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Interfaith Literacy Resources in the Index Islamicus: A Bibliometric Analysis

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Abstract

Purpose – Seeks to identify the potential value of an e-tool, viz., Index Islamicus as an interfaith literacy resource. Specifically, it is about the value of such a tool by users, such as, scholars as well as library and information professionals in promoting tolerance in every day life. A conceptual clarity is required as to how far such a tool helps or when there is a need to develop tools that supplement the content of Index Islamicus. Here, interfaith is confined to mean it is all about Islam and its relation with other faiths.

Design/methodology/approach – The study uses bibliometric indicators and bibliographic parameters in order to assess the contents, as well in identifying the frequently occurring themes and to know how user-friendly its resource description is. Index Islamicus covers almost 100 years of publications on the world of Islam, in over 300 journals (among many other formats), and has 330,878 records.

The author has bibliometrically analysed the 1308 subject headings appearing in 675 articles from 106 journals in Index Islamicus. A detailed description highlights the state of the art of the contents, i.e. Index's coverage by geography and subjects. The present study will focus on English language interfaith resources, published between 1976 and 2006. A quick look at the data reveals that there is a bias towards the Western world in the content. Interestingly, despite this factor, there are 153 articles from Organization of Islamic Countries. Overall, the analysis of the literature aimed to first, test the hypothesis about the interfaith coverage of the Index, and second to visualize how well the Index categorizes its subject content. Quantitative and qualitative approaches are used to test these performances.

Findings – The study finds that there are as many as 675 articles with a high frequency of terms relating to interfaith literacy in the Index Islamicus. Despite this high frequency of occurrence of the terms relating to interfaith perspectives in the Index, there is no such subject heading or descriptor, per se on the subject of interfaith. Hence, the hypothesis about presence of such a literature stands validated. But, the hypothesis about manifestation of such a vast literature in terms of resource description, as descriptors (or subject headings), fails.

Nevertheless, the subject coverage as available in Index Islamicus offers a real opportunity for Librarians and researchers, globally, to not just search but also browse. However, there is a need first, to improve this tool, second, bring uniformity in subject descriptors (headings), and third consistency in use of subject terms. In a way, this tool presents an opportunity for librarians in their day to day mediated searching, first to customize the content and second to develop similar indices using emerging web and technological interfaces. The information professionals are urged to use this or other similar tools and produce an improved product on interfaith literacy. Such a product will increase trust and reliance by the end-user, and thereby get a direct support for library programs and services. The author feels that librarians do have the skills, capabilities and technology to accomplish this, especially if they are supported by their organizations--with respect to interfaith education and resources that promote mutual

co-existence among the global citizens. An appendix of this article provides a sample template to design and develop such tools.

Originality/value – This article should be of use in the development of interfaith librarianship. The results of the study will help, at least, three distinct communities of practice, viz., end-users will know what is available in the Index, disseminators will know the strength and opportunities of this information-base, and producers of such resources or information industry will know the challenges and weaknesses.

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I. Introduction: Approach to and Coverage of the Index Islamicus on Interfaith Information

There is a dire need for educational resources on Interfaith accommodation, in order to promote tolerance of the other believers (or a human being in general) in our global village. The Quran prescribes and Hadith mandates that we Muslims as human beings treat others as we treat ourselves. The following quotes simply support a humane approach with our fellow beings in the East or the West:

“O people, We have created you as males and females, and have made you nations and tribes that you may know one another, “(Al-Hujurat: 13)

“If it had been your Lord’s will, they all would have believed – all who are on earth. Will you, then, compel the people, against their will, to believe?” (Yunus: 99).

God does not forbid you from turning to them (for friendship and protection) and from dealing kindly and justly with those who do not fight you for (your) faith, nor drive you out of your homes, for God loves those who are just. (Al-Mumtahanah: 8)

“Have they who have accepted faith not yet realized that had God so willed, He would indeed have guided all humankind aright?” (Al-Ra’ad: 31)

“Whoever hurts a non Muslim, I shall be his complainant and for whoever I am a complainant, I shall ask for his right on the day of Resurrection.” “Whoever persecutes a non Muslim or demands work from him beyond his capacity or takes something from him with evil intentions, I shall be a complainant against him on the day of rrection.” (Hadith)

