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The Development of Islamic Education in The Malay World: Highlighting The Experience in Malaysia

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Abstract

Islamic education has made a significant contribution to the development process of Malaysia. Ever since preachers introduced Islam to Malaya, Islamic education has found a home in the hearts of the Malays. Its long journey has resulted in the establishment of a dual system of Islamic education. Thus, this study presents a qualitative-based method through data collection and past studies. Finding research look the Malays are still staunch supporters of the traditional system while the dual-stream system is a catalyst for Islam's empowerment in Malaysia. Therefore, this article aims to discuss how the Malaysia's government has modernised the structure and form of the Islamic education system, particularly in dual system Islamic education and Malaysia's Islamic education system maintained both traditional and modern methods.

Keywords: Islamic Education, The Malay World, Pre and Post-independence

Introduction

Islam has always been present in our country. Since the 13th century, it has been acknowledged as a religious faith and belief (Azmi, 1980). The preachers' calm and non-coercive approach, whether from Arabia, China, or even India, was well received by the Malay nobility and general public. It continued to grow and succeeded in drowning out the teachings of animism and Hindu-Buddhism, which dominated the Malay community's beliefs prior to the spread of Islam. The preachers' - concurrently traders' - success in persuading the Malays about the truth of Islam at that time should be honoured and rewarded, because it was through their efforts that Islam was appointed the religion of the majority of people and was crowned the official religion in the Federal Constitution of Malaysia.

In the teachings of Islam, education is given a great deal of emphasis and attention. The Qur'an states that educated individuals would be exalted their position on the side of humanity (al-Mujadalah: 11), and the sunnah underlines that acquiring knowledge is an obligation for every Muslim, regardless of gender (Hadith Narrated by Ibn Majah). This overall picture clearly illustrates the Islamic viewpoint, emphasizing the educational aspect. Islamic scholars have also noted that the process of seeking knowledge should begin from the cradle (children) until the grave (facing death). Thus, Islam has long used lifelong education as a framework for preparing for the hardships of the world and hereafter.

This endeavour has persisted for a long time, ever since Islam first took root in our country. Various forms of education have been organised by Islamic scholars in ensuring that the Muslim community is well-versed. Multiple forms of education have successfully been adapted by the scholars to satisfy current needs and requirements. The question is, what is the form and pattern of the country's Islamic education system that has been accentuated until it was able to survive to this day? Therefore, this study seeks to discuss the pattern of Malaysia's Islamic education system, which, in the author's opinion, is the national goal for the continuation of lifelong education of the Muslim community in particular.

History of Islamic Education in the Malay World

The term *Alam Melayu* is also known as the Malay Archipelago or *Nusantara* which encloses the geographical area inhabited by the Malays in Southeast Asia (Hashim, 1988). It comprises several countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia, Southern Thailand, Southern Philippines and Brunei. Regardless of how and to what extent Islamisation had spread throughout the Malay World in its early days, history has proven that the arrival of Islam in these regions was a watershed moment in the Malay world's history. Prior to the advent of Islam, the Malay community practised animism. This situation changed after the arrival of Islam, which introduced the concept of monotheism by rejecting the existence of several gods. Beginning with the concept of God's oneness and worship towards Him, Islam has succeeded in capturing the attention of the local population. Since the arrival of Islam, the Malay community's daily life and certain customs that were deemed to be antithetical to the belief have gradually been abandoned (Zainuddin, 2004).

The arrival of Islam in Malaya is believed to have begun around the 7th century. This viewpoint is predicated on the possibility of Islam spreading from West Asia to China via traders and missionaries. Subsequently, Islam spread rapidly following the rise of multiple Islamic kingdoms in Pasai and Perlak in the Malacca Straits in the 13th century. According to Marco Polo, Islam had spread in Malaya before the 15th century. In the year of 1292, Polo stopped by Sumatra while he was on his way back home from China and Perlak was his first port of call. He added that at that moment, Arab traders in the archipelago were already attempting to convert the locals to Islam. He also mentioned that Perlak was the only Islamic state in the Malay Archipelago at that time (Zainuddin, 2004).

