



A critical study of the presentation of Islamic dynamics in the Indian subcontinent in the ISH curriculum

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Abstract

Islamic Cultural History (ISH) learning plays a crucial role in shaping students' historical awareness, critical thinking skills, and contextual understanding of Islam. However, in practice, ISH learning tends to be descriptive and memorization-oriented, thus failing to optimally develop students' analytical skills. This study aims to critically examine the presentation of material on the dynamics of Islam in the Indian subcontinent in the ISH curriculum, particularly regarding conflict, identity politics, and the influence of colonialism. This study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive-analytical library research method. Data were obtained from curriculum documents, textbooks, and relevant scientific literature, then analyzed using critical historiography, the double movement concept, and the 'ashabiyyah concept. The results show that ISH material is still dominated by chronological narratives that emphasize political success and prominent figures, while aspects of conflict and socio-political dynamics are less discussed. Therefore, a more critical, contextual, and reflective reconstruction of learning is needed to foster students' tolerance and critical thinking skills.

Keywords: history of islamic culture; critical learning; indian subcontinent; identity politics; historiography.

Abstrak

Pembelajaran Sejarah Kebudayaan Islam (SKI) memainkan peran penting dalam membentuk kesadaran sejarah, kemampuan berpikir kritis, dan pemahaman kontekstual siswa terhadap Islam. Namun, dalam praktiknya, pembelajaran SKI cenderung bersifat deskriptif dan berorientasi pada menghafal, sehingga gagal mengembangkan kemampuan analitis siswa secara optimal. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji secara kritis penyajian materi mengenai dinamika Islam di anak benua India dalam kurikulum SKI, khususnya terkait konflik, politik identitas, dan pengaruh kolonialisme. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode penelitian perpustakaan deskriptif-analitis. Data diperoleh dari dokumen kurikulum, buku teks, dan literatur ilmiah yang relevan, kemudian dianalisis menggunakan historiografi kritis, konsep gerakan ganda, dan konsep 'ashabiyyah. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa materi SKI masih didominasi oleh narasi kronologis yang menekankan keberhasilan politik dan tokoh-tokoh terkemuka, sementara aspek konflik dan dinamika sosial-politik kurang dibahas. Oleh karena itu, diperlukan rekonstruksi pembelajaran yang lebih kritis, kontekstual, dan reflektif untuk menumbuhkan toleransi serta keterampilan berpikir kritis siswa.

Kata kunci: sejarah budaya Islam; pembelajaran kritis; subbenua india; politik identitas; historiografi.

Introduction

The study of Islamic Cultural History (ISH) within the Islamic Religious Education system plays a strategic role in developing historical awareness, critical reasoning, and a contextual understanding of Islam in students. ISH should not be positioned merely as a subject that presents a chronology of past events, but rather as a space for intellectual reflection to critically understand the dynamics of Islamic civilization and its relevance to contemporary realities. However, in practice, ISH learning often remains trapped in a descriptive and rote approach, thus failing to fully develop students' analytical skills regarding the complexities of Islamic history (Islam and Dynamics, 2017).

According to Fazlur Rahman, understanding Islamic history should not be limited to textual and chronological aspects alone, but rather through a contextual approach that connects the past with contemporary realities (double movement). This approach emphasizes that history is a dynamic process laden with values, and therefore must be interpreted critically to maintain its relevance to current developments. In an educational context, this view emphasizes the importance of Islamic Islamic Studies (SKI) learning that not only conveys historical facts but also encourages students to analyze the meaning behind these events.

One of the most important regions in global Islamic history is the Indian subcontinent, encompassing present-day India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. This region has a long history of Islamic development marked by a complex interplay of religion, culture, and politics. Besides its heydays, such as the Delhi Sultanate and the Mughal Empire, this region has also been a space for significant identity conflicts and divisions, particularly in the period leading up to independence from British colonial rule (Agama, 2020).

