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# INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ACADEMIC RESEARCH IN PROGRESSIVE EDUCATION & DEVELOPMENT



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## Pengasuh's Magazine: Catalysts of Social Awareness in Education Between The Years 1918-1941

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### Abstract

This article will discuss about the *Pengasuh's* magazine as a catalyst for social awareness in education between 1918-1941. The main focus of the paper is on Islamic education through *Pengasuh* magazine to the Muslim community in Kelantan. The development of newspapers and magazines in Malaya also influenced the influence of Islam, especially in education. The discussion of this paper covers the early years of the establishment of the *Pengasuh's* magazine from 1918 to 1941. Social awareness in education in Kelantan is greatly influenced by the *Pengasuh's* magazine as one of the main mediums to spread Islam directly to the Malay community. This article uses a qualitative method that includes the collection and analysis of data from primary sources obtained from the Islamic Religious and Customs Council of the State of Kelantan (MAIK) such as *Pengasuh's* magazine and al-Quran manuscripts. In addition, secondary sources are also used such as journals and books to further strengthen the work carried out. The data obtained will be analyzed to obtain real information about the article. The researcher will use the *Historical Approach* method by using the theme method so that the study is more structured and analytical. The results of the study found that social awareness in education in Kelantan was successfully influenced through the *Pengasuh's* magazine.

**Keywords:** Islamic Education, Social Awareness, *Pengasuh's* magazine, Kelantan

### Introduction

Kelantan was among the first states in the Malay Peninsula to establish an organizational Islamic religious administration institution called the Council of Islamic Religion and Customs of the State of Kelantan (MAIK) on December 24, 1915. Through the establishment of the MAIK, Kelantan has achieved a level of progress in giving awareness to education through

*Pengasuh's* magazine. This awareness movement was started by several figures consisting of Muhammad Yusuf bin Muhammad or better known as Tok Kenali, Dato' Bentara Setia Haji Nik Mahmud Ismail who is better known as Dato' Perdana Menteri Paduka Raja, Haji Muhammad bin Khatib and Haji Muhammad Said (Daud, 1988). MAIK's main support exist to the Malay community in Kelantan and to the Islamic religion itself.

Therefore, the need for a strategy in providing education directly without involving a large amount of funds in a short time. For this reason, the Council of Islamic Religion and Malay Customs of the State of Kelantan (MAIK) mobilized a special column in the author's conference by publishing a weekly magazine called *Pengasuh* magazine. The *Pengasuh's* magazine published by the Malay Islamic Religious and Customs Council of Kelantan (MAIK) sells for \$0.15 cents and the average subscription price in a year is \$2.88 in the state while \$3.00 outside the state. The main purpose of *Pengasuh's* magazine in the development of Islam is to refine the community's views on Islam and the people's socialism in the state of Kelantan.

MAIK is an institution that carries out various functions in forming a clear identity regarding the education and progress of the Malay community. The existence of *Pengasuh's* magazine is to form the magazine's identity and vision in accordance with the wishes of the Kelantan State Council of Islamic Religion and Customs (MAIK). With the publication of a magazine in Kelantan, it should be an advantage for the children of the state to evaluate with caution their thoughts on the development and social awareness of education to ensure the continuity of education even if it does not start with the development of a monument as a landmark of reform in education.

### **Pengasuh's Magazine an Identity of Early Education in Kelantan**

If viewed from the humanitarian side, the *Pengasuh's* magazine tends to involve the Malay community by providing early exposure on education methods by disseminating the main purpose of the *Pengasuh's* magazine and its importance to the Malay community.

