Intellectual Discourse

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Intellectual Discourse is a highly respected, academic refereed journal of the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM). It is published twice a year by the IIUM Press, IIUM, and contains reflections, articles, research notes and review articles representing the disciplines, methods and viewpoints of the Muslim world.

Intellectual Discourse is abstracted in *SCOPUS, ProQuest, International Political Science Abstracts, Peace Research Abstracts Journal, Muslim World Book Review, Bibliography of Asian Studies, Index Islamicus, Religious and Theological Abstracts, ATLA Religion Database, MyCite, ISC* and *EBSCO*.

Note from the Editor

In this issue of Intellectual Discourse (Vol. 29, No. 2), a total of five research articles are presented to our esteemed readers. These articles reflect the results of research carried out by academics and researchers based not only at International Islamic University Malaysia but also from other universities at home and abroad. In a few of the articles in this issue, they were also written as collaborative efforts. In addition to the research articles, this issue also contains a book review and a conference report. As the new editor of Intellectual Discourse, I must acknowledge the immense efforts and dedication of Almarhum Associate Professor Dr. Ishtiaq Hossain, who was editor of the journal from Vol. 25, No. 2 until Vol. 29, No. 1, spanning a prolific period of four years. May Allah SWT grant him forgiveness and bestow upon him Jannah.

The first article (Revisiting the History of Early Settlements in Pulau Pinang: The Contributions and Legacies of Rawa People), authored by Suhaila Abdullah and Fauziah Fathil, focuses on the Rawa people as a group of inhabitants who have made Pulau Pinang as their homeland long before the colonial British rule of Malaya. The article traces the Rawa people from West Sumatra who are historically familiar with both Pinang Pinang Island as well as the mainland area of Seberang Perai. The authors utilized qualitative methods of inquiry that emphasizes on the existence of Malay settlements prior to the British and the contribution of the Rawa people and other Sumatran migrant groups to the early socio-economic and political development of Pulau Pinang, a fact that deserves acknowledgment and recognition.

The second article (A Framework of Good Governance in Regulating Religious Extremism in Malaysia) by Elmira Akhmetova, Rabi'ah Aminudin, Nadzrah Binti Ahmad, Sharifah Syahirah, and Izzuddin M. Jaafar presents a framework of good governance in regulating religious extremism in Malaysia. The article asserts the vulnerability of religious sentiment to be exploited by violent extremist groups for recruitment

and mass mobilization, and a call for the sustainability of Malaysia's moderate Islam. Secondly, the article, which uses both qualitative and quantitative methods, triangulates its findings to identify two levels of factors, individual and socio-cultural/governance, which contribute to the growth of religious extremism due to external and socio-economic drivers and political grievances. In short, the void of good governance is a foundational issue. The article identifies the authorities responsibility to promote the principles of good governance by developing socio-economic and political resilience, and also by facilitating a moderate and authentic understanding of Islamic principles and values for Malaysia's long-term nationbuilding in the context of security and public order.

Lailufar Yasmin, author of the third article (Women as Agents of Violence in Bangladesh—*The Perks of Being Wallflowers*), meanwhile, argues for the need of a wider and more in depth research of women's involvement in extremism in Bangladesh. Due to violence often being seen as the domain of men, the supposed passivity of women in conflicts is seen as a residual of patriarchy. Her study aims to fill this gap as an indigeneous element of extremism or as a global pattern. The qualitative study identifies the perception of women as the titular 'wallflowers', hence marginalized, have further made them them vulnerable to radicalization and recruitment. This requires the need of research and engagement activities to fill the gap on gender and family dynamics on the nature of violent extremism in Bangladesh.

The fourth article (Understanding Community Needs for Better Corporate Social Responsibility in Pulau Pinang and its Educational Implications) authored by Fazreena Mansor, Hasnizawati Hashim, Siti Aishah Mohamad, Ilyani Azer, and Muhammad Zainuddin Mohamed Azudin, looks into the impact of CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) on local communities where little attention has been given to understanding its impact on the communities. The authors' consider CSR practice as relatively immature due to companies failing to understand the community needs and the method to effectively fulfill these needs. At the same time, it is also believed that the social work profession shares common values with CSR. This study attempts to understand the gap in CSR delivery through the lens of its recipients by investigating current practices and perceptions on CSR function and the potential involvement of social workers in this field. In-depth interviews were conducted with CSR recipient communities in Pulau Pinang providing

evidence that widens the understanding of how efficient CSR specialists can optimize their roles while providing a basis for the establishment of an appropriate educational curriculum in support of the sector and its necessity for business and corporate ethics.

Finally, in the fifth article (*Waqf* and its legal framework in Sri Lanka: A Preliminary Study) by Muhammed Buhary Muhammed Thabith and Nor Asiah Mohamad, *Waqf* or religious endowment implementation and management revivalism are deliberated. The authors discuss *Waqf* reforms in Sri Lanka, such as the introduction of the Ministry of *Waqf*. The article looks into the historical evolution as well as the status quo of *Waqf* governance in Sri Lanka by employing doctrinal analysis based on past literature as well as the laws governing *Waqf*. After exploring the origin of *Waqf* under Islamic law, it discusses the application of the *Waqf* Act in Sri Lanka. The current challenges and issues of the *Waqf* legal framework for the Muslim Mosques Charitable Trusts or *Waqf* Act (MMCTWA) in Sri Lanka are also evaluated, revealing positive development in *Waqf* management, but a lack of overall awareness from which sustainable support and cooperation from the various socio-economic and political stakeholders are required.

Danial Mohd Yusof
Editor

Revisiting the History of Early Settlements in Pulau Pinang: The Contributions and Legacies of Rawa People

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Abstract: It is common that the history of Pulau Pinang is often affiliated with the British as pioneers even among Malaysians, almost to the point of no return. This is despite the fact that there have been Malay groups of both local and regional origins who have made Pulau Pinang their homeland long before the coming of the British. Of the second group, Rawa people from West Sumatra are strangers neither to Pulau Pinang Island nor the mainland area that formed part of the northern state i.e. Seberang Perai. Adopting a content analysis approach via library research and qualitative methods, plus interviews involving the Rawa people of the state, the paper aims to highlight the often-dismissed fact that the Rawa people along with some other Sumatran migrant groups have contributed to the early development of Pulau Pinang. Only recently that several studies come to prove the existence of Malay settlements on the Island prior to its so-called foundation by a British explorer representing the British East India Company, Francis Light in 1786. This paper is to provide further proof in that direction as the early Malay settlers deserved acknowledgment for the contributions made and recognition for the legacies left behind. Apart from assessing various reasons for the Rawa migration and their early areas of settlements, more importantly, the paper demonstrates that the Rawa migrants throughout their long years of existence in the state have contributed to the socio-economic and political developments of Pulau Pinang.

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Abstrak: Umum memaklumi bahawa sejarah Pulau Pinang sering berafiliasi dengan British sebagai perintis bahkan dalam kalangan rakyat Malaysia sendiri, pemahaman sebegini hampir tidak dapat ditukar. Pada hakikatnya, terdapat kumpulan masyarakat Melayu tempatan yang menjadikan Pulau Pinang sebagai tanah air mereka jauh sebelum kedatangan Inggeris. Sementara itu, kumpulan kedua masyarakat Melayu iaitu orang Rawa yang berasal dari Sumatera Barat bukanlah orang asing di Pulau Pinang atau di utara tanah besar iaitu Seberang Perai. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan analisis kandungan menerusi penyelidikan perpustakaan dan kaedah kualitatif, berserta kaedah temubual yang melibatkan orang Rawa di negeri ini, artikel ini cuba mengetengahkan fakta yang sering diabaikan, iaitu bahawa orang Rawa bersama beberapa kumpulan pendatang Sumatera lain telah turut sama menyumbang kepada pembangunan awal Pulau Pinang. Hanya mutakhir ini, terdapat beberapa kajian yang membuktikan kewujudan penempatan orang Melayu di Pulau Pinang sebelum penubuhannya oleh penjelajah Inggeris yang mewakili Syarikat Hindia Timur Inggeris, Francis Light pada tahun 1786. Justeru, artikel ini cuba memberikan bukti lanjut bagi mengukuhkan hujah bahawa peneroka awal Melayu wajar mendapat penghargaan atas sumbangan yang diberikan dan pengiktirafan untuk warisan yang ditinggalkan. Selain daripada menilai pelbagai alasan berkaitan migrasi Rawa dan kawasan penempatan awal mereka, yang lebih penting, artikel ini membuktikan bahawa pendatang Rawa yang telah sekian tahun berada di negeri ini telah memberikan sumbangan besar kepada perkembangan sosio-ekonomi dan politik Pulau Pinang.

Kata kunci: Rawa, Pulau Pinang, penempatan awal, sumbangan, warisan

Introduction

The 'Rawa' or 'Rao' is a Malay ethnic group that originated from an area called Rao, a district in Pasaman, West Sumatra, Indonesia (previously known as Rao Mapat Tunggul). Due to historical affinity between Rao and Minangkabau (centered at Pagarruyung) where the former was made to be part of the latter by Dutch colonizers in 16th century CE (Drakard, 1999), it is not surprising that to some people, the Rawas or people of Rao are part of the larger Minang ethnic group, i.e. the people of Minangkabau. The ethnicity of Rawa is, in fact, less known in Indonesia as it is viewed to be synonymous with the Minang group although, in some aspects of their language, customs, and traditions, they differ (Sanusi & Pa, 2010).

Meanwhile, the term 'Rawa' carries a more distinct meaning in the Malay Peninsula referring to a particular ethnic group whose descendants migrated from Rao in West Sumatra. The integration process in Indonesia explains the amalgamation of the Rawas into the larger Minang group, yet in the Malay Peninsula, according to one view (Bungo, 2012), the ethnic name 'Rawa' is preserved due to the tendency among the migrants to remind themselves of their homeland and identity.

While the Rawa people are known to have migrated to and settled in particularly west coast states such as Pulau Pinang, Perak, Selangor, Negeri Sembilan, and Melaka, it is worth mentioning that the term 'Rawa' is believed to have first become prevalent in the Malay states due to its affiliation with a renowned figure in Pulau Pinang namely, Haji Abdullah Nordin al-Rawi. A migrant from Rao, Abdullah Nordin was famously known as the owner of United Press, an established printing and publishing company in the first half of the 20th century Pulau Pinang (Abdullah, 2007; Harun, 2005), through which the dissemination of knowledge particularly of religious nature to the public took effect. It is possible that the fact that his direct descendant, Haji Yusof Rawa made a name for himself particularly during the 1960s until the 1980s as a respected politician and religious figure, also caused the term 'Rawa' to stand out and be known even more among the people of this country.

This paper aims to trace the migration of the Sumatran people, particularly Rawas to Pulau Pinang, against the existing theories pertaining to the formation of early settlements and their contributions to the development of the state. Given the view that the migration of Sumatran people to the Malay Peninsula had occurred long before the arrival of Western colonial powers, possibly as early as 5th century CE (Bungo, 2012; Omar, 2005), not to mention the special connection between Pulau Pinang and Sumatran Island and other feasible reasons, the history of the state is, therefore worthy to re-look into.

Literature Review

The study of the Rawa community in the contemporary literature on Malaysian history is generally still quite scarce. While there have been some studies on the Rawa people, particularly in recent years, the number is still very few and lacks in-depth investigation or detailed information. The two most relevant pieces of literature are the edited

work of Lubis, Saludin & Samat (2009) and that of Ismail & Samat (2013) which provide accounts on the Rawa community in some Malay states such as Perak, Selangor, Pahang, Negeri Sembilan, Pulau Pinang, Melaka and Kelantan, the history of their migration, settlements and some contributions. Yet, as the works are meant to cover the history of the community across the various states, detailed accounts on the Rawas of Pulau Pinang are limited and very few. There is also a work by Manaf (2009) specifically on the relation between the Rawa people and Pagarruyung, their migration to the Malay Peninsula, and settlements, yet the focus is mainly on the Rawa people of Pahang. Another relevant work is by Ismail (2013) on leading Rawa figures and their contributions in various spheres, yet the scope is mainly of 19th Malaya and 20th century Malaysia. This paper, on the other hand, aims to trace the history of the Rawa people in Pulau Pinang well before the 19th century until the 20th century. There is an autobiography of a prominent Rawa figure of Pulau Pinang namely, Haji Yusof Rawa was written by Rawa (2001) which also provides some information on the background of the community in the state, yet as to be expected, the work mainly deals with the life and family of the individual understudy.

Several works by Indonesian writers are also worthy of note, such as those written by Jorajo (2009) and those by Undri (2009 & 2010). Nevertheless, as intended by the authors, the studies are more concerned with the general history of the Rawa people, namely their roots and origin, and socio-cultural traditions with limited information on their migratory movements. There are hardly any detailed accounts on the Rawa community in Pulau Pinang.

