

Zakat Distribution and Programme for Sustaining Muallaf Belief and Thought

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Abstract

Zakat is one of the pillars of Islam that emphasises the socio-economic development. Any discussion on zakat in the context of worship cannot be disconnected from the socio-economic factor, especially in aiding the underprivileged. The primary purpose of zakat is to redistribute wealth of the society among the poor. Zakat is not purely welfare-oriented that relies on the contribution of the giver but an obligation that must be carried out to qualified recipients. Therefore, it is pertinent that the management of zakat is made efficient to ensure that the rights of the recipients and the society, in general, will not be put in jeopardy. The question is then raised regarding the type of zakat distribution or programmes pertaining to the asnaf Muallaf. The objective of this article is to explore zakat distribution programmes for sustaining muallaf belief (Tauhid) and thoughts (Iman). The methodology of this article is based on qualitative research through document analysis and interview with zakat officer. This article has revealed that a huge amount had been allocated for the development of asnaf Muallaf. It is concluded that, State Islamic Religious Council needs to continuously improve a comprehensive programmes that focus on sustaining the Muallaf belief (Tauhid) and thoughts (Iman).

Keywords: Muallaf; zakat distribution; muallaf programmes; Selangor State Islamic Religious Council

Abstrak

Zakat merupakan salah satu rukun Islam yang menekankan pembangunan sosio-ekonomi. Apa-apa perbincangan mengenai zakat dalam konteks ibadah tidak boleh lari dari faktor sosio-ekonomi, terutamanya dalam membantu golongan kurang bernasib baik. Zakat bertujuan untuk mengagihkan semula kekayaan dalam masyarakat di kalangan golongan miskin. Zakat bukan semata-mata berorientasikan kebajikan yang bergantung kepada sumbangan pemberi tetapi satu kewajipan yang perlu dilaksanakan kepada mereka yang layak. Oleh itu, adalah penting pengurusan zakat dibuat secara cekap untuk memastikan bahawa hak-hak penerima dan masyarakat, secara amnya tidak terabai. Objektif artikel ini adalah untuk meneroka program pengagihan zakat samaada ianya berjaya atau tidak dalam meningkatkan kepercayaan (Tauhid) dan Keyakinan (Iman) dikalangan Muallaf. Kaedah kajian ini adalah berdasarkan penyelidikan kualitatif melalui analisis dokumen dan temu bual dengan pegawai zakat. Kajian ini telah mendedahkan bahawa jumlah yang besar telah diperuntukkan bagi pembangunan asnaf Muallaf. Apa yang dapat disimpulkan bahawa Majlis Agama Islam Negeri perlu sentiasa berterusan meningkatkan program yang lebih menyeluruh yang memberi tumpuan kepada meningkatkan kepercayaan (Tauhid) dan Keyakinan (Iman) di kalangan Muallaf.

Kata kunci: Muallaf; pengagihan zakat; program muallaf; Majlis Agama Islam Selangor

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Islam brings justice to this world, as manifested with numerous evidences in Al-Qur'an in justifying the truth of its message through logical reasoning that has been truly proven in opening up the human hearts in accepting the purity of Islam. Muallaf is a person who has converted or has interpreted as having reverted to Islam regardless of their races and nations¹. Multi-

religion, ethnicity and diversity are very important aspects in policy making, so this article attempts to highlight the uniqueness of zakat distribution in a multi-ethnic and multi-religion country. Indeed, Islam is for everyone and it is not restricted to any specific ethnicity².

Many muallaf had nowhere to go after converting to Islam. Most of them are lack of proper Islamic education and care. The muallaf community is really in need and should seek help from

the Muslims in enhancing their faith. Al-Qardawi (1986)³ stated that besides alleviating poverty among Muallaf, zakat distribution should improve and increase one's Tawhid (The Oneness of Allah), Iman (belief) and Taqwa (level of righteousness) to Allah (s.w.t.). Furthermore, zakat should also bring about gratitude and thankfulness to God for the bounties that He had bestowed upon us. God has bestowed on humans both the spiritual and material bounties. Prayer and other physical worship express gratitude for the grace of creation, while zakat and other financial worship expresses gratitude for the material grace of God. How disgraceful is he who sees the obvious needs of the poor and does not graciously give one-fourth of a tenth of his wealth, or thank God who had given him enough bounty to remove him from the misery and pressure of poverty. The institution of *Zakat* purifies one's heart from the love of material, wealth and prepares it to make sacrifices for the cause of Allah⁴.