Entering the 20th century, the dynamics of Islam in this region underwent a major change with the emergence of the idea of separating the Muslim and Hindu communities. This idea is known as the Two - *Nation Theory*, pioneered by Muhammad Ali Jinnah, who stated that Muslims and Hindus constitute two distinct national entities. This theory later became the basis for the formation of the state of Pakistan in 1947. This event not only impacted the political aspect, but also gave rise to social conflict, mass migration, and deep historical trauma (Al Amin and Sukari, 2025).

From the perspective of modern Islamic historiography, as argued by Ibn Khaldun, historical dynamics are heavily influenced by social and political facts, as well as group solidarity (*'ashabiyyah*). This theory is relevant for understanding the divisions of Muslims in the Indian subcontinent, where religious identity and political interests play a significant role in shaping the course of history. Therefore, these events should be an important part of Islamic studies because they reflect the complex realities of Islamic development in the modern world.

However, in practice, Islamic Studies (SKI) material taught in madrasas or schools often fails to deeply examine these aspects of conflict and fragmentation. The presentation of the material tends to emphasize the chronology of events and prominent

figures, without providing a critical analysis of the socio-political factors underlying the divisions among Muslims. As a result, students lack a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of Islamic history, particularly regarding issues of nationalism, religious identity, and colonial politics (Ali, 2025).

Many studies have been conducted on SKI learning, particularly on learning methodology. Research by Abdul Rahman Ali shows that SKI learning can be an effective means of fostering critical thinking in students through strategies such as inquiry-based learning, problem-based learning, and historical source analysis. However, this research focuses more on learning strategies and has not critically examined the content of the material taught (Jejak, 2024).

Numerous studies have been conducted on *Sejarah Kebudayaan Islam* (SKI) learning, particularly concerning learning methodologies and approaches. First, research by Abdul Rahman Ali (2024) demonstrates that SKI learning can effectively foster students' critical thinking skills through inquiry-based learning, problem-based learning, and historical source analysis. The study concludes that active learning strategies encourage students to engage more deeply with historical events and develop analytical thinking. However, the research primarily focuses on instructional strategies and learning outcomes, without critically examining the content and historical narratives presented in SKI materials.

Second, Muhammad Nabil Fahmi's study emphasizes the importance of applying historical-critical methods and the double-movement approach in SKI learning to make historical education more contextual and meaningful. The findings suggest that history education should not merely transmit historical facts but also facilitate students' understanding of values and their relevance to contemporary life. Nevertheless, the study concentrates on pedagogical approaches and does not specifically analyze how particular historical figures, events, or narratives are represented within the curriculum and learning materials.

Third, research by Ahmad Fauzi and colleagues on Islamic history education highlights the role of SKI in strengthening students' religious character and cultural identity. Their findings indicate that SKI contributes significantly to value internalization through the presentation of exemplary historical figures and events. However, the study tends to accept historical narratives as given and does not critically investigate potential biases, omissions, or ideological constructions embedded in the curriculum content.

Although these studies provide valuable insights into teaching strategies, contextual learning approaches, and character formation through SKI, they share a common limitation: they focus predominantly on pedagogical methods and educational outcomes rather than critically examining the historical content itself. In particular, they do not investigate how specific historical narratives are selected, represented, and interpreted within SKI textbooks and curricula.

Therefore, the present study seeks to fill this gap by critically analyzing the representation of historical material in SKI learning. Rather than focusing solely on teaching methods, this research examines the construction of historical narratives, the perspectives embedded within them, and their implications for students' understanding of Islamic history. The novelty of this study lies in its critical examination of curriculum

content and historical representation, an area that remains underexplored in previous SKI research.

Based on the above description, it can be concluded that there is still a research gap, namely the lack of critical analysis of the content and presentation of Islamic history material in the SKI curriculum, particularly regarding the dynamics of Islam in the Indian subcontinent, including issues of communal division, identity conflicts, and the relevance of the Two-Nation Theory. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to critically examine how the history of Islam in the Indian subcontinent is represented in SKI learning materials, to analyze the historical narratives and perspectives embedded within the curriculum, and to evaluate their relevance in fostering students' critical understanding of Islamic history and contemporary socio-religious issues. By addressing this gap, the study aims to contribute to the development of a more critical, contextual, and comprehensive approach to SKI learning.