A few remarks should also be made here pertaining to the issue of the foundation and early settlements of Pulau Pinang. Different views can be found ranging from the British role i.e. Francis Light as the founder of the Island, ancient Chinese travelers, and traders as the first to discover the island, and local people as well as migrating communities from nearby islands particularly Sumatra as early settlers long before the coming of foreign powers. Projecting a Euro-centric view, Mills & Blagden (1925) claim that Pulau Pinang Island was almost uninhabited prior to the coming of the British except for a few Malays, and this goes in contrary to the view of Merican (2015) who maintains that the local people and Sumatran migrants have been living in some parts of the Island, forming small villages like Batu Uban, well before the arrival of

the British colonizers. Of the same view is Adnan (2012) who asserts that when the British first came on August 17, 1786, there had already been few Malay settlements on the Island. The place where the British landed, known as Georgetown today (previously known among the locals as Tanjung Penaga) had only a small Malay settlement. Larger Malay settlements, however, were in Jelutong and Batu Uban to the south of Georgetown. Navigating in the middle is Broeze (2010) who maintains that upon the arrival of the British, the island was sparsely populated, yet, providing no further information regarding the people who were residing there. In the meantime, Ludher (2015) dwells on one of the existing claims that Pulau Pinang was discovered by a famous Chinese admiral, Zheng He during his visit to Southeast Asia in the 15th century, yet falls short of necessary details as to whether this led to the establishment of early Chinese settlements.

Results and Discussions

Rawa Migration to Pulau Pinang

The coming of Western powers to the Malay world was primarily driven by economic motives and to a limited extent military or security reasons, as in the case of the British who decided to have Pulau Pinang as an economic and military base in 1786. Used to be part of the Kedah state, the Island of Pulau Pinang was leased to Francis Light, a representative of the British East India Company by Sultan Abdullah Mukarram Shah. Later, an adjacent area on the mainland known in present-day as Seberang Perai (previously called Province Wellesley) was handed over to the East India Company following a treaty with Sultan Dhiauddin Mukarram Shah II in 1800.

Unlike the British, the Rawa migration to the Malay Peninsula in general, inclusive of Pulau Pinang, involved all-encompassing reasons. Given the similarities among different Malay ethnic groups i.e. in terms of the natural landscape of their places of origin, their past histories, culture, language, and religion, migration to other parts of the Malay Archipelago is no more than a natural process (Wiharyanto, 2005). It has been a long-established tradition among the people of the region out of necessities or various socio-economic and political reasons, to travel and eventually settle in certain parts of the Malay lands or islands.

Additionally, among the Rawa people, the migrating practice is second only to their nature as it has been part of their culture and tradition

since ancient times. Known as *'adat merantau'*, the practice is widely practiced by the people (adult males) of West Sumatra or Minangkabau region initially in pursuit of knowledge and life experience, a quest for new economic opportunities, and due to religious motives. Nevertheless, following the occurrence of religious and political conflicts in West Sumatra, migration is also meant to escape persecution and save lives. Murad (1980) and Hadi (1981) maintained that due to the widespread practice of the tradition, it has become an institutionalized norm among the people of West Sumatra.

Apart from the *adat merantau*, as with other migrating communities who came to the Malay Peninsula, the migration of the Rawa people to Pulau Pinang was also motivated by other factors. The need to search for a better socio-economic life is one common reason that prompted farmers and peasants from the Rao region to migrate to the Malay states as early as the 5th century CE. Such migration continued in the subsequent centuries as coastal ports on the west coast of the Malay Peninsula grew in importance (Lubis & Sanusi, 2009) resulting primarily from the flourishing trade between East (China) and West (India) (Hussin, 2007b). By the 15th century CE, Malacca stood out as one of the most prosperous ports in the Malay world and this must surely have a weight on the choice made by the Rawa people to migrate to the Peninsula. This was substantiated by Western travelers such as Tome Pires and Godinho de Eredia who, in their journey to different parts of the Malay world, noted that the migration of Sumatran people to the Malay Peninsula occurred since the early 16th century onwards (Andaya, 2008; Naim, 1979).

By the 17th and 18th centuries, gold and tin mining industries in the Malay states started to take off and this further contributed to the Rawa migration (Fathil, Sulong & Manaf, 2018; Undri, 2009). It is worth stating here that the Rawa people prior to the development of those industries in the Malay Peninsula had long been involved in similar mining activities (gold and tin) in Sumatra. Hence, given their experience and the prospects of uplifting their economic state, it is only natural that some Rawas opted to migrate to Pulau Pinang from where they then continued their journey to the tin and gold-producing states such as Perak, Selangor, Pahang, and so forth. Of these migrants, some could have decided to settle in Pulau Pinang for good. This scenario was in line with the accounts by some Arab traders who, upon their arrival in

Pulau Pinang at the end of the 18th century, remarked that migrants from Sumatra had already established settlements there (Bajunid, 1978).

Additionally, religious motives and the Rawa migration are inter-linked following particularly the rise of Melaka as the center of Islamic da'wah in the 15th century and the rise of Islamic reformist movements in the Malay world in the later centuries. Consequently, not only did the Sumatrans including the Rawa people travel to the Malay Peninsula to learn and teach Islam; but to transit there for a while before continuing their journey to the holy land for hajj (Fathil, Sulong & Manaf, 2018) or to the Middle East in order to pursue religious studies (Bungo, 2012). Apart from Melaka, Pulau Pinang used to be a very well known transit center for hajj pilgrims not only among the local people of the Peninsula but also those from Sumatra.

Finally, the Rawa migration to the Malay Peninsula was prompted by political reasons, i.e. the outbreak of the Padri War (1803-1837) in West Sumatra which saw at first the struggle between Muslim clerics (known as Padri) and traditional chiefs and later, between the Padri and Dutch colonizers. Consequently, there was an influx of migrants from the Rao region leaving for the Malay Peninsula, some to escape the harsh religious policies of the Padri group who, during the early stage of the war managed to rule over a large area in West Sumatra, while some to escape the Dutch persecution following the eventual Dutch victory in the war. According to Milner (1978), the migration of the Rawa people occurred mainly around the late 1820s, yet, it is likely that even a larger number fled in the 1930s as a result of the fall of Rao district and Bonjol area, the last Padri strongholds to the Dutch in 1932 and 1937 respectively. Fearing for their lives, Burgst (1827) noted that the Rawa people had left their villages idle two years before the Dutch arrival, thus indicating the great impact of the war on the Rawas that it served as one main reason for their migration to the Malay Peninsula including Pulau Pinang.

Also noteworthy is that, unlike the earlier migrations which mainly involved Rawa laymen, farmers, peasants, traders, and miners, the 19th century Rawa war refugees were mostly of royal blood, comprising Muslim clerics, scholars, warriors, commanders, and so on (Sanusi & Pa, 2010; Rajab, 1976). This fact by itself carries some importance in that the Rawa community now having all the various talents within its

ranks could actively involve and contribute even more to the socio-economic and political developments in the Malay Peninsula in general and Pulau Pinang in particular.

Early Rawa Settlements in Pulau Pinang

As mentioned earlier, there are different views regarding the early settlements in Pulau Pinang state, in particular with respect to the Island of Pulau Pinang. The prevailing Euro-centric view is that Pulau Pinang Island began to attract people only after the coming of Francis Light and that the Island was practically unpopulated prior to 1786. With regard to the account of the Chinese discovery of Pulau Pinang, there is so far no solid evidence to suggest that the discovery made in the 15th century led to the settlements of Chinese people on the Island. That said, there is nevertheless, a view among some quarters of the present-day population of Pulau Pinang that Chinese migrants have founded Tanjung Tokong, a predominantly Chinese area, several decades before the coming of the British i.e. around the middle of the 18th century (Kim, 2006). The mainland part of the state that is Seberang Perai, however, elicits almost no controversy as to the issue of early settlements since it has been generally accepted that there have been a substantial number of local Malays who populated the area since ancient times.

In the meantime, as far as the Rawa people are concerned, in view of the various reasons for their migration to the Malay Peninsula, as discussed earlier, it is highly probable that the Rawas began to establish their settlements in Pulau Pinang Island at least a few centuries earlier before 1786. Kedah coast for one; was once known for its trading ports since ancient times, hence, naturally, the Island which is facing the Kedah coast might have well become destinations of the local or migrating communities to establish their settlements. Hussin (2007a) somewhat substantiates the view when he maintains that since the early 18th century, there have already been small towns established in Pulau Pinang Island due to trading activities, and the community was multi-ethnic comprising people from Sumatra, Coromandel coasts, China, and Europe. In view of the commonalities between the Sumatran migrants (including the Rawas) and the local Malays in culture, language, and religion, it is to be expected that the former gradually adapted to or blended into the local environment via assimilation process (Yaakub, 2013) and this is what sets the Sumatrans and the Rawas apart from the

other migrating communities of non-Malay origin where the assimilation greatly facilitated their settlement in Pulau Pinang.

The earliest evidence of the early settlements of the people from Sumatra was following the migration of Dato' Keramat, a Muslim cleric from Acheh to Pulau Pinang Island in 1710. He settled down in the area around the banks of Sungai Pinang and upon his death, he was buried at Kampung Dodol cemetery (Sahar, personal communication, May 10, 2019). As a pioneer, a street was named after him, that is, Jalan Dato' Keramat (Stevens, 1929; Merican, 2015).

Of the many parts of Sumatra, Acheh is the closest to the northern Malay Peninsula. Consequently, many Acehnese found their way to Pulau Pinang and due to their relatively big number, a street was named after them, that is, Lebuh Acheh or Acheen Street. For the same reason too, i.e. the close distance between Acheh and northern Malay states, people of other ethnic groups including those from West Sumatra used to travel across the Melaka Straits to Pulau Pinang via Acheh, which served as a major transit point for traders, migrants, refugees, and others departing from the Sumatran Island.

Pertaining to the early settlers from West Sumatra, three siblings who had links with the royal family of Minangkabau had traveled to Pulau Pinang Island prior to the arrival of Francis Light in 1786. They obtained permission from the ruler of Kedah, Sultan Muhammad Jiwa Zainal Adilin Muazzam Shah II (r. 1710-1778) to settle in Batu Uban in the early 1730s with their followers. There, they built the earliest mosque in Pulau Pinang in 1734 (Othman, 1990; Merican, 2014). The three siblings were Nakhoda Bayan, Nakhoda Intan (Haji Mohammad Salleh or Raja Nan Intan bin Tuanku Patis or Pateh Nan Sabatang), and Nakhoda Kechil (Nakhoda Ismail). They controlled the coast of Bayan Lepas and Balik Pulau, Gelugor, and Tanjung in Pulau Pinang (Merican, 2015). Other leading figures of the same origin include Tuanku Syed Hussain and Nakhoda Kecil, famously known as successful merchants who were responsible to forge of a close trading connection between Pulau Pinang Island and Acheh in North Sumatra (Hussin, 2007a).

Meanwhile, data compiled by Francis Light from 1786-1794 on incoming and outgoing ships at Pulau Pinang port is also worth mentioning as it contained information regarding the arrival of Malay traders by *perahu* (Malay small boats). Although the data did not reveal

the nationality of the captains or crews of the ships and *perahu*, it is most likely that some of the Malay traders and their crews were from Sumatra, possibly from the Rao region too. This is substantiated by the fact that there had already existed trade relations between Sumatra and the Malay Peninsula for centuries that by the 18th century, Pedir and Acheh in North Sumatra were supplying pepper, betel nuts, and other forest products to Pulau Pinang (Hussin, 2007a).

To further demonstrate the close connection between Sumatra and Pulau Pinang, Wells (1993) mentioned that there were trade activities between Siak with Singapore and Pulau Pinang in the late 18th and early 19th century, i.e. from 1791-1821. Among those who came in the 19th century was Haji Muhammad Rashid Talu from Kampong Pinang in the district of Talu, West Sumatra, who reached Pulau Pinang in the 1880s. In 1884, Abu Bakar, the son of Raja Pinayungan Lubis who visited Pulau Pinang from Deli in East Sumatra noticed that there was a colony of Rawa tribe living in Acheen Street or Lebuh Acheh (Ismail, 2013).

From the above information, it is arguably safe to say that the early settlements of people from Sumatra in Pulau Pinang Island have taken place well before the 18th century as proven by the existence of some villages inhabited or associated with Rawa people in both the Island and Seberang Perai.

Kampung Rawa, Jelutong

One of the early settlements of the Rawa people in Pulau Pinang is Kampung Rawa, Pulau Pinang. Named after the ethnic group, Kampung Rawa was once a settlement for people coming from Sumatra located on the bank of Sungai Pinang, i.e. in Jelutong, Georgetown. Prior to the coming of the migrants, as testified by a local inhabitant of Rawa descent, it used to be a swamp area and the Rawa migrants built their houses there before the arrival of the British (Ismail bin Mahmud, personal communication, December 28, 2019). Being near the main river, the place was strategic for trade as traders can travel upstream by boats.

At present, however, there are only six families of Rawa origin in Kampung Rawa, Jelutong, Penang, which comprise 30 peoples. Many have migrated to other Malay states due to marriage and employment opportunities, while some returned to their homeland in West Sumatra

to run their own businesses (Ismail, personal communication, December 28, 2019, & Sahar bin Harun, personal communication, May 10, 2019). Intermarriage with local Malays, which resulted in the assimilation of the Rawas further contributed to the weak presence of the Rawa community in Kampung Rawa in particular and Pulau Pinang, state in general. With the passing of time, as confessed by few Rawa descendants, the present-day Rawas in the village consequently could no longer speak Rawa dialect, nor do they practice traditional Rawa customs such as '*adat berjojak*' and '*pantang tanah*'.