Meanwhile, Ibn Battutah, an Arab traveler who stopped by twice in the oceans while travelling regularly to China between 1345 and 1346, reported that the Samudera-Pasai King (the ruler of the oceans) at that time had embraced Islam and practiced the Shafie *madhhab*. According to him, other states around the region have not yet accepted Islam. During the 13th and 16th centuries, Islam swept almost entirely over the Malay Archipelago, reducing the influence of Hindu-Buddhism, which had been established in Malaya for centuries. Since then, Islam has developed swiftly to become the religion embraced by the majority of the Malay Archipelago's inhabitants (Zainuddin, 2004). According to Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas,

the migration of the Malay community from the Hindu-Buddhist religious system to Islam is analogous to the transition of the Western world from the realm of Greek mythology to the world of thought development and enlightenment (Al-Attas, 1969).

Based on the history's perspective, Islamic studies and education that were originally established in the archipelago, particularly in Malaya, were in the form of reciting the Quran. Such a structure is similar to any district or area conquered by Islam, whether in Arabia, India, the archipelago, or elsewhere. This can be proven by the fact that in Malaya itself, during the Sultanate of Malacca (1400-1511), reciting the Quran was a basic course in addition to other fields of study. The study sessions were informal and held in the *tok guru's* residence, *surau*, and mosque. Some even claimed that the palace was also a place of learning (Buang, 2008). To make it easier for the locals to pronounce and utter the words of the Quran and Arabic letters, Islamic scholars and missionaries have introduced the Jawi letters into the Malay language, which are the same shape as the Arabic letters (Buang et al., 2008). This is done not only to assist locals learn the Quran, but also to help them learn other books, the majority of which are published in Arabic.

At this time, the *tok guru's* house was a venue to study knowledge as well in addition to the *surau*, mosque, and *madrasah*. Islamic religious studies were usually held at night in *surau*s and mosques, and were solely attended by adult males and ladies. It was held at night time since the teachers and students would work during the day. The teachers came from a variety of backgrounds, including traders, travellers, and preachers descended from Sayid or Sheikh (Nor & Othman, 2011). The presence of these people who came from various parts of the world such as Mecca, Medina, Hadramaut, Egypt, India, China, Java and Persia, had aided the courtiers and locals in matters related to Islam, particularly in the teachings of the Qur'an, such as reading al-Quran and Tajweed, *Tafsir al-Quran* and Hadith, Fiqh and Tawhid (Kim, 1980). In Malacca, the development of Islamic education began in the palace when the Sultan began to study with the Sheikhs and the change was followed by the dignitaries and public (Darusalam, 2001). This is where Islamic education began in Malaya.

Ever since Islam began to spread, the love for religion and the quest for Islamic knowledge have obviously inspired the souls of the Malaccan rulers. The sultan's decision to embrace Islam was motivated not only by a desire to protect his personal and political interests, but also by an aspiration in learning the religion's principles and regulations. The intention of the Sultan of Malacca to study Islamic knowledge has been explained by Shellabear as follows:

Then, His Majesty was to study the order of prayers with the *makhдум*.

(Shellabear 1948, p. 63)

This clearly demonstrates that Islamic education is the most significant component in the process of an individual's growth and maturity, capable of producing a generation of useful and ethical individuals. With the advent of Islam in this region, the spirit of nationalism and intellectualism grew not just among the courtiers, but also among the common people. In the historical record, the institution of Islamic studies has been mentioned as one of the bodies that operated magnificently till they were able to produce Islamic graduates and scholars who are versatile (Ishak, 2000). Furthermore, historical research indicates that the growth of Islamic education in the past began with the establishment of *madrasas* such as Nizamiyyah and Al-Azhar University (Arif, 2008).