Research methods

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive-analytical library research, aiming to critically examine the presentation of the material on the dynamics of Islam in the Indian subcontinent in the Islamic Cultural History (ISHC) curriculum. The approaches used include critical historiography to analyze the construction of historical narratives, a contextual approach through the concept of double movement from Fazlur Rahman, and a sociological approach to history through the concept of '*ashabiyyah*' from Ibn Khaldun. The data sources consisted of primary and secondary sources. The primary sources included the official Islamic Cultural History (ICH/SKI) curriculum documents issued by the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, particularly the Decree of the Minister of Religious Affairs (KMA) No. 183 of 2019 on the Curriculum of Islamic Education and Arabic Language in Madrasahs, published by the Ministry of Religious Affairs in 2019. In addition, the study analyzed the *Sejarah Kebudayaan Islam* textbook for Madrasah Aliyah, published by the Directorate of KSKK Madrasah, Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia (2020). These sources were selected because they constitute the official references used in teaching SKI in Indonesian madrasahs. Secondary data consisted of books, peer-reviewed journal articles, and other relevant scholarly literature discussing Islamic historiography, curriculum studies, and SKI learning. Data collection techniques are carried out through documentation studies and other relevant literature studies, while data analysis uses content analysis techniques that include the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and drawing interpretive conclusions. In the analysis process, this study employs Ralph W. Tyler's curriculum theory as presented in *Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction* (1949) to assess the alignment between learning objectives and instructional materials. Furthermore, the study draws upon constructivist learning theories developed by Jean Piaget, particularly as outlined in *The Origins of Intelligence in Children* (1952), and Lev Vygotsky's sociocultural theory as presented in *Mind in Society: The Development of Higher Psychological Processes* (1978). These theoretical frameworks are used to evaluate the learning process, students' cognitive development, and the extent to which SKI learning materials facilitate meaningful knowledge construction and social interaction in the classroom. The validity of the data is maintained through source triangulation

techniques and the use of credible references, so that this research is expected to be able to produce a comprehensive, critical, and relevant analysis of the development of SKI learning.

Results and Discussion

To facilitate data interpretation, the findings from the document analysis were processed, categorized, and summarized into thematic patterns rather than presented as raw data. The results are presented in Table 1, which highlights the main characteristics of the representation of Islamic history in the SKI curriculum and textbooks. The table shows that the curriculum is dominated by political narratives and chronological descriptions, while discussions of social conflict, identity formation, colonial influence, and multiple historical perspectives receive comparatively limited attention.

Table 1. Main Findings of the Analysis of SKI Materials on the Indian Subcontinent

Findings	Evidence from Curriculum and Textbooks
Dominance of chronological-political narratives	Focus on dynasties, rulers, and political achievements
Limited discussion of social conflict	Partition of India discussed descriptively
Marginalization of colonial factors	Colonialism treated mainly as background information
Limited representation of alternative actors	Greater emphasis on rulers than scholars, Sufis, and reformers
Single narrative perspective	Few opportunities for multi-perspective historical interpretation
Weak connection to contemporary issues	Limited discussion of nationalism, pluralism, and identity politics

The findings presented in Table 1 indicate that the representation of Islamic history in the Indian subcontinent remains largely descriptive and politically oriented. These results provide the basis for further discussion regarding the extent to which the curriculum supports the development of critical historical thinking and contextual understanding among students.

From the perspective of Tyler's curriculum theory, the dominance of factual and chronological narratives suggests a lack of alignment between curriculum objectives and learning experiences (Tyler, 1949). Likewise, from the constructivist perspectives of Piaget (1952) and Vygotsky (1978), the limited use of multiple perspectives and critical inquiry may restrict students' opportunities to actively construct historical understanding. These findings therefore explain why SKI learning often remains focused on memorization rather than critical reflection.

