful examination of every and all of so-called Islamic educational institutions and universities pronounces the question: What is and truly Islamic in these university curriculums in order to qualify a specialized field of Islamic education and its contributions to the modern world of learning? Consequently too, in this inquiry arises the question: How does the existing questionable nature of so-called Islamic education contribute to the emergence of a way of thought, behavior, institutions, markets, economy, and society at large? How do these and many more participatory components of human knowledge, lives, existence and relations between self and other define the nature, model and purpose of Islamic education in relationship with modernism that ought to be divulged to today's world of learning?