In his book, “The Great Theft: Wrestling Islam from the Extremists,” Dr. Khaled Abou El-Fadl summarizes the Islamic view of “Li-Ta’arafu: know one another” which is the qur’anic phrase guiding the process of interfaith dialogue, “God’s appeal to human beings to engage in ta’aruf, or knowing the other, is not a call for a heartless process of collecting data about other human beings. It is however, divine guidance and an exhortation to believers to realize that essential to knowing and loving God is to know and love God’s viceroys on earth.” Without dialogue human beings cannot work together to uphold justice, compassion and love. (Munir El-Kassem)

“There are three situations that really expose a person’s character: dealing and behavior; attitude to one’s neighbors; and traveling on a journey. The companions of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) left good impressions wherever they went. People loved them for their character, and through their example people came to love Islam. May Allah give us tawfeeq to act on this.” Source: (3 WAYS OF KNOWING A PERSON. Jami'yyatul Ulama Canada)

The above quotes are self-explanatory and do not need sermonizing, at any length.

Role of Information Professionals: A role for information disseminators in the renaissance of Ummah (a community faced with globalized and multicultural world that is revitalizing religious resurgence and interfaith tensions in post 9/11 era), is to help maintain peace and harmony in the society. One way to do so is develop tools for interfaith literacy. The term Interfaith (aka Multifaith) refers to interreligious understanding, i.e., understanding of other religions. The value of the Index, in interfaith perspective, is obvious from the following quote by a scholar and specialist in Interfaith relations:

“Flipping through the pages of Index Islamicus, the casual reader is impressed not only by the sheer number of articles in the Islamic studies field, but by the fact that alongside Muslim contributions are articles by Jews, Christians, and those professing no religious commitments at all.” (Andreas D'Souza).

Based on the above quote a detailed analysis is required to assess the issues relating to access to the subject content. And, an attempt is made to analyze interfaith literacy literature in the Index Islamicus.

Interfaith Literacy defined: Interfaith Literacy Initiative will provide opportunities for participants in any learning process for every day life’s sharing and caring:

To articulate one's belief/faith/values

Demonstrating the self awareness to say what they believe

To connect one's belief/faith/values with one's identity

Demonstrating the connection between what one believes/hopes/understands with one's actions

To reflect on one's belief/faith/values within the given context, issues, events of one's life

Demonstrating an appreciation for the impact of the events around one on one's belief/faith/values

To sit with other s' beliefs/faith/values

Demonstrating a measure of comfort in the company of diversity

To identify common threads between one's own and others beliefs/faith/values

Demonstrating the ability to openly discuss similarities and differences between various belief/faith/value systems

To engage in meaningful interaction/partnerships across belief/faith/value systems

Demonstrating a facility to work with members of disparate belief/faith/value systems for shared purpose (Westminster College Spiritual Life)

A working definition of interfaith literacy, based on the above description, is being informed and appreciative of the beliefs of one's own faith and the faith of others. Librarians and other information disseminators need to develop tools to facilitate such literacy among users, who today come from a diverse background of society that is multifaith, multi-racial, multi-ethnic, multicultural and multi-lingual. Interestingly, Interfaith literacy is in accordance with the Islamic prescription for co-existence, viz., to know one another (Yunus: 99; and Al-Hujurat: 13), be kind to them and deal equitably with them (Al-Mumtahanah: 8).

Search Features in the Index: The following screenshots show the great variety of search and browse features, offered by the Index Islamicus.