The findings of this study are consistent with Abdul Rahman Ali's research, which emphasizes the importance of inquiry-based learning in promoting critical thinking in SKI education (Ali, 2024). They also support Muhammad Nabil Fahmi's argument that historical learning should be contextual and interpretative rather than merely descriptive (Fahmi, 2024). However, unlike those studies, which focus primarily on pedagogical methods, the present study critically examines the curriculum content itself. This difference constitutes the main contribution and novelty of the research.

A. Characteristics of presentation of SKI material in the curriculum

The Islamic Cultural History (IS) material in the Islamic Religious Education curriculum is generally structured using a chronological-linear approach oriented

toward a grand narrative of civilization. This presentation pattern positions history as a series of events that move sequentially from the initial phase, through glory, to decline. In the context of the Indian subcontinent, the material structure typically begins with the arrival of Islam through trade and da'wah routes, then progresses to the political phase with the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate, and reaches its peak during the Mughal Dynasty (Program, 2022).

In this construction, great figures such as Babur, Akbar, and Aurangzeb are often used as primary representatives of the region. However, this figure-centric presentation (great man history) tends to present history in a heroic and glorifying framework, where political success and expansion of power are emphasized over the complexity of the social realities that underlie them.

As a result, important dimensions such as internal conflict, tensions between religious groups, changes in social structure, and the influence of economic factors and colonialism are often marginalized. For example, the virtues of religious tolerance during Akbar's reign are rarely compared critically with the conservative policies of Aurangzeb, even though these differences reflect significant dynamics of religious interpretation and political interests.

Furthermore, this chronological-descriptive approach tends to position students as passive recipients of information, rather than active subjects invited to interpret and critique historical events. This results in limited historical thinking skills, such as cause-and-effect analysis and the interpretation of historical values in contemporary life (Mohammad Natsir, 2018).

From Fazlur Rahman's perspective, this approach is inadequate because Islamic history should be understood through the framework of double movement, a dialectical process that connects past historical contexts with contemporary realities. History should not be understood statically but must be critically reinterpreted to remain relevant to current developments.

From a curriculum theory perspective, this weakness indicates a mismatch between learning objectives and practices. In the curriculum model proposed by Ralph W. Tyler, an ideal curriculum should encompass alignment between educational objectives, learning experiences, material organization, and evaluation. However, in practice, the goal of developing critical thinking skills has not been balanced with supporting learning experiences, as learning remains oriented toward memorizing historical facts.

Furthermore, from the constructivist perspective developed by Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky, learning should position students as active subjects who construct knowledge. In this context, SKI learning should involve a process of exploration, discussion, and interpretation of various historical sources. However, the reality on the ground shows that SKI material is still often presented as a "single truth" that must be accepted, rather than as a discourse that can be critically examined (Ali, 2025).

Furthermore, the one-way approach to SKI learning can also be criticized through the perspective of Critical Education pioneered by Paulo Freire. Freire criticized the "banking education" model, where students only act as passive recipients of information.

In many SKI learning practices, this approach remains dominant, as seen from the emphasis on memorization and reproduction of historical material.

In contrast, Freire's dialogical approach emphasizes the importance of active student involvement in understanding reality, including historical reality. In this context, SKI learning should encourage students to question historical dynamics, analyze the relationship between religion and power, and reflect on the relevance of past events to current socio-political conditions.

Thus, it can be concluded that the current presentation of SKI material still faces several weaknesses, both in terms of content and pedagogical approach. Therefore, a curriculum reorientation is needed that emphasizes not only chronological aspects but also integrates critical, contextual, and constructivist approaches. This transformation is crucial so that SKI learning not only produces factual knowledge but also forms a reflective historical awareness relevant to modern life.

B. Dynamics of Islam in the Indian subcontinent: From cultural Islamization to identity politics

The arrival of Islam in the Indian subcontinent was a complex historical process that cannot be reduced solely to the narrative of military conquest. Historically, Islamization in this region occurred through various channels, primarily trade, socio-cultural interactions, and the preaching of Islam by Arab traders and Sufi scholars. Since the 7th century CE, trade relations between the Islamic world and coastal India have been intensive, particularly in the Gujarat and Malabar regions, which served as entry points for the spread of Islam.