Since Malaya became a multi-racial country at the time, the history of the development of education in Malaya was formed in a unique way. Each ethnic community has its own and separate academic institution. For the Malays, religious education is compulsory to be received. It started with non-formal education, namely *surau*, mosque, teachers' houses and later evolved into the development of the *pondok* education system, which is Malaya's oldest school system. With the development of the *madrrasah* or *maahad* system, this system has also undergone revisions and reforms to produce a more structured organisation. The religious education system functioned well until the arrival of Western imperialism with a secular mindset, which challenged Malaya's religious education system at that time. This has ultimately occurred as a result of assimilation and integration into the Malay educational system (Saat, 2007).

The arrival of the British was not only to regulate Malaya's economic wealth, but also to orient the Malays' thinking through a secular education system (Saat, 2007). This is because, prior to the war, the English education policy was deemed dualistic, since it reserved English education only for the aristocrats while vernacular education was more suited for the general people. This attempts to create a gap of differences in the Malay community as the English education system became an avenue to train students into becoming office workers that were needed to fill in the junior and secondary officer positions in public service and areas of business. On the contrary, vernacular education aimed to curb the general society's lack of education in a traditional manner which was discovered to be in line with the British's plans (Ee, 1990).

The establishment of English schools in the early 18th century, such as the Penang Free School (1816); Malacca Free School (1826); Singapore Free School (1834); Raffles Institution (1863); Victoria Institution (1894); King Edward VII Taiping School (1906), had a significant impact on Malaysia's Malay Muslim community. This is because, the Muslim community at the moment were extremely strong in adhering to Islamic teachings and suspicious of the development of English schools. They were frightened that their children would be Christianized through English schools run by Christian missionaries at that time, because the English education curriculum did not emphasise religious education at all (Jusuh, 1989). In fact, it is primarily concerned with the formation of values based only on Christian beliefs. Mok Soon Sang and Lee Shok Mee's points of view are as such:

These missionary schools are available to children of all races, and the goal of building the school is to provide general education and enhance children's morality based on Christian teachings.

(Sang & Mee 1988, p. 205)

This statement is particularly concerning for the Malay community to send their children to English schools as they believe that these schools are attempting to Christianize the Malays. As a matter of fact, its existence at the time posed a threat to the development of Islamic education in Malaya as well.

Islam have developed in the Malay world with the involvement of Islamic scholars and intellectuals who found a position in Malay society, either at the palace level or at the lower society level. The close relationship between them can be seen when Islamic scholars and intellectuals were appointed as royal officials, palace teachers, national missionaries and nobles solely to spread Islam in the Malay realm. The role of *ulama* (Muslim scholar) in the *pondok* education system was successful in producing a large number of Malay Muslim

intellectuals throughout the archipelago (Salleh, 1977). Before World War II, the *pondok* education system was immensely popular among the Malay population because it produced individuals who were intelligent and broad-minded about life. This is partly due to the fact that the function of religious schools at the time marked a historic action to help promote and organise Islamic education, instantaneously creating a sentiment of patriotism for the country.

For example, William R. Roff argued that based on the history of the development of religious schools in Perak, the existence of Malay students who received English education, such as at Malay College Kuala Kangsar (MCKK) which was established in 1909 and Sultan Idris Training Centre (SITC) which was established in 1922, played a role in changing the Malay mindset and nationalism at the time (Roff, 1980). However, Redzuan Othman, a local researcher, criticised Roff's theory since Roff focused solely on the importance of SITC and MCKK, ignoring the significance of religious schools in the formation of Malay nationalism awareness (Othman, 2006). The author also agrees with Redzuan Othman's point of view because Islamic educational institutions such as *pondok* and *madrasah* have historically played an important role in promoting awareness of the Malay community, and this further reflects the high value and role of religious schools at that time.

Islamic Education in Malaya Pre and Post-independence

Non-formal education is believed to have flourished in the Malay Peninsula and the Malay Archipelago from the 14th to 16th centuries, along with the expansion of Islam brought about by Arab and Indian traders who came to trade in Southeast Asia. On the other hand, formal and systematic education in Malaya began with the arrival of English trading companies along with Christian missionaries at the end of the 18th century (Hussin, 2002). During the 18th and late 19th centuries, many Islamic scholars attempted to construct *pondok* (Arabic) schools and *madrasas* throughout the Malay Peninsula especially in Kelantan, Terengganu and Kedah (Hussin, 1993).