Rawas in Lebuh Acheh

In the inner city of Pulau Pinang Island, there was a Malay town along a street known as Lebuh Acheh or Acheen Street. As can be derived from the name, it was after the Acehnese community from north Sumatra who came and built their settlement in the area in the late 18th century. Among these early settlers was Tengku Syed Hussain al-Aidid, a prominent and wealthy merchant of Arab descent who migrated to Pulau Pinang where he set up a new trading base following the creation of a British trading post there, by Francis Light (Lubis, 2009b).

Apart from Acheh, there were other ethnics such as local Malays, Rawas, Mandailings, Minangs, and other Sumatran groups (Rahim, 1994), as well as people from southern Thailand who formed their settlements in the vicinity of Lebuh Acheh. The present-day Rawa descendants who added that there were some Rawa settlements in several other parts of Pulau Pinang namely, around Gelugor and Bayan Baru confirmed this.

At Lebuh Acheh, the Rawas together with the Mandailings, Minangs, and Talus were said to have formed a close-knit community since they were all *anak dagang* (literally means foreign traders) or migrants. The settlements continued to flourish until the late 19th and early 20th centuries particularly as Lebuh Acheh served as the transit center for hajj pilgrims from all over the Malay Archipelago. Due to its popularity, Lebuh Acheh was known as the 'Second Jeddah' where a large number of pilgrims would congregate here while waiting for the ships destined for Makkah (Lubis, 2009b).

Rawa Settlements in Seberang Perai

There are few villages in Seberang Perai named after 'Rawa', i.e. Kampung Permatang Rawa, Penaga in northern Seberang Perai and Kampung Permatang Rawa, Bukit Mertajam, in central part of Seberang Perai. Being predominantly Malay areas, these villages were once believed to be inhabited by the Rawa community from West Sumatra. In addition, there is one area in the southern part of Seberang Perai that also bears the term 'Rawa' namely, Pengkalan Rawa in Nibong Tebal. Through oral history, it was said that the place obtained its name '*pengkalan*' (jetty) following an event where some refugees from Rao district who traveled by sea, landed in the area.

Similarly, Permatang Rawa in Bukit Mertajam was believed to have been populated by the Rawa people from Sumatra in the past. It is now a Malay village surrounded by a large area of paddy fields. During the early 19th century, the place was said to be a swampy area full of bushes and that apart from the Rawas, there were some families from Acheh and Batu Bara, Sumatra, and from Jawa who also resided in the area (Abdul Rahman, personal communication, July 17, 2019). Nowadays, however, there are no clear traces of the Rawa presence in the area. This may be due to the assimilation of the Rawa migrants with the local Malays resulting in the eventual loss of their identity over the course of time. The same experience might have befallen others namely, the people from Acheh, Batu Bara, and Jawa who once resided in the area since they too cannot be traced today.

Meanwhile, although Kampung Permatang Rawa in Penaga also has the term 'Rawa' to its name, there are even less indication of Sumatran people of Rawa descent still living in the area today. Nevertheless, the location of Kampung Permatang Rawa is worthy to contemplate in tracing the origin of the name of the place and its connection with the migrants from Sumatra. Located at the seafront area facing Pulau Pinang Island, migrants or refugees from other parts of the Malay Archipelago including Sumatra who traveled by sea could easily land there. Being close to the sea, the people in the area are mainly involved in fishing activities, while some in paddy planting.

Another supposition on the Rawa connection is based on an oral history where it is revealed that the areas around Kampung Permatang Rawa, including Bakau Tua and Pasir Gebu, housed the people from

Acheh (Faridah, personal communication, April 9, 2020). Although no traces of the existence of the Rawa people is to be found currently in these places, the presence of the Acehnese originating from north Sumatra entails that other ethnic groups from the same Island might have also migrated to the areas. Secondly, given the popularity of Lebuh Acheh in nearby Pulau Pinang Island, it is possible that the locals knew various migrant communities from Sumatra who resided in the areas simply as Acehnese. In fact, looking back in history, it is interesting to note that West Sumatra where the Rawa people came from had once been under the tutelage of Acheh. This was during the reign of Sultan Iskandar Muda (1607-1636) whose dominance stretched from the northern region of Sumatra to Deli (Aru) in the east and Padang in the west part of Sumatra (Hussin, 2007b). This could well explain the generalization made by the local people, calling all migrating Sumatran groups Acehnese.

Compared to the Rawa people in the Island of Pulau Pinang, the existence of the Rawa community in Seberang Perai, despite the term 'Rawa' associated with certain villages, cannot be easily mapped out. This is perhaps partly due to the activities of the Rawa people in Seberang Perai, i.e. mainly as paddy planters and fishermen causing them to appear as mediocre people of no high standing, and partly due to their small number in comparison to the local Malays. On the contrary, the Rawa migrants in Pulau Pinang Island were generally well-to-do traders, businessmen, religious teachers, etc. thus enabling them to acquire eminent positions in the society. Their number too; must have been greater and this is not difficult to understand especially in view of the increasing importance of Pulau Pinang as a trading port in the northern region of the Malay Peninsula. Surely, this attracted not only established and wealthy businessmen and traders, but also many people of various backgrounds from nearby Sumatra.

Contributions and Legacies of Rawa Community

Islamic Da'wah

Not only was Pulau Pinang since the early 19th century known as the transit center for hajj pilgrims, but also as the center of religious education. On the former, Lebuh Acheh was renowned as the place where pilgrims assembled prior to their journey to the holy land. From there, they boarded pilgrim vessels to Makkah.

Meanwhile, as the center of religious teaching and learning, Muslims from various backgrounds and places in the Malay Archipelago came to Pulau Pinang in order to study Islam. Some joined learning activities held at Masjid Lebuh Acheh or Lebuh Acheh Mosque in Pulau Pinang Island, while some chose established *pondok* schools in Seberang Perai. The *pondok* schools were also preferred by pilgrims to deepen their religious knowledge, especially that related to hajj rituals. As the pilgrimage season approached, they headed for the Island, gathering at rented houses around the Masjid Lebuh Acheh while waiting for the arrival of the ships bound for Makkah (Fazil, 2014; Lubis, 2009b).

It is worthy to mention here that the Rawa community in the Lebuh Acheh was considered as an elite group alongside the *Jawi Peranakan* (sayyid) and Acehnese. One obvious reason being there existed some figures from Rao who were actively involved in the dissemination of Islam, particularly in Pulau Pinang. Among them include Sheikh Muhammad Murid Rawa (Syahbandarawi), Sheikh Muhammad Shalih Rawa (Saghir, 2007) and Sheikh Tahir Jalaluddin al-Azhari al-Falaki (Mustajab, 2003). Yusof Rawa, a 20th-century religious scholar, and politician in his interview, substantiated this in 1998 with Lubis (2009b) that many Rawa people of the past were religious scholars (*alim*) and good businessmen for which reasons, they were highly revered.

Of the three Rawa religious figures mentioned above, Sheikh Tahir Jalaluddin al-Azhari al-Falaki was the most outstanding. Having migrated to the Malay Peninsula in 1899, he was well known as both a religious scholar and an astronomer (Mustajab, 2003). Around 1918-1920, he was invited by Syed Sheikh al-Hadi, another renowned religious scholar of Arab-Malay descent to fill up the position of a religious teacher at Madrasah al-Mashoor in Pulau Pinang, which he accepted. While his commitment to the cause of Islam must have been the main reason for his acceptance of the offer, yet, it was no coincidence that there were many students of Sumatran origin such as Acheh and Minangkabau studying at the school. Interestingly, the sense of camaraderie can be observed to be present among the migrants from Sumatra. Not only was this demonstrated in the close-knit relations among the Sumatran people of various ethnicities, but also in the way they facilitated one another in the matters of hajj. Sheikh Tahir himself had once served as a *hajj sheikh* and *mutawwif* (hajj pilgrim guide), and as with other hajj sheikh of Rawa origin, he attended particularly

to those who came from Sumatra such as Medan, Minangkabau, Deli, Langkat, Serdang, Batu Bara, Lesahan, and so on (Sarim, 2003).

In disseminating Islamic knowledge, Sheikh Tahir used to sell religious books and produce many writings either in Arabic or Malay language. While preparing ships for the return journey of the pilgrims, for instance, Sheikh Tahir used to load up religious scriptures that he obtained from Makkah on board the ships destined for Pulau Pinang for sale (Sarim, 2003). Meanwhile, as a prolific religious scholar, he wrote religious books such as, *Pati Kiraan pada Menentukan Waktu yang Lima* dan *Hal Qiblat dengan Logarithma* (1938), *Risalah Penebas Bidaah-bidaah di Kepala Batas* (1953), *Tatimatul al-Irshad al-Khair fi al-ilm al-Faraid* (1952) and *Tazkiratu Muttabii al-Sunnah fiarraddi 'ala' al-qaili bis-sunnati rak'ataini qabla al-Jum'ati* (1953) (Samat, 2009; Sarim, 2003).

Pilgrimage Affairs

Since the early 19th century, Pulau Pinang Island had become a major departure point for hajj pilgrims from southern Thailand, Sumatra, northwestern and northeastern states of the Malay Peninsula until the 1970s. To understand why many pilgrims chose Pulau Pinang as a transit point, the readily available and conducive infrastructure could have become the key factor. And the Island had just that; there was a mosque dated back to the late 18th century that served as an assembly point and Islamic center for the pilgrims. Famously known as Masjid Melayu Lebuh Acheh (Acheen Street Malay Mosque), it was built in 1792 by Tengku Syed Hussain al-Aidid, an Acheh royal from Sumatra who founded a Muslim community village at Lebuh Acheh. Syed Hussain, together with his family and followers had built a mosque, tower, residence, shop houses, Islamic *madrasah* (educational institution), and trading offices in the area. The construction of the mosque was completed in 1808.

For many pilgrims from Sumatra including the Rawas, they came to Pulau Pinang through Medan (Lubis, 2009a, 2009b). Once they reached Pulau Pinang, they would gather mainly around Lebuh Acheh while waiting for ships bound for Makkah. To facilitate the pilgrims, the Rawa people in Pulau Pinang used to be involved as pilgrimage agents or hajj *sheikh*, serving their fellow Sumatrans, especially those coming from the Rao region (Effendi, 1924). The agents were responsible to assist the

pilgrims for instance, in arranging transportation, processing necessary documents, etc. One such individual according to Abdullah (2007), was Sheikh Jamal Rawa, a descendant of the famous religious scholar, Sheikh Muhammad Shalih Rawa (Pa & Sanusi, 2014). According to Rawa (2013) and Sidin (1998), a family member of another leading Rawa figure (Haji Abdullah bin Nordin al-Rawi), Arifin bin Salleh also served as a hajj *sheikh* at Lebuh Acheh.

Business and Trade

Based on local oral history, the Rawa community in Kampung Rawa, Pulau Pinang used to involve in the selling of religious books or scriptures written in *Jawi* (Arabic scripts). Due to the low demand on the Island, some of the Rawa villagers were reported to have moved their businesses to Pekan Rabu in Alor Setar, Kedah where there existed a bigger market for such products (Ismail, personal communication, December 28, 2019).

Another field of business that the Rawa people were known for is the printing press. Malay printing press, which began to flourish in the early 20th century, was initially set up by the *Jawi Peranakans* (people of Arab-Malay descent) and Arab migrants. By the 1920s however, the business was taken over by the Rawa people in Lebuh Acheh, Dato' Keramat Road, and Jelutong in Pulau Pinang (Lubis, 2009a).

Additionally, there were Rawa people who were involved in the spice business while others owned textile shops and book shops at Lebuh Acheh though they lived in Kampung Rawa, Jelutong, or a few other districts in Pulau Pinang Island such as Ayer Itam, Bayan Lepas, and so on. Those who owned bookshops normally sold religious items such as religious books, wooden bookstands for the Quran, framed Arabic calligraphy, stationery, Muslim headgears, etc. (Salma ed., 1990).

Printing and Publication

Undoubtedly, the establishment of United Press and Persama Press had played an important role in the development of Lebuh Acheh (Acheen Street) as a 'center' of printing operations in Pulau Pinang. It was the place where several major newspapers and magazines such as *Warta Penang*, *Dewasa*, *Suara Qalam*, *Bahtra*, and *Persahabatan* were published. Similarly, Lebuh Acheh was known for the many famous writers there with different writing techniques and thoughts, including those who had

gained experience in Sumatra, Singapore, and the Middle East. With all that going on at Lebuh Acheh, it is not an exaggeration to say that the emergence of the printing companies had led to the development of printing and publication industries in 20th century Pulau Pinang as well as the urbanization of Georgetown area as various infrastructures were set up in the area (Sidin, 1998).