*"D.K.S.P.M.K dan K.S.M.G Yang Dipertuan negeri dan hujahan Kelantan Darul Naim istimewa pula kejadian "Pengasuh" ini di Kelantan daripada perkara yang tiada di dalam sangkaan dan harapan orang yang dahulu dan sekarang maka jadilah ia daripada perkara yang menjunjungkan kelebihan tuahnya dan maju segala pelajarannya"* (Muhamad bin Ismail, 1918)

It is this matter that is the catalyst for the awareness of (MAIK) members towards the importance of the Malay community and the development of the Islamic religion. These ideas are in line with the concept of ad-din (الدين), where Islam is ad-din that is pleased with God as a way or a guide that is complete in everything to organize and organize the life of the universal human being (Alwi, 2022). The presence of this *Pengasuh's* magazine is an advantage for the Malay community. Most magazines or newspapers found in Malaya do not get much attention in terms of capital, writers and community response to them. This is proven by the extreme change in the main identity of *Al-Imam* magazine for each issue (Roff, 2020). The difference in level and flow will cause society to judge rather than accept what is trying to be conveyed. The identity and vision championed by *Pengasuh* magazine is synonymous with the acceptance of the Malay community in Kelantan.

The government of Kelantan was in the 20th century, was exposed to the ideas of decentralization that emerged from the Malay government regarding the power to govern their own state itself, gave an advantage to Sultan Muhammad IV (Daud, 1988) to approve a magazine that functioned as the main mass for the Malay community at that time. The ideas

to create an easier medium of communication that can provide what the Malay community needs and preferably is on social awareness about education. In carrying out his duties as a servant to God, humans also need to learn about every thing that gives advantages that bring results in every job.

*"Ilmu itu pangkal bagi manusia dan perbendaharaan segala hakikat dan dengan dia boleh menakluki segala bahan dan menyampaikan kepada perhinggaan yang betul dan ialah serta dan rakan yang mentambatkan kelebihan, kemuliaan pada dunia dan akhirat"* (Ismail, 1918)

This sign was put forward by Ismail (1918) on the basis of taking into account the importance of science to the Malay community. For him, wisdom is progression of thought that unites a person's thoughts and actions. Therefore, with the emergence of love for science, then the identity as an individual, community, religion and nation will be able to be maintained just as the identity as a Muslim is maintained even when faced with the development of civilization. The relation between wisdom and identity is an equipment to unlock suspicious path for the Malay community. Therefore, education is one aspect of reform that is being initiated through *Pengasuh's* magazine as a method of resisting changes in the daily norms of the Malay community.

Preparations to resist this progress are indeed difficult in the early stages due to the high influence of feudalism among the Malay community (Maaruf, 2020). However, the conference of the editors of *Pengasuh's* magazine is wise to process from the real situation to a resemblance of the advantages establish in education. It occurs not merely based on evidence and justification in nourishing awareness, but that assistance stands apparently stated in the Quran Surah al-Ra'ad (13:11) that it is important in creating transformations to individuals, communities and nations. This lawsuit occurs the catalyst for the change that the *Pengasuh's* magazine wants to form through a new publicity which is the notion of ad-din (الدين).

### **Social Awareness in Education**

If we assume a glance at the *Pengasuh's* magazine, a massive number of its publications provide social awareness about educational identity that can be found in all matters found in Kelantan. Social awareness in education is heavily influenced by the *Pengasuh's* magazine, although the revelation has ended but this prophetic function continues to be carried out continuously. This view is adapted by *Pengasuh's* magazine according to the priority of problems that arise in the Malay community. For the *Pengasuh's* magazine, this social awareness is able to change the perception of education and can give some credence to the influence of the West by accepting things that bring benefits.

*"kita sekarang terhantar dibawah bayang-bayang kemuliaan dan kelimpahan Barat dan kepada Baratlah kita berguru pada tiap-tiap perkara yang besar seangkatan dengan pelajaran negeri dan bangsa, maka keutuhan kita itu kembali kepada usaha dan ikhlas guru-guru kita Barat bersama-sama kita, maka kita yang bersangkatan cenderung kepada Barat daripada timur yang lain ini"* (Adabi, 1929)

This principle was also presented by Abdul Kadir Adabi on the matter of educational improvement for the Malay community. Certainly, through his attention, Abdul Kadir revealed that numerous prevail not knowledgeable of the significance of the Europe civilization in every perspective, specifically when it apperas to education principles. Although the narrative we realize that the Western powers barely utilize the slogan white's men burden, but from another perspective Abdul Kadir Adabi relies on the facts and current

situation that can give a good effect to the society through his writing in the *Pengasuh's* magazine.