Zakat, as one of the five pillars of Islam, has obliged certain people to contribute part of their wealth to the needy. Zakat has also become an important financial source, especially in dense Muslim population countries⁵. Zakat fund could be an incentive to the Muallaf as part of an effort to assist them to become productive recipients economically if the fund is channeled in a sustainable form. Moreover, the zakat fund could free the recipients from poverty and improve their living standard⁶. In Islam, a person's wealth is impure if he does not pay the right of Allah's servants from the wealth bestowed by Him. Also, his heart is impure since he does not appreciate Allah's generosity to him in the form of giving him more than his needs. Very little goodness can be expected of such people.

■2.0 CONCEPT OF MUALLAF

Literally, the word Muallaf as mentioned in *al-Marbawi Dictionary* comes from two root words i.e. 'Allafa' which means "obedient, tamed, and submissive" and 'Alifahu' which means compliant⁷. The combination of the two root words gives the definition of the word Muallaf which means "to change or make somebody change his or her religion or beliefs." According to the *Cambridge International Dictionary of English* (1997), the term 'convert' means "someone who changes their beliefs or ways of living"⁸. In a multiracial country like Malaysia, Muslim converts are also known as muallafs (LZS)⁹. According to *Webster's New World College Dictionary* (1996)¹⁰ 'conversion' refers to "a converting or being converted: specifically, a) a change from lack of faith to religious belief, adoption of a religion" and "b) a change from one's belief, religion, doctrine, opinion, etc. to another." According to McGuire (1997)¹¹, "conversion is a process of religious change which transforms the way the individual perceives the rest of society and his or her personal place in it, altering one's view of the world."¹²

In theological studies, conversion has been associated with sociological terms. Donald Gelpi (1998)¹² elaborated conversion as a "social process" which consists of seven stages: (1) settlement within a particular social context that sets the tone for the conversion experience, (2) experience of personal crisis, (3) personal crisis leads to religious quest, (4) religious quest leads to a connection with an advocate of a particular religious tradition, (5) interaction within the religious community, (6) religious commitment, and finally (7) recognition of the consequences of the religious commitment. In this case, conversion is noted not only for producing interior change related to belief and conviction, but also for generating a significant ethical predisposition toward social transformation.

The Selangor Zakat Centre defined the Muallaf as "The new converts to Islam and can be tamed his heart by given assistance so that they strongly love Islam."¹³

■3.0 ZAKAT FOR ASNAF MUALLAF

The administration of zakat involves at least two broad aspects namely, collection and distribution. The role of the state in collecting and distribution of zakat fund began later during the Holy Prophet's (s.a.w.) time in Madinah. Zakat funds were distributed among the eight categories of beneficiaries as stated in the Qur'an. There are eight prescribed categories for the recipients (Asnaf) of Zakat. Allah s.w.t. has determined these categories when He says:

"Sadaqat are for the poor and the needy, and those employed to administer (the Zakat), for those whose hearts are to be won over, and for the freeing of human beings from bondage, and (for) those who are burdened with debts, and (for every struggle) in Allah's cause, and (for) the wayfarer: (this is) an ordinance from Allah, Allah is All-Knowing, full of Wisdom."
(Al-Qur'an 9:60)

According to this verses "*(the Zakat), for those whose hearts are to be won over*", or we called it as (*Muallafat-al-Qalub*) thus, referred to distribution of Zakat among the Muslims converted. Even though some of Islamic scholars argue that this asnaf category only exist for the time of the late prophet Muhammad, however Imam Shafie said that this interpretation can be used in recent time¹⁴. Thus, *Muallafat-al-Qalub* refers to persons newly converted to Islam. In principle, this includes those who give full co-operation in contributing and strengthening Islam¹⁵. This also includes those that are newly converted to Islam who might have lost their previous properties and therefore need assistance and encouragement. Financial help may strengthen their belief (*iman*) and the sense of belonging to the Muslim Ummah. Also included in this category are those who are aggressively against Islam that hopefully by providing money, it may stop them from doing so, and so on.