Founded by a Rawa businessman, Haji Sulaiman al-Rawi in 1930, Persama Press was one of the famous printing companies at that time. Starting from 1934, the company that was located at no. 83, Acheen Street, Pulau Pinang was managed by his descendant, Haji Muhammad Idrus Sulaiman al-Rawi (Harun, 2005; Ishak, 1998). Another printing company owned by a Rawa individual was United Press. Haji Abdullah bin Nordin al-Rawi was the owner of the company that was initially founded by Dabab bin Haji Muhammad Salleh in 1928 along Dato' Keramat Street, Pulau Pinang. According to Mujahid Yusof Rawa, apart from the printing company, his father, Haji Yusuf Rawa, and his grandfather, Haji Abdullah bin Nordin al-Rawi, had set up a company that published religious books near Masjid Lebuh Acheh after their arrival at Pulau Pinang from Rao. The business premise also functioned as a center for pilgrims to obtain hajj reference books and other necessities, as well as a focal point for hajj agents of Rawa origin from Makkah such as Sheikh Amin Rawa and Sheikh Ahmad Lampong (Rawa, 2013; Sidin, 1998).

Politics

One of the notable politicians of Rawa descent was Tun Hamdan, a descendant of Sheikh Tahir Jalaluddin al-Azhari al-Falaki. Born in Pulau Pinang in the year 1921, he used to serve as the Director of Education at the Ministry of Education Malaysia. He then became the Vice-Chancellor of Universiti Sains Malaysia before being appointed as Tuan Yang Dipertua Negeri Pulau Pinang or the State's head of state in May 1989 (Long, 1999, 2001; Lubis & Sanusi, 2009).

Another famous figure was Haji Yusof Rawa (Yusof bin Haji Abdullah), the son of Haji Abdullah bin Nordin al-Rawi. He was born in 1922 at Lebuh Acheh, Pulau Pinang. His father was a trader who traveled from Sumatra to trade Al-Quran, Islamic religious scriptures, etc. (Rawa, 2001). Having lived and studied in Makkah for 12 years (Lubis & Sanusi, 2009), Yusof Rawa was known as a religious scholar

and had been actively involved in politics especially from the late 1960s until the 1980s. As a scholar, he published a magazine called *Al-Islah* and was awarded the *Tokoh Maal Hijrah* Pulau Pinang in 1992. As for his involvement in politics, he was once the president of the Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party (PAS); and used to serve as a member of the national parliament and cabinet, as well as the country's ambassador to a few countries in the Middle East.

Conclusion

Generally, the Rawa people from West Sumatra had migrated and established their settlements in Pulau Pinang long before the arrival of the British in the late 18th century. Traces of their settlements can be found in Pulau Pinang such as Kampung Rawa, Jelutong, Gelugor, Bayan Baru, Lebuh Acheh, and few areas in Seberang Perai such as Permatang Rawa, Penaga and Permatang Rawa, Bukit Mertajam. Throughout their long history of existence in the state of Pulau Pinang, the Rawa people had contributed to various socio-economic and political developments of Pulau Pinang Island as well as Seberang Perai. All in all, the presence of Rawa people in Pulau Pinang state had undeniably brought about changes and positive developments, hence, enriching the history of Pulau Pinang.

Acknowledgment

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A Framework of Good Governance in Regulating Religious Extremism in Malaysia

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Abstract: This paper presents a framework for regulating religious extremism based on principles of good governance. The first part provides a general study into the definitions of extremism and religious extremism. It asserts that religious sentiment can be utilised by terrorist organisations and radical movements to mobilise the masses. The paper further suggests that religious extremism is becoming a severe concern in Malaysia, which was for decades hailed as an oasis of moderate Islam. The second part of the paper analyses the factors contributing to the rise of religious extremism in Malaysia using a quali-

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quantitative method that incorporates survey data gathered in KL in 2019 by the authors, expert interviews, and secondary literature. It identifies two levels of factors, individual and socio-cultural/governance, that contribute to the spread of extremist understanding of religion. It suggests that human behaviour has become more receptive to violence and that the individual and collective understanding of religion has become more radical today due to personal grievances, social environment and global realities. Thus, the process of reducing extremism and radicalism in the Muslim world should encompass the individual, societal and transnational stratum. Extremism and radicalisation of societies are the manifestation of the absence of good governance. Thus, the last part of the paper highlights that adhering to good governance assists authorities in regulating societies' immoderate behaviour by providing wellbeing, safety and happiness to the overwhelming majority of the population. It proposes a framework that can provide a moderate and authentic understanding of Islamic principles and serve as an instrument in creating an amicable and harmonious social and political environment in Malaysia. This framework can improve national security by promoting the basic principles of good governance such as transparency, participation, equality, justice, moderation and accountability, which are ingrained in the spirit of Islam.

Abstrak: Kertas ini membincangkan tentang kerangka kerja kawal selia ekstremisme agama berdasarkan prinsip tadbir urus yang baik. Bahagian pertama kertas kerja ini membincangkan definisi ekstremisme dan ekstremisme agama. Kertas ini menegaskan bahawa organisasi pengganas dan gerakan radikal boleh menggunakan sentiment agama untuk menggerakkan pengikut mereka secara besar-besaran. Kertas kerja ini juga mendapati ekstremisme agama di Malaysia adalah membimbangkan terutamanya kerana reputasi Malaysia sebagai negara Islam yang sederhana dan progresif. Bahagian kedua kertas ini menganalisis faktor-faktor yang menyumbang kepada kebangkitan fahaman ekstremis agama menggunakan kaedah campuran iaitu kaji selidik yand dijalankan di Kuala Lumpur pada tahun 2019, temu bual pakar, dan penggunaaan sumber sekunder. Kajian ini mengenal pasti dua faktor utama iaitu faktor individu dan sosio-budaya/pemerintahan menyumbang kepada perkembangan fahaman ektremis agama. Hasil dapatan kertas ini mendapati tingkah laku manusia yang lebih reseptif terhadap keganasan dan kefahaman agama individu dan masyarakat menjadi lebih radikal adalah kerana beberapa faktor seperti ketidakpuasan hati peribadi, keadaan persekitaran sosial, dan realiti global yang tidak menyenangkan. Oleh itu, proses untuk

mengurangkan kadar ekstremisme dan radikalisme dalam masyarakat
dunia Islam perlu merangkumi stratum individu, masyarakat setempat, dan
transnasional. Kewujudan masyarakat yang ekstrim dan radikal merupakan
penanda kegagalan proses tadbir urus yang baik. Bahagian terakhir kertas ini
menerangkan tentang kepentingan berpegang teguh kepada prinsip tadbir urus
yang baik untuk membantu pihak berwajib dalam mengawal selia tingkah
laku melampau dalam hidup bermasyarakat dengan memberi perhatian
terhadap aspek kesejahteraan, keselamatan, dan kebahagiaan sebahagian besar
anggota masyarakat. Kertas ini mencadangkan kerangka kerja yang memberi
kefahaman prinsip-prinsip ajaran Islam yang sederhana dan tulen dan akan
menjadi instrumen penting untuk membina suasana politik dan sosial yang
baik dan harmoni di Malaysia. Kerangka kerja ini dapat menambah baik
keselamatan negara dengan menggalakkan pematuhan proses tadbir urus
yang baik melalui prinsip ketelusan, penglibatan yang menyeluruh, kesamaan,
keadilan, kesederhanaan, dan kebertanggungjawapan, yang juga merupakan
sebahagian dari ajaran Islam.

Kata Kunci: ekstremisme agama di Malaysia, rangka kerja untuk mengawal
ekstremisme, korelasi antara ekstremisme dengan tadbir urus yang baik, Islam
dan tadbir urus yang baik

Introduction

The post-Cold War world has witnessed a global tendency towards violent
change. However, the Muslim world is disturbed with the maladies of
extremism, radicalisation and terrorism more than other parts of the
world. In present-day media and some scholarly circles, Islam is often
equated with brutality and extremism because of terrorist groups and
radical organisations that use propaganda to mobilise the masses. No
doubt, extremism and terrorism are a complex phenomenon. Therefore,
the simplistic clash-of-civilisations narrative to refer to the current
escalation in the Muslim world raises several doubts because it declares
there is something inherently violent in Islam, namely *jihad*, which
inevitably leads to a confrontation with non-Muslims (Sageman, 2006).
Modern scholarship has failed to understand the nature of religions
and the importance they hold in regulating society. Interestingly, many
modern scholars advocate for the increased marginalisation of religions
to achieve more well-balanced and stable societies and to promote
social order and peace (Samir, 2011).

In the current political climate, Islam is often portrayed negatively and as a monolithic entity that is considered a growing threat to world stability and peace. Since 9/11, Muslims have often been portrayed as violent groups that are incompatible with modern life. The media often portray them as terrorists who live in authoritarian, fascist regimes. This negative portrayal has increased Islamophobia, especially in non-Muslim communities (El-Aswad, 2013). In research conducted by Pew Research Centre, it shows that Europeans and Northern Americans view Islamic extremism as one of the biggest security threats (Poushter, 2017). However, history reveals that moderation and equilibrium are engrained in the very nature of Islamic civilisation. For many centuries, Islam demonstrated itself as a religion of moderation, dedicated to establishing a system of truth and justice. It shuns laxity on one side and extremism on the other.

However, the rise of religious extremist groups in Muslim societies like Al-Qaeda, Boko Haram, and Daesh has raised the question of how and why the extreme/radical understanding of Islam and its principles came to exist, and why the belief in such principles is increasing in modern Muslim society. By recognising the need to step beyond stereotypes and headlines, this paper focuses on the factors related to the emergence of religious extremism in a specific Muslim nation-state, Malaysia.

Malaysia has historically been an exemplary country of a tolerant, moderate, and plural Muslim society. However, Jaafar (2020) found an increasing inclination towards religious extremism among Malay Muslims. In his study, 75.3 per cent of respondents articulated that they felt more special than moderate Muslims and non-Muslims when adhering excessively to the religion (p. 144). Also, 45.1 per cent of the respondents (35.2 per cent responded 'agree' and 9.9 per cent 'strongly agree') expressed their willingness to be involved in a war against non-Muslims (p.132). The same poll revealed that 67.7 per cent of respondents (41.9 per cent responded 'agree' and 25.8 'strongly agree') believed that non-Muslims should accept Shari'ah rule (p. 137).

Such public opinion in a multi-ethnic and multi-religious country signifies the existence of hidden intolerance in the society, which requires urgent attention to maintain long-term national security and public wellbeing. As the presence of religious intolerance may signify

signs of potential religious violence, it should not be ignored. Instead, it should be dealt with at an early stage to prevent severe conflict in society. This paper examines the core factors that have led to the intensification of social intolerance and religious extremism. Also, it proposes a framework of good governance that serves as a guide for creating an amicable and harmonious social and political environment in Malaysia.

Extremism, Religious Extremism and Islam

The primary purpose of this article is not to provide alternative definitions of extremism and religious extremism. Instead, the discussion focuses on mainstream definitions and the approaches which exist in modern scholarship and political discourse. However, since the term religious extremism is often prejudiced and is used as a tool of political or academic exploitation, it is constructive and pertinent to highlight the stance of this paper regarding the definitions of these terms by mentioning the following points.

First, there are divergent views in modern scholarship regarding the meaning and definition of extremism and religious extremism. Archbishop Desmond Tutu suggests that an individual behaves as an extremist "when you do not allow for a different point of view; when you hold your own views as being quite exclusive; when you do not allow for the possibility of difference" (Willis, 2011, p. 14). As Willis (2011) assumes, extremists are the ones who advocate measures beyond the norm; thus the term is often used today "to describe people whose strong religious beliefs lead them to hurtful or violent acts against those who do not share their beliefs" (pp. 14-18). Hashim Kamali (2015) states that the principal indicator of extremism is the fanatic pursuit of one particular view. He mentions "The extremist tends to be self-righteous, power-hungry, willing to inflict harm and hardship on others, and (is) also inclined to conflate the order of values" (p. 148). Extremism is mostly related to radical political views and exclusive religious beliefs. The main focus of this paper is religious extremism, although it is difficult to distinguish between these two types of extremism in contemporary political and social structures.

Religious extremism, as described by Mason and James (2010), is an "anti-social behaviour based on religious beliefs. Sometimes people's extreme religious views make them treat others as inferior or

wrong. Extreme religious beliefs can lead to violence" (p. 4). According to Michelle Roya Rad (2013), "a religious extremist is a self-righteous person gone too far." However, depending on how one defines the phrases 'self-righteous' and 'too far,' the label 'extremist' could be applied to any individual who fulfils his daily religious obligations, especially those stranded in different societies as religious or ethnic minorities. Muslim minorities living in Europe and other Western countries are a perfect example. While conferring the phenomenon of religious extremism, its causes, reality and remedy within a genuine Islamic framework, Yusuf Al-Qaradawi (1991) observes that religious extremism is currently in the dock, and is a target of accusations and criticism by writers, orators and governments (p.13). Hence, the term extremist is highly subjective (Kilp, 2011), and its dimensions depend on viewpoint, opinion, objectives, social context, and the value system of the one who defines it. Thus, its definition varies depending on time and space, and it remains vague without any specific or fixed connotations (Nozick, 1997).