The similar term, Abdul Kadir Adabi asserted tremendous expectation for the awareness of the Malay community in matters of education which is fraction of a stable journey for the Malay community. What Abdul Kadir Adabi is competing for is a social awareness that is related in essence to the awareness of nationalism, and can rewrite a perspective on dependence on the West beyond their own efforts. If the Malay community disciplines the concept of 'adat' and 'daulat', it stands said that it will threaten their own interests. This matter will harm the Malay community, especially the young people who are not exposed to any form of understanding about the philosophy of education. So to change the influence of loyalty to the government, sentiments about psychological idols (Shariati, 2017) should be eliminated first. Such sentiments should not be revealed in the context of young folk's thinking, whether in social teachings and settling the status of elders as gods who are able to fulfill all human desires even though they also depend on the Almighty God. Therefore, Muhammad bin Ismail provided a justification about the objectives in obtaining education at the initial stage. In Surah al-Mulk, Allah S.W.T says

*"Tuhan yang telah menjadikan hidup dan mati kerana ia hendak menguji, mencuba kamu-siapakah daripada kamu yang terlebih baik kerjanya"*(Surah al-Mulk, 67:2)

It is essential that humans already realize the objective they existed created by Allah S.W.T is to create all the goodness on this earth with the best work. One of those chores subsists education that can be obtained in every matter whether in religious activities or in the form of humanity. This sign is Muhammad bin Ismail's priority for his responsibility as a ruler, so it is obligatory for him to convey every consequence in advancing the people and his religion for the purpose of reference in the afterlife. In this assertion,

*"...memperhatikan umat yang telah terdiri dengan ketinggian dan yang telah jadi di dalam tiap-tiap perlumbaan kehidupan ialah tulisan pelajaran dan hajat yang menerangkan segala ehwal kejadian maka diketahui ialah daripadanya tiada diberatur kehidupan umat dan tiada dapat menggapai bunga-bunga perhiasan kelebihannya melainkan kemudian daripada telah menerima bagi dirinya pelajaran yang tinggi dan melainkan latihan adab yang sempurna serta menjadikannya pakaian yang lazim bagi seluruh anggotanya"* (Ismail, 1918)

Established on Muhammad bin Ismail's observations, he apparently asserted that an individual should depend on two things, discovering and the have a greatest manners. The importance in getting education is like providing as many branches or sites for the proliferation of knowledge among the Malay community. Additional, if education continues to be developed, then the interest of the Malay community will increase to get as much as possible from the branches of knowledge that are already available. However, the role of thinkers such as Tok Kenali is one of the *branches* established specifically in Kelantan. So this availability gives space to young pupils including parents to send to the Muhammadiyah madrasah in Kelantan to obtain as asserted lectures as essential to provide a equilibrium between curiosities in this world and the afterlife. In matters of manners, it is a responsibility that is placed on him to take care of and ensure that it becomes part of the form of education that has been obtained. Muhammad bin Ismail's view is clear that the height of manners will be a benchmark for the quality of education that has been formed in him. Adab is one of the mediators that act in providing reflection on social awareness for the Malay community. The importance of these two things is to give an analogy that without the supremacy of manners, a family institution will be destroyed and there will be a problem of religious appreciation.

However, it is through education that this social awareness will be able to be formed in various perspectives based on the understanding of each individual.

What is the purpose of the students to school? This will be able to be evaluated by the Malay children of Kelantan about the main purpose they want to get an early education in a Malay school.

*“nescaya didapati jawapan 99 persen daripadanya hendak makan gaji dengan kerajaan (jadi orang gaji kerajaan) dan hendak menjadi pegawai kerajaan belaka dan barangkali satu persen sahaja hendak mencari nafkahnya membuat perkerjaan sendiri, ini pun kita ada suka lagi ada demikian itu” (Ahmadi, 1930)*

