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## The Role of District Chief (*Penghulu Mukim*) in Religion and Muslims Affairs in Selangor State

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### Abstract

District Chief (*Penghulu Mukim*) in selangor is a civil servant appointed by the current selangor state public service commission who acts as the head of administration at the district level and the traditional formal leader of the community, not based on politics. District Chief played a major role in the Malay community starting from the era of the rule of the Malay Kings before the arrival of the British. District Chief becomes an intermediary between stake holders and the people. The institution of Penghulu is also often associated with the Islamic religious affairs of the community, especially in matters of weddings, mosques, celebrations of Islamic great days, points of reference for the views of household institutions, management of small inheritances and so on. The Islamic Religious Administration Enactment (Selangor State) 2003 states that the District Chief is the Advisor for the mosque in his district based on the provision in item 41. (5) Regulations of Mosques and Suraus (Selangor State) 2017. Therefore, the District Chief has a role and responsibility in religious affairs and the Muslim community in Selangor. Thus, this article aims to identify the role and responsibility of the District Chief as a community leader in matters of religion and Muslims in Selangor today. Quantitative method is the research design chosen in this study. The method used in this study is literature research by referring to primary sources and secondary sources consisting of articles, journals, enactments and guidelines. The method of field research by interviewing the District Chief in the district and the Union of Penghulu/Penggawa Peninsula Malaysia (KPPSM) Selangor State Branch was also carried out. The results of the study found that District Chief plays an important role in Islamic religious affairs for the Muslim community, especially in the administrative area.

**Keywords:** District Chiefs, Penghulu Mukim, District Administrator, Islamic Affairs, Selangor

## Introduction

The administration of district under the leadership of Penghulu is one of the elements of traditional positions in the history of national administration and it is one of the important uniqueness in Malaysia. The position of Penghulu is so significant and important in the world of administration, leadership and politics, especially for the Malays since before the British colonization in Malaya. After the country achieved independence, the administrative institution of District Chiefs (*Penghulu Mukim*), especially in Selangor, continued with adjustments and made the position of Penghulu one of the civil positions appointed by the Selangor State Public Service Commission. The Penghulu institution is associated with the Islamic religious affairs of the community, especially in matters of weddings, mosques, celebrations of Islamic days, points of reference for the views of household institutions, management of small inheritances and so on because the Penghulu has been the traditional leader of the Malay Muslim community since time immemorial. The need for the leadership of District Chiefs (*penghulu mukim*) to the village community cannot be denied anymore because the Penghulu institution is one of the important elements as an agent in determining the success and progress of community development in the village. Therefore, this article aims to explain the role and responsibility of Penghulu as a community leader in matters of religion and Muslims in Selangor today.

## Research Methodology

The design of this study is qualitative. The data collection method used is through bibliography that refers to primary sources and secondary sources consisting of articles, journals, books, seminar papers, dissertation research, theses, enactments and guidelines. The method of field research by interviewing the District Chiefs (*Penghulu Mukim*) in the district and the Union of Penghulu/Penggawa of Peninsula Malaysia (KPPSM) Selangor State Branch was also carried out.

## The Institution of Penghulu

The term "Penghulu" is defined as the leader of a district, village, or district (Dewan Bahasa Dan Pustaka, 2007). Among the Malaysian society, particularly among the Malay-Muslim communities in rural areas, villages, or outskirts, the term "Penghulu" is well-known to them (Jusoh et al., 2016). The word "Penghulu" is derived from the base word "ulu" or "hulu," which means head or source. The addition of the prefix "peng" to the word "hulu" forms the term "Penghulu," which can be understood as an individual who is a pioneer, founder, or initiator. Therefore, the term "Penghulu" can be defined as a leader of a group of people under their supervision or care.

Since before the arrival of the British, the institution of Penghulu has been closely linked to the administrative world, especially among the Malays, who mutually needed and were directly associated with the leadership of the Sultan in the palace (Nur Azim & Azmi 2017). In the past, the state administration system, led by the Sultan as the state leader, was assisted by officials in the districts, and the smallest leadership unit within a district was the Penghulu (Gullick, 1989). The traditional administrative institution prior to the British takeover in this country showed that the position of Penghulu was held only by individuals of royal or noble descent, appointed directly by the Sultan. Thus, indirectly, the Penghulu acted as the absolute representative of the Sultan in the administration of a district during that time (Wangsa Mahkota Selangor 2016).