Second, extremism and violence are a universal phenomenon that has existed throughout human history and are not unique to a particular religious or ethnic group. It is not specific to any geographical boundary or religious affiliation. In most cases, extremism is associated with the idea that the existing government is corrupted and needs to be replaced by a perfect nation based on a set of idealistic values, commonly depicted by religious scriptures or political ideologies. Extremists believe in the use of force and aggression as a way of achieving such an ideal state. Extremism disturbs social harmony and human security as it causes bloodshed and enmity within social strata. Extremism, in this sense, contradicts the main principles of Islam, which are moderation, and commitment to the progressive reform of societies. All religious foundations function as a framework for peaceful co-existence and social balance, trust and cooperation. Kamali (2015) suggests that religion has a minimal role in the origination of extremist acts and that most cases of extremism are extraneous to religion (p. 150).

Third, there is a tendency in contemporary scholarship and media to link Islam with extremist attitudes. For instance, Neil Kressel (2011) highlights the dangerous nature of Islamic extremism and claims that the Islamic religious tradition provides the extremist with an abundance of source material (p. 28). He recognises the potential for moderation

as well as extremism in Islam, and states that "Terrorism is an inherent aspect of Islamic extremism" (p. 20). He says, "Yet, it is undeniably in the world of Islam where – these days - manifestations of religious hatred and terror have been (the) most frequent, most pronounced, most apparent, most consequential, most popular, and most supported by mainstream clerics" (p. 22). This conclusion of Kressel is reasonable as extremists frequently relate their motivations to religious slogans such as the concept of *jihad*, obtaining the pleasure of God or protecting Islam against non-Muslims. However, it worth noting that other religions, apart from Islam, could be exploited by extremists to mobilise people into helping them fulfil their ambitions. Thus, extremism is not confined by reference to geographical, religious or cultural margins (Kamali, 2015, p. 161).

As the history of Islamic civilisation confirms, Islam presented itself as a religion of moderation and balance, committed to establishing a system of truth and justice that shuns laxity on one side and extremism on the other (Akhmetova, 2015). In short, extremism is the conceptual opposite of moderation. Kamali (2015) states that extremism violates the limits of moderation, which are represented by authoritative sources and rules such as laws, constitutions, religious scriptures, moral standards, and the general customs of society. Furthermore, whereas moderation is centripetal and is strongly focused toward the centre, extremism is centrifugal, and it pushes away from the centre toward the outer edges and extremes of its subject matter (p. 149). Thus Al-Qaradawi (1991) suggested that "[The banner of Islamic] knowledge will be carried from one generation to the other by the moderates who defend it against the distortions of bigots, the claims of falsifiers, and the misinterpretation of the ignorant" (pp. 14-15).

Fourth, the prevailing value system and dominant norms in society play a vital role in a person's judgement of a particular action as extreme or normal. Thus, an action which is defined as extremist in one culture can be standard in another as their values and customs differ. For example, the British government defines extremism as "vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs" (Casciani, 2014). This difference means that the actions of British Muslims that contradict or question British values are considered extreme in the British context.

Furthermore, the value system of a particular society plays a vital role in shaping the public attitude as either extreme or moderate. However, moral codes and customs are not rigid, and they continuously transform over time. For years, Malaysia was known for its moderate and enlightened public who rejected extremism in any form. Works published in the late 1970s and 1980s defined Malaysia as a pluralistic country, and as Fred R. Von Der Mehden (1987) stated, "the very pluralism of the system has led to a society in which ethnicity and religion have become intimately entwined and in which social, policies, politics, and economics are heavily influenced by communal considerations" (p.177). However, recent public opinion surveys indicate a rise in the level of extremist tendencies among Muslims in Malaysia. Jaafar (2020) identifies that Malaysian Muslims now incline religious intolerance (*see Table 1 below*).

Table 1: Religious Intolerance

Item	Percentage
Willing to participate in a war against non-Muslims	45.1%
Intolerance towards different religious thoughts	43.5%
Forced acceptance of non-Muslims on the Shari'ah law	67.7%

Source: Izzuddin Jaafar, 2020 (p. 147)

Based on the table above, it is clear that Malaysian Muslims feel superior in terms of their position and way of life in comparison to others who do not subscribe to the same faith or school of thought. These feelings may not bode well in a multicultural society and within the international community. The feeling of superiority may act as a defence mechanism for Muslims as they further feel marginalised and alienated on a global level. This paper further analyses the internal and external factors that contribute to religiously intolerant sentiment in Malaysia.

At present, Malaysian society is far from being moderate and inclusive. It is strongly believed that if the entire society becomes more radical in its approach towards other ethnicities and religious

communities, then, the moral codes and customs of dealing with others will change as well. The subsequent pages of the paper evaluate the reasons for the rise of religious extremism in Malaysia.

Factors for the Increase of Extreme Behaviour

Studies of political violence and social movements indicate that the architects of violence usually draw on religion, culture, or identity to give meaning to extreme violence. Pedahzur (2006) suggests that religion, culture, and identity serve as "tool kits" from which organisers of collective action strategically select narratives, traditions, symbols, rituals, or repertoires of action to imbue risky activism with morality. Religious symbols are carefully selected to motivate extreme actions by terrorist organisations. At the same time, not every individual in society behaves radically. Also, not every extremist is receptive to calls for radical/terrorist actions, and instead, most of them remain at the level of passive/non-receptive extremism. Thus, a discussion about the factors that have contributed to the gradual rise of extremism in Malaysia is essential before tangible suggestions can be outlined to eliminate radicalism and religious extremism. The factors that contribute to the rise of extremism and religious extremism are commonly divided into two layers, i.e. internal and external factors.

Internal Factors

When Malaya obtained its independence from the British in 1957, Islam did not play a prominent role in the governance. The ruling coalition UMNO (the United Malays National Organisation) guaranteed that, under Malaya's federal system, Islam remained a state rather than a national responsibility, making it one of the few areas of power left in the hands of the individual states (Funston, 2006). Since then, Islam has peacefully co-existed with the 40 per cent non-Muslim population in Malaysia, and it was regarded as moderate and pluralistic (Mehden, 1987). However, in recent decades, the tension between Muslims and non-Muslims in Malaysia has grown because of several individual, socio-cultural and governance factors.

Individual Motives

Humans are incredibly prosocial creatures, and there has been a noticeable decline in the mental health, happiness and wellbeing of people in recent years. The World Happiness Report 2019, an annual

publication of the United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network, indicates a link between positive social interactions and happiness. Many individuals suffering from personal trauma and grievances are socially isolated or depressed, which makes them anti-social and more susceptive to extremist ideas.

Jessica Stern (2011) describes several social and psychological factors that contribute to the radicalisation of individuals such as a religious ideology, social grievances, group dynamics and economics. Terrorist movements often arise in reaction to real or imagined injustice that they feel must be corrected, but, as Stern observes, "terrorists who claim to be driven by religious ideology are often ignorant about Islam" (pp. 66-68). The main reason why terrorists choose this anti-social path is related to their traumas experienced at a young age. As Stern (2011) found in the case of Saudi Arabia, most terrorist detainees had suffered sexual abuse in madrasahs or while in the hands of the police. Also, 25 per cent of detainees in Saudi Arabia accused of having terrorist affiliations also held a criminal record, and half had been convicted of drug-related offences. Interestingly, only 5 per cent of detainees had received a proper religious education (pp.71-72).

Ahmad El-Muhammady (2019), an expert on political violence and terrorism, asserts that, in Malaysia, only the "vulnerable individuals" are attracted to the calls of the international terrorist organisations. According to him, the main characteristics of "vulnerable individuals" are (1) detachment from parents, society and friends; (2) low self-worth and feeling unappreciated by others; (3) emotionally sensitive as are easily affected by the suffering of others, and susceptible to the words of 'jihad', 'humanitarian mission', and 'shahid'; (4) high level of narcissism and a desire to be a 'hero'; (5) cognitive distortions that often lead to incorrect conclusions; (6) high level of impulse sensation seeking; (7) high aggressiveness as they demonstrate a high level of emotional, verbal, and physical aggression; (8) desire for change; and (9) a distorted understanding of religion.

Thus, having individuals with radical mindsets does not endanger national cohesion and security. However, the real hazard to national security emerges with the rise in the number of unhappy anti-social people, which increases the number of individuals receptive to calls of extremism and terrorism. Thus, if governments do not show concern

about the pains and grievances of their inhabitants, more extremist and anti-social behaviour will occur.

The World Happiness Report (2019) ranked Malaysia as 80th out of 156 countries (score 5.339 out of 10). From 2005-2008 to 2016-2018, there was a negative change in the happiness index for Malaysia of -0.697 points. The report presents several links which contribute to the decline in individual and social contentment such as quality of government, the lack of prosocial behaviour exposure, and changes in information technology. Furthermore, the decline in public happiness is related to lifestyle and the surrounding environment. The report highlights that how adolescents socialise has fundamentally changed and is now more focused on online activities and less on face-to-face social interaction. The increased use of social media and other screen-based activities effects sleeping and eating patterns, and means that people read less. All of these factors are detrimental to people`s health and general wellbeing. Accordingly, research suggests that adolescents who spend more time on electronic devices are not as happy as ones who spend more time engaging in other activities (Helliwell et al., 2020). In terms of mobile usage, social media and screen activities Malaysia is ranked in the top five globally, and the highest in Southeast Asia according to the Digital 2019 report by *Hootsuite, and We Are Social*. It reports that Internet penetration in Malaysia stood at 80 per cent and that users spend a daily average of eight hours and five minutes online (Bernama, 2019).

These characteristics cause human behaviour to transform because of the changes in the social environment, values, and social norms.

Socio-Cultural and Governance Factors

In the last section of the paper it was suggested that an increase in the number of extremism-oriented individuals creates an extreme society, and, vice versa, radical social conditions and norms produce individuals who are prone to extreme behaviour. The radicalisation of social conditions depends on (1) governance, (2) education, and (3) the existing social norms. At present, the social structure and educational system, which create norms and lifestyle are determined by governments. Thus, there is a direct link between the radicalisation of an individual/society and governance.

The first factor that contributed to the radicalisation of the Muslim world in general and in particular, Malaysia, is the consequences of colonialism. Colonialism played a vital role in reshaping the modern Muslim mindset towards a realisation of an urgent request for change and progress. The *Islah* (reform) and *Tajdid* (renewal) movements appeared in most of the colonised Muslim lands with the agenda of liberating the minds and lands of Muslims following colonial rule. However, after independence, local puppet governments became the hindrance of the Islamic revival and attempted regeneration of Muslim lands. These events led to the formation of legitimate opposition parties in the name of Islam like the Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party (*Parti Islam Se-Malaysia*), PAS, in Malaysia; the Iraqi Islamic Party in Iraq; and the Islamic Action Front in Jordan. Using Islam as their trademark, these parties transformed the role of Islam into a manipulative political tool of opposition. They also created the problem of *takfirism,* which meant that parties in Muslim majority countries were obliged to demonstrate that their affinity to Islam was more significant than other parties so they could gain more votes. In Malaysia, the use of religious sentiment mostly revolves around the Malay-Muslim identity being the majority population in the country. As Tibi (2005) suggests, the politicisation of religion is mostly observable today in Malaysia as being imbued with ethnicity as the main driver. Thus the politicisation of Islam in Malaysia has widened the gap between ethnicities. As Osman Bakar (2011) observes, the extensive politicisation of religion by politicians and religious leaders will not create a tolerant society, but rather, it will only intensify social hatred and intolerance. Joseph C. Liow (2015) suggests that "non-Muslims are marginalised in Malaysia as the dominant parties try to 'out-Islam' each other." The rise in the state`s institutionalisation of Islam in Malaysia has also contributed towards the alienation of minority groups and the rise of supremacist ideals among Malay Muslims. Sharifah Syahirah (2019) observes that in several post GE14 events, such as the anti-ICERD rally led by UMNO-PAS coalition, gained tremendous support by using the race and religion card. The coalition championed protest movements against government initiatives to sign the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

In the long run, colonialism also created personal/communal psychological difficulties in the Malay society, such as an inferiority

complex and the lack of self-confidence. There is a common fear among
the Muslims in Malaysia of losing faith when compromising with
non-Muslims or when working with them. Such a lack of confidence
explains the Malaysian Home Ministry's banning the word 'Allah' in
the Herald`s Malay language editions of 2008, justifying that the use
of the Arabic word in other religions may offend some Muslims. The
inferiority complex of Malaysian Muslims also explains the recent
wave of the phenomenon of 'Arabisation.' Syed Farid al-Attas observes
that Malays often experience feelings of low self-worth and that they
consider Arabs to be more authentic Muslims and accordingly imitate
them in every aspect (Zahiid, 2016). As Akhmetova (2019) suggests:
"The dilemmas of self-loathing and insecurity are deep-rooted in the
hearts of the modern Malays and may constitute one of the reasons they
are receptive to ISIS propaganda. Due to religious ignorance, they are
prone to blindly follow even the most extreme ideas that originate from
the Arabs and respect them as authentic Islamic teaching" (p. 14).

