

Preliminary Findings on Waqf Management Practices among Selected Muslim Countries

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Abstract. Waqf is a contribution which includes money, assets and others that benefit other Muslims. Muslims countries have their own ways of managing waqf. Some ways are similar to one another and some are different. Most Muslims have some knowledge on what waqf is, ways to contribute to waqf institutions and how waqf institutions can assist them. They might know that there is a centre or trustee managing or handling waqf but the difference might be the level or depth of knowledge they have on waqf. In this paper, in the preliminary findings, the authors will look at waqf management practices among selected Muslim countries. Authors hope that the preliminary analysis and discussion on waqf management practices among selected Muslim countries could help other waqf institutions to manage their waqf contributions effectively.

Keywords: waqf, waqf management, Malaysia and overseas

1. Introduction

The word waqf derived from arabic word “waqafa” means to stop, to prevent and to detain. Islamic jurists interpret “waqf” as “Detaining assets that are beneficial and physically lasting, to be given to charity” [2]. The Muslim communities worldwide are exposed to waqf, but how far the understanding about waqf is hard to identify. Generally, it is obvious the Muslim community realize that waqf is one of the most noble and needed in the Islam religion because it benefits the Muslims and can help the needy such as the poor people, orphans and many more. The effect of waqf not only benefit in this world but also a continuous reward to the trustee till the netherworld.

There are many dalils which relate to the need to waqf and the benefit received by the trustees. Some of it are:-

Hadith Riwayat Imam Muslim :

“When a Muslim dies, therefore all the good deeds will be broken except three sources which is donation or beneficial knowledge or a soleh child that always pray for them.”

The donation in the hadith, also includes waqf that involves money, property and others that benefit other Muslims. In Malaysia, waqf is not something new and it has started since the arrival of Islam to the country.

In the article “6 Strategies a Mosque Can Generate Money”, the author has used the research done by Haji Jaafar Ahmad that stated most mosques cannot generate their own income. Only 20% of mosques are generating their own income but they too are facing technical problems. Lately, there are many issues and problems arise concerning the management of waqf. Some of it is the limitations in waqf management until its causing ineffective administration [4].

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Commonly, the problem of waqf administration that is faced by the States in Peninsular Malaysia is waqf properties documentation transparency. In general, there are a few factors that contribute to the problems developing waqf properties and to encourage Muslims to waqf their properties and cash such as lack of knowledge of waqf among the public, absence of documentation and systematic database, inadequate skillful professionals in waqf management, absence of good structural administration/ waqf management, and absence of a clear and consistent procedures about the registration, land management and waqf properties. The study also claimed that almost all States Waqf Departments have documentation and some had taken the initiative to use code system by using the computer. Nevertheless, there are still a lot of restraints and shortcomings. State Waqf Department do not use the same accounting system thus, a lot of the information are not transparent and only rely on the given information only. All visited waqf institutions have their own unique quality [3].

2. Analysis on Overseas' Waqf Management

In Brunei, MUIB (Majlis Ugama Islam Brunei) administer and manage the waqf property using e-government technology and became the sole trustee for all waqf. MUIB also gives information and understanding to the public about the waqf procedure. MUIB has successfully generated a high income and give full benefits to all the Muslims from waqf property's income [6].

While in Singapore, the development of waqf in this country is according to Administration of Muslim Law Act (AMLA). MUIS (Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura) has started a subsidiary company known as Wakaf Real Estate of Singapore (WAREES Investment Pte. Ltd) to make sure waqf properties are developed to the maximum level. The value of waqf property has increased by ten folds and generates a bigger income towards waqf fund. Singapore, a small country with limited land width and a minority Islamic Community has become an example to the world on effective waqf management and development [7].

The success of managing waqf here which gives an economic return in ten folds plus the increase of value of the waqf which is the property of the Muslim community, Singapore through (MUIS) has decided to export their experience and expertise. Until now, about 200 waqf property with current value of approximately SG\$250 million, was developed and generating yearly rental about SG\$6 to SG\$7 million. This has also made Singapore as one of the most developed country in handling waqf. Through that achievement, MUIS plans to become an international player in the field of exporting expertise and waqf management service at global level [7].

Furthermore, the waqf administration system in Kuwait is under the Awqaf and Religious Matters Ministry. The Ministry launched a community program and activities are done in and out of the country to increase waqf events. Other than that, investment and increment in waqf is also done and the proceeds are spent for the development of its society [9].