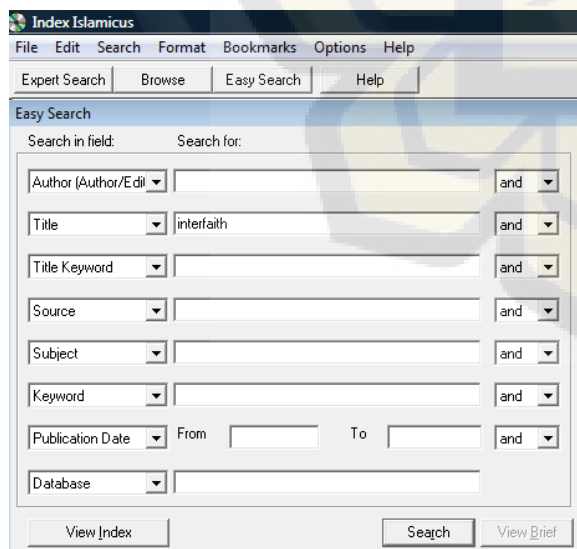


Figure 1: Search Screen in Index Islamicus

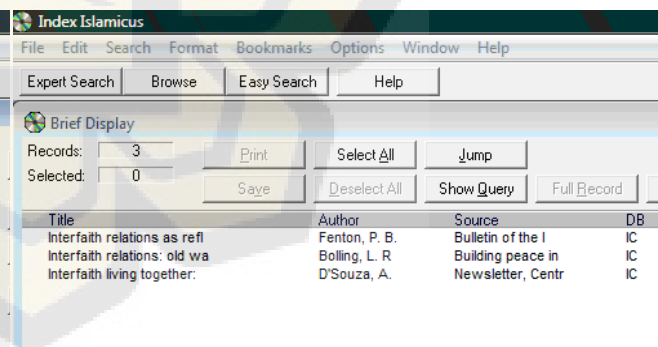


Figure 2: Brief Display of Search Results

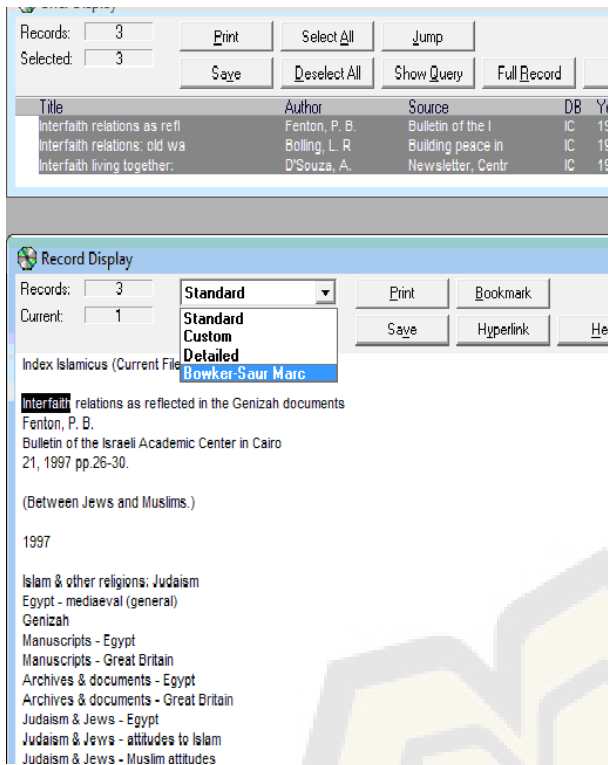


Figure 3: Full record in Index Islamicus, and options to customize output

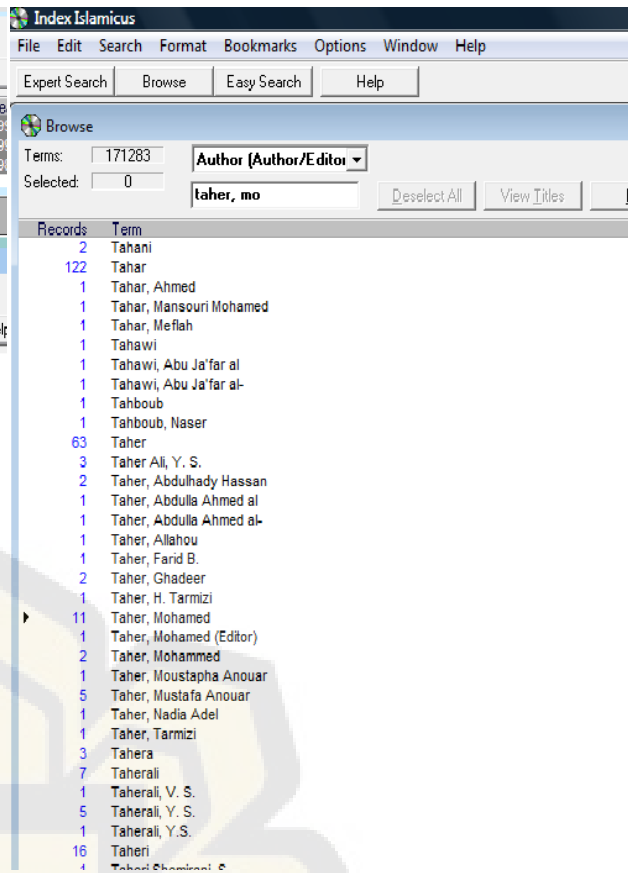


Figure 4: Browse by author / editor

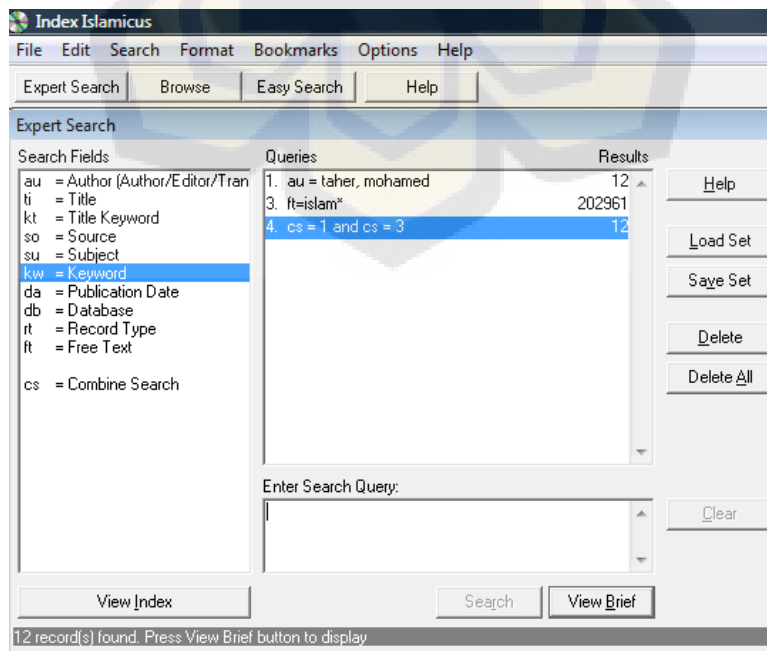


Figure 5: Command and Combined search -- Expert Search Feature (Boolean search)

II Geographic and Subject Coverage of the Journal Articles indexed in Index Islamicus:

Geographic Coverage: In order to find interfaith literature in the Index, an attempt was made to combine keyword search and a search by subject headings. Although the Index has a coverage of over one hundred years (viz., 1906-), articles on the subject of interfaith relations, appear for the first time in the Index in 1970s. A comprehensive search resulted in identifying 675 articles (from 103 journals) indexed in the Index Islamicus. Of these, highly ranking items are displayed, in Table 2.

In Table 2, there are 32 Journals and these are ranked according to their contribution to the subject of interfaith relations. In other words, the ranking is based on the number of articles that relate to Interfaith as a keyword and/or subject heading (descriptor).

Interestingly, the first eight highly ranking journals are all western publications. This bias is obvious, and expected, because the Index is itself focused on English and European language publications. What might interests everyone to probe further is how many contributors are from the Muslim faith, as against the other contributors to these journals. Such an analysis of the author and their faith affiliation is left for a future study.