Islamic educational institutions were discovered to have played a positive role in the development of Islamic teachings, either through *surau*, *pondok*, and *madrasa* institutions. Some believe that it was inspired by the reformist ideas of the Middle East, such as Sayid Jalaluddin al-Afghani (1839-1907) and Muhammad Abduh (1849-1905), where Islamic schools became an ideal momentum for people to gain an education at the time. Islamic scholars have considered and planned various efforts to strengthen the function of these Islamic educational academies in tackling the numerous issues that lie ahead. Among the elements emphasised in any Islamic educational institution are (Rahim & Awang, 2003)

- i. Aspects of discipline to produce Muslims who are knowledgeable and behave with morale,
- ii. Application of the concept of knowledge and democratisation of education to the students involved,
- iii. Creation of an advanced syllabus for current interests,
- iv. Encouragement for students to pursue academic *rihlah* (further studies to a higher level) and
- v. Establishment of a network between Islamic educational institutions around the world with mutual recognition.

In general, the structure of Islamic education or Islamic studies in the archipelago was comprehensive, starting at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels (Ishak, 1995). Islamic

education was also provided in homes, *suraus*, *pondok* and mosques by *imams* and scholars, some of whom were descendants of Sayyids and Sheikhs. At this moment, the levels of study were not so significant as it was merely an informal method of study. The study focused on strengthening one's understanding of the holy book of the Quran, Arabic Language, Sufism, Fiqh, Tawhid, Islamic History, and *Fard al-Ayn* (Salleh, 1980). The development of such education is vital since it has served as the foundation for the advancement of Malay education. This foundation helped facilitate vernacular development when it was later introduced by the British as a form of education in Malay society (Chelliah, 1947).

Islamic Education Pre-independence

Due to the presence of British colonialists in the country, the development of Islamic education was highly restricted (Redcliffe, 1978). The fall of Malacca to the Portuguese in 1511 caused the Malays to face the dark ages in terms of politics, economy, culture, religion, and even education. However, some Malays who had previously been informed by the concept of Islam through *akidah*, *sharia*, *akhlak*, and education were able to prevent themselves from being saturated by all Western thoughts in the fields of culture, religion, and education.

This is evident when the Malay community strived to defend traditional institutions such as houses, *suraus*, mosques or Quranic schools as centres of focus for students until some of them continue their studies to higher levels such as in Mecca, Egypt, Pattani and other places. After graduation, they would return to their hometown and establish a higher level of Islamic education, such as *pondok* or *madrassa*. This is noticeable as according to some historians, the advent of *pondok* in Malaya began around the 19th century (Ishak, 1994). *Pondok* is one of the traditional educational institutions that is ideal and exceptional compared to at home, *suraus*, mosque, and palace (Salleh, 1997). Its purpose is to provide the community with Islamic knowledge and education in order to develop a perfect Muslim.

The teaching given in the *pondok* had a higher standard than the teaching in the houses of the priests and teachers. This was also supported by Mohd Salleh who stated that the *pondok* education system can be organised from the conveyance of religious teachers at home or *suraus* (Salleh, 1997). The states that were famous for their *pondok* schools are Kelantan, Kedah, Terengganu, Perak, and Penang. Some claimed that Kelantan is the most eminent state for the study of *pondok* until it is known as Serambi Mekah, which is a temporary stopover place to study before continuing their studies in the city of Mecca. Among the famous *pondok* in Kelantan are Pondok Kubang Pasu, Pondok Tok Semaian and Pondok Sungai Budur (Salleh, 1997). As for in Terengganu, there are Pondok Pulau Manis, Pondok Haji Ali Atas Tol and Pondok Haji Wan Latif in Besut, while Pondok Batu 16 or better known as Pondok Pak Ya, Padang Lumat, Pondok Tuan Haji Ahmad, Pondok Haji Abdullah bin Kechik and others in Kedah (Jusuh, 1990; Salleh & Salleh, 1998).