In Indonesia, in traditional phase, most waqf is used for physical development such as mosque and cemetery. In semi-professional stage of waqf management, the usage of mosques is being widen for place of discussion, wedding and seminar. Waqf lands also being utilized for other benefits such as farming activities, shop lots and rice factories [1].

Bangladesh under the Social Islamic Bank also provide waqf management services such as cash waqf certificates and managing waqf and mosque properties. Cash waqf is an opportunity for the wealthy people to contribute for the country's social matters. This cash waqf also act as an investment to the waquif (waqf contributor). The cash will generate profit from time to time and it is up to the waquif on how to spend on the profit earned. The profit also will be contributed to the waqf as order given by the waquif [8].

3. Analysis on Malaysia Management of Waqf Property

In Malaysia, Waqf Management of Selangor (runned by MAIS or Majlis Agama Islam Selangor) introduced Selangor Share Scheme to induce public to purchase the share units to waqf the certificates in the name of Allah S.W.T. MAIS acts as the sole trustee and will waqf the share units for the betterment and welfare of Muslims. The scheme is applicable to public without permanent assets such as land, house, building, and etc. but still willing to contribute [10].

Other activity of MAIS through its subsidiary called MAIS Group Corporation Sdn Bhd (RMC) is opening the fifth branch of MAIS Dialysis Treatment Centre. Other than opening Dialysis Treatment Centre, the trustee is developing few waqf buildings such as mosque, higher institution of learning, worship institution, shop lots and other for the betterment of Muslims. From these activities MAIS is persistent in helping the social and socio-economy of Muslim in Selangor through the share scheme and development of waqf property [10].

In Kedah, MAIK (Majlis Agama Islam Kedah) encourage a project called called “Waqf Jemba”. Majlis Agama Islam there will purchase a property/land and then will divide it and later sold to the public. The public in return will purchase the land that is divided for them to waqf [11].

The waqf management of Perak also has several types of waqf activities such as cemetery land waqf, mosque, schools, and others [12]. In Penang, the trustees manage their waqf through renting of commercial premises, raising accommodation units, treatment centers as well as shop lots and offices shops. Other includes the development of medium cost apartments and terrace houses [13].

In Johor, one of the effective mosques generating income in Johor is Masjid Jamek Bandar Baru (Masjid BBU) which was acknowledged as Excellent Mosque for a few years. “BBU Mosque’s Asset” nearly RM8 million, the mosque management always ensure the mosque always moving towards the right goal. The mosque possesses 2 storey shop lots, apartment, house, community hall, land, dialysis centre and health BBU Mosque [5]. Johor waqf trustee (MAIJ) also did some joint ventures in agriculture and farming with government agencies such as FAMA, MARDI, RISDA and many more can be done to enrich waqf properties as done by MAIJ (Johor) [14].

4. Discussion on Waqf Management Practices

From the analysis of waqf management practices among selected Muslim countries, the management of waqf properties varies from countries to countries. For instance, Singapore developed waqf properties into real estate which generate millions of Singapore dollar a year. Another example is Kuwait, the practice is to spend more on charity which is on society development. In fact in Malaysia, the waqf management practices are different from one state to the others. For certain states, they practices share scheme and some states do not practices such. However there are also some similarities for example, most of the waqf properties are developed for common purposes for instance mosques, educational development and social welfare.

Overall, the effectiveness of implementation on waqf management practices has significant impact on the development of the Muslim countries. It can be seen in Singapore waqf management practices. Although the country is quite small in term of size and Muslim is the minorities, but they manage to get an enormous return on their waqf properties. The implementation practices facilitate the economic development of the Muslim. While in Malaysia waqf management practices, Johor and Selangor are among the best in term of effectiveness in managing and implementing waqf management practices such as share scheme and agriculture joint-venture with government agencies. The relevancy of this scheme and joint venture is to boost more income from waqf contribution among the Muslim thus benefit all Muslim.

5. Recommendations and Conclusion

Those countries with best waqf practices can share their experience and knowledge to help all Muslim around the world in developing the implementation of waqf management properties. An association can be established where the members are those who are the trustee of the waqf management purposely to share ideas and monitor the development of each waqf practices all over the world. The association can come out with books or manual to develop the best waqf practices. Those who are lacking of ideas can turn to this association for assistant. In addition, an international waqf conference can be implemented to benefit all waqf trustees around the world. In the conference, discussion on best practices as well as standard operating procedures can be developed. Current issues on waqf can be also discussed to get the best solution to all.

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