Table 2: Geographic Coverage of the Journal Articles indexed in Index Islamicus

Rank	Ranking Journals	Articles	Continent
1	Islam & Christian Muslim Relations (US)	79	America
2	Muslim World (US)	49	America
3	Studies in Interreligious Dialogue (Belgium)	36	Europe
4	Islamochristiana (Italy)	31	Europe
5	Journal of Institute of Muslim Minority Affairs (UK)	30	Europe
6	Encounters (Leicester)	22	Europe
7	Sufi (London)	21	Europe
8	Am J Islamic Social Sciences (US)	18	America
9	Al-Mushir (Pak)	18	Asia
10	Al-Liqa Journal (Saudi)	46	Asia
11	al-Tawhid (Iran)	15	Asia
12	Muslim & Arab Perspectives (India)	14	Asia
13	Islamic Q. (UK)	14	Europe
14	Encounters: J Inter-Cultural Perspective	12	Europe
15	Ma'ab (Jordan)	10	Asia
16	Bull of the Royal Inst for Inter-Faith Studies (Jordan)	10	Asia
17	World Faiths Encounter (UK)	9	Europe
18	Islam and Modern Age (Delhi)	8	Asia
19	Comparative Studies in Society and History (UK)	8	Europe
20	Bull Christian Institute of Islamic Studies (India)	8	Asia
21	J Ecumenical Studies (US)	7	America
22	Iqbal Review (Pak)	7	Asia
23	Dialogue & Humanism (Poland)	7	Europe
24	Studia Missionalia (Italy)	6	Europe
25	Middle East Affairs Journal (US)	6	America
26	Islamic Studies (Pak)	6	Asia
27	Islamic Culture (India)	6	Asia
28	Greek Orthodox Theological Review (US)	6	America
29	Bull of the Henry Martin Institute of Islamic Studies (India)	6	Asia
30	University Lectures in Islamic Studies (UK)	5	Europe
31	The Harp (US)	5	Asia
32	Hamdard Islamicus (Pak)	5	Asia
	71 Journals with 4 or less number of articles	116	
	Total number of articles	675	