■4.0 MUALLAF DEVELOPMENT THROUGH ZAKAT DISTRIBUTION

Zakat is one of the pillars of Islam that emphasizes socio-economic development. Any discussion on zakat in the context of worship cannot be disconnected from the socio-economic factor, especially in aiding the underprivileged based on the *maslahah* concept¹⁶. The definition of zakat has been done in various ways such as grow, blessing, pure, good and renowned. Furthermore, from the *fiqh* point of view, zakat can be extracted from a certain amount from a specific wealth for the benefit of those who are entitled to receive it as stipulated by Allah¹⁷. The primary purpose of zakat is to redistribute the wealth from the non-poor to the poor¹⁸. Zakat is not purely welfare-oriented that relies on the contribution of the giver but an obligation that must be carried out to entitled zakat recipients. Therefore, it is pertinent that the management of zakat should be made efficient to ensure that the rights of the recipients and the society, in general, will not be put in jeopardy¹⁹. History has confirmed that one of the reasons that led to the fall of the Umayyad dynasty was its government's failure to manage the *Baitulmal* successfully²⁰. As stated in *Islamic Encyclopaedia*, the word Muallaf comes from the Arabic '*Al-Muallafa Qulubuhum*' which means "those whose hearts are won over" or "those hearts to be reconciled". On the other hand, the actual phrase is

connected with the Qur'an in the Surah Al-Tawbah: 60, which means:

*"Zakat 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 a legal obligation from Allah. Allah is all knowing, all wise"*²¹

Based from above phrase, Zakat plays a significant role 'to win' and 'to soften' the heart of the Muallaf to follow Islam as a way of life. Previous Muslims scholar agreed that the term Muallaf also includes non-Muslims, but only for the purpose of turning their hearts to Islam. For example, al-Qardawi states, the case where there is a group of infidels being courted in the hope that they will accept Islam, such in the case of Safwan. During the opening of Mecca, Safwan was given a period of four months by the Prophet (s.a.w.) to consider accepting Islam. When the battle of Hunayn occurred, he took part in it. The Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) then lent Safwan his sword and gave him a few camels, taken from a valley. Consequently, after that incident, Safwan became a good Muslim²². The authentic hadith referring to the event is found in *Sunan al-Tirmidhi*, which mentions: "From Safwan, son of Umayya r.a., 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."*²³ The hadith mentioned above explained that Rasulullah s.a.w. had transformed Safwan who hated him most at first, but through love, care and material wealth showered upon him by Rasulullah s.a.w., his hatred changed to love. As a result, almost all of the Islamic scholars agree to accept the non-Muslim as a part of Muallaf as a way to persuade them to embrace Islam. Al-Qurtubi (1954)²⁴ mentioned three of them, which are:

1. Those who have just embraced Islam. They need support in order to build up their confidence towards Islam. Al-Qurtubi also included the Jews and Christians who had newly accepted Islam, even though they were wealthy in this group.
2. The leaders and public figures amongst them who had many friends who were non-Muslims. By giving them a part of the Zakat, it was hoped that it would attract them and their friends to embrace Islam.
3. The middlemen who can persuade other non-Muslims to embrace and accept Islam. On this matter, they received a part of the Zakat to become such middleman.

5.0 LITERATURE REVIEW: ZAKAT AND MUALLAF DEVELOPMENT

Since September 11, 2001 booming episode, there are numerous misunderstandings and stereotypes about Islam, Muslims and connect them with terrorist²⁵. This misunderstandings and stereotypes caused deep distress within Muslim communities and those converting to Islam come across these prejudices that certainly build fear within them. The misunderstandings and stereotypes therefore need to be constantly challenged and addressed though the New Convert obviously needs the time and space to be able to know and understand Islam so that he understand about the misconceptions and becomes confident about his conversion.

New converts mostly in non-Muslims country will experience the barriers of being part of minority. They suffer the changing attitude of people amongst them. They report that as formerly part of the majority, they never had to face before this kind of hatred, attitudes and behaviors²⁶. Barriers in job or other

their economics sources can cause them to be poor, barriers on relationships among the family will results in feeling abundant and barriers among the Muslims itself will make them feel rejected. As the closes and becoming brothers in Islam, the Muslims is responsible in supporting them mentally and monetarily.

Mahyuddin Haji Abu Bakar *et al.* (2011)²⁷ states that zakat distribution to the Muallaf can help strengthen their faith and creates a sense of belonging among Muslims to assist those who are in need like this group of people. Aishah M. *et al.* (2011)²⁸ seeks to investigate the conversion patterns among muallafs in Malaysia. The focus is to find out demographic information of muallafs and to identify popular conversion patterns among muallafs in Malaysia. From the study conducted, the following conclusions can be derived: (a) majority of the muallafs come from Sabah and belongs to other ethnicities found in Malaysia such as Iban, Asli, Myanmar, Kadazan and Thai, (b) many of them are unemployed despite having adequate academic level, (c) majority of the new muallafs agreed that they had first obtained their information regarding Islam from people who are close to them like family members, friends, colleagues and neighbours, (d) majority of the new muallafs associate their conversion process with the friendliness pattern, followed by the intellectual pattern and lastly the mystical pattern. This coincides with the first source of information they obtained regarding Islam.