So each of the pupils of Kelantan has tremendous ambitions to sow devotion to their own homeland. There is no denying that the children of Kelantan already know the need for progress to gain knowledge even though Kelantan is still young with everything. Education is the main communication tool of the Kelantan community with the outside world. The *Pengasuh’s* Magazine utilizes her ideas to be used in developing education in Kelantan. The children of Kelantan became the main focus of the *Pengasuh’s* magazine when the Council of Islamic Religion and Customs of Kelantan established the first Muhammadi school in 1917. This gave Kelantan an advantage to recruit as many new members as possible to be exposed to "duo-functional" education. The education approach in Kelantan prioritizes the humanities, science and the approach of religious subjects as the core to educate the Malay children of Kelantan. *Pengasuh’s* Magazine has a strong stance on education in Kelantan. Therefore, education is focused comprehensively regardless of gender and social background. *Pengasuh’s* magazine wants to spread education throughout Kelantan by setting up a school for girls in Kelantan.

*“Bersangatn kemari dan sukanya hati kita mendengar suara Pengasuh kita dihormati menyebut-nyebut akan sekolah perempuan di Kelantan dan permohonan yang bersungguh-sungguh kepada kerajaan cuba membangunkan sekolah itu di bandar Kota Baharu ini, maka atas permohonan itu kita sukahati dan menyertainya bersama-sama harapan kepada limpah kurnia kerajaan itu dengan sebab semua negeri-negeri lain telah mengadakan sekolah perempuan dan masa di Kelantan ini telah menyeru sangat-sangat berhajat kepadanya, sungguhpun tidak banyak suara-suara nyata akan dia” (Ahmad, 1930)*

The belief of emancipation towards women is the main duty for *Pengasuh’s* magazine in raising the dignity and giving space to women in a better direction in the social system of Malay society. The basis of the *Pengasuh’s* magazine's struggle is based on the concept of ad-din (الدين) in religion clearly states that every human being is equal in the eyes of God except for his piety. In the context of education, the concept of ad-din (الدين) is not fully practiced by parents to their children. The crisis of understanding Islam is the main driver for the division of social status in the lower levels. Therefore, parents will be a propaganda tool for their children in delivering social messages directly about education. This question is not only on the main mind of the writer of *Pengasuh’s* magazine but also influences the thinking of Kelantan Malay children who are still wondering about reform for themselves.

If education is formed at an early stage in one community group in the city only, then there will be injustice in reaching the level of ad-din (الدين). Education is an autonomous power that can be formed from the will of the government either towards loyalty or being revolutionary. *Pengasuh’s* Magazine considers that the perspective of education as a weapon for reform, this is driven by the progress of education in Egypt. How does the *Pengasuh’s* magazine try to deploy an ideology of social awareness to the Malay children of Kelantan?

The establishment of schools is a safe way for the Malays, but in the early 1900s in the state of Kelantan, it was still in the form of a fictional thought.

*“Selagi pelajaran-pelajaran kepada perempuan itu tidak diberi, lazimlah kemajuan itu menjadi lambat kerana penggalak kepada laki-laki itu ialah perempuan-perempuan dan jika perempuan tiada mempunyai pelajaran-pelajaran lazimlah tiada mereka itu mengetahui bagaimana hendak menggalakkan laki-laki kepada membuat perkerjaan-perkerjaan dan langkah-langkah yang terpuji, dari itu wajibnya ia menggalak akan dia dengan kemajuan kejadian yang lemah lembut dan perhiasan yang comel molek itu kepada jalan-jalan menambahkan kekejian jua dengan ketiadaan saudaranya terutama sekali pada orang-orang muda pada hal orang-orang muda itulah yang sangat-sangat dikehendaki oleh masa kerana sihat dan segar bagi menghadapi kebenaran-kebenaran dan mengjihadkan tiap-tiap lintangan dan kejadian”* (Ahmad, 1930)

This statement is to meet the demands of the social needs of the Malay community outwardly needing each other. If seen from a social point of view, education for girls is also fought for by *Pengasuh's* magazine to put an equal social level in the Malay society system in Kelantan. *Pengasuh's* magazine is of the view that education for women should be given if they want to be given administrative tasks in matters related to personal development, household and children. The social perspective that the *Pengasuh's* magazine is trying to fight for is not against the Islamic law, but it is limited by the action in providing education at the level of flow that is felt to be appropriate according to the level. The idea of combining male and female students in one class is the initial approach of the *Pengasuh's* magazine as implemented in English schools (Ahmad, 1930).

