

PERSPECTIVE ON ISLAMIC VALUES BY INDIAN MUALLAF

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ABSTRACT

In the development of Muslim community, mosque is considered as a nerve centre. Though varying in dimensions and structures, the mosque becomes a place of worship five times a day as well as a symbol for the diffusion of ‘truly’ Islamic knowledge. Since the approach of Islamic values was introduced by the Malaysian government in 2004, the mosques throughout the country have actively promoted the new ways of improving the life of Muslims, especially among Muallaf. This study is an attempt to examine the administration and activities of the mosques in supporting the ideas of Islamic values. Friday’s khutbah (sermons), religious preachings, forums as well as the celebration of various events in the Islamic calendar will be analysed in order to illustrate how the new understanding of Islam is being promoted to the Muallaf. This paper argues that the mosque, where the believers assemble for prayers as well as for the spiritual upliftment, is the respectable premise that should be utilised extensively for the changing of Muslim minds towards this worldly life.

Keywords: Islamic Values, Indian Muallaf, Mosque Activities, Social, Malaysia

1. INTRODUCTION

In every Muslim community, the mosque is considered as a place of worship as well as a centre for the Muslim community. ‘Mosque’ or ‘masjid’ in Arabic refers to all types of buildings where Muslims assemble for daily prayers. Literally, ‘masjid’ means “to bow” or “to knell” in reference to the prostrations performed during prayers. The importance of a mosque in the life of Muslims is not just for prayers as demonstrated by the Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. From the *sirah*, the first thing the Prophet did upon arriving near Medina after the emigration from Mecca in 622 was built the Quba Mosque and shortly later he established the Masjid al-Nabawi. As a centre for Muslims’ community development, these two early mosques were not just devoted for prayers but became a place for learning about Islam as well as the place planned for military action, the meeting and negotiations, the settling of disputes and even the place where some people lived. In Islam, the three most holiest mosques are the Masjidil Haram in Mecca, the Masjid Nabawi in

Medina and Masjid al-Aqsa in Jerusalem. However, other mosques are also considered sacred although each may have different features and adapting to various cultures around the world.

In Malaysia, the mosque is a common building found in most urban and rural areas in the country. Many new mosques have been built throughout the country to cater for the increasing number of Muslim population, particularly in new housing estates. The construction of the mosques, like many mosques around the world, has been associated with the signs of purity and the intention to serve Allah The Almighty, particularly through the prayers and acts of remembrance knowing that Allah presence pervades and hollows the atmosphere.(Abdul Ghafar Don, Razaleigh Muhamat @ Kawangit, Salasiah Hanin Hamjah. et.al. 2012, retrived from <http://www.aensiweb.com/anas/2012/521-523>, 26th of December 2013:p.521) Besides prayers, education is a primary function of mosques in the forms of formal and non-formal. Some mosques have full time schools that teach traditional Islamic contents and general knowledge while some have non-formal classes. Since the introduction of the concept of Islamic values, mosques throughout the country have been looked upon as a proper premise to have been involved in promoting that concept. Mosques' functions and activities therefore have been channeled to change the minds of Muslims towards the betterment of this worldly life.

2. ISLAMIC VALUES APPROACH AND THE ROLE OF THE MOSQUE

As soon as he assumed the mantle of the premiership of Malaysia in late 2003, Abdullah Ahmad Badawi announced the new framework policy known as “Islamic Values Approach”, a programme to enhance the Islamic development of the country. Islamic values are projected as a “wholesome approach towards developing the human, society and country based on the perspective of Islamic civilisation. It is a comprehensive and holistic approach towards creating a civilisation particularly in Malaysia” (Abdullah Ahmad Badawi. 2007:p.47). In order to achieve the objective of the programme, he outlined the 10 principles as a framework to create a developed and modern Malaysian society as follows:

- i- Believing in and obedience to Allah
- ii- A fair and just government
- iii- The independence of the human life
- iv- The acquisition of knowledge
- v- A balance and comprehensive economic development in Islamic perspective
- vi- A quality standard of living
- vii- The protection of women's and minority groups' rights
- viii- Culturally and morally strong
- ix- The preservation of the environment

x- A robust and resilient defense system

The Premier's programme has been elaborated and explained further by many leaders of the government as follows:

i- The then Minister in the Prime Minister Department (2004-2007), Abdullah Md. Zain explained that:

“Islamic values are an Islamic concept which emphasises on the developmental aspect, such as Islamic education, good management, superior civilisation attributes, positive growth, not only in the physical sense but also spiritually, in the development of religion, education as well as economy”. (Abdullah Md. Zain. 2005:p.72)

ii- Nakhaie Hj. Ahmad from the Malaysian Islamic Dakwah Foundation stated that:

“Through Islamic values, this country will be developed to become the first Islamic country to reach developed nation status using its own mold. This country is now entering a new phase of growth; a development policy that will lead to the formation of a contemporary Islamic civilisation”. (Nakhaie Hj. Ahmad. 2008:p.80)

iii- Dr. Ghafarullahuddin Haji Din of the Centre for Islamic Thought and Understanding (CITU), Universiti Teknologi Mara opined that:

“In general, Islamic values are a system and a method which is progressive, advanced, dynamic and civilised. The adaptation of this concept will produce a society that is knowledgeable and highly cultured based on virtuous moral values, thus enabling them to meet contemporary challenges. The concept has a clear vision, which is to build Malaysia as a model of an Islamic country”.

“Islamic values mean Islam with the attributes of a well-developed civilisation; it is the opposite of Islam *raj'i*, which means Islam is backward and obsolete. In other word, Islam emerges with positive values: Islam is just, Islam is freedom, Islam is merciful, Islam is loving and caring “ (Musa Ahmad et al.. 2005:p.39)

In a more critical view, especially on the implementation of the new agenda of Islam in Malaysia, Ismail Haji Ibrahim, former director of the government's Institute of Islamic Understanding Malaysia (IKIM) stressed more on the abused religious issues and became

“worthless and empty speeches, or purely symbolic and rhetorical”. He posed several challenges and questions that should be carefully addressed and organised such as the question of “how can we develop a dynamic Islam which is liberal, advanced and based on the knowledge of this world and the Hereafter in our society today, such that this development is made to be more meaningful compared to the period before, where the society in general have never even heard of the term Islamic values?” He also emphasised on the conflicts and inconsistencies on the implementation of Islamic law; various elements that lead to the nation’s moral degradation; some sort of wild entertainment that caters to lust in which he said should have no place in Islamic values; a huge mistake if the public believes that Islamic values has achieved its aims after a few speeches and sermons or just after organising one or two forums and discussions; and the challenge to the arena of education to change and integrate the concept of knowledge and Islamic education including re-evaluation of the present curriculum to make it relevant to the concept of Islamic values. (Musa Ahmad. 2005:p.87).

Having declared that Islamic values approach can be a compass that points to success in this world and the Hereafter cannot be accomplished without a Muslims’ understanding of the concept. Therefore, some researches have been carried out in order to measure whether Muslims throughout the country can come to terms with the concept or not. For instance, Abdul Ghaffar Surip (2008) from the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM) has surveyed 191 respondents who were the staff of the department on their perceived of the concept. Most of the respondents have involved directly in the implementation of Islamic values programmes and supposed to be familiar with the concept. The finding was surprising as 128 respondents (55.5%) revealed that the term “Islamic values” is confusing. On the other hand, 128 respondents (55.5%) acknowledged that the 10 principles outlines as a framework of the Islamic values approach are consistent with Islamic teachings. This finding shows that the main problems of Islamic values is the term used and not the content. Without the “values”, Islam as a religion has already encouraged Muslims to be progressive and dynamic. Therefore, though Islamic values programme do not change the basic principles and core teachings of Islam, quite a big number of respondents (44.5%) viewed that Islamic values approach initiated by the government has a political motif. In other words, the sincerity of the government to pursue the agenda of Islam through Islamic values are questionable. (Abdul Ghaffar Surip and Badlihisam Mohd. Nasir. 2008:pp.124-126)

Another research done by Md. Yunus Abdul Aziz et al. (2006) from Islamic Science University of Malaysia (USIM) surveyed 566 respondents in Klang Valley on their perceived understanding on the concept of Islamic values. The result revealed that 52.5% of the respondents indicate that they do not understand what Islamic values are meant. Meanwhile,

68.7% admitted that they were either not sure or agree that Islamic values are instituted by the government to gain political mileage. (Md. Yunus Abdul Aziz. et al.. 2006 :p.159)