Moreover, zakat distribution aims to change the lives of the poverty-stricken by enabling them to afford to live a comfortable life. Al-Qardawi (1986) also mentioned that the distribution of zakat serves to cater for the needs of its recipient²⁹. For this purpose, zakat is not necessarily given to all recipients if there are those that are in need of more zakat. According to him, the government has the authority to identify ways to distribute zakat. With regard to this, Muhamad Anwar (1996)³⁰ maintains that the obligatory nature of zakat should become a catalyst to assist Muslims in four aspects through the goal of zakat distribution: to resolve poverty issue, to establish social justice, to develop a society based on love, mutual solidarity, brotherhood and to eliminate from the poor the feelings of hatred that they may harbour towards the rich. Further, zakat has its own strength as it unites the Muslims, build better relations among them and encourage Muslims to work together³¹. Zakat also should be for the purpose of being a welfare instrument to overcome economic issues or as a means to stabilize the economy of the Muslims.

Razaleigh Muhamat *et al.* (2012)³² set outs to explore the exact level of the social aspect of assimilation between Chinese Muallaf and their Malay counterparts in Kuala Lumpur. It was certain that assimilation within the social aspect is a dilemma which the Chinese Muallaf faces when they convert from their own religious belief to Islam. It suggests that when these converts begin to practice Islam, their behaviour changes in line with the identity of the Malays. This is because Islam is associated with the Malays in the Malaysian context. Whilst they are welcomed by their Malay counterparts, it is nevertheless hypothesized that they may not assimilate fully into the Malay community. Through this research, it was found/discovered that the social assimilation level of Chinese Muallaf is at the low level.

According to McGuire (1997)³², *"Conversion is a process of religious change which transforms 'the way the individual perceives the rest of society and his or her personal place in it, altering one's view of the world."* Lofland & Skonovd (1981)³³, describe the process of conversion from one religion to another; (a) Intellectual; 'response to teaching' through reading, media, talks, (b) Affection; through having good and positive personal

experience with members of the Muslim society, (c) Mystical; through visions and supernatural experiences, (d) Experimental; going through the process of trial and error in the religion of choices, (e) Revivalist; conforming to the crowd; involving emotional inspirations; and (f) Coercive; through pressure.

The most difficult phase for a Muallaf is to share it new religion with his family. Most of Muallaf will feel guilty amongst their family and relatives and being afraid of being rejected³⁴. Families can be very reluctant to accept their children religious conversions because they can think that they have lost their children or because of their common misconceptions about Islam such as violence and women's rights³⁵. Family members will protest, devastated and agree with the conversion and worst when there is anti-Islam in the family member. Further, the Muallaf will even feeling guilt at their family because of what an embarrassment for their family to have somebody who's doesn't fit their status, religion and cultural among the family. There are also some cases of most of Muallaf will feel lost regarding find teacher or resources to effectively live their faith. However, most of them will encounter a problem of fell being rejected (ethnicization) by the Muslims³⁶. Thus, this article is try to explore zakat distribution programmes for sustaining muallaf belief (Tauhid) and thoughts (Iman).

Zakat distribution can improve their economic and social hardness (for sustaining muallaf belief and thoughts) by reducing their burden of poverty while at the same time making them feel accepted among the Muslims community³⁷. Zakat functions as a fiscal mechanism, it performs some of the major functions of modern public finance, which deals with social security entitlements, social assistance grants for childcare, food subsidy, education, health care, housing, and public transportation in a welfare state³⁸. Since zakat reallocates the resources from the rich to the poor, it becomes the effective approach to fight against poverty³⁹.

Converting to Islam had become the biggest decision made by the Muallaf in their life. There are a lot of stimuli around them that they are not used to, being thrown out of family, society, friends as well as loss their job and loss their financial sources. Often, Muallaf might look uncomfortable because they are not used to their surroundings. Thus, they need help and mentors from Muslims community to teach them, support them, and guide them through their new journey as a Muslim. When they have someone that has warned them about these issues and is constantly helping them, teaching them, and answering questions, they feel supported and confident that they have someone to go back to⁴⁰. This is where zakat assistant is important to assist them materially and morally besides the support from the Muslims community itself. The lack of support will leave the new Muslim feeling isolated and unaware. Attempting to go through any combination of these issues alone without any support is often the reason why many Muallaf end up leaving Islam. In recognizing and highlighting these issues, the need for effective zakat distribution becomes blatantly clear.