Also, the complete social fabric, traditional ways of political and
religious synchronisation, and independent educational systems were
eliminated in part by the colonialists, and then later through nation-
state policies that influenced the governance of institutions under
state control. As highlighted earlier, elections and the cry for votes
consequently resulted in the phenomenon of the politicisation of Islam
in Malaysia, which is something that has not been observed in the West.
Such politically corrupted synthesis of religion and political practice is a
consequence of colonialism and the application of Western approaches
towards its religion, Christianity, to the unrelated realities of the Muslim
world and Islam. Hence, one of the worse consequences of colonialism
was utilising the Western models of governance and religion for Muslim
lands, which were different from the European context. This tension
also created a confusion of traditional norms and values.

The second factor is related to the existing educational system, and
Samir asserts that how Islam and the Qur'an are taught in traditional
madrasahs leads to extremism and terrorism. Teachers at traditional
madrasahs are good in religious studies, but they lack knowledge of
modern sciences and are incapable of integrating social and religious
themes. Such traditional schools produce indoctrinated youth who feel
dissatisfaction with the existing governance, suggests Samir (2011).
Based on the Malaysian experience, El-Muhammady (2019) refutes the

idea of blaming traditional religious schools for spreading extremism and radical ideas. He says that "The study conducted by Institute for Youth Research Malaysia (IYRES) in 2017 found that only 3 out of 39 individuals (7.7%) who joined extremist activities received their education at traditional schools, while the rest were from ordinary national schools." The choice of an extreme path is not always caused by the lack of a modern secular education, which is evident in that many Malaysians who joined ISIS were engineers. Instead, the main reason is related to the lack of a moderate understanding of Islam or the failure to integrate secular knowledge with religious teachings.

The third factor for the rise of extremist behaviour is related to the conduct of current governments and their failure to establish justice and quality of life for their citizens. Widespread corruption, social injustices, unemployment, and economic crises can radicalise the masses, especially young people. Argo (2011) observes that suicide bombers are motivated by social rather than religious injustices (p. 84). Nevertheless, they commonly justify their violence with the language of Islam (p. 92). Mia Bloom (2006) suggests that extremist behaviour occurs when the population believes in violence as a means of resolution for existing social and political problems, and when they believe other peaceful strategies have failed. Hence, the absence of good governance creates extremist behaviour and terrorism.

In short, both personal and socio-cultural and governance factors are heavily influenced by the policies and actions of the government (see *Figure 1*). At present extremist behaviour has become acceptable in many Muslim communities because the long-lasting fundamental values of moderation, compassion and public trust have changed throughout the processes of colonisation, decolonisation and globalisation. Public understanding of Islam has also changed, and many concepts have been reinterpreted in the current context of competition, clash and struggle.

External Factors

The Iranian Revolution of 1978-9 and the liberation of Afghanistan from the Soviets was crucial in the emergence of Islam as an agent of social and political change in the 1980s. The use of concepts like military *jihad* and martyrdom intensified, and specific verses from the Qur'an and the hadiths of the Prophet of Islam (PBUH) were reinterpreted out of context to mobilise Muslims against the Soviet bloc during the

Cold War and in the Palestinian liberation struggle. As Mohammed Hafez observes, martyrs were honoured, and their 'heroic acts' were publicised. Slowly, violence became a vehicle to uphold one's religious values and prove one's self-worth. As a result, "it transformed cruel terror into sacred missions in the minds of potential militants and their sympathetic observers" (Hafez, 2006, p. 67). Individuals were carefully selected in Muslim societies and professionally trained as a 5th column during the Cold War period by both superpowers.

The eruption of the Soviet-Afghan war in 1979 stimulated the expansion of religious extremist ideology in the other parts of the world through the Afghan alumni, who took part in the anti-Soviet struggle under the banner of the Mujahidin. As Shay (2017) suggests, after the return of these Afghan Alumni to their homelands, cases of extremism and terrorism increased sharply in the Muslim world, including in Malaysia. The United States Agency for International Development reported that, between 1985 and 1995, around 300-400 Malaysians and Indonesians were trained in Pakistan and Afghanistan (Jaafar & Akhmetova, 2020). After returning from the war, their primary target was to topple the existing government in their homeland as they regarded it 'un-Islamic', and they demanded the formation of an administrative body fully aligned with their version of Islam.

Another external factor contributing to the escalation of extremism in Malaysia is related to the consequences of the terrorist attack on 11 September 2001. When the USA launched the Global War on Terror in Afghanistan, there were massive protests in Kuala Lumpur in front of the US embassy. Shortly after the start of the war images of children suffering, of dead bodies, and destroyed cities were being shared extensively on social media, aggravating the mood of the Muslims against the West and marionette Muslim countries. Azeem Ibrahim (2011) believes that Muslim terrorists are motivated by moral disgust at Muslim suffering, rather than poverty or the lack of education. He says that there is no link between disadvantage and radicalisation as one does not typically come to believe it is God's will for you to murder innocent strangers because you grew up poor, hungry, uneducated, or generally disadvantaged (pp. 61-62). They are disturbed by the sense of moral disgust from observing the suffering of Muslims in wars started over geopolitical conflicts, and reasons related to energy and petroleum politics. Therefore, Kamali (2015) identifies extremism as a reactionary

response to the injustices happening in the Muslim world connected to the military aggression by superior military powers (p. 149).

The recent escalation of Islamophobia and protective ultra-nationalistic tendencies has also widened the ideological disparity between Islam and the West. Today Islam is synonymous with terrorism. As such, the controversies over caricatures of Muhammad (PBUH) published in the Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten* in 2005, and the French satirical magazine *Charlie-Hebdo* in 2015, revealed the potentially prejudiced stance of the Western media under the pretext of freedom of speech. Negative perceptions of Muhammad (PBUH) and Islam are easy to find in the mass media, academia, and in public. Thus, Marc Sageman (2011) blames the mass media bias for creating confusion and negative public opinion concerning Islam, and for not taking into account or mentioning that the overwhelming majority of Muslims condemn terrorism (p. 35). Accordingly, the recent rise of extremism is a multi-factorial phenomenon depending on personal and communal motives, and the interaction of environmental conditions, as shown in *Figure 1*.

Figure 1. Factors for the rise of religious extremism in Malaysia
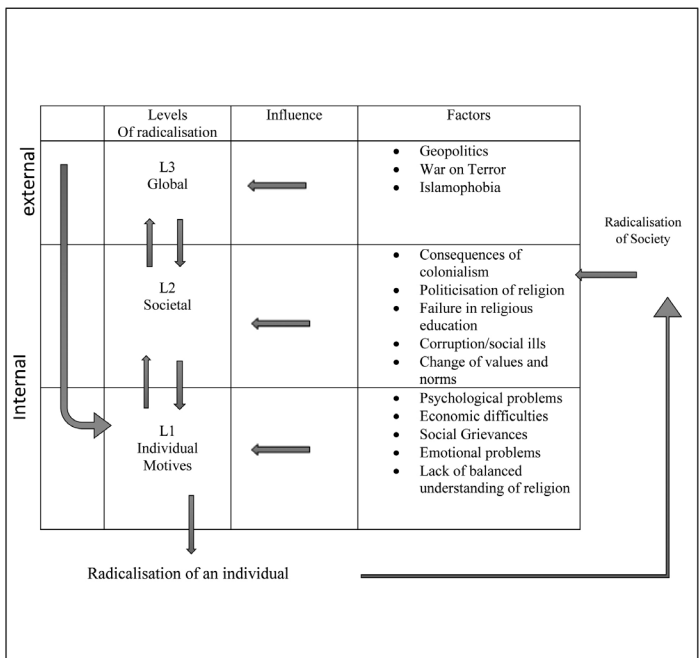
In sum, the myth of the heroic martyr was born due to realities in the post-colonial Muslim world, and its ghost is still very much alive in Muslim countries in the form of widespread injustices, invasions, and poverty resulting from bad governance. Human behaviour has become more receptive to violence, and individual and communal understanding of religion are more radical today due to individual grievances, social environments, and global realities. Thus, the process of reducing extremism and radicalism in the Muslim world should encompass the individual, societal and transnational stratum.

Framework of Good Governance in Reducing Extremist Behaviour

The study of the factors that have led to the growth of extremism in Malaysia suggests that the institution which can regulate religious extremism is the government. Regulating extremist behaviour could be accomplished in two ways, either through coercion or soft power. Using force may deliver expected results in a relatively short period. These results, however, might be superficial since the root causes of extremism persist, and it may lead to another future wave of radicalisation. Thus, in order to achieve the effective and long-lasting results, the authorities should focus on improving the wellbeing and welfare of citizens rather than focusing merely on regulating the isolated extremist and anti-social behaviours.

Indeed, prevalent extremism and radicalisation of societies are manifestations of the absence of good governance. Adhering to good governance assists the authorities in regulating societies' immoderate behaviour through providing wellbeing, safety and happiness to a vast majority of the population.

The term good governance originated in 1989 in a World Bank document entitled *Sub-Saharan Africa: From Crisis to Sustainable Growth*. Since then, the concept of good governance has been expanded to consist of the following: economic liberalisation and the creation of market-friendly environments; transparency and accountability for economic and political decision-making; political liberalisation, particularly democratic reforms; the rule of law and elimination of corruption; the promotion of civil society; the introduction of fundamental human rights guarantees, especially concerning political rights such as freedom of expression; freedom of assembly and freedom

from arbitrary imprisonment; and the adoption of policies designed to safeguard long-term global interests like education, healthcare, and the environment (UN Programme, 1995). The United Nations Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism (2016) states that promoting good governance by upholding the rule of law, human rights and eliminating corruption creates an enabling environment for civil society and reduces the risk of escalating extremism. Through good governance practices, the government can review legislation, policies, strategies and practices to counter and prevent extremism that is usually caused by state violations against human rights or discrimination.

Hence, good governance mainly concentrates on the responsibility of the government and governing bodies to meet the needs of the public. The establishment of public welfare and concern for the public interest are among the most important functions of good governance. It is worth noting that governance in this context is not limited to the capacity of the government in the traditional sense; instead, it includes institutions and policies within and beyond the governmental structure (Salim & Akhmetova, 2018). The ASEAN Plan of Action to Prevent and Counter the Rise of Radicalisation and Violent Extremism (2018) highlighted that promoting moderation and tolerance and strengthening good governance helps to prevent radicalisation and extremism.

The mechanism of good governance tends to improve the quality of life and wellbeing of individuals, societies and nations. In the long run, it creates well-balanced individuals in well-balanced societies, therefore reducing the opportunity for extremism and radicalisation in society. The mechanism of moderating religious extremism with the framework of good governance is illustrated below in *Figure 2*.

Figure 2. The framework of good governance in regulating
religious extremism

Harmonious World

Aims	Level	Strategies	Effect	Extremism factors
Well-balanced Perspective / Well-balanced society	L3 Global	-government's attitude towards injustices -building moderate individual perspective	→	Failure of a government to resist global level injustices • Global War on Terror • Geopolitics • Islamophobia
Well-balanced society	L2 Societal/ National/ Governmental	-transparent and accountable government -empowering youth -empowering women -empowering B40 -equal opportunities for all -balanced education accessible for all	→	-Social ills/corruption -Politicisation of religion -Lack of balanced education (religious and secular) -Change of social values and norms
Well-balanced individuals	L1 Individual	-human rights (equality, justice) -economic opportunity and job security -balanced education -addressing social grievances	→	-Psychological/emotional problems -Economic difficulties -Lack of balanced understanding of religious principles -Social grievances

Government   Policies   Institutions

Good Governance Mechanism

As described in *Figure 2*, good governance mechanisms include the actions and policies of governments, the objectives of social and economic institutions, and social policies. The process of achieving good governance to moderate religious extremism and promote a harmonious world operates on three levels: 1) individual; 2) societal/governmental; and 3) global. As the diagram shows, the relationship between these three levels is interrelated: well-balanced individuals form a well-balanced society and, vice-versa, a well-balanced society produces well-balanced individuals. Then, well-balanced societies form a harmonious world with a well-balanced perspective, and a harmonious world results in well-balanced societies and states. The relation among these factors is based on mutual respect, equality, dignity, and support.

Individual Level

Good governance mechanisms that involve individual-level transformations are aimed at constructing well-balanced and amicable individuals. As mentioned, there is a possible hazard to national security from the rise in anti-social and unhappy individuals who are more susceptive to extremist ideas and influence. Hence, unless the governments address the grievances of the population, more extremist and anti-social behaviour is bound to occur. Therefore, governance, social institutions and policies should tackle the factors that lead individuals to commit extreme acts in the name of religion or an ideology. These factors include psychological and emotional problems stemming from personal trauma and social grievances, economic problems, and a misguided understanding of religious principles.

Consequently, it is recommendable to employ the following mechanisms of good governance, such as guaranteeing the fundamental human rights of each individual. These rights include equality, justice without religious, gender, or ethnic discrimination, equality in education, and the provision of economic opportunities, job security, and financial stability. Government initiatives should social support activities that address the grievances of individuals and social groups so that they can provide a well-balanced and equal society for all.