Based on some of the above findings, it is important to measure the mosque congregation perceived on the concept of Islamic values. Assuming that they are the religious people who always gather in the mosques, their understanding of Islamic values are crucial to achieve the objectives outlined by the government.(Muhamad Faisal Asha'ari, Abdul Ghafar Don, Razaleigh Muhamat @ Kawangit. et.al. 2012, retrived from <http://www.aensiweb.com/anas/2012/511-520>, 26th of December 2013:p.511) This study was done in the state of Selangor because some findings revealed that Selangor has a good management of Islamic affairs including the mosques programmes. Moreover, the number of mosques in this state is bigger compared with other provinces in Malaysia .So, the finding of this research will represent for the whole country of Malaysia.

3. CONCEPT OF *Muallaf* IN ISLAM AND MALAYSIA

The word '*Muallaf*' means those who are changed from their previous religions to Islām and become Muslim. The *Encyclopedia of Islām* explains that the word *Muallaf* comes from the Arabic '*Al-Muallafa Qulūbuhum*' which means "those whose hearts are won over" or "those hearts that need softening". (C.E Bosworth, E. Van Donzel, W.P Heinrichs and C.H Pellat. 1993:p.254) The term applied to those former opponents of the Prophet Muhammad who are said to have been reconciled to the cause of Islām by gifts of 100 or 50 camels from the Prophet Muḥammad's share of the spoils of the battle of *Hunayn*, after Muḥammad's forces had defeated the *Hawāzin* confederation, and which were divided out at the *al-Dijrana*. The list included the Meccan Leader Abū Sufyān and his sons Mua'wiyya and Yazīd and various Bedouin chiefs from the tribes of western A'rabia. On the other hand, the actual phrase is connected with the Qurān in the *Sūra Al-Tauba*: 60, which means: "*Zakāt¹ is for: the poor, the destitute, those who collect it, reconciling people's hearts (Muallaf), frees slaves, spending in the way of Allah, and travellers. It is legal obligation from Allah. Allah is all knowing, all wise*"

From the above phrase, *Muallaf* should be given *Zakāt* in order 'to win' and 'to soften' their hearts to follow Islām as a way of life. To give better understanding about *Muallaf*, especially their categories according to the Islamic view, the word should be discussed together with *Zakāt*.

¹ *Zakāt* otherwise known as Islamic religious tax, one of the five basic pillars of Islam. All adult Muslims of sound mind and body with a set level of income and assets are expected to pay *Zakāt*. *Zakāt* will be paid yearly on certain types of property determined by religion (Islām). *Zakāt* is payable, at different rates on basically five items of income and assets which are crops, harvests, herds, gold and silver, and merchandise.

These two things are determined in Islam as being included within the category of *Fiqh*². Several discussions among Islamic scholars showed that the term *Muallaf* also includes non-Muslims, but only for the purpose of turning their hearts to Islām; for example, al-Qarādāwī states, where there is a group of non-Muslim being courted in the hope that they will accept Islam, such as the case of Safwān. During the opening (al-futūh) of Mecca, Safwān was given a period of four months by the Prophet Muhammad to consider accepting Islām. When the battle of *Hunayn* occurred, he took part in it. The Prophet then lent Safwān his sword and gave him a few camels, taken from a valley. Consequently, after that incident, Safwān became a good Muslim. (Yūsuf al-Qarādāwī. 1986:p.595) The ḥadīth Sohīh referring to the event appears in the Sunan al-Tirmīdhī, which means: *“From Safwān, son of Umayya, who said: “On the day of the Hunayn war, the Prophet had given me something. Truly, he was the person whom I hated most but he always gave me (something) until he really became the person that I love most”*

The ḥadīth mentioned above explained that Prophet Muhammad had transformed Safwān who hated him most at first, but through love, care and material showered on him by the Prophet, his hatred changed to love. Similarly, there is another ḥadīth Sohīh collected by Shawkānī and cited by Ahmad with the *sanad* from Anas: (Al-Shawkānī, Muḥammad bin Ali. 1987:pp.120-121) *“Truly, the Prophet never asks something except for the importance of Islām unless he was definitely able to fulfil it. Once, a man come and asked him something, he then was told to take a large part of the Zakāt, (goats) which occupied land between two mountains. So, the men went back to his people and said: My people, all of you should embrace Islām, for Muhammad (loves) gave something as though a person was afraid of hunger”*