6.0 RESEARCH METHOD

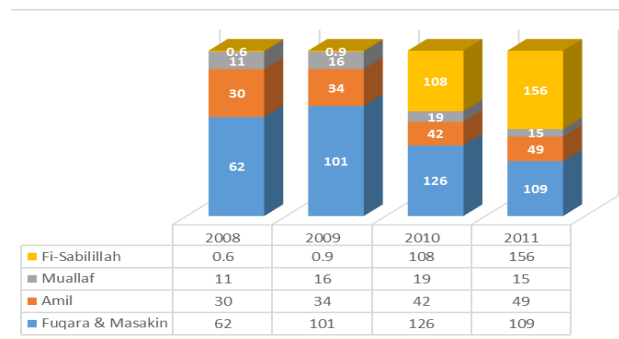
This paper is essentially based on the on-going academic research work and descriptive analysis to get an overview of Muallaf development through zakat distribution and programmes in current practice. An interview session was conducted on the 25th of June 2013, at 3.30 pm with two officers from The Selangor State Islamic Religious Council whom were Ustaz Mohd Helmi (Assistant Director for Muallaf Welfare in Selangor) and Ustaz Mohd Anwarulhaq (Assistant Director for Muallaf Education in Selangor). The Main question in this

article is regarding the type of zakat distribution or programmes pertaining to the asnaf Muallaf. The objective of this article is to explore zakat distribution programs for sustaining muallaf belief (Tauhid) and thoughts (Iman). Thus, the purpose of this interview session is to get the response/feedback according the SIRC practices about zakat distribution towards muallaf asnaf in Selangor. Data under study was from the year 2002 until 2012.

The Selangor State Islamic Religious Council was selected because of their achievement as being the highest zakat fund collection in Malaysia.⁴¹ The question that was raised was, with the highest collection of zakat in Malaysia, why are the Muslims still putting blame and complaints to the Selangor State Islamic Religious Council regarding the distributions of zakat collection.⁴² These questions is reflexed to the controversial issue on the discovery of converted Muslims (muallafs / new Muslims) being investigated by the Selangor State Islamic Religious Council during their inspection based on the complaint received by Muslims on their involvement with activities organised by the Damansara Utama Methodist Church (DUMC) in Petaling Jaya on August 3rd, 2011.⁴³ Majority of the Muslims placed the blame on the Selangor State Islamic Religious Council and questioned regarding Muallaf's rights on Zakat contribution. The blame had stressed upon the allotment of the zakat fund, as the general perception was that these Muallafs are not being supported by the authorities.⁴⁴ Thus, this study aims to identify the programmes or activities relating to the distribution of zakat funds, focusing mainly on the plight of the asnaf of Muallaf.

7.0 THE DISTRIBUTION OF ZAKAT ON MUALAF DEVELOPMENT IN SELANGOR

The Selangor State Islamic Religious Council is responsible to collect and distribute zakat in Selangor, and their effectiveness in managing the zakat in Selangor had shown impressive growth from time to time. This is proven by a stunning increase in the amount of zakat collection from 2008 to 2011 for all categories. Generally, the highest zakat distribution goes to the Fuqara and Masakin from 2008 and it is continually increasing through the years until 2010 totalling MYR 126 million. However, in the year 2011 the highest zakat distribution goes to the Fi-Sabilillah totalling MYR 156 million, the second highest goes to Fuqara & Masakin totalling MYR 109 million, third highest goes to amil totalling MYR 49 million and forth goes to Muallaf totalling MYR 15 million as shown at Figure 1.1 as follows;



Source: Selangor State Islamic Religious Council, 2012

Figure 1.1 Selangor Zakat Distribution by Category (2008-2011) (MYR MILLION)