The curriculum of *pondok* studies emphasises *naqliyah* knowledge in addition to *asriah* knowledge. Among the knowledge that were meant are reciting the Quran, Tajweed, Usuluddin, Fiqh, Usul Balaghah, Falak, Islamic Literature, Arabic Language, Islamic History and Medicines conducted in some *pondok* (Salleh, 1997). Among the privileges enjoyed by Islamic educational institutions of the past (*pondok*) is (Rahim, 2003): Firstly, the education system was created privately, free of government policy limits and restraints. As a result of this condition, an *ulama* was able to operate autonomously, without being affected by any party with a certain goal and objectives. More precisely, in the era of tradition, the *pondok's*

scholars have acted as agents of change and intellectuals of the *ummah* who are attentive and proactive in dealing with modern societal concerns.

Secondly, an educational system oriented toward the interaction between practice and theory was established, emphasising the cultivation of a knowledge in order to make a student learn as much information as possible in order to gain Allah's pleasure. Thirdly, an open education system that allows everyone, regardless of ancestral background or age, to pursue it. What can be proud of is that, through this approach, it has already indirectly adopted the concept of democratisation of education with the emphasis on the importance of knowledge in the life of a Muslim, as knowledge belongs together, and every individual has the right to be given the opportunity to obtain knowledge.

However, following the commencement of World War II in 1945, this *pondok* institution began to deteriorate (Roff, 1980). Thus, a more formal and organised education system was constructed in the form of *madrasa*, or religious or Arabic schools, and it was founded by the Kaum Muda, who were the nation's pioneers at the time. This *madrasa* education system began to develop in the early 1920s and remains to this day (Lebar, 2002). Its main goal in establishing itself was to compete with the English and Malay vernacular schools (Salleh, 1980).

The *madrasa* administration system operated independently. However, the basic curriculum that was introduced was the same, with *akidah*, *sharia* and Arabic used as the medium of instruction in the learning and teaching procedure. Many graduates of *madrasa* institutions continued their education in West Asia, notably as at the Masjidil-Haram, Mecca and Al-Azhar University, Egypt. The first *madrasah* that existed in Malaya was Madrasah al-Iqbal in 1907 in Singapore. Ten years later, Madrasah al-Hadi was established in Bandar Kaba, Malacca (1917) which was founded by Syed Sheikh Ahmad al-Hadi himself, a young figure who was well-known in Malaya at that time. Following that are Madrasah al-Masyhur, Pulau Pinang, Madrasah Muhammadiyah, Kota Baharu, Madrasah Alawiyah ad-Diniah, Perlis and Maahad Al-Ihya 'asy-Syarif Gunung Semanggol, Perak.

The *madrasa* education can be described as balanced because it includes both *Fard al-Ayn* and *Fard al-Kifaya*. The education at the *madrasah* also provides students with guidance, enthusiasm, and courage to tackle all of the difficulties and trials that come due to the secularisation approach of Western institutions. Islamic studies were no longer limited to matters of worship and monotheism, but were constructed more comprehensively by incorporating other subjects in the curriculum such as Arabic, mathematics, geography, history, and other subjects that can assist students to obtain a perfect education (Salleh, 1997).

The construction of the education system, on the other hand, gave the colonialists a sense of unease since they were searching for ways to limit the development of Islam. Hence, the pre-secularisation of Malay children's education occurred rapidly and dramatically. In the early 19th century, the Malay Vernacular department of the Malacca Free School was established. This is owing to Christian missionaries from the London Missionary Society becoming aware of the Malay community's strong prejudice against English education. As a result, they attempted to introduce this new Malay education system to Malays as much as possible.