As a result, almost all of the Islamic scholars agree the non-Muslim as a part of *Muallaf* as a way to persuade them to embrace Islām. Unfortunately, they do not verify the categories clearly. Only al-Qurtubī mentioned three of them, which are: (al-Qurtubī.1954: p.180)

- i- Those who have just embraced Islām. They need support in order to build up their confidence towards Islām. al-Qurtubī quoted from al-Zuhri, who was of the opinion that those included in this group were the Jews and Christians who had newly accepted Islām, even though they were rich.
- ii- Leaders and public figures amongst them who had many friends who were non-Muslims. By giving them a part of the *Zakāt*, it was hoped to be able to attract them

² *Fiqh* refers to the study of the law in Islam and was defined in terms of *jurisprudence* as the knowledge of the rights and duties whereby human beings are enabled to observe right conduct in this life and to prepare them for the world to come. See more meaning about *fiqh* at: Kamali, Mohammad Hashim. 1991. Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence. Cambridge, U.K.: Islamic Texts Society.pp.197-200.

- and their friends and get them to embrace Islām as was in the case when Abū Bakar gave *Zakāt* to Uday bin Hatīm and Zabarqan bin Bdr. Both of them were of high social standing in their society.
- iii- The middle-men who can persuade other non-Muslims to embrace and accept Islam such as an act of war. In this matter, they received a part of the *Zakāt* to become such a middle-man.

After the death of Prophet Muḥammad, the companions directed their attention to the rights of the *Muallaf* in receiving *Zakāt*. They do not explain further the meaning of the group, and these were the reasons, categorising the *Muallaf*. For example, during the time of Prophet Muḥammad, Uyayna bin Hisn, al-Aqra' bin Habīs and Abbas bin Mirdās were each given a guarantee (a letter) from the Prophet and Abū Bakr that they were to be given a portion of the *Zakāt* collection. When the letter was brought to the notice of Umar, he immediately tore up the letter. He said: "*The Prophet gave you that portion to entice you to Islām. Now Allah has exalted Islām and there are no longer any bonds between you and us. If you are still in Islām, then we accept you but if you are not, then our tie is through the sword*". (Amiur Nuruddin. 1991:pp.141-142)

After that Umar read al-Qurān, *Sūra al-Kahf*:29, says: "*It is the truth from your lord, so let whoever wishes have īmān and whoever wishes be kāfir*". They went back to Abū Bakr and told him what had happened and thus asked: "*Are you the Caliph or Umar?*" Abū Bakr answered: "*Umar!*". (Amiur Nuruddin. 1991:pp.141-142) Abū Bakr did not refute the sayings and actions of Umar, nor did the other companions until that matter achieved the consensus of opinion (*ijma'*) of them all, according to some scholars. There were no comments from Uthman and Ali about that portion hitherto meant for the *Muallaf* being taken away from them. When Abū Bakr was caliph, he continued giving the part to Uday bin Hatīm and the people on his area.

After the era of the companions, there are a few differences of opinion among the *Fiqh* Scholars (*Ahlu al-fiqh*), for example, Hanafī *Fiqh* scholars were of the opinion that the portion for *Muallaf* should be abrogated; they thus lost all rights after the death of Prophet Muḥammad. They based their opinion on the *ijma'* of the companions of the Prophet, since Abū Bakr and the other companions did not question the action and sayings of Umar. However according to al-Qurtubī, the Malikī scholars had two differences of views on this matter, which are that the loss of *Muallaf* rights was due to the strength and the expansion of Islām and the rights of the *Muallaf* are permanent as long as they have done their work in persuading other non-Muslims to embrace Islām. According to Shāfi'ī, there are two opinions on the problem of giving *Zakāt* to the *Muallaf*:

- i- The new converts to Islām could be given part of *Zakāt* because Allah has commanded *Zakāt* taken from Muslims to be given back to Muslims and not to be given to people of other religions.
- ii- The non-Muslim should not receive any part of the *Zakāt* even to attract them to Islām. Although the Prophet had once given part of the *Zakāt* to some non-Muslim in the *Hunayn* War, it was actually from the property of '*ghanīma*' (acquired without the use of force or struggle) and more specifically from the Prophet's own property.