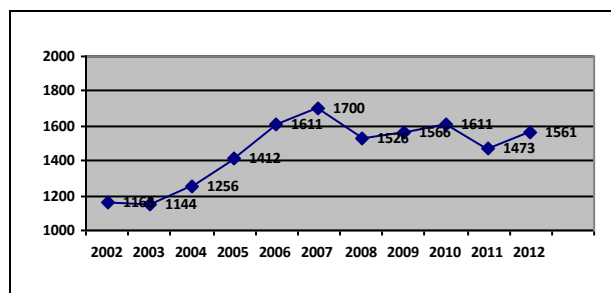
Figure 1.1 shows that the amount of zakat distribution to the Muallaf is increasing from MYR 11 million (2008) to MYR 16 million (2009) and MYR 19 million in the year 2010. Only in the year 2011, the amount of zakat allocated to the Muallaf had a small decline which dropped from MYR 19 million to MYR 15 million as respond to the registered muallaf in Figure 1.2. The rest, we can conclude that distribution of zakat to the muallaf in the state of Selangor (except for year 2011) is consistently increasing each year. The trend of zakat distribution to the Muallaf is actually reflected from the total amount of registered Muallaf in the state of Selangor every year. This research attempts to look into the number of registered muallaf, zakat distribution and the programmes that are allocated for them. In general, what we can conclude is that the huge amount is allocated for the Muallaf indicated that zakat plays an important role in assisting new Muslims and helping them overcome their suffering and poverty as stated in the Qur'an (9:60). Zakat is provided to the Muallaf as a way of assisting and enabling them to start a new life in the way of Islam, as the total number of registered muallaf increases every year (Figure 1.2).

Figure 1.2 shows the increasing number of registered Muallaf from year 2002 – 2012 in the State of Selangor. This illustration (Figure 1.2) supports the changes that occurred shown in Figure 1.1. It shows that zakat distribution is reflected by the number of registered Muallaf in the State of Selangor. In the year 2011, the registered Muallafs were less than the previous years. Overall, this positive increment and practice serves as evidence to the view regarding the necessity of Zakat aid towards Muallaf as part of da'wah methodology since it is essential for Muslims to propagate Islam, in saving them from the swords of the Muslims here on earth and the Fire of Hell in the life after death⁴⁵. Al-Qurtubi gave some emphasis by giving them priority in guidance, briefly as follows:

1. To prevent them from deeds that may spark social unrest.

2. To make them realize the comprehensiveness (*Shumul*) of Islam as their constant guide on the right path.
3. To encourage them to hope for the blessing of Allah, so that their hearts are open to accept the teaching of Islam.
4. To show them how Islam always cares for and loves the Muallaf, and that the Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. is a blessing for all and especially the new converts.

According to Ibn Hisham⁴⁶ the purpose of providing guidance to the Muallaf in the basic knowledge of the '*Deen*' (religion) and instilling them with qualities of precise moral behaviour is to encourage them to willingly embrace Islam, and to avoid evil deeds.



Source: Selangor State Islamic Religious Council, 2013

Figure 1.2 Number of registered muallaf in the state of Selangor; 2002 -2012

Table 1.1 Statistics for registered Muallaf Selangor State according to District and PERKIM (2002-2012)

DISTR CT	YEAR	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	TOTAL
Gombak		138	182	142	177	152	149	139	154	150	125	125	1633
Hulu Langat		161	147	129	107	164	134	128	169	271	176	196	1782
Hulu Selangor		35	55	79	72	80	99	51	48	123	68	94	804
Klang		135	182	160	155	158	156	151	156	139	142	137	1671
Kuala Langat		59	54	44	52	50	36	54	49	88	52	76	614
Kuala Selangor		37	22	23	18	20	26	15	26	24	26	32	269
Petaling Jaya		62	71	42	42	34	44	105	158	138	90	75	861
Subang Jaya		4	54	37	n.a	n.a	2	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	0	97
Sabak Bernam		14	10	11	9	20	19	18	31	7	25	18	182
Sepang		45	38	57	47	64	49	53	47	48	62	59	569
Shah Alam		147	109	159	239	298	318	274	290	307	380	427	2948
PERKIM		318	217	358	477	548	648	519	424	313	322	315	4459
Other		8	3	15	17	23	20	19	14	3	5	7	134
TOTAL		1163	1144	1256	1412	1611	1700	1526	1566	1611	1473	1561	16023

Source: Selangor State Islamic Religious Council, 2013

Table 1.1 Shows that the highest number of Muallaf is registered under the Muslim Welfare Organization Malaysia (PERKIM)⁴⁷. In terms of district, Shah Alam recorded the highest number of registered Muallaf in Selangor, followed by Hulu Langat, Klang, West Gombak and other districts. Based on

the ethnicity for 2013, the largest number of Muallaf were the Indians with 404, followed by other ethnics (307), Chinese (293), Orang Asli (129), Iban (112), Filipino (83), Kadazan (65), Bidayuh (48), Indonesia (29), Cambodia (25), Murut (22), Myanmar (17), Thailand (12), Eurasian (8) and Punjabi (7)⁴⁸.