Malay vernacular schools that were established by the British government in 1856 gained less support from the Malay community because the Quran was not taught (Salleh, 1997). Thus, in 1871, Skinner, the nazir of schools or Inspector of School who was the Acting Magistrate in Seberang Perai established the *Sekolah Melayu*, and the Quran was taught in

the afternoon in this school (Kee & Hean, 1972). Malay students at the morning school would learn reading, composing, spelling, writing, arithmetic, physical training and natural sciences. Then, in the 20th century, it was added with gardening and weaving classes (Marzuki, 1995). However, the policy of diplomacy and tolerance of colonial Malay education was discontinued beginning in 1917 when Winstead, Assistant Director of Education of the Straits Settlements and the Federated Malay States had suggested in his report (Winstead Report), that religious education (al-Quran Education) should be discontinued in Malay schools. This is because al-Quran classes that were used as an incentive for parents to send their children to school were no longer necessary (Kim & Othman, 1995). As a result, religious and al-Quran courses in Malay schools have been relocated from the official school timetable and instructed to be taught in the afternoon. Without recognising it, the Malay community developed a philosophy of dualism toward knowledge, the foundation of integrated knowledge. Therefore, there is a non-religious knowledge known as academic and religious knowledge that is non-academic which is frequently discriminated against because it is considered to not contribute to the country's development even one bit (Lebar, 1992).

Following the country's independence, *madrasas* became paralysed due to facing the country's secular national education system, as well as a lack of students and financial resources (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 1988). This is attributable to the fact that education receives more economic security in government schools only. This situation has shifted society's perception of education in government schools being far superior to education in *madrasas*. In short, prior to independence, the development of Islamic education achieved a pinnacle with the establishment of the Muslim College Malaya in Klang in 1955, and it is an Islamic educational institution that has produced many skilled graduates from all walks of life (Zin et al., 2005). The establishment of that college paved the way for the establishment of several more Islamic institutions of higher learning in the country, particularly after Malaysia's independence.

Islamic Education Post-independence

Religious schools, which use Islamic education as a base, have endured a period of decline since the existence of secular education. This is because government school pupils receive economic stability through the secular system. Since Malaysians recognised that economics was an essential aspect of life at the time, many parents opted to send their children to government schools rather than religious schools (Sakamon, 1988). The secular education system divides the curriculum into two interconnected groups: the Islamic part and the modern part (Kassim, 1991). This secular system, however, has dominated academic education while discriminating against religious education in schools.

The establishment of Islamic Education in the National Education System is based on the recommendations included in the Razak Report 1956, the Rahman Talib Report 1960 in Sections 36 (1) and 36 (2) of the Education Act 1961 (Kadir, 1994). According to what is stated in both the statement and the Act, Islamic education or subjects must be taught in any registered school if there are at least 15 Muslim students (Ahmad, 1984). Hence, Islamic religious lessons are currently provided at government-aided schools as a result of the enforcement of the Act, and were initially taught outside of school hours (evening school). Up until 1962, the topic of Islamic religious knowledge has been included in the official school timetable, with a weekly allocation of 120 minutes for teaching and learning (Kadir, 1994).

At the time, the Islamic religious education curriculum only covered the fundamentals of Islam, such as Fiqh, Tawhid, Islamic History, and teachings from a few selected verses of

the Quran and Hadith (Ahmad, 2004). Based on the curriculum, Islamic studies place a greater emphasis on conveying religious information than on highlighting the methods of practice and appreciation. Furthermore, the manner in which teachers deliver their teachings was also patterned to provide knowledge and information as outlined in the curriculum. Moreover, students are more likely to memorise information given without relating it to practice and appreciation. This is because they take religious studies only for information and to pass the examination only whether at the level of *Sijil Rendah Pelajaran (SRP)* or *Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM)* (Ahmad, 2004).

The community is mindful of students' difficulties in connecting religious education to their daily lives. Finally, in 1974, the Committee to Review Islamic Religious Subjects in Schools was formed (Kadir, 1994). This committee's role is to assess and re-evaluate the Islamic religious knowledge curriculum, as well as teaching methods, supervision, and teaching staff. The study's findings were forwarded to the Cabinet Committee to Review Education Policy in 1979, who stated:

Today, the quality of teaching and learning of Islamic Religious Knowledge in schools has not yet achieved the required level, owing to the fact that the majority of these religious teachers lack the requisite professional qualifications. Furthermore, students do not receive sufficient guidance in Islamic Religious Education as it is currently practised, which does not highlight the practical components as expected and desired.