Table 3: Geographic Coverage of the Journal Articles from OIC

Rank	OIC Member State	Total articles
1	Saudi Arabia	48
2	Pakistan	46
3	Jordan	20
4	Iran	15
5	Turkey	8
6	Egypt	6
7	Lebanon	4
8	Tunisia	2
9	Sudan	2
10	Morocco	2

Articles from OIC Countries: The geographic data of journals is modified in Table 3 to show the place of OIC (Organization of Islamic Countries). Interestingly, with the recent moves in the direction of interfaith dialog the top most country among the OIC's is Saudi. A detailed study is required as to why some are doing this, and why most of the OIC's are not into this, at least from the Western publications that are being used in this Index.

Subject Coverage of the Journal Articles Indexed in Index Islamicus:

Research question: The resources in the Index have higher frequency of occurrence of themes, concepts, and phrases that promote healthy relations between faiths. For e.g., a quick search by keyword in the Index reveals it has many articles and other resources required in building harmony, dialogue facilitation, promoting tolerance, peaceful co-existence, and commonalities rather than themes such as, religious differences, polemics, hate, discrimination violence, salvation, conversion, evangelism, and proselytization.

This study, in short, aims to test a hypothesis in the area of subject representation. The hypothesis here is, that the resources in the Index have higher frequency of occurrence of themes, concepts, phrases that promote healthy relations between faiths. And, that subject descriptors are inclusive (or sufficiently representative in categorization) of the frequently occurring themes.

A quick glance at the records indexed in the Index, will give an idea of the occurrence or absence of these themes, in the following figures.

<p>Index Islamicus (Current File)</p> <p>To know one another - reflections on 'mutual understanding' Rabo, A. Al-Mu'tamar al-Thani 'an al-Islam wa-Urawpa: al-'Alaqat bayn al-'Alam al-Islami wa-Urawpa, al-Mafraq, al-Urdunn 10-13/6/1996. The Second Conference on Euro-Islam: relations between the Muslim World and Europe, Mafraq, H.K. Jordan, 10-13.6.1996. Documentation. (Ed. T.Lundén). Stockholm: Swedish Institute, 1996 pp.75-77.</p> <p>[Middle East & Europe.]</p> <p>Islam & other religions: Christianity Modern; Muslim-Christian dialogue Christianity - attitudes to Islam Christianity - Muslim attitudes Europe (general) - modern</p>	<p>Title with a Quranic theme: To know one another – but there is no matching descriptor!!!</p>
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Figure 6: Interfaith Content – Sample One

<p>Index Islamicus (Current File)</p> <p>Interfaith relations: old wars and new dialogue Bolling, L. R. Building peace in the Middle East: challenges for states and civil society. Ed. E.Boulding Boulder: Rienner, 1994 pp.303-310.</p> <p>(Christians, Jews & Muslims ... throughout the Middle East.)</p> <p>Islam & other religions Christianity - Middle East (general) Judaism & Jews - Middle East (general)</p>	<p>Title with a phrase: Interfaith relations – but there is no matching descriptor!!!</p>
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Figure 7: Interfaith Content – Sample Two

<p>Index Islamicus (Current File)</p> <p>Interfaith living together: an experience of Muslim, Hindu, Christian meeting in India D'Souza, A. Newsletter, Centre for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations 16, 1986 pp.7-8.</p> <p>Muslims of South Asia (general) Anthropology & ethnography; sociology Hinduism Christianity - India India (Republic) Minorities (Muslim)</p>	<p>Concept of Interfaith relations and tolerance promotion exists; but there is no keyword that describes the resource!!!</p>
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Figure 8: Interfaith Content – Sample Three