8.0 ZAKAT DISTRIBUTIONS AND PROGRAMMES FOR MUALLAF

In the state of Selangor, the Selangor State Islamic Religious Council (SIRC) is responsible for educating, assisting and monitoring the Muallaf through various programmes beginning

from the first day that they become Muslim until they pass away. Thus the aid and education programs setup by SIRC can be categorized into short-term and long-term programmes. Table 1.2 shows the type of programmes and activities and the amount of zakat involved in the year 2013.

Table 1.2 Type of distribution / activities, and amount of zakat distribution to Asnaf Muallaf (2013)

NO.	TYPE OF DISTRIBUTION / ACTIVITY	AMOUNT (MYR)
AIDUL FITRI ASSISTANCE FUND (ONCE PER YEAR)		
1	D.Y.M.M SULTAN	400
	AIDUL FITRI FUND	400
2	MONTHLY ASSISTANCE	500
3	CIRCUMCISION	250
	CIRCUMCISION (SPECIAL CASE)	500
4	WEDDING ASSISTANCE	2000
5	FUNERAL ASSISTANCE	1500
	WEAK / NO HEIRS / NO HOUSE	100
	SHORT SUPPLY FOR LIVING EXPENSES	200
6	EMERGENCY CASE	200
	UTILITY BILLS	100
	TRANSPORTATION	50
EMERGENCY		
7	ASSISTANCE DUE TO UNEMPLOYMENT (MYR 500 * 6 MONTHS)	3000
	COST OF LIVING AND HOUSEHOLD EXPENSES (MYR 500* 6 MONTHS)	3000
	EMERGENCY	5000
	OTHERS	1000
	MEDICATION	10000
8	EXPENSES TO BUY BASIC NEEDS	5000
	HOUSE LOAN DUE TO LOSS OF EMPLOYMENT	APPROVED BY TECHNICAL COMMITTEE
	OTHERS	3000
9	LAWYER FEE	5000
10	CLUSTERED HOUSE CONSTRUCTION	BASED ON APPROVAL
	INDIVIDUAL HOUSE CONSTRUCTION	
11	3 ROOMS	45000
	4 ROOMS	55000
BUYING HOUSE ASSISTANCE		
12	MEDIUM COST	45000
	LOW MEDIUM COST	45000
	LOW COST	45000
	FIXING HOUSE	BASED ON APPLICATION
13	FIXING HOUSE	20000
14	RENTAL (MYR 600 PER MONTH, MAX 6 MONTH)	600
15	BUSINESS CAPITAL ASSISTANCE	BASED ON REQUIREMENTS
16	PROTECTION HOUSE (MANAGEMENT)	BASED ON REQUIREMENTS
17	PROTECTION HOUSE (FIX)	BASED ON REQUIREMENTS

Continued (Table 1.2)

	MEDICAL ASSISTANCE	10000
18	MEDICAL ASSISTANCE (CHRONIC)	50000
	MEDICAL ASSISTANCE (EQUIPMENT)	30000
MUALLAF ENCOURAGEMENT ASSISTANCE		
19	GOODIES (MUALLAF KIT)	BASED ON REQUIREMENTS
	COMPENSATION FOR BRINGING PEOPLE TO ISLAM	300
20	ISLAMIC DAY CELEBRATION ASSISTANCE	BASED ON REQUIREMENTS
21	PRINTING / PUBLICATION	BASED ON REQUIREMENTS
22	COMPUTER MAINTAINANCE	BASED ON REQUIREMENTS
23	ASSISTANCE FOR MUALLAF ORGANIZATION	BASED ON NEEDS AND APPLICATION
24	ACTIVITY	BASED ON NEEDS AND APPLICATION
25	ALLOWANCE FOR CLASS ATTENDANCE (MYR 20.00 * 1 SESSION)	20
TEACHER ALLOWANCE		
26	TEACHING MUALLAF CLASS 13 SESSIONS PER MONTH (MYR 100* 1 SESSION)	100
	LECTURE ALLOWANCE (MYR 200 * 1 HOUR)	200
	FARDHU AIN CLASS ALLOWANCE	150 * 1 SESSION
EDUCATION EQUIPMENT ASSISTANCE		
	LAPTOP	BASED ON REQUIREMENTS
27	BOOK	CERTIFICATE - MYR 300, DIPLOMA AND ABOVE - NO LIMIT
	TICKET (TWO WAY)	TWICE PER YEAR
	SPECTICAL	300
STUDENT ALLOWANCE		
	PRIMARY	200
	SECONDARY	250
	HOSTEL	350
	UNIVERSITY	450
28	CERTIFICATE OF LEADERSHIP AND DA'WAH (PSDK)	300
	INSTITUT DAKWAH ISLAMIAH PERKIM (IDIP)	350
	PONDOK PASIR TUMBOH (PPT)	400
	PUSAT BIMBINGAN SAUDARA BARU (PUSBA)	300
	INSTITUT TAUFIQ ISLAMI (ITI)	525
	PUSAT DAKWAH ISLAMIAH YAYASAN ABU BAKAR (PDIYAB)	300
COURSE / TRAINING ASSISTANCE		
	PRIMARY LEVEL (MUALAF, IPTA/S, GENERAL, UMUM)	25000
29	ADVANCED LEVEL	25000
	PROFESIONAL LEVEL	15000
	NON MUSLIMS DA'WAH COURSE	15000
	DA'WAH MANAGEMENT SKILLS FOR NON MUSLIMS	15000
30	MUALAF TALKS PROGRAM	BASED ON NEEDS AND APPLICATION
31	FIXED ASSETS ASSISTANCE	BASED ON NEEDS AND APPLICATION