This study also suggests that policymakers start targeting something beyond GDP to measure citizens' wellbeing and national progress. The Happiness Index 2019 highlights the necessity for governments to focus attention on the 'happiness' or subjective wellbeing (SWB) of citizens

(Helliwell et al., 2019). The quality of government, its institutions and the structure of governmental policies influence the happiness and security of populations, and changes in policies could enable citizens to lead happier lives. Governmental quality is dependent on the quality of policy delivery, the control of corruption, and the capacity to reduce conflict and promote peace (p. 41).

There is a direct correlation between access to decision-making and the level of happiness. As the Happiness Index 2019 states: "Happier people are not only more likely to engage in politics and vote but are also more likely to vote for incumbent parties" (Helliwell et al., 2019, p. 60). Happier citizens not only adhere to peaceful lifestyles and improve national security, but their decisions are decisive in establishing the best and fairest governments. Thus the measures of good governance for achieving happier citizens should focus on the provision of political and human rights, and deal with the individual grievances of citizens. The process of healing from personal trauma and social grievances can be done through social support institutions, which empower 'vulnerable individuals' instead of marginalising them through social isolation. There is a link between positive social interactions and the happiness of individuals. Therefore, governments should encourage prosocial behaviour such as charity work, volunteering, and promoting kindness to animals and less-advantaged groups. Through these methods, young citizens, especially those from broken families, can volunteer through various educational, social, religious, and community engagement projects provided by institutions, schools, and universities.

Ahmad Fauzi Abdul Hamid sees "extremism creeping into the Malay-Muslim subconscious mentality as those who express reservations or alternative viewpoints are branded as traitors to the Malay-Muslim cause" (Abdullah, 2020). Educational reform could change this mentality which is rooted in conflict and the idea of superiority.

The education system could be used to try and produce more ethical and socially responsible citizens by incorporating moral values into their syllabus in line with the secular and religious curriculums. Also, they should teach social and leadership skills, as well as abilities in peacebuilding and reconciliation. At religious institutions, pupils should be exposed to critical thinking tools in Islamic studies rather than following the current mode of memorisation. Fauzi suggested restoring

a moderate worldview and adopting a civil approach to the teaching of comparative religions, especially in the Islamic studies curriculum that produces religious scholars and public figures (Abdullah, 2020). Traditional Islamic critical thinking tools like *qawa'id al-fiqh* (*fiqh* rules), *usul al-fiqh* (methodology of *fiqh*), and *maqasid al-shariah* (objectives of the *Shari'ah*) should be taught at Islamic institutions so young people possess the skills to filter and reject extremist ideas.

Societal/Governmental Level

Societal and governmental level mechanisms of good governance are aimed at establishing a well-balanced society through the empowerment of citizens, especially young people and women, the establishment of transparent and accountable governmental bodies, and equal societal values and norms imparted through an objective educational system. These measures commonly focus on eliminating the factors linked with the rise of religious extremism such as post-colonial mentality, the politicisation of religion, corruption and the lack of transparency, in addition to, promoting ongoing changes in societal values and norms that emphasise moderation and social harmony.

The Muslim world is facing several dilemmas of governance resulting from colonial interference. For example, the politicisation of Islam which ignores its higher objectives (*maqasid al-Shari'ah*), intensified political competition among Muslim states to control or dominate regional geopolitics, petroleum politics, and a general lack of good governance and public policies. Before the colonial age, Muslims were accustomed to maintaining a certain distance from governing authorities. The traditional social fabric was completely different from the present nation-state based governing structure because the governments did not directly control the social, economic and cultural spheres of public life. During the last Muslim rule, which was the Ottoman state (1289-1918), society and rule were based on religious community structure, called the *millet* system, which was grounded on the values of mutual respect, religious freedom, and social cooperation. These values were customary of that time, and interactions between non-Muslim and Muslim societies were not a daily occurrence. In history, yet, every member of society had been counted and respected (Abdelgafar, 2018, p. 174).

The current realities and nature of governance are different. The existing nation-state governing structure eliminates the isolation of citizens, regardless of their ethnic, religious and ideological backgrounds. Everyone expects to be treated equally by the government. If the government fails to provide equal treatment, then society will suffer from the problems of ethnic or religious discrimination or hatred. Fareed Zakaria (2011) relates the current escalation of extremism, radicalism and violence in the Muslim world to the absence of good governance. He believes that extremism is a result of dysfunctional rule and widespread corruption. Thus, a good governance mechanism is essential to achieve equal treatment for all citizens and the provision of human dignity, respect and meritocracy.

In order to achieve social order and national security, the creation of a prosocial community is by tackling the existing public problems. Public policies are instruments that define a course of action or inaction taken by authorities to address public problems and concerns. Basma Abdelgafar (2018) considers that the *maqasid* (*maqasid al-Shari'ah*) approach to public policy and governance could be a solution for Muslim-majority countries. She suggests the integrated and purposeful reading of revealed and secular laws to provide individuals and social units with an ethical framework. For her, the *maqasid* approach is capable of providing an ethical framework for governance and policy. Public policies and governance should be based on universal values such as compassion, transparency, honesty, equality, meritocracy, accountability, justice, mercy, efficiency, dignity and respect. Purposeful reading of the primary sources of Islam (the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* of the Prophet) demonstrates that these values are highly recommended in Islamic governance. Governance in Islamic countries is a great responsibility given the impact on individuals, living creatures, communities, and the collective wellbeing of humanity (p. 3). It is essential to improve dialogue and work with religious leaders and religious organisations that promote a culture of peace, moderation and tolerance. Also, the strengthening of strategic communication, through the internet and social media, can help to prevent extremism (ASEAN, 2018).

Young people are a significant asset for Muslim nations as approximately 34 per cent of the population are younger than 15 years old. While discussing how to beat terrorism, Ibrahim (2011) suggested reducing the motivation for young people to become radicalised. For

him, education is the key. Terrorism and extremism can be prevented by changing minds through proper Islamic education within the right context. Thus, the young generation should be empowered through an unprejudiced education, and they should be given the appropriate attention, trust, and respect. These actions will encourage political and social responsibility based on meritocracy.

Global Level

Good governance measures concentrate on global aims to establish just and objective attitudes towards global events, especially those related to the Muslim world. While discussing the causes that contribute to the rise of extreme understanding of Islam, it was highlighted that the failure of local governments to challenge global injustices is a primary factor. For example, the recent radicalisation of Muslims in Malaysia is interpreted in a broader context as their reaction to the political crises in the Muslim world resulting from Cold War events like the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan 1978-1989, the US-led Global War on Terror following the events of 9/11 in 2001, the Israeli-Palestinian deadlock, and the failure of the international community to solve recent Muslim minority problems in Kashmir, China and Burma.

Most importantly, the Muslim citizens in the Muslim world are unhappy with the attitude of their governments towards global injustices and prejudices, and this is exploited by terrorist organisations to mobilise people against governments. In May 2016 *The New Straits Times* reported that Zainuri Kamaruddin, who was a supposed leader of the Malay speaking ISIS arm *Katibah Nusantara* until he died 2017, stated in a propaganda video that ISIS had declared Malaysia and its people as 'taghut' ('sinners' or those against the teachings of Allah). He also declared that they must be fought (Karim & Shah, 2016). The propaganda may have had an impact considering that in 2013 thirty-nine per cent of Malaysian Muslims believed violence was justified against the enemies of Islam (PEW Research Center, 2013). Whereas the 2019 survey conducted in KL for this research, shows that fifty-one per cent of respondents believe that non-Muslims want to defeat Muslims, while forty-one per cent want to be involved in physical *jihad* for the sake of religion (Jaafar, 2020, pp. 132-138). The results of such ISIS propaganda that promotes terrorist attacks against 'sinning' Malaysia could have disastrous consequences.

The United Nations (2016) adopted a global framework with seven priority areas to prevent extremism through (1) dialogue and conflict prevention; (2) strengthening good governance, human rights and the rule of law; (3) engaging communities; (4) empowering youth; (5) gender equality and empowering women; (6) education, skill development and employment facilitation; and (7) strategic communications, the internet and social media. These priority areas were also adopted by regional intergovernmental organisations such as ASEAN in 2018.

There is no doubt that global events are out of control for many nations, especially those in the developing world. Governments` stance towards global injustices and discriminations is crucial in cultivating dignified individuals and well-balanced societies. This study suggests that governments focus on fulfilling the needs of citizens rather than trying to satisfy the interests of superpowers. At the same time, nurturing a moderate and rational perspective among citizens towards global events must be one of the leading long-term targets of the educational curriculum.

Conclusion

After deliberating the definitions of religious extremism, the factors for its emergence, and the potential solutions to regulate it, this study proposes the following concluding remarks.

The first is related to the definition and features of religious extremism. The term religious extremism has a tendency to be prejudiced and is used as a tool of political or academic exploitation. Its dimensions depend on viewpoint, opinion, objectives, social context and the value system of the one who defines. Thus, its definition varies with regards to time and space and remains vague without any specific or fixed connotations. An action defined as extremist in one culture is considered normal in another because of varying values and traditions. Consequently, an analysis of extremism in a particular society depends on the value system of that particular community and not the value system of the definer.

Besides, the study found that none of the religions, including Islam, propagate extremism or violence. At the same time, any religious ideology can be utilised as the tool of propagating extremism like any other contemporary ideology such as nationalism, racism, or

communism. Extremism contradicts the main principles of Islam, which are moderation and commitment to the progressive reform of societies. The eradication of religious beliefs is not the option to produce a harmonious society, and governments should also provide an appropriate education and social reform under the principles of good governance.

Second, the recent rise of religious extremism is a multi-factorial phenomenon depending on personal and communal motives, environmental conditions, and their interactions. Human behaviour became more receptive to violence, and both the individual and collective understanding of religion is more radical today due to individual grievances, social environment, and global realities. Widespread injustices, foreign invasions and poverty due to the lack of good governance substantially contribute to the rise of extremism. Thus, the process of reducing extremism and radicalism in the Muslim world should encompass the individual, societal/governmental and transnational stratum.

Third, the study concludes that prevalent extremism and radicalisation of societies are a manifestation of the absence of good governance. Consequently, adhering to good governance may assist the authorities in regulating religious and other types of extremist behaviour by providing wellbeing, safety and happiness to an overwhelming majority of the population. The mechanism of good governance, in the long run, is expected to create well-balanced individuals in well-balanced societies, thus reducing the opportunity for the growth of extremism and radicalisation in that particular society.

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Women as Agents of Violence in Bangladesh—*The Perks of Being Wallflowers*

Lailufar Yasmin*

Abstract: Violent extremism—the definition of which is still to be agreed upon by experts—has rather opened up this debate in a much larger scale—regarding women's 'nature'—are women inherently 'peaceful'? In this article, I draw upon the involvement of women as violent extremists in Bangladesh and argue that the patriarchal ideas regarding women as passive actors and peaceful in nature have driven a general lack of awareness regarding the true nature of women's involvement in extremism in the country. Such understanding has rather discouraged wider research on the matter as well as under-exploration on the roots and causes of female extremism in Bangladesh. Therefore, this study aims to fulfil this lacuna that exists in understanding the nature of violent extremism in a holistic manner in the country. Additionally, understanding the nature of female extremism in Bangladesh shall contribute in greater understanding on women's involvement in Islamist extremism—if there are any distinctive features that exist in Bangladesh that is absent in the global pattern or conforms to it.

Keywords: Gender and conflict, Bangladesh, Female extremism

Abstrak: Keganasan sering dilihat sebagai "domain" lelaki-sama ada konflik langsung atau tidak langsung. Wanita biasanya digambarkan sebagai aktor pasif dalam konflik. Pelampau atau ektremisme keganasan - takrifan yang masih belum dipersetujui secara umum oleh pakar - membuka perdebatan ini dalam skala yang lebih besar - mengenai 'sifat' wanita - adakah wanita secara lumrahnya lebih 'damai'? Dalam artikel ini, saya mengambil kira penglibatan wanita sebagai pelampau keganasan di Bangladesh dan berpendapat bahawa idea patriarki mengenai wanita sebagai aktor pasif dan aman telah mendorong

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kepada kurangnya kesedaran umum mengenai sifat sebenar penglibatan wanita dalam ekstremisme di negara ini. Pemahaman seperti itu tidak menggalakkan penyelidikan dan penerokaan yang lebih luas mengenai punca ekstremisme yang melibatkan wanita di Bangladesh. Oleh itu, kajian ini bertujuan untuk memenuhi kekosongan yang wujud dalam memahami sifat ekstremisme ganas secara holistik di negara ini. Tambahan lagi, memahami sifat pelampau wanita di Bangladesh akan menyumbang kepada pemahaman yang lebih mendalam tentang penglibatan wanita dalam ekstremisme agama berpandukan Islam - jika terdapat sebarang ciri khusus yang wujud di Bangladesh yang tiada ataupun akur dengan corak global.