The arrival of the British established British administration in Selangor by appointing Residents and Assistant Residents starting from October 1874, after the signing of the Pangkor Agreement or after the Selangor Civil War (Nur Azim & Azmi, 2017). This event had an impact on the traditional Malay administration with the emergence of Western-style administration, which introduced the Resident as the main government leader, while the Sultan only acted as a powerless ruler. The British in Selangor, through the Resident, introduced the Selangor State Council (MMNS) in 1877, government departments, and District Officers in 1875 (Farhan, 2012). The position of Penghulu was also introduced by the British in the Resident's administration in Selangor in 1875 and recognized as a Government Officer in the administration of Selangor. During the British colonial era, the institution of Penghulu was still continued because the Resident needed Penghulus, especially to control the lower classes, as the Penghulu was the individual closest to the people (Leong, 2005). The Penghulu, as a local leader, was highly valued by the British in helping to maintain a particular administrative area. However, the Pangkor Agreement and the emergence of the British administration system led by the Resident caused the Penghulu's direct relationship with the Sultan to decline, and the Penghulu was placed under the control and monitoring of the British Resident. During that time, the work instructions issued to the Penghulu came from the Resident, not from the Sultan. The British administration system in Malaya caused the institution of Penghulu to become increasingly distant from the palace and the Sultan, unlike in traditional Malay times.

After the country's independence, the institution of Penghulu in the district, particularly in Selangor, was continued with adjustments, and the position of Penghulu was made one of the public service appointments under the State Public Service Commission of Selangor. Under the administration of the Selangor State Government, Selangor has Penghulu positions with grades NP29, NP32, NP36, and NP40, where all Penghulus are assigned to the Development Division (Community Development) and the District/Land Offices in Selangor. Since the 1990s, the District Chief Offices have been placed under the administration of the Development Division, District/Land Offices to streamline the management and tasks of the Penghulus within a district (Nor Razinah & Faisal, 2016). The District Officer acts as the department head who issues task instructions and monitors the Penghulu's tasks within a district. The District Chief's in Selangor are community leaders who serve as intermediaries between the Selangor State Government, especially with the people, regarding land administration, Islamic religious administration, development security, social activities, and community welfare, especially at the village and district levels (Public Service Department, 2009).

In general, the selection and appointment requirements for a District Chief in Selangor today require a male Malaysian citizen who is 18 years old and above and a native of Selangor. Additionally, the appointed Mukim Penghulu must be a Muslim as their duties encompass matters of Islamic administration. If the Penghulu is appointed with a *Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia* (SPM) or an equivalent qualification recognized by the Government, they are required to have at least 10 years of relevant experience, involvement in community activities and volunteering, as well as extensive knowledge of community development, customs, religion, and local socio-culture (Public Service Department, 2009). If the Penghulu is appointed with a *Sijil Tinggi Persekolahan Malaysia* (STPM), *Sijil Tinggi Agama Malaysia* (STAM), *Diploma*, or an equivalent qualification recognized by the Government, they are required to have at least 5 years of relevant experience, involvement in community activities and volunteering, as well

as extensive knowledge of community development, customs, religion, and local socio-culture (Public Service Department, 2009).

An individual appointed as a Penghulu should ideally be a native of the state, respected by the community, and capable of learning, understanding, and mastering the local dialect of the mukim in order to communicate effectively with the local residents (Nor Razinah & Faisal, 2016). Furthermore, the Penghulu should also be approachable and visible in mosques or suraus, especially within their administrative area, while also being able to read the Quran, deliver sermons (khutbah), lead tahlil recitations, and be proficient in Jawi script (Roshidi et al. 2021).

### **The Role of Penghulu in Religious Affairs and The Muslim Community**

The role of the Penghulu in matters of religion and the Muslim community in the mukim of Selangor can be observed as follows:

#### **Management/Administration of Mosques**

One of the roles of the Penghulu in matters of religion and the Muslim community in Selangor is as follows:

#### **Advisor to the Mosques in the Mukim**

The mosque is the house of Allah, a place of worship, a revered place, and a symbol of the grandeur of Islam for Muslims worldwide. The function of the mosque as a place of worship is not limited to prayers, seclusion (*iktikaf*), study classes, and religious lectures alone. The mosque also plays a role in education, administration, community cohesion, politics, economic development, social affairs, and the spiritual and physical development of the Muslim community (Suhardi et al., 2022). The historical administration of Tanah Melayu has proven the significance of mosques as important institutions where mosques, suraus, or madrasahs serve as centers for education, the dissemination of Islam (Roslan & Tarmizi, 2011), and the development of the Muslim community and the splendor of Islamic civilization itself (Azlina et al., 2016). The role of the mosque in the development of the Muslim community is closely related to the role and responsibilities of a District chief.