Source: Selangor State Islamic Religious Council, 2013

Basically, Table 1.2 indicates that zakat assistance to the Muallaf begins from the first day they become Muslims. For example, the new Muslim would be immediately helped with

monthly allowance for five years until they become a Mukallaf¹⁹. This aid is important for them to bear their cost of living. Besides monthly allowance, Islam is also concerned with

the education and health of its devotee. Support from SIRC towards education covers the fees, pocket money allowance, book allowance, ticket and eyeglasses. This support package is comprehensive throughout the 10 types of educational institution inclusive of primary and secondary school, university and Muallaf educational centre within and outside of Selangor. For medical aid, the Muallaf is eligible for assistance of up to MYR 50,000. For housing assistance, the Selangor State Islamic Religious Council had provided several types of assistance for repairing, restoring and renovating house, paying rent and also purchasing low cost houses. Other type of allowance includes cost for funeral services, Islamic day's celebration and compensation for attracting new Muallaf whose purpose is to encourage, assist and educate the Muallaf in becoming better Muslims.

For non-monetary program, the SIRC had assembled several programs and educational classes for the Muallaf to learn about Islam. *Fardhu 'Ain*⁵⁰ (individual obligations) class is organized to teach them about performing *Solat* (prayer), Zakat, Fasting and Hajj as well as a class on learning *Fardhu Kifayah*⁵¹ (communal obligations) that teaches them on moral responsibility upon a community. Moreover, in encouraging the Muallaf to attend classes, allowance for attending class is also given. Besides, there are a few subventions on courses and training for improving their management skills. This clearly manifests the great concern from SIRC in supporting, educating and nurturing the Iman of the Muallaf to become a better person and Muslim.

Table 1.2 displays all 31 types of programmes and activities for asnaf Muallaf through zakat distribution. What we can summarize is that from all the various types of programmes and activities, we can categorize them to four main range of zakat distributions. The first category comprise of 25 programmes involving the amount ranging from MYR 20 – MYR 500.00. The second category consists of 12 programmes amounting within the range from MYR 500.00 – MYR 10,000.00. The third category has 13 programmes with amount ranging from MYR 10,000.00 and above. Finally, the last category is the remaining 16 programmes that are stated as others, according to the need and application, and depending on the approval or depending on the technical approval.

9.0 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this research has clarified that huge of amount of funds has been allocated to the development of asnaf Muallaf in Selangor. On top of that, 31 types of programmes have been assigned to ensure that the Muallaf can sustained in facing a various challenges of being a new Muslim. Hence, this research has answered the big question that was raised by the majority of the Muslims claiming that the Muallaf are being neglected by the religious authority or the Islamic Religious Centre in particular. Thus, the blame had stressed upon the allotment of the zakat fund, as the general perception was that these Muallafs are not being supported by the authorities was not true. It is conclude that, State Islamic Religious Council needs to continuously improve a comprehensive programmes that focus on sustaining the Muallaf belief (Tauhid) and thoughts (Iman). On top of that, it is truly hoped these development programmes through zakat distribution will facilitate the Muallaf in preparing and transforming them to become a better Muslims. However, this study is only limited to the data that was available from the officers interviewed. Therefore, this study is suggested to expand its scope to include the Muallaf themselves as the respondents in the future.

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