Al-Nawāwī was in complete agreement with Shāfi'ī's opinion that in order to attract the hearts of non-believers to Islām, *ghanīma*'s property, or any other, could be used, but not out of the *Zakāt* collection. Meanwhile according to al-Qarādāwī, the *Muallaf* includes both non-Muslim and Muslims, giving the portion of the *Zakāt* to them would be in order if it could attract the non-Muslim to Islām. The prohibition concerns giving a part of *Zakāt* specifically to them. New converts, however, should receive their part as prescribed.

However, there are two things not really clear from the above discussion. Firstly; the period which somebody who has newly embraced Islām can be called *Muallaf*. The second is related to integration, or in other words, how the *Muallaf* integrate with the Muslims. If the period referred to the stand of Umar in relation to Uyaynah bin Hisn, al-Aqra' bin Habīs and Abbas bin Mirdās, the period is only two years. This is based on the term which Abū Bakr has been a caliph until the early term of U'mar. Unfortunately, some subsequent Islamic scholars followed basically what Prophet Muhammad did during his life in giving *Zakāt* to *Muallaf* (including those who were non-Muslims) as long as they enhance Islām. That means, they will continue to be called *Muallaf* and will receive the *Zakāt* collection.

The way *Muallaf* integrate with ordinary Muslims probably can be seen best through a consideration Islamic education or sometimes the discussion can be found in the '*da'wa Islāmiya*'³ section. For example, according to al-Qurtubī the reason to give attention and guidance to *Muallaf* in the way of Islām is part of *da'wa* methodology since it is obligatory for Muslims to propagate Islām, to save them from the swords of the Muslims here on earth and the fire in the life after death. After that, al-Qurtubī gave some emphasis by giving them priority in guidance, briefly as follows:

- i- To prevent them from deeds that may spark social unrest.

³ Da'wa is an Arabic term meaning 'invite' or 'invitation'. It is considered to be an obligation on Muslims to invite others to understand and practice Islām as a way of life. Da'wa is usually referred to as the act of 'preaching Islām'. It can apply to both Muslims and non-Muslims. See more at: Hirschkind, Charles. 2004. Civic Virtue and Religious Reason: An Islamic Counter-Public. USA: Hall Publication. pp.8-30.

- ii- To make them realise the wholesomeness (*Shumūl*) of Islām as their constant guide on the right path.
- iii- To encourage them to hope for the blessing of Allah, so that their hearts are open to accept the teaching of Islām.
- iv- To show them how Islām always cares for and loves the *Muallaf* and that the Prophet Muhammad is a blessing for all and especially the new convert.

Meanwhile, according to Ibn Hishām the purpose of providing guidance to the *Muallaf* in the basic knowledge of the '*Dīn*' (religion) and instilling them with qualities of correct moral behaviour is to encourage them to willingly embrace Islām, and to avoid evil deeds. Ibn Hishām said that the best example of love and guidance can come from '*Hijra*'. The companions were ever willing to sacrifice themselves, their nation, home, wealth, friends and families to migrate to Yathrib (Medina). As an example, Ali bin Abī Tālib willingly took the place of Prophet Muhammad, lying on his bed even though he knew the pagan *Quraish* had already designed to kill the Prophet. Abū Bakr, constantly looked ahead to ensure that he had chosen the best way for the Prophet Muhammad; and at the same time looked back to see no danger coming from behind in order to protect the Prophet whilst on their journey to Yathrib. (Ibn Hishām, Abd al-Mālik al-Himyarī. 1966:pp.98-123)

In Malaysia, the concept of conversion followed from what was discussed as the Islamic view above. This was strongly reflected with the rule of *Zakāt*. However, in certain areas unrelated to the rule of *Zakāt*, there are several different practices concerned with the concept, which can be summarised in two parts:

- i- The Malay Muslims call the *Muallaf* 'our brother' (or '*Saudara Kita*' in the Malay language) and 'new brother' (known in the Malay language as '*Saudara Baru*'). The word 'new brother' (*Saudara Baru*), used in the Malay Muslim society in Malaysia, is to indicate and state that someone has embraced Islām. Referring to them as such is a way to enhance Islamic brotherhood's care for and love of the converts. However, this also may alienate the converts and cause them to become separated from the mainstream of the Muslim *umma* as the converts may feel that they are not one of the born Muslims. This can divide Muslims into born Muslims and converts. This is not good for integration, that is, to encourage them to socialise and mix freely as Muslim brothers.
- ii- In general, instead of the words '*Saudara Kita*' and '*Saudara Baru*', Malay Muslims categorised all the converts in one category called '*Muallaf*' which referred to those who are not Malay. It happens because, as Malays, they do not know whether the *Muallaf* was born as a Muslim or just embraced Islām. Then, this also invited some

problems. For example, the word seems to indicate there are gaps between them, and for sure it will be considered a racism issue. On the other hand, the *Muallaf* have prior complex feelings because they assume they are on their own, without any support from their surroundings. All this makes the integration between Malays as a majority, and the *Muallaf* as ‘new comers’ to Islām, get worse. The problem appeared to be not a simple matter, and it was faced not only by *Muallaf* but also by other minorities. The difference was that what was happening to *Muallaf* was considered as being between Muslims, for the others it was between different races. (Razaleigh Muhamat @ Kawangit, Abdul Ghafar Don, Salasiah Hanin Hamjah. et.al. 2012, retrived from <http://www.aensiweb.com/anas/2012/504-510>, 26th of December 2013:p.505)

4. MOSQUE’S ADMINISTRATION IN THE STATE OF SELANGOR

The administration of Islam in Malaysia is rather complex. While the Royal Highnest of Malaysia continues to be the Head of the Muslim religion in his own state and in Malacca, Penang, the Federal Territories, Sabah and Sarawak, there is no head of the Muslim religion for the whole of the Federation. Each of the other States including Selangor has its own Ruler as the Head of Islam. Though in some aspects the administration of Islam may differ from state to state, efforts have been taken continuously to coordinate, particularly by the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia, under the Prime Minister’s Office.

The administrations of the mosque, such as the appointment of mosque’s officers and the enforcement of the rules regulating it come under the State Enactment. Islamic Religious Council of Selangor and the Islamic Religious Department of Selangor are both the state government agencies which are responsible directly to the Ruler of Selangor. According the Selangor’s Mosque Administration Division (1999), seven committees have been set up to manage daily matters and programmes as follows: (Razaleigh Muhamat @ Kawangit, Abdul Ghafar Don, Salasiah Hanin Hamjah. et.al. 2012, retrived from <http://www.aensiweb.com/anas/2012/524-533>, 26th of December 2013:p.525)

- i- Committee for economy and finance
- ii- Committee for education and missionary
- iii- Committee for social and culture
- iv- Committee for cleanliness and environment
- v- Committee for the Qur’an and *takmir*’s programme
- vi- Committee for women affairs
- vii- Committee for youth and recreation

Besides congregational prayers held daily in the mosques, the committees have been directed to organise the following programmes:

- i- Religious speeches
- ii- Religious forums
- iii- The course for funeral management
- iv- The course for understanding Islam
- v- The course for family's *sakinah* (kindhearted)
- vi- The course for *imam* and *bilal*
- vii- The course for *hajj* and *'umrah* (pilgrimage)
- viii- The course for pre-married
- ix- Married ceremony
- x- *Tahlil* and feast's programme
- xi- Other programmes directed by the Department

According to the Lists of Masjid in State of Selangor 2005-2010, there are 772 mosques and 1,417 *surau* (small mosque) throughout the State and more than 20,000 officials have been elected to manage the mosques and *surau*.

5. METHODOLOGY

The primary purpose of the study was to assess the effectiveness of mosques' programmes on the upliftment of 'religiosity' among congregants, especially Indian *Muallaf*. However, for the purpose of this presentation, the perceived mosques' congregants on the agenda of Islamic values will be discussed. This study was carried out through a survey conducted in 20 selected mosques located at Selangor in July-October 2012. The primary data collected consists of the mosque's congregants in which a sample of 200 Indian *Muallaf* respondents who are the regular mosque attendees were chosen. The sampling unit was individual, who was given a set of questionnaires. In the section E of the questionnaire, the respondents were asked to indicate their perceived understanding of Islamic values. Data gathered were analyzed using SPSS WIN 12 for the descriptive and inferential statistics to answer the objectives of the study.

6. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 revealed some demographic characteristics of the Indian *Muallaf* respondents. The majority of Indian *Muallaf* respondents were male (77.5%) compared to female (22.5%). The majority of them (51.5%) age between 46-60 years old and above. In terms of marital status, 74% of them were married. With regard to their education level, 49 % were studying at secondary school and 27 % were university graduates. In terms of income earned per month, 38 % of the respondents got less than RM 1000.00; 40 % between RM1000.00 - 2000.00 and 13.5

% between RM2001.00 – 3000.00. Only 5% got more than RM 3001.00 and above. The distance between respondents' house and the mosques will also reflect the frequencies of attending mosques' programmes. Data showed that 150 (75.5%) of the respondents resided less than 1 km from mosques.

Table 1 Demographic characteristics of the *Muallaf* respondents

Demographics variable	Number	Percentage (%)
Male	155	77.5
Female	45	22.5
Total	200	100
<i>Age</i>		
15-30	45	22.5
31-45	52	26.0
46-60 and above	103	51.5
Total	200	100
<i>Status</i>		
Single	46	23.0
Married	148	74.0
Widowed	6	3.0
Total	200	100
<i>Educational level</i>		
Primary	48	24.0
Secondary	98	49.0
Tertiary	27	27.0
Total	200	100
<i>Income</i>		
<RM 1000.00	76	38.00
1000.00-2000	81	40.00
2001-3000	27	13.5
>3001 and above	10	5.0
Others	6	3.0

Total	200	100
<i>Distance to mosque</i>		
<500 m	80	40.00
501- 1 km	70	35.5
>1 km	46	23.0
Not answered	3	1.5
Total	200	100

Table 2 below showed the effectiveness of mosque programme to the understanding of Islamic values principles. The respondents were asked to indicate the effectiveness of the programmes based on the five scale points as follows: 1= not at all effective; 2=not effective; 3= less effective; 4= effective; and, 5= most effective. According to table 2, the overall mean score of perceived understanding of Islamic values is 3.6435 meanwhile the standard deviation is 0.70765. The value of mean score acquired shown that the understanding of respondents is at a fair or moderate level. From the 10 principles of Islamic values, only the first principle “Believing in and obedience to Allah” get higher score mean (4.0). Meanwhile “The preservation of the environment” obtain the least mean score (3.41).

Table 2 Effectiveness of the mosque programmes towards the understanding of Islamic tolerance values principles (n=200)

	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>	<i>Means</i>	<i>SD</i>
1. Believing in and obedience to Allah	1.00	5.00	4.000	.79572
2. A fair and just government	1.00	5.00	3.6750	.86784
3. The independence of the human life	1.00	5.00	3.6250	.89351
4. The acquisition of knowledge	1.00	5.00	3.8100	.82297
5. A balance and comprehensive economic development in Islamic perspective	1.00	5.00	3.5700	.85366
6. A quality standard of living	1.00	5.00	3.6750	.82361
7. The protection of women’s and minority groups' rights	1.00	5.00	3.6000	.81444
8. Culturally and morally strong	1.00	5.00	3.4200	.97897
9. The preservation of the environment	1.00	5.00	3.4100	.96777
10. A robust and resilient defense system	1.00	5.00	3.6500	.92291

Note: Overall mean score =3.6435; standard deviation =0.70765

Source: survey 2012

What can be derived from the data above is that the diffusion of Islamic messages through the mosques has not been comprehensively conveyed. All spheres of *al-din*, including the issues of protecting the environment; economic growth; managing the right of women, disable and minority groups; establishing a fair and just government; enhancing the quality of life; and building resilient defense system in the country have not yet been communicated properly to the people through mosques. Islam, as a way of life, is not only aimed to produce a new outlook of faith but also to develop a new order, i.e. to become a perfect Muslim and establish a dynamic community that can stand facing the contemporary challenges.

7. CONCLUSION

As Islamic values is projected to change the minds of Muslims towards a well-balanced material and spiritual development of the country, the potential of the thousands of mosques throughout the country should be properly utilised. In order to build a nation whose citizens, particularly Muslims, are strong and committed to the highest standards of ethical and moral values, mosques throughout the country should be managed according to the Islamic values objective. The messages of Islam, as a way of life, should be emphasised and promoted through the platform of mosques.

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