In Selangor, mosques are categorized into seven types: state mosques, district mosques, royal mosques, central mosques (masjid jamek), institutional mosques, village mosques (masjid kariah), and upgraded mosques (naik taraf) (Selangor, Jabatan Agama Islam Selangor Portal E-Masjid, 2019). The Penghulu serves as an advisor to the mosques within their mukim. This is based on the Enactment of the Administration of Islamic Religion (Selangor) 2003, which states that the Penghulu is the advisor to the mosques within their mukim based on the provisions in Section 41(5) of the Mosque and Surau Regulations (Selangor) 2017. The mosque advisor has a role in attending the mosque committee meetings organized by the mosque administrators. Additionally, as an advisor to the mosque, the Penghulu ensures that the management and administration of the mosque within their mukim comply with the provisions, regulations, laws, and guidelines in force. Furthermore, the advisor plays a role in providing any views or suggestions regarding issues that arise in the mosque and recommending the implementation of any programs aimed at enhancing the mosque.

As a community leader not based on politics and an advisor to the mosque, the Penghulu also serves as an important bridge between the mosque committee and the members of the Village Community Management Council (MPKK). The relationship between these two groups is often said to be distant and less cooperative due to differences in views,



especially political ideologies. In this situation, the Penghulu, who is a supervisory officer to the Mukim Chiefs (*Penghulu Mukim*), is seen as the most suitable individual to strengthen the relationship and establish good working relations between the mosque committee and the leadership of the village committee.

### **Members of the Nominating and Selection Panel for Mosque Committee Members and Audit Inspectors at the District Level**

In the state of Selangor, the appointment period for members of the mosque committee for one session is three years, and the latest session is for the years 2023-2025, effective from January 1, 2023, to December 31, 2025. In the third year (the final year) of a session, the Selangor Islamic Religious Council (MAIS) issues a circular letter to all Kariah Mosque Trustees and Institutional Mosque Trustees to convene a Special General Meeting for the Nomination and Election of Kariah Mosque Committee Members and Audit Inspectors for the next session, following the regulations in the Guidelines for the Implementation of the Special General Meeting (Nomination and Election of Kariah Mosque Committee Members and Audit Inspectors) of Selangor.

In this meeting, nominations will be proposed from registered members of the Kariah to fill seven positions of Mosque Officers, consisting of one Trustee (Nazir), two imams, two muezzins, and two caretakers (*siak*). The meeting will also nominate registered members of the Kariah to fill non-Mosque Officer positions, including one Deputy Trustee, one secretary, one assistant secretary, one treasurer, one assistant treasurer, six committee members doubling as bureau chiefs, one youth representative, one Muslimat representative, one Muslimat funeral manager, and two audit inspectors. A total of 23 individuals will be appointed as Kariah Mosque Committee Members and Audit Inspectors for the new session.

According to Section D of the Guidelines for the Implementation of the Special General Meeting (Nomination and Election of Kariah Mosque Committee Members and Audit Inspectors) of Selangor 2022, the Mukim Penghulu serves as a Member of the Nomination and Candidate Selection Panel for Mosque Committee Members and Audit Inspectors at the District Level. The meeting will be chaired by the District Officer, who also serves as the District Islamic Religious Head. The Penghulu, as a panel member, plays a role in assessing the selection of candidates for the Kariah Mosque Committee Members and Audit Inspectors.

The views and advice of the Mukim Penghulu will be sought and referred to, especially regarding the acceptance of the nominated individuals by the Kariah members before their official appointment. This is particularly important for candidates who have issues such as formal objections from Kariah members, holding positions in any political party, undergoing prosecution for civil or Shariah criminal offenses in court, having known poor personal character that is widely recognized by Kariah members, and so on. For example, in the Hulu Langat district, there were previous cases where an imam candidate supported or adhered to ideologies conflicting with Ahl Sunnah Wal Jamaah, such as Wahhabi and Hizbut Tahrir ideologies.