(Kadir 1994, pp. 107-108)

Several features from the 1979 Cabinet Committee Report can be summarised; first, components of Islamic practice and appreciation are not emphasised in Islamic teaching and learning. Second, since teachers do not use the suitable teaching aids, teachers' instruction aspects are more focused on the delivery of Islamic knowledge and less on the practical aspect. Third, teachers do not receive adequate teacher training, supervision, or guidance. By recognising these flaws, many short-term and long-term efforts have been implemented to remedy the situation and weak points.

Among the measures taken are the provision of teacher training to untrained educators, the appointment of sufficient officers in the Islamic Education Unit, the State Education Department, and the District Education Office, and the establishment of Religious Subject Inspectors in schools. Furthermore, the formulation and implementation of the Integrated Primary School Curriculum (KBSR), the Integrated Islamic Education Curriculum (1982) and the Integrated Secondary School Curriculum (KBSM) were developed (Kadir, 1994).

With reference to the claims and certain facts above, the author believes that all of these are the background and history of Islamic Education that occurred in Malaysia, which not only involves changes in the location of study but also changes in study time, curriculum, goals, and teaching techniques. This is because Islamic education prior to independence permits pupils to only study the Quran and receive spiritual education, whereas education after independence focuses solely on knowledge. The goal of KBSR and KBSM Islamic education is to civilise Muslims. All of these modifications are intended to improve the effectiveness of Islamic education among students through Islamic studies.

Discussion

The Islamic education system is currently organised into three categories: federal government religious schools, state government religious schools, and private religious schools. The Malaysian Ministry of Education is in charge of federal government religious schools. These schools can be categorised into four types: *Sekolah Berasrama Penuh*, *Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Agama*, *Sekolah Agama Bantuan Kerajaan* and *Kelas Aliran Agama Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan* (day schools). Next, the state government religious schools are administered by the State Islamic Religious Council as the organisation that implements the administrative mandate directed by the State Religious Exco. Lastly, The School Governing Board is in charge of private schools that are divided into three categories, namely *sekolah pondok*, *Sekolah Agama Rakyat*, and *Sekolah Tahfiz al-Quran*.

Malaysia's government has modernised the structure and form of the Islamic education system, particularly in dual system Islamic education. Up until 2012, Malaysia's Islamic education system maintained both traditional and modern methods. Those who are unconcerned about graduating will follow the conventional path while those seeking a government degree and certificate will enrol in dual system institutions. The variety of Islamic education available in Malaysia exemplifies the government's openness and dedication to the promotion of Islamic law in Malaysia. Furthermore, this type of religious education has gained popularity and favour among parents who wish their children to understand the world and the hereafter.

The curriculum for dual system students has been modified to meet current requirements. It is separated into two sections: the curriculum of the Malaysian Ministry of Education and the curriculum of Al-Azhar University (Bu'uth al-Azhar). The Malaysian Ministry of Education's curriculum is still used in the majority of government-sponsored schools while the majority of private religious schools that use a dual system chose to combine the ministry curriculum with the al-Azhar curriculum. The Islamic Education Division of the Malaysian Ministry of Education, on the other hand, constantly monitors the students for this dual curriculum to assure the quality and worth of graduates produced.

Conclusion

For Malaysian Muslims, Islamic education is a necessity. It grows and evolves in accordance with current events. Although there are two streams of Islamic education, their common purpose is to develop a generation of *rabbani* (divine) who adhere to Islamic beliefs. It also functions as a fortress to keep Malaysians from becoming caught by *mungkar* (bad) actions that are prohibited by Islam. Islam, as sharia, must be protected by the whole Muslim community, and one method of doing so is through Islamic education.

The Malaysian government has given the citizens complete freedom to deepen their knowledge of Islam. It is a symbol of government democracy for citizens to obtain their rights as Malaysians. This can be proven as the government's endeavour in showcasing the broadest possible opportunity for the Islamic education system to thrive. Thus, the preachers have made use of this field to continue implementing Islamic order, ensuring that Islam flourishes, notably in Malaysia and around the world.

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