In this process, the cultural approach brought by Sufis played a significant role. Figures such as Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti became important figures in the peaceful spread of Islam. Through a spiritual approach that emphasized the values of tolerance, compassion, and acculturation of local cultures, Islam was widely accepted by society without causing significant conflict. The inclusive tradition of Sufism enabled dialogue between Islamic teachings and the pre-existing Hindu and Buddhist traditions (Kafi and Nugraha, 2024).

In addition to Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti, Sufi orders such as the Chishti, Suhrawardi, and Qadiri also served as agents of social transformation. Sufi scholars not only disseminated religious teachings but also built social solidarity, reduced intergroup tensions, and created spaces for cultural integration. Thus, Islamization in its early phase was more of a gradual and peaceful cultural process than a political expansion.

However, in the Islamic Studies curriculum, these early dynamics often receive insufficient attention. Learning materials tend to emphasize political and power aspects, marginalizing the role of ulama, society, and socio-cultural processes. As a result, students understand Islamic history narrowly as a result of political domination, rather than as a complex process of social interaction.

Entering the next period, particularly in the 19th and 20th centuries, the dynamics of Islam in the Indian subcontinent underwent significant transformation. While the initial phase of Islamization was primarily cultural, during this period, religious identity began to be politicized in the context of colonialism and the struggle for independence.

This change marked a shift from Islam as a socio-cultural force to Islam as a political identity (Madrasah, 2025).

In this context, two major political movements emerged: secular nationalism, represented by the Indian Congress, and Muslim-based nationalism, championed by the All-India Muslim League. The differing visions between these two groups reflected a fundamental debate over the concept of the nation and national identity.

A central figure in the political construction of Muslim identity was Muhammad Ali Jinnah, who put forward the Two-Nation Theory. This theory asserted that Muslims and Hindus constituted two distinct national entities, making it impossible to unite them into one state. In contrast, figures such as Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru championed the idea of inclusive nationalism that rejected religious-based divisions.

This ideological tension reached its peak in the 1947 Partition of India, which gave birth to the states of India and Pakistan. This event not only impacted political aspects, but also triggered mass migration, inter-communal conflict, and deep social trauma. From Ibn Khaldun's perspective, this phenomenon can be understood through the concept of '*ashabiyyah*', in which religious-based group solidarity is a major factor in the formation of political identity and a source of conflict (Education, 2024).

In addition to internal factors, the role of British colonialism, through its divide and rule policy, also contributed to the polarization between Hindu and Muslim communities. Thus, the India-Pakistan divide resulted from a complex interaction between social, political, colonial, and religious identity constructions.

However, in the Islamic Studies curriculum, these events are often presented in a descriptive and limited manner, without critical analysis of the roots of the conflict and its impact. This prevents students from fully understanding that Islamic history is not only about glory but also encompasses the dynamics of conflict, division, and identity negotiation.

Therefore, a more comprehensive reconstruction of the presentation of Islamic Studies material is needed, integrating social, cultural, and political approaches in a balanced manner. History learning must not only explain "what happened" but also "why it happened" and its significance for contemporary life. With this approach, students are expected to understand the dynamics of Islamic history more critically, reflectively, and contextually.

C. The golden age and political complexity

During the Mughal Dynasty, Islam reached one of its peaks in the Indian subcontinent, both politically, culturally, and intellectually. Mughal rule was marked not only by government stability and territorial expansion, but also by the development of advanced art, architecture, and administration. However, behind this narrative of glory lay complex political dynamics and ideological debates.

Under Akbar's leadership (1556–1605), a policy of religious tolerance emerged, known as the concept of *sulh-i kul* (universal peace). This policy aimed to create harmony within India's multicultural and multi-religious society. Akbar not only provided space for religious freedom but also involved figures from various religions in government and encouraged interfaith dialogue. He even initiated a religious synthesis through the

concept of Din-i Ilahi, which, although not widely developed, reflected an effort to integrate spiritual values across traditions (Asia and Jauh, 2013).