### **Members of the Mosque Administrative Board in the District**

In order to upgrade the management of mosques in the state of Selangor, according to the Selangor Islamic Religious Administration Enactment (Selangor) of 2003, the Selangor Islamic Religious Council (MAIS) has classified several categories of mosques as management mosques. These include all royal mosques in Selangor, all district mosques, most recently completed mosques, and some Kariah mosques that have conflicts or issues with the

congregation. The management mosques are composed of a chairman, a deputy chairman, six members representing departments or agencies in the district, five members representing the congregation, and a secretary who also serves as the manager of the management mosque.

Currently, there are 43 management mosques in Selangor. The district of Petaling has the highest number of management mosques, with a total of 18 mosques. It is followed by the Klang district with 6 mosques, and the Gombak and Hulu Langat districts with 4 mosques each. The Sabak Bernam district has the lowest number of management mosques in Selangor, with only one mosque. The number of management mosques that are represented by the Mukim Penghulu as members of the Administrative Board is 21, with the highest number in the Petaling district, consisting of 5 mosques. The Hulu Langat and Gombak districts have 4 mosques each. The Sepang and Sabak Bernam districts have management mosques but are not represented by the Mukim Penghulu as members of the Administrative Board.

Table 1

*Number of Management Mosques Represented by the Mukim Penghulu as Members of the Administrative Board.*

District in Selangor	Number of MAIS Management Mosques	Mosques Represented by Mukim Penghulu as Members of the Administrative Board (Session 2023-2025)
Petaling	18	5
Klang	6	3
Gombak	4	4
Hulu Langat	4	4
Kuala Langat	2	2
Hulu Selangor	3	2
Kuala Selangor	2	1
Sepang	3	0
Sabak Bernam	1	0

Source: Union of Penghulu / Penggawa of Peninsular Malaysia, Selangor Branch. (2023).

#### **Officer for Verification of Resident Affidavit and Income**

Resident refers to someone who settles or resides (Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 2007). The Enactment of Islamic Family Law of Selangor (2003) defines residency as permanent residence or commonly residing in a specific area. The state of Selangor has stipulated that the minimum period for someone to be considered a resident in Selangor is at least four months within the local community. Verification of residency is important for residents in Selangor, especially for those originating from other states and having identification addresses outside Selangor, in order to conduct specific affairs, particularly official matters, in Selangor.

Verification of income is a form of confirming the monthly income received by individuals who do not have a salary statement. This is usually required by those who are self-

employed, such as small traders, street vendors, rural workers, and farmers, especially in rural areas where monthly income statements are not commonly available.

The District Chief (*Penghulu Mukim*) is a government officer authorized to verify residency and income of residents in Selangor according to their respective districts, sub-districts, and villages within their administrative areas. The verification of residency or income provided is based on information from the applicant's identification address, the applicant's verbal confirmation, testimony from accompanying witnesses, original copies of electricity bills, and recent water bills as evidence that the applicant is a resident of the district, sub-district, or village. Typically, the District Chief (*Penghulu Mukim*) is familiar with the residents who permanently reside within their sub-district or village.

There are numerous official transactions or applications in government offices in Selangor that require the verification of residency and income as one of the requirements to be submitted together with the application. These include applications for Islamic marriage or divorce in Selangor. Muslims residing in Selangor who wish to apply for marriage must complete Form 1, the Affidavit of Residency Confirmation, before submitting it with other required documents to the District Islamic Religious Office in their place of residence. Similarly, for applications for zakat assistance in Selangor, which is managed by the Selangor Zakat Board, Muslims applying for assistance from the board need to fill out and complete Form A, the Residency Confirmation of Head of Household and Household Income, to be attached with other documents in the application. Additionally, applications for divorce through the Sharia Court in Selangor, government job vacancies through the Selangor Public Service Commission, educational assistance from the Selangor Foundation, assistance from the Selangor Elderly Friendly Scheme (SMUE), MARA educational assistance, and assistance from the Department of Social Welfare (JKM) also require the verification of residency and income in the submitted applications.

Therefore, the role of the District Chief (*Penghulu Mukim*) in facilitating the affairs of the community in this matter is crucial. Furthermore, it becomes easier for the community to meet, make appointments, and visit the District Chief's residence even outside office hours or on non-working days, as the District Chief (*Penghulu Mukim*) also resides as a resident within the respective sub-district or village.