<p>Index Islamicus (Current File)</p> <p>How can mutual tolerance and respect be promoted? Karlsson, I. Al-Mu'tamar al-Thani 'an al-Islam wa-Urawpa: al-'Alaqaat bayn al-'Alam al-Islami wa-Urawpa, al-Mafraq, al-Urdunn 10-13/6/1996. The Second Conference on Euro-Islam: relations between the Muslim World and Europe, Mafraq, H.K. Jordan, 10-13.6.1996. Documentation. (Ed. T.Lundén). Stockholm: Swedish Institute, 1996 pp.43-44.</p> <p>[Muslims in Europe.]</p> <p>Muslim minorities in Western Europe Europe (general) - modern Minorities (Muslim) - Europe (general)</p>	<p>Title has a phrase mutual tolerance – but there is no matching descriptor!!!</p>
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Table 9: Interfaith Content – Sample Four

Obviously, the above subject descriptors are inclusive (or sufficiently representative in categorization) of the frequently occurring themes. Whereas, the descriptors (or subject headings), as these are found, need a little more focus (call it tweaking) to attract the audience and also to increase user-friendliness of this resource. For e.g., interfaith education, interfaith relations, interfaith dialog, interfaith workshops, interfaith conferences, and interfaith resources as descriptors or subject headings, are missing, in the Index, although very highly desired by the times we live in. Increasing such a thematic focus in its resource description will save the time of the user, as well as increase the value of findability in the Index by the researchers in the global village. Thus the hypothesis that the Index has a highly value for interfaith literacy holds good. A subset of this question will be how many resources and tools are indexed in these? Answer to this will be, None. Then, if there are no tools and templates to develop interfaith literacy programs, librarians will have to look elsewhere for such handy models. And, the other hypothesis is about the descriptors and its value. The above samples and the foregoing discussion (esp. in Table on Subject Coverage), shows there is none, at all. Librarians, as information mediators and developers as input providers for such an Index need to re-consider, both dimensions, i.e. the subject analysis and subject access.

As mentioned, above an explanation of the failed hypothesis follows. Subject headings with five or more articles, containing the respective terms, is displayed in Table 4.

Table 4: Subject Coverage of the Journal Articles Indexed in Index Islamicus

Rank	Ranking Subject Descriptors	Articles
1	Islam & other religions: Christianity Modern; Muslim-Christian dialogue	171
2	Christianity - attitudes to Islam	165
3	Christianity - Muslim attitudes	160
4	Islam & other religions	106
5	Islam & other religions: Christianity Historical	50
6	Judaism & Jews - Muslim attitudes	40
7	Christianity	28
8	Theology	21
9	Conferences, congresses, symposia, etc.	19
10	Comparative religion	18
11	Judaism & Jews - attitudes to Islam	17
12	Islam & other religions: Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism	16
13	Minorities (Muslim)	13
14	Hinduism	12
15	Islam & other religions: Judaism	10
16	Dhimmis (general)	10
17	Qu'ran & Qur'anic studies	9
18	Missions (Christian)	9
19	Fundamentalism & revivalism - Muslim (general)	7
20	Conferences, congresses, symposia, etc. - Christian-Muslim relations	7
21	Bible	7
22	Kor'an & Koranic studies	6
23	Judaism & Jews	6
24	Great Britain - Muslim world (general)	6
25	Christianity - Middle East (general)	6
26	Christianity - comparative	6
27	Christianity - Arab world (general)	6
28	United States of America - Muslim world (general)	5
29	Minorities (Muslim) - general	5

30	Judaism & Jews - comparative	5
31	India (Republic)	5
32	Europe - (general) - modern	5
33	Ethics	5
34	Da'wa	5
	233 SUBJECT HEADINGS with 4 or less number of articles	342
	Total number of articles	1308

The above table displays 34 subject headings appearing in 966 articles (almost 75% of the total 1308 articles). What is not shown here are the 233 subject headings with 4 or less number of articles. This is the very idea (of few subjects representing or comprising of most items) that was depicted by Bradford in his famous law of scatter, to say fewer subjects are major contributors, since these fewer subjects represent almost 75% of the published content in the sample under review from the Index. This is a major indication of applicability of bibliometric indicators in the field of Islamic studies (See Taher, 1993)

It is evident from the above sample that there is a vast treasure to explore, in the Index Islamicus that can directly and indirectly facilitate education and awareness in the area of interfaith literacy.

The editors of the Index Islamicus must be congratulated to have taken up this herculean task of aggregating Islamic resources in many fields. The Index as seen above not only helps in finding the materials in interdisciplinary areas, it also helps in browsing—browsing in this age of Google and searchability, is admittedly still a value added feature that must be included in any index.