This policy demonstrates that political legitimacy is not solely built on religious identity, but also through strategies of inclusivity and social stability. In this context, religion is used as an instrument of reconciliation and social integration, not as a tool of exclusivity.

However, this paradigm underwent a significant shift during the reign of Aurangzeb (1658–1707). Unlike Akbar, Aurangzeb implemented more conservative policies and emphasized formal Islamic identity within the government system. He enforced stricter Islamic law, including the imposition of jizya on non-Muslims, and restricted certain religious practices deemed inconsistent with Islamic orthodoxy.

This policy shift cannot be understood solely as a difference in personal religiosity, but must also be viewed within the context of power politics. Aurangzeb faced internal challenges in the form of rebellion and territorial fragmentation, so the assertion of religious identity can be understood as a strategy to strengthen political legitimacy and consolidate power. Thus, Mughal religious policy was closely linked to the political dynamics and stability of the state.

The differences between Akbar's policies and Aurangzeb's demonstrate that Islamic history is not monolithic. Rather, it is replete with variations in religious interpretations and practices. Islam in a political context can appear in various forms, depending on social conditions, the need for power, and the leader's perspective (M. Abdul Karim, 2013).

However, in Islamic studies curricula, this complexity often goes inadequately. Learning materials tend to portray the Mughal era as a symbol of glory without critically examining the different leadership paradigms within it. As a result, students fail to understand that Islamic history is also filled with internal debates, identity negotiations, and the dynamics between religious identity and political realities.

From a critical historiographic perspective, this neglect of internal conflicts and differences demonstrates a tendency to simplify history. History is reduced to a single, stable and harmonious narrative, when in reality it is fraught with tension and change. This limits students' ability to understand history as a dynamic process open to interpretation (Tandhim, 2023).

Therefore, a more analytical approach to Islamic studies is needed, emphasizing comparative studies of policy analysts and the socio-political contexts that underlie them. This way, students can understand that Islamic history is not only about glory, but also about the complexities, differences, and dynamics that shape the course of civilization.

D. Colonialism and socio-political transformation

The British East India Company's entry into the Indian subcontinent marked a crucial turning point in the region's history. Initially, the British presence was primarily economic, but through these activities, they gradually assumed political and administrative power. This transformation from economic dominance to political control fundamentally altered the social, economic, and political structures of Indian society.

British colonialism not only introduced a new system of government but also created changes in social stratification and inter-community relations. One of the main strategies employed was the policy of divide and rule, a policy that systematically reinforced differences between social groups, particularly between Hindu and Muslim communities. This policy was not only administrative but also ideological, as it indirectly shaped an increasingly exclusive sense of identity (Mashuri, 2025).

In this context, colonialism acted as a catalyst for the emergence of modern identity politics in India. Polarization, previously cultural or fluid, shifted to a more rigid and political form. This was reflected in the emergence of modern political organizations such as the Indian National Congress, which represented secular nationalist aspirations, and the All-India Muslim League, which championed the political interests of Muslims.

In addition to structural factors, this transformation was also driven by the emergence of Muslim intellectuals who sought to respond to the challenges of colonialism through educational and modernization approaches. One such prominent figure was Sayyid Ahmad Khan, who emphasized the importance of modern education as a means of improving the socio-political well-being of Muslims. Through the establishment of educational institutions such as Aligarh Muslim College, he encouraged the integration of Western science and Islamic values.

Sayyid Ahmad Khan's thinking demonstrates that the Muslim response to colonialism was not singular but varied, ranging from resistance to adaptation. This demonstrates that the dynamics of Islam in colonial India were the result of a complex interaction between external pressures and internal efforts to survive and transform.

However, in the Indonesian Language and Culture (SKI) curriculum, colonialism is often positioned only as a descriptive historical backdrop, rather than as a determining factor shaping socio-political dynamics and identity conflicts. This presentation prevents students from understanding the significant role colonialism played in constructing social reactions, including reinforcing identity segregation, which ultimately led to conflict (Mildawati and Rama, 2024).