### **Islamic Propagation Agents and Religious Practice**

Dakwah refers to the act of inviting or calling people to the path of truth, guiding them towards the path approved by Allah, and saving them from falling into the valley of falsehood (Faisal et al., 2020). This goal can be achieved by spreading the teachings, principles, and values of Islam to others in order to help them understand the essence of true Islam based on the principles of Ahli Sunnah Wal Jamaah. In this context, District Chief (*Penghulu Mukim*) play a crucial role in disseminating the correct teachings, values, and principles of Islam to the community members under their leadership.

Penghulus have the responsibility of facilitating the delivery of authentic Islamic teachings and guiding the villagers towards practicing these teachings. From the perspective of dakwah, Penghulus act as da'is (preachers) within their communities, inviting people to goodness and urging them to abandon forbidden actions. This aligns with the definition of da'i, which refers to a person who calls others directly or indirectly through words, actions, or behavior towards a state that is good or better, based on the Quran and the Sunnah (Kholis et al., 2022).



Penghulus also serve as intermediaries between the rural community and the Islamic religious authorities in bridging the understanding gap in Islamic teachings. As leaders in the village, Penghulus are entrusted with upholding the enjoining of good and forbidding of evil within the society. Community leaders should encourage and motivate the people to better practice the teachings of Islam. Penghulus need to set a good example in religious practices and serve as role models for the people under their administration. They play a role in assisting those in need, including in religious affairs such as organizing marriage ceremonies, providing family advice, managing funerals, or visiting the deceased in the Muslim community. Penghulus also strive to establish cooperation with authorities such as the Selangor Islamic Religious Department (JAIS) and other religious institutions to enhance religious practices in their respective areas. The role of Penghulus in dakwah is crucial as they can directly influence the moral values, customs, and ethics of the community. In essence, Penghulus play a significant role in spreading the true teachings of Islam, promoting unity, peace, harmony within the society, and becoming exemplars of righteous living.

In Selangor, there is a lineup of Penghulus who are appointed, not only with educational backgrounds in administration or management but also with academic qualifications such as bachelor's degrees and diplomas in Islamic studies from local and Middle Eastern institutions of higher learning. Selangor has four Penghulus who possess teaching certifications issued by the Selangor Islamic Religious Council (MAIS), including one in Hulu Langat and Klang districts, and two in Kuala Langat district. They are actively involved in delivering lectures and sermons in mosques and suraus, particularly within their administrative areas, with a focus on imparting knowledge of the fundamental principles of Islam to congregants.

Table 2

*District Chiefs (Penghulu Mukim) with higher education qualifications in Islamic studies in Selangor*

<b>Names Penghulu</b>	<b>of</b>	<b>District</b>	<b>Qualification</b>	<b>University</b>	
Mohd Fazli bin Abdul Latif		Gombak	Bachelor's degree in Islamic Studies (Syariah)	Universiti Selangor	Islam
Tuan Haji Abd Ghani bin Surani		Kuala Langat	Bachelor's degree in Islamic Studies (Syariah)	Universiti Mesir	Al-Azhar,
Rusmi bin Minhat		Hulu Selangor	Bachelor's degree in Islamic Studies (Arab)	Universiti Mesir	Al-Azhar,
Mohd Redzuan bin Samsudin		Kuala Langat	Bachelor's degree in Islamic Studies (Syariah)	Universiti Mesir	Al-Azhar,
Mohd Rizan bin Haron		Kuala Selangor	Bachelor's degree in Islamic Studies (Da'wah and Leadership)	Universiti Malaysia	Kebangsaan
Nor Akmal bin Nordin		Hulu Langat	Bachelor's degree in Islamic Studies (Da'wah & Leadership)	Universiti Malaysia	Kebangsaan

Hasif bin Japri	Klang	Bachelor's degree in Islamic Studies (Theology & Philosophy)	Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia
Ishak bin Sulaiman	Sabak Bernam	Diploma in Islamic Education Management.	Universiti Islam Selangor
Ahmad Nazri bin Ibrahim	Hulu Selangor	Diploma in Islamic Studies	Universiti Teknologi Malaysia

Source: Union of District Chiefs (*Penghulu Mukim*) / Wardens of Peninsular Malaysia, Selangor Branch (2023).