Browsing by subject terms, such as, ‘Christianity - attitudes to Islam,’ (ranked at second place in the above table) & ‘Christianity - Muslim attitudes’ (ranked at third place) brings forward a good example. These two descriptors, for instance, highlight the hidden context of a theme such as, understanding of Islam as Christians would treat it, versus understanding Christianity’s treatment by the Muslims. Interfaith as a term, and as described above, is about the two way traffic. At the out set one may not get the spirit of using two terms with its permutation and combination (e.g, ‘Christianity - attitudes to Islam,’ & ‘Christianity - Muslim attitudes’). But, this requires a good deal of scholarship that has been in evidence from the over fifty years of the Index, about thinking as well improving that is undertaken by the indexers and the advisors at the background in producing the Index Islamicus. They have picked up many such in-depth facets and concepts in making the Index a really useful value-added component for the users, mediators and other indexers to replicate.

However, there are a few issues that need another digg for more effective results. For instance, the subject heading, Islam & other religions: Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism (ranked at twelfth place) may need an alternative way to describe such an interfaith content—both in the choice of terms and in their order. It is likely that such ways will also meet the cataloging guidelines for pre- and post-coordinated searching. If one article, for instance, has a focus on only one term, and the other two faiths are a low priority, then it would be better to get an insight from other international practices. One such practice is set by Library of Congress (five headings per document) an another by Sears List of Subject headings (three headings). Library of Congress has a “20 percent rule.” That is a heading may be assigned for any topic that takes up 20 percent of an articles’ content. The guidelines of Library of Congress also suggest “generally a maximum of six headings is appropriate. In special situations more headings may be required.” (Mann, 2005: 25). Incidentally, the above stipulation is for books, but resource description guidelines apply for any type of reading materials, and hence articles in this context.

Quite a few detailed suggestions have been already made by specialists to improve the findability, searchability and usability of the Index [See: by Rodgers (1990), Behn (1992), and Taher, (2000)]. A detailed guideline for indexing, classification, categorization and subject access is also a good source

of reference to develop user-friendly interfaces (Guidelines for Subject Access, 2011). Hence, it is appropriate to supplement the suggestions here:

- Reduce / avoid the lengthy subject headings. For a librarian or for a user the following heading (as a single string) is not just confusing, it is complicating the search, e.g., Islam & other religions: Christianity Modern; Muslim-Christian dialogue (this term appears as top most, in the above ranking of subject terms in the Index).
- Add focus on the core topic by adding more focus in subject headings, rather than have a single (punctuated) subject heading, e.g., Islam & other religions: Christianity Modern; Muslim-Christian dialogue.
- Reduce / avoid the noise that occurs in repeating Islam in an index that is all-about ISLAM, e.g., Islam & other religions: Christianity Modern; Muslim-Christian dialogue.
- One may consider, if not yet done so, existing guidelines to get more precise subject headings on Islam / Muslims? For example, Ziauddin Sardar's work (1979) on classification of Islamic knowledge is the only book on faceted scheme to interpret the discipline of Islam. Using such valuable works, one can avoid too broad a heading or too generic term as Christianity (appears 28 times or in the seventh rank, in the above discussion).
- One may also consider the level of audience and the type of format in organizing the content, as well as in the output of the search results.

III Conclusion:

The study finds that although there are many references to the concept of interfaith literacy in the Index Islamicus, there is no subject heading or descriptor, per se. Hence, the hypothesis about presence of such a literature stands validated. But, the hypothesis about manifestation of such a literature in descriptors (or subject headings), fails.

Bibliometric and bibliographic studies act as a tool for developing a core & / or local collection in this field. Suggested improvements include, input (e.g., using taxonomy), output (e.g., enhanced search features) and dissemination (e.g., thematic webliographies). These findings and suggestions will be hopefully also helpful in meeting the fourth objective of WCOMLIS.

Appendix I -A Sample Template for Interfaith (Multifaith) Literacy Tool (Religious beliefs and practices)