From a critical historiographic perspective, this neglect of the role of colonialism demonstrates a reduction in historical complexity. History is not understood as the result of the interaction of various structural forces, but rather as a series of independent events. Yet, without understanding the role of colonialism, it is difficult to explain the emergence of identity politics and subsequent divisions.

Therefore, a reconstruction of the presentation of Islamic Studies material is necessary, placing colonialism as a key variable in historical analysis. This approach is crucial for students to understand the interrelationships between power, identity, and conflict in Islamic history and to relate these to contemporary global realities still influenced by colonial legacies.

E. Identity politics and divisions among Muslims

Entering the 20th century, the dynamics of Islam in the Indian subcontinent underwent an increasingly complex transformation, with the strengthening of religious-based identity politics. While in the previous phase, Islam functioned primarily as a socio-cultural force, in the context of colonialism and modernization, religious identity

began to be politicized and became a primary instrument in power struggles and state formation.

A central figure in this phase was Muhammad Ali Jinnah, who articulated the Two-Nation Theory. This theory asserts that Muslims and Hindus in India are not simply religious communities, but rather two nations with fundamentally different identities, histories, and value systems. Therefore, Jinnah argued, the two could be united within a single nation-state without causing prolonged conflict (Alfan, 2024).

On the other hand, figures like Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru rejected this idea. They advocated the concept of inclusive nationalism, which viewed India as a unified, pluralistic nation, where various religious groups could coexist within a secular state. These differing views demonstrate that the conflict was not solely based on religion, but also involved ideological debates about the concepts of the state, identity, and nationhood.

These ideological tensions reached their peak in the 1947 Partition of India, which created two nations: India and Pakistan. This event was one of the greatest human tragedies in modern South Asian history. Its impact was far-reaching and multidimensional, including:

- a. Mass migration of millions of people moving across national borders.
- b. Inter-communal violence that claimed hundreds of thousands of lives.
- c. A deep historical trauma that continues into the next generation.

This incident not only reflects political conflict, but also shows how religious identity can turn into an exclusive and conflictual political identity when placed in certain contexts (Islam, 2023).

From Ibn Khaldun's perspective, this phenomenon can be analyzed through the concept of '*ashabiyyah*' (group solidarity). According to him, the power of group solidarity can be a unifying factor in establishing power, but it can also be a source of conflict when confronted with other groups. In the case of India and Pakistan, religious-based '*ashabiyyah*' strengthened the collective identity of Muslims and Hindus, but at the same time deepened the divide between them.

Furthermore, upon critical analysis, this division cannot be separated from the context of British colonialism, which had previously reinforced social segregation through identity politics. Thus, this event was the result of a complex interaction between ideological, political, social, and colonial factors.

However, in the Islamic Studies curriculum, discussions of these events are often presented briefly and descriptively, without in-depth analysis of the causal factors, the dynamics of the conflict, and its social and humanitarian impacts. As a result, students do not gain a comprehensive understanding of how Islamic history encompasses experiences of conflict and division, not just narratives of triumph.

From a critical education perspective, ignoring these aspects of historical conflict and trauma has the potential to produce ahistorical and normative understandings. Students are not encouraged to reflect on how identities are constructed and mobilized in political contexts, and how this impacts people's lives (Europe, 2023).

Therefore, a more analytical and reflective approach to SKI learning is needed, emphasizing cause-and-effect analysis, multi-perspective analysis, and value reflection. This way, students will not only understand historical facts but also be able to learn from the dynamics of these conflicts, fostering tolerance, modernization, and critical awareness.

F. Criticism of the presentation of SKI material

Based on an analysis of the dynamics of Islam in the Indian subcontinent, several fundamental weaknesses can be identified in the presentation of Islamic Cultural History (ISHC) material in the curriculum. This criticism concerns not only the content but also the way in which historical knowledge is constructed and taught to students (Mashuri, 2025).