Table 3

*Mukim Chiefs (Penghulu Mukim) with Religious Teaching Certificates in Selangor.*

Names of Penghulu	District	Tauliah Category
Hasif bin Japri	Klang	D4-Lain-lain
Mohd Redzuan bin Samsudin	Kuala Langat	D2-Fardhu Ain
Ahmad Nor Hasan bin Mohamd	Kuala Langat	D4-Lain-lain
Norezudin Kamaruddin	Hulu Langat	D2-Fardhu Ain

Source: Jabatan Agama Islam Selangor, 2023.

### Prevention Agents of Spreading Deviant Teachings

The Selangor State Government, through the Selangor State News from August 1991 until now, has issued fatwas (original and amended fatwas) regarding 45 fatwas related to 37 groups of deviant teachings that deviate from the true teachings of Islam (Dewan Negeri Selangor, 2019). Based on complaints received by the Selangor Islamic Religious Department, a total of 14 active deviant teaching groups have been identified in Selangor, including Qadiani/Ahmadiyya, Shia beliefs, Hizbut Tahrir ideology, Millah Abraham/Ibrahim, and Al-Arqam/Rufoqo' teachings (Harian, 2022). All of these beliefs are recognized as contradictory to the teachings and beliefs of Ahlus Sunnah Wal Jamaah, which form the foundation of Islamic faith among Muslims in Malaysia (Asmady et al., 2020).

The religious activities practiced by these deviant groups have affected the bond of brotherhood among the Muslim community, destabilized the political stability, and posed a threat to national security. This is because some of the groups declared deviant by the Selangor State are involved with militant or extremist movements such as the Islamic State (IS) militant group, which is believed to still be active (Nur Solehah et al., 2020). Therefore, in order to curb the development of any negative influences among Muslims, particularly in Selangor, the State Government, through the Selangor State Mufti Department, has taken strict measures by issuing fatwas related to teachings or ideologies that threaten the Islamic faith, and intensifying programs of dissemination and promotion of fatwas.

In the context of preventing the spread and eradicating deviant teachings in Selangor, the role of District Chiefs (*Penghulu Mukim*) is crucial in ensuring the preservation of Islam in

the state. Community leaders have a responsibility to ensure that the people in their villages or administrative areas adhere firmly to authentic Islamic teachings and are protected from the influence of deviant teachings. District Chiefs (*Penghulu Mukim*), as leaders of the Islamic community in their areas, should have sufficient knowledge of Islamic teachings, especially in matters of faith (aqidah) and obligatory knowledge (fardhu ain), to ensure that no deviant groups infiltrate their jurisdiction. Through Village Heads and residents, District Chiefs (*Penghulu Mukim*) are able to monitor the activities of the community in their administrative areas and take early action if there are suspicious religious group activities.

Establishing good relations between District Chiefs (*Penghulu Mukim*) and religious authorities and related agencies will facilitate cooperation in combating deviant teachings. When there are activities related to deviant teachings, District Chiefs (*Penghulu Mukim*) can immediately report to the religious authorities for prompt action. District Chiefs (*Penghulu Mukim*) and community leaders should always be responsive to complaints and inquiries from the community, especially regarding suspicious and disturbing activities carried out in the name of religion (Siti Zubaidah 2010). Furthermore, District Chiefs (*Penghulu Mukim*) can assist religious authorities by disseminating fatwa information or criteria for identifying deviant teachings to the general public. The skills to identify deviant beliefs and the steps to counter them at the community level can be provided to leaders and members of the community. This is important so that District Chiefs (*Penghulu Mukim*) and community members can take appropriate measures to protect the community from the influence of deviant teachings.

If left unchecked, deviant beliefs will corrupt society and their faith in Islam. District Chiefs (*Penghulu Mukim*) who possess good knowledge of religion and a sense of responsibility to ensure that the Muslim community, especially within their administrative areas, adheres firmly to true Islamic teachings, will undoubtedly be serious in eradicating deviant teachings.

### **Management of Small Estates**

The management of small estates involves the process of distributing the deceased's assets according to Islamic law, based on the Quran, for both Muslims and non-Muslims under the Small Estates (Distribution) Act 1955. Managing small estates is necessary to avoid problems such as asset freezing, false information, or unenforceable wills. According to Section 8(1) of the Small Estates (Distribution) Act 1955, the District Chief (*Penghulu Mukim*), as the community leader, is among those eligible to file an application for the deceased's small estate (Small Estates (Distribution) Act, 1955).