	Christianity 	Hinduism 	Islam 	Judaism 
A follower is called as	Christian	Hindu	Muslim	Jew
Sacred, Spiritual (Divine) Source	God the Father Almighty, Jesus his Son, and the Holy Spirit	Brahman, the Supreme Reality	Allah	Y H W H; G-d
Nature of Religion	Monotheistic	Monotheistic	Monotheistic	Monotheistic
Messenger / Founder	Jesus Christ	Many different founders	Prophet Muhammad	Abraham, the Patriarch
Leadership, Global	Yes in Roman Catholics (Pope)	Adi Sankracharya and many more Gurus	None in Sunni. Yes in Shia (Imam)	None
Leadership, Local (functional)	Depends on group or denomination.	None formal (informally Pandit, or Guru, Swami, Sadhu, Baba)	None formal, in Sunni (informally Imam or Sheikh). Mujtahid in Shia	Rabbi
Sacred Text	Bible (Old & New Testament)	Vedas, Upanishad, Gita, Ramayana, Mahabharata, Puranas	Quran	The Torah, Talmud
Faith's symbol	Cross	OM	Crescent Moon and Star	Star of David
Denominations / Division	Roman Catholic; Protestants; Eastern Orthodox	Saiva; Vaishnava; or a worshiper of Ganapati, Sakti or Surya; Sanatan, Arya Samaj	Shia; Sunni	Orthodox; Conservative; Reform; Reconstructionist
View about a just	Humans	Human	Shariah as a way	All humans

society	reconciled with God; The Kingdom of God; The Mission of God; Mission of the Church	inequalities are due to Karma and samsara, Salvation is a personal experience	of life (five basic principles of faith, based on Quran, Hadith and Sunnah)	reconciled with God; The Community of Israel; keeping the Torah; The Kingdom of Heaven; The Messianic Age
View of the human	Created in the image of God; Possessing free-will; Fallen and sinful; Loved by God; Redeemed by Christ's sacrifice	Human beings are part of the endless cycle of birth, death and re-birth	Created from clots of blood; Dependent upon Allah for success here and in hereafter	Created by God, Fallen and sinful; Loved by God; Having free will
Gender interaction – Shaking hands and mixing with opposite gender in social network	Religiously no such restriction	Greet with folded palms/hands; Men and women seat separately	Not allowed to shake hands or mix with opposite gender	Not allowed to shake hands or mix with opposite gender in the case of Orthodox Jews
Dress code - Covering	Religiously no such requirement	Head covering by married ladies is common, at all times.	Yes, required – modesty. Men: head covering not required during prayer. Women: a dress that hides the body, a scarf to cover the head all-times	Yes, required – modesty. Men: A small head covering (Kippah or yarmulke), and a prayer shawl during worship. Women: a hat or head covering may be required in some worship houses
Religious Holy days - annually	Lent, Good Friday, Easter and Christmas	Diwali; Holi; Shivratri; Ram Navami; Navaratri; Dussehra; Janamashtami	Eid-ul-fitr; Eid-ul-Adha; Yaum Ashura	Rosh Hashanah; Yom Kippur; Sukkot; Shemini Atzeret; Simchat Torah; Shavu'ot; Passover
Religious Holy day - Weekly	Sunday	Depends on the region and division	Friday	Saturday
Observe / celebrate festival by lunar or solar dates?	Solar	Lunar	Lunar	Lunar

Worship space – congregational, performed anywhere?	No. Only in dedicated space	No. Only in dedicated space	Yes.	No. Only in dedicated space
Worship time – Individual (non-congregational)	Morning, afternoon and evening	Morning and evening	Five times daily	Morning, afternoon, evening
Worship time - congregational	Weekly	Depends on the occasion and division	Five times daily	Morning, afternoon, evening
Sacred Symbols, images, statues for worship	Yes for most of the divisions. But depends on the division	Yes for most of the divisions. But, depends on the division	None	None
Houses of worship - Naming	Church	Temple, Mandir	Masjid (Mosque)	Synagogue
Terminology for worship and solace (in respective theology)	Prayer; Praise; Scripture; Sacraments	Prayer (Puja, Arti); Praise (Bhajan); Scripture (mantra from religious text); Sacrament (Prasad)	Prayer (Salat, Dua, Ibadah, Rituals, Rites); Praise (Darud, Qasida, Taarif, Salam, Naat, Vadhaif, Dhikr, Tasbeeh); Scripture (Inspirational literature); Sacraments (Muqaddas, Mutabarrik, Tabarruk, Aathar)	Prayer (Tefilah, rites); Praise; Scripture (Hebrew Bible, Midras); Sacrament
Rituals after death – burial or cremation	Burial	Cremation	Burial	Burial
Dietary restrictions	Depends on group or denomination.	Most vegetarian	Halal	Kosher
Is the use of Alcohol allowed	Yes, with moderation	Yes, with moderation	No	Yes, with moderation

Greeting	Peace	Namaste / Namaskar	Salam	Shalom
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