This social demand is a catalyst for male students to work hard at school when they see female students participating in the same class session or school. The call from the *Pengasuh's* magazine is to give social reflection in education, especially to the Malay children of Kelantan. Education reform in Kelantan was largely triggered through the *Pengasuh's* magazine as a medium in providing awareness of the importance of knowledge. *Pengasuh's* magazine can be considered as an early propaganda tool in Kelantan due to its function being the same as a "letter's order" from the government to the community regardless of social status. Educational identity is tried to be formed through *Pengasuh's* magazine as a way of initial preparation during its publication for the Malay community in Kelantan.

*“Kita biasa dan berbual-bual dengan kebanyakan daripada orang-orang Melayu kita di bandar ini, maka sentiasa apabila diterbitkan kalimah sekolah perempuan di Kelantan itu dikehendakkan sekarang bagaimana negeri-negeri lain juga, tiadalah nampak pada pemandangan kita satu suara atau kiranya pun yang hendak menyebut tidak mahukan sekolah itu, kalau bagitu beranilah kita berkata suatu jemalah yang besar daripada anak-anak perempuan bandar kota baharu ini akan dihantar oleh ibu bapanya belajar kelak apakali kerajaan mengadakan sekolah itu, bahkan telah banyak suara yang memperati akan segala kewajipan pelajaran-pelajaran kepada perempuan itu diberi sekarang dan telah acapkali kita mendengar ahli bandar ini berkata-kata”* (Ahmad, 1930)

*Pengasuh's* magazine is interested in the enthusiasm displayed by the Kelantan community in recommending the right to education to be held in Kota Baharu. The observation of the *Pengasuh's* magazine found that most of the Kelantan community wanted a girls' school to be built in Kota Baharu as the main preparation for their daughters. Parents are urging the government to establish a school for girls so that they are not neglected and stranded in the progress that increasingly requires knowledge as a tool for the formation of civilization. The essence of this call reflects the parents' worry when they feel that girls will

lose their social status which should be equal with men. This view began to emerge as a result of the development of Malay schools in Kelantan (Al-Ahmadi, 2004). It is the progressive attitude of the *Pengasuh's* council that wants the scientific tradition to develop among the Malay community and to think openly and then awaken the values of patriotism, especially among parents.

This call for reform in education is longed for by *Pengasuh's* magazine as a source of knowledge endowment for the next generation and self-assess the success of the efforts made. One of the main struggles is against the emancipation of women to provide a level of equality for the Malay community in Kelantan. The great desire of this *Pengasuh's* magazine is coveted by all parents who want their children to be given the same education as the *jus soli* principle. Equality of rights in education for the Malay community became an inspiration for *Pengasuh's* magazine in highlighting the concept of *ad-din* comprehensively through social awareness in education. Abdul Kadir supports British ideals of education policy but prioritizes education awareness for the Malay community in Kelantan.

Therefore, the main struggle for Muhamad Daud in his article with the *Pengasuh's* magazine is to leave early traces in the reform of education which will be the main pillar of the landmark of the *Pengasuh's* magazine. Social awareness is a signification for *Pengasuh's* magazine because they want to mark the identity and vision to translate efforts in developing the Kelantan Malay community at the beginning of its transformation. One of the main pillars of Malay identity is the language, for the Malay community was indeed known during the Malay Sultanate of Malacca as the *lingua franca*. If the *Pengasuh's* magazine wants to practice this method in its efforts to provide awareness in education, then it should first be emphasized through reading, correct oral and prudent use of its meaning. Despite the multi-lingual learning environment consisting of Malay, Arabic and English, this Malay identity is able to assimilate according to the diversity of languages and the level of understanding of the Malay community, especially the students. The openness to master the Malay language is not easy at the initial stage because many have not yet mastered the 3M (Abdul Malek, 2021) level. Therefore, Muhamad Muda insisted that to develop Malay personality and identity it is appropriate to master the Malay language even though learning is taught in Arabic. This struggle is to represent their parents when they try their best to give the best education to their children. A narrow understanding of education is one of the diseases for the Malay community that needs an antidote which is knowledge (Kenali, 1918)