The District Chief (*Penghulu Mukim*) is considered one of the community leaders who is knowledgeable about and closely connected to the heirs. Leaders who are responsible for their locality will always be aware of the problems faced by community members, and issues related to small estates are certain to arise. Despite numerous efforts to resolve these small estate issues, many heirs have yet to settle the matter. Therefore, one of the roles that community leaders can play is to provide advice to the heirs, help guide them in filling out application forms, or arrange for discussions with the heirs of the deceased.

If a person passes away without heirs, wills, or grants, the District Chief (*Penghulu Mukim*), as the community leader, should assist in managing the small estate according to the procedures outlined in the Small Estates (Distribution) Act 1955. The District Chief (*Penghulu Mukim*) is eligible to apply for and manage the small estate if there are no heirs claiming the small estate. In the case of a small estate left behind by a deceased person of the Islamic faith

without heirs, wills, or grants, it should be donated to the state's baitulmal (public treasury). Under Section 18(1) of the Small Estates (Distribution) Act 1955, the District Chief should report to the Land Administrator if the heirs do not claim the small estate within 6 months from the date of death.

### **The Welfare of the Muslim Community and the Prosperity of the Village**

The role of the District Chief (*Penghulu Mukim*) as a community leader representing the Government is crucial, especially during times when a particular village area is expected to or is currently facing a disaster, such as a natural disaster like the major flood that occurred in December 2021, which affected many areas and districts in Selangor.

The Special Report on the Impact of Floods in Malaysia 2021, issued by the Department of Statistics Malaysia based on a survey conducted in 11 states in Malaysia, stated that Selangor recorded the highest losses in terms of residential areas, amounting to RM1 billion, with the districts of Petaling and Hulu Langat being the hardest-hit areas. Furthermore, Selangor also recorded the highest losses in terms of damaged vehicles, damage to the manufacturing sector, and damage to business premises, with the Petaling district being one of the major contributors in the data reported (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2021).

The District Chief (*Penghulu Mukim*) plays an important role in providing early information received from agencies regarding the potential risks of disasters and how to cope with them to the residents through the Village Head (Ketua Kampung). When a flood disaster occurs, the District Chief (*Penghulu Mukim*), assisted by the Village Head (Ketua Kampung), will lead the flood victims to evacuate to designated safe shelters or temporary relocation centers. The District Chief (*Penghulu Mukim*) will coordinate information sourced from the Village Head (Ketua Kampung) and residents regarding the current situation during the disaster and estimated numbers of affected population to be conveyed to the authorities to facilitate the distribution of aid, whether it is rescue assistance, medical support, food supplies, clean water supply, and so on. The District Chief (*Penghulu Mukim*) is the point of reference for government agencies to obtain accurate information regarding the destruction of village infrastructure, the number of affected families who have lost their homes, proposed locations for temporary relocation centers identified by the Department of Social Welfare (JKM), and more. Additionally, the District Chief (*Penghulu Mukim*) serves as a liaison between non-governmental organizations (NGOs) or volunteer organizations who wish to enter the disaster-stricken areas to provide assistance to the Village Head (Ketua Kampung) and affected residents due to the natural disaster.

The role of District Chief in religious affairs and muslims can be summarized as in the table below

No.	THE ROLE OF DISTRICT CHIEF ( <i>PENGHULU</i> ) IN RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS AND MUSLIMS
1.	Management/Administration of Mosques: a. Advisor to the Mosques in the District b. Members of the Nominating and Selection Panel for Mosque Committee Members and Audit Inspectors at the District Level c. Members of the Mosque Administrative Board in the District
2.	Resident and Income Declaration Verification Officer
3.	Islamic Propagation Agents and Religious Practice
4.	Prevention Agents of Spreading Deviant Teachings
5.	Management of Small Estates
6.	The Welfare of the Muslim Community and the Prosperity of the District

### Conclusion

In conclusion, this article argues that the District Chief plays a significant and responsible role as a community leader in religious affairs and the welfare of the Muslim community, especially within their administrative district in Selangor. Therefore, there is no denying the importance of the District Chief's role in facilitating the management and administration of religious institutions such as mosques, Islamic welfare, Islamic preaching, preventing the spread of deviant ideologies, particularly in rural areas, managing small estates of the deceased, and promoting the well-being of the Muslim community and the prosperity of the village.

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