First, the lack of representation of alternative figures. The Islamic Studies curriculum tends to emphasize prominent figures in the political and power spheres, such as Babur, Akbar, and Aurangzeb, while intellectuals and reformers like Sayyid Ahmad Khan receive less attention. Yet, these figures made significant contributions to shaping social consciousness, education, and modern Islamic thought in India. This imbalance demonstrates a bias in historiography that prioritizes political history over socio-intellectual history.

Second, there is a lack of analysis of conflict and division. Important events such as the 1947 Partition of India are often presented only descriptively without a thorough examination of the causes, dynamics of the conflict, and its humanitarian impact. As a result, students fail to understand the complexity of history as a process involving tension, negotiation, and conflict between groups.

Third, the lack of contemporary context. SKI material is generally not linked to current issues such as nationalism, pluralism, and identity politics. This results in history being perceived as something far removed from the realities of students' lives. However, as Fazlur Rahman emphasized, historical understanding must be contextual and relevant to contemporary conditions.

Fourth, the dominance of a single, linear narrative. History is often presented as a stable flow and seemingly devoid of internal conflict. This approach ignores the fact that history is a complex process and open to multiple interpretations. As a result, students are not trained to think critically and view history from multiple perspectives.

From a critical historiographic perspective, these weaknesses indicate that SKI learning remains trapped in a traditional approach that provides little room for analysis, reflection, and interpretation. This has implications for SKI participants' limited ability to understand history in depth and contextually (Latifah and Nugraha, 2024).

G. Implications and reconstruction of learning

To address these weaknesses, a more critical, reflective, and contextual reconstruction of SKI learning is necessary. This reconstruction involves not only changes to the material but also to the methodological approaches and learning paradigms used.

First, the application of a critical historiography approach. History learning needs to be directed at cause-and-effect analysis, source interpretation, and an understanding of

various historical perspectives. With this approach, students not only learn facts but also understand the process and meaning behind historical events.

Second, the integration of classical and modern thought, such as Fazlur Rahman's double movement concept and Ibn Khadun's *ashabiyyah* concept. This integration is crucial for providing a theoretical framework for understanding the dynamics of Islamic history more comprehensively, from both a normative and sociological perspective.

Third, the use of active learning methods such as inquiry-based learning and problem-based learning. Through these methods, students are encouraged to ask questions, analyze historical sources, and solve problems related to historical events. This approach aligns with constructivist theory, which positions students as active subjects in the learning process.

Fourth, comparative analysis of figures. SKI learning can be developed through comparisons between figures and policies, for example, between Muhammad Aji Jinnah and Mahatma Gandhi in the context of nationalism, or between Akbar and Aurangzeb in the context of religious policy. This comparative approach enables students to understand that history is dynamic and full of differing perspectives.

With this reconstruction, it is hoped that Islamic Studies (SKI) learning will no longer be oriented solely toward memorizing facts, but will instead foster a critical and reflective historical awareness. Students will understand that Islamic history is not just about glory, but also encompasses conflict, change, and complex social dynamics. This learning is crucial for developing a moderate, tolerant attitude and critical thinking skills in facing the realities of modern life (Al Amin and Sukari, 2025).

Conclusion

This study aimed to critically examine the representation of Islamic history in the Indian subcontinent within the Islamic Cultural History (SKI) curriculum and learning materials. The findings reveal that the curriculum predominantly presents Islamic history through a chronological and political narrative that emphasizes major rulers and civilizational achievements, while giving limited attention to social conflicts, identity formation, colonial influences, and the complexities surrounding the Partition of India and Pakistan. Consequently, students are provided with a simplified understanding of Islamic history and have limited opportunities to develop critical historical thinking. These findings indicate the need for a reconstruction of SKI learning that incorporates critical historiography, contextual interpretation, and active learning approaches to enable students to engage more critically with historical events and their contemporary relevance. Such an approach would strengthen historical awareness while fostering tolerance, moderation, and critical thinking skills necessary for navigating modern social realities.

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