*"bapa kamu yang membukakan pandangan bergopoh-gopoh berjalan menuntut ilmu berhimpun belajar ke madrasah dengan doanya bagi kamu sekalian mudah-mudahan berbahagia dan sentiasalah menghasilkan kejayaan"* (Salam, 1918)

The courage of parents in accepting educational reform for their children is seen as an early success (Patriot, 1919). This acceptance gives confidence to the *Pengasuh's* magazine to continue to give views on education even if it is general (Patriot, 1919). The details of the *Pengasuh's* magazine found that the main key for them to succeed is to give confidence to the previous generation to understand the lesson even if they are used to hearing the word study. *Pengasuh's* magazine's emphasis on the education given to their children is a social struggle that should be honored for successfully changing minds and at the same time reflecting that the Malay community can succeed and progress in every field it will venture into later. The sacrifice of these parents if observed is indeed difficult to accept in new things due to attachment to the concept of extreme feudal thinking (Mansoureh *et. al.*, 2020). On this occasion, the *Pengasuh's* magazine leaves words of encouragement to their children through the *Pengasuh's* magazine as the main driver for the well-being of their studies.



*“maka berkatilah kami mudah-mudahan perhimpunan kamu sekalian didalam pelajaran itu jadilah persatuan yang membangkitkan kaum dan ugama kerana tiada sudi kemajuan umat (kaum) itu hasil melainkan dengan bersatu” (Patriot, 1919)*

The excitement of the *Pengasuh's* magazine can clearly be seen in its writing which can be described as an early success for them. This encouraged *Pengasuh's* magazine to strengthen the role of the Malay language as the main link to social awareness in education in Kelantan. The question of the language in learning at school is not a problem for the students of the Muhammadiyah al-Kelantaniah madrasah, but the *Pengasuh's* magazine would like to emphasize that this language should be learned first in the mother tongue which is Malay. Although most of the books are written in Arabic (Al-Ahmadi, 2004). However, *Pengasuh's* magazine wants the students at the Muhammadiyah madrasah in Kelantan to master the Malay language directly while making it easier for them to spread new knowledge to the community more easily in oral form or in writing sessions. This matter is a priority for the *Pengasuh's* magazine because social awareness in education actually has two main drivers consisting of the *Pengasuh's* magazine and the children of the state who get education in madrasahs, schools or awareness directly through the *Pengasuh's* magazine.

The priority of *Pengasuh's* magazine in providing social awareness in education is to introduce simple reformist ideas to the Malay community. Ideas such as the cultivation of the Malay language are easy to assimilate in the learning of local children in madrasahs or schools because Malay is the main medium of instruction in Kelantan. Apart from that, the values of educational nationalism will also be able to be formed if the new generation consisting of the children of the state gives a message that education is the main thing at that time. Through this approach *Pengasuh's* magazine tries to give an analogy on the question of language on the question of what and why should be highlighted to the children of the state of Kelantan. Through this method, the *Pengasuh's* magazine has begun to carry out an obligation towards its people by spreading the seeds of nationalism in education.

## Conclusion

The initial approach used by the *Pengasuh's* magazine was a progressive approach in nature. Through the institution of the Islamic Religious and Customs Council of the State of Kelantan (MAIK), then a special section that has been formed by MAIK has outwardly completed its obligation to the Malay community in Kelantan. However, with the availability of weekly publications at a reasonable price at that time, indirectly, the Malay community, especially the children of the state of Kelantan, have begun to accept ideas about social awareness in education and at the same time can move the community towards a more open and progressive in every action.

However, the efforts made by MAIK and the *Pengasuh's* magazine ironically cannot be developed without the large-scale involvement of the Malay community itself. with the existence of *Pengasuh's* magazine, the state of Kelantan is one of the first states in the Malay Peninsula through a religious institution that has established a special room for the Malay community to discuss matters related to education. This is a sign that the state of Kelantan for 23 years between 1918 and 1941 managed to break the tradition from a single flow of feudalism to a form of progressive thinking in the field of education.

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