Kata Kunci: Jantina dan konflik, Bangladesh, Ekstremisme melibatkan wanita

Introduction

> Tho' much is taken, much abides; and though
> We are not now that strength which in old days
> Moved earth and heaven; that which we are, we are;
> One equal temper of heroic hearts,
> Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
> To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

As M, the Chief of MI6 was testifying before a Committee to justify the existence of the Cold War relic, James Bond 007—she recites these verses from Tennyson's *Ulysses*. She argues that the threats have become opaque, not coming only from states anymore—which needs further scrutiny and overseeing by agents in the field (Mendes, 2012). While the movie was released in 2012, we have seen a known world transforming before our eyes since the 1990s. A stable international order where rules of engagement and actors were quite discernible, gradually transformed as the dragon was slayed and in the absence of structural peace in the jungle, the poisonous snakes emerged to make their claims—a metaphor used by former Chief of the United States (US) Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) James Woolsey to describe the post-Cold War disorder (Kilcullen, 2020, p. 17). Scholars have pointed out that not only a changing dynamic of warfare can be observed, but also in terms of motivations to go to war and actors of war, there have been significant variations in recent times (Kaldor, 1999; Munkler, 2005; Howard, 2006; Smith, 2008; Malesˇevic, 2008). The attack in

US on September 11, 2001 (9/11) was the first organized attack by terrorists—in other words—non-state actors on a state actor that brought about changes in the manner 'terrorism' used to be dealt with by both policymakers and scholars. It could no longer be brushed aside as law-enforcement or ideological issues—but there are deeper dissatisfactions emerging from societies which are producing 'terrorists' which need to be identified and addressed. In this article, I emphasize on the changing nature of actors in terrorism—also interchangeably termed as 'violent extremism'. In fact, this terminological shift is what makes the affair complicated in 21st Century. Not only is it puzzling to provide an acceptable definition of terrorism and/or violent extremism, but it is also equally, if not more, challenging to locate the process through which one *becomes* a terrorist/extremist. In the last century, wider emphasis was to identify terrorism as an internal threat—often it had transboundary effect since the mid-1960s but international cooperation was affected due to differing political ideas about the nature and causes of terrorism (Saul, 2005). Women's increasing involvement in terrorism and extremism has made the issue more complex than ever. It is in this backdrop that I articulate the central argument and methodology of the paper in the next section.

Central Argument of the Paper and Methodology

Taking a gender lens, I argue that the traditional understanding about 'women as agents of peace' or 'women are peaceful' compromises policymaking. We overlook that being peaceful or violent is a learned behavior, not a biological component connected to the sex of a person, when we internalize 'women are peaceful'. Additionally, this kind of understanding rationalizes violence as being a 'natural' part of men's domain. It ignores that the process of identity creation is relational in nature. Therefore, often women who chooses a violent behavior—either being a part of a group or otherwise, might be identified as a part of the deindividuation process—that is being merely 'antisocial' and aberrant behavior than this being a conscious choice. In this paper, I argue otherwise. First, I draw attention on how globally women were engaged in carrying out violent acts—which have drawn scholarly attention but seldom reflected in the policymaking. Then, taking Bangladesh's case study, I discuss how this discourse of 'women as peaceful' has enabled female extremists to carry out their acts in this country. Moreover, with the ongoing COVID-SARS pandemic that led to the *feminization of*

joblessness—a phenomenon where women are the first targets of job cuts—raises the fear of women's recruitment to be easier by extremists. This is where I bring the comparison of women with wallflowers. As wallflowers grow anywhere and wither any storm, these are often neglected—seen as lying on the path and not given significance—having taken for granted. The idea that women as mothers and being peaceful agents can also wither any storm—it is in their nature to do so, and therefore, they are taken for granted and their perspectives matter little in making vital family decisions. Thus, although the discourse has changed widely, studies show that economic empowerment does not necessarily mean that women have acquired decision making roles in families. This is where extremists come to the scene—they can convince women to acquire needed agency and the false promise that being violent can make their voices heard. I point out in this paper why this particular concern needs to be recognized with more urgency during the pandemic period. Due to the feminization of joblessness that is occurring in Bangladesh, where women are the first victims of job cuts—these women are left with little economic choices and therefore, are more susceptible to be targets of recruitment by extremists. We should not neglect the wallflowers—but lesser agencies for women may divert them to a wrong direction.

In discussing the pattern of women's involvement in extremism, this study primarily deals with a unpublished research that carried out social profiling of female extremists in Bangladesh from the first case (in December 2007) to October 2018—that includes a total number of 105 women so far apprehended by the members of law enforcement agencies to be connected with extremist acts. Along with this, this study also takes into consideration of the primary materials on female extremists as they were reported in mainstream media. As interviewing the detainee female extremists directly was not possible, this paper rather goes through the interviews and statements of Bangladesh's Counter Terrorism & Transnational Crime (CTTC) officials. Also, it deals with other scholarly materials available on this issue. The paper draws attention to a few practical gaps in the current research. First, it is difficult to come across to a generally accepted definition of terrorism and extremism worldwide and there exists an overlap in this regard. In the case of Bangladesh too, such an overlap exists. According to the

Anti Terrorism Act of 2009, the following practices can be considered as terrorist activities (but not limited to):

> Terrorist activities. – (1) If any person, entity or foreigner-
>
> (a) for the purposes of threatening the unity, integration, public security or sovereignty of Bangladesh by creating panic among the public or a section of the public with a view to compelling the Government or any entity or any person to do any act or preventing them from doing any act–
>
> > (i) kills, causes grievous hurt, confines or kidnaps any person or attempts to do the same, or damages or attempts to damage any property of any person, entity or the State;
> >
> > (ii) abets or instigates any person to murder, injure seriously, confine or kidnap any person, or abets or instigates to damage any property of any person or entity or the State; or
> >
> > (iii) damages or tries to damage the property of any other person, entity or the state; or
> >
> > (iv) conspires or abets or instigates to damage the property of any other person, entity or the state; or
> >
> > (v) uses or keeps in possession any explosive substance, inflammable substance and arms for the purposes of subclauses (i), (ii), (iii) and (iv).

This act was later amended to approve death penalty for assisting in terrorist financing (Fabe, 2017). However, the point is, extremists are also tried under this particular act. In other words, the differentiation in terms of who is a terrorist or who is an extremist has not been made in Bangladesh's context as well.[1] The second gap in this research is that no comprehensive profiling of female extremists of Bangladesh has been done yet. Most materials on this issue are often sketchy and written in journalistic manner than on a scholarly manner. Terrorism and extremism are often considered in an *agendered* manner for which gender lens is often absent. Keeping these particular gaps in mind, this study provides its analysis on the basis of existing materials. Scholars

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[1] This paper therefore uses the terms terrorism and extremism interchangeably.

believe that gross generalizations and myopic view towards terrorism have prevented Bangladesh to formulate a potent counterterrorism strategy (Hussain, 2008). Also, I add with this that the lack of research in a comprehensive manner on women's issues in Bangladesh has led to the assertion of the idea that "women are peaceful" and therefore, it has become easier for extremists to persuade women to join in extremist acts.

The paper is divided into several substantive sections after the introduction and this section on research question and methodology. The first substantive section discusses how gender and terrorism merge in global construction of women as peaceful agents. It uses the examples of how this discourse was used as a convenient ideology for extremists to employ women as agents of violence. It also highlights how women themselves chose to become a part of conflicts as well. This section also highlights that women are not naturally peaceful—rather they also make deliberate choices to act as violent agents alongside men when they find it necessary for the future of their communities. The next substantive section discusses case studies emerging from Bangladesh. The paper concludes by summarizing key discussions and the dangers of popularizing the discourse of women as agents of peace.

The Intertwining of the Discourses of Gender and Terrorism

Gender perspective in terrorism and extremism tended to be neglected and underexplored. The typical literature emphasized upon the concept of terrorism being gender-neutral or *agendered* in nature, although globally we have seen women's active engagements as part of different terrorists groups, specially during the anti-colonial movements since 1920s. David Rappaport (2004) identified how women were used as carriers of messages and other such activities in nationalist struggles carried out in Ireland, Israel and Algeria, although he argued that women's roles being limited compared to those of men. On the contrary, the movie *The Battle of Algiers* (1966) portrays the crafty use of women in their traditional roles that deceived the French and empowered the Algerian fighters to use women as carriers of ammunition and detonate those in right places. In fact, women played more robust roles being part of the Irish Republican Army (IRA) and as suicide bombers for the Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka. On the other hand, women during British colonial rule in the subcontinent of India played more vigorous roles as both

leaders, convenors and trainers to create armed resistance. Mia Bloom identifies women's roles in conflicts as 'the third oldest profession', where women possess a win-win situation due to their gender identity. Bloom explains how women can easily get by from being checked by security personnel, and when they are, it is convenient to launch an attack of mishandling "our women" (Bloom, 2017). These, along with many other examples, demonstrate that women are capable of taking decisions to go to war willingly. Scholarships regarding this started to emerged that challenged the narrative of 'women as victims of war only' in the works of Jean Elshtain and Cynthia Enloe, who have shown, through systematic researches, that women are also active participants during conflicts (Elshtain, 1985; Enloe, 1990).

What I add with this analysis is that when we consider women as peaceful, we create a dichotomous relationship between women and men by justifying its binary opposition that men are violent. In other words, this discourse promotes that women and men are born with different nature—one is inherently peaceful and the other is inherently violent. Such a discourse promotes that women are natural agents of peace but ignores that being peaceful and violent is socially constructed and reproduced through different institutions of patriarchy starting from family, education and other institutions. This is also internalized by women and older women emerge as educators for younger women about the existing norms and culture by justifying them as traditions. In other words, women also act as gatekeepers of patriarchy by perpetuating and reproducing particular roles assigned by the society for women. It is a part of patriarchal assumption that since women give birth, they must bear patience and thus, are peaceful. In this connection, one cannot but remember the famous declaration of Helen Caldicott who argued that because we give birth, we understand the genesis of life. She was one of the leading figures of nuclear disarmament movements in Australia. But such an understanding about women's nature is also inherently flawed because if women are peaceful, such a peacefulness and love must extend beyond borders. We do see the discourse of an Indian mother regarding the Kashmir issue would be entirely different than the discourse of a Pakistani mother on the same issue. Similarly, it cuts across ethnicity, religion, caste and other identity issues. The fairy tales also provide testaments of existence of step-mothers and their repression and abuse against step-children. Ella acquired her name Cinderella as

she would be dusty after cleaning the cinder of the house by the order of her step-mother, who had two daughters herself. Mothers, therefore, do not treat all children equally—instead, prioritizes their own children over children of *other* women. In other words, women, just like men, are driven by the idea of self-preservation as they deem fit.

In the scholarship of 'women as peaceful' or as 'peaceful agents', it fails to pay attention to the tremendous roles that women have displayed in the face of adversaries. This discourse is unable to explain the acts of world leaders like Ms. Margaret Thatcher, Ms. Golda Myer and Ms. Indira Gandhi did not hesitate to use 'violence' to serve their national interests. They took strong decisions for fulfilling national interests of their respective countries which have had long term implications for the future of their country. Such decisions, often were deemed as 'manly' or in other words, necessary to rule in a man's world. Ms. Thatcher, along with US President Ronald Reagan, is regarded as one of the architects of Cold War victory for the West vis-à-vis Soviet Union. Ms. Thatcher's reputation earned her the title of Iron Lady, because she displayed strength and courage, which were considered atypical of women to possess. On the other hand, Mr. Reagan earned no such title as Iron Man—as men are supposed to tough and strong. This deindividuation process is what makes policymakers to take women as incapable of being agents of violence. That is, because women perform specific social roles, they are not aggressive. This particular idea sees sex roles and gender roles as indivisible one—that because women are mothers, women are always to be kind, peaceful and caregiver as opposed to having intentions to cause harm. Thus, studies undertaken in psychology contends that in deindividuated process, that is in the absence of social roles, women are capable of being aggressive (Lightdale and Prentice, 1994). I, however, contend that women are capable of being aggressive even in an individuated condition. This particular area and its relationship with understanding how terrorists and extremists have found a 'new' and 'unsuspecting' weapon that is the women-force that would hardly be questioned or challenged while carrying out their activities is what I add to the existing discourse on understanding female extremism.

It is to be noted that despite women being involved in terrorist activities and conflicts, research on women's involvement in terrorism started to begin since 1990s (Jacques & Taylor, 2009). However, these studies seldom explored the role of the flawed assumptions on

women being peaceful can be utilized successfully by extremists. The assassination of India's Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi would be an apt example in such a case. The very first person of the world to put on trial for carrying out terrorist acts, who did not shy away from proclaiming it to be so—I am a terrorist—was also a woman. The Russian woman Vera Zasulich attempted to assassinate the Governor of St. Petersburg, Fedor Trepov and was put on trial for this. While some studies appear to explore women's involvement in terrorism, the issue of women's involvement in Islamist extremism did not come under scholarly scrutiny albeit much later. While the concept of *jihad* was introduced as 'violent extremism' by Islamist extremists, the general idea was—as proclaimed by Al Qaeda—:

> A Muslim woman is a female Jihad warrior always and everywhere. She is a female Jihad warrior who wages Jihad by means of funding Jihad. She wages Jihad by means of waiting for her Jihad warrior husband, and when she educates her children to that which Allah loves. She wages jihad when she supports Jihad when she calls for jihad in word, deed, belief, and prayer. (Knop, 2007)

This particular trend shifted quickly with the emergence of other Islamist extremist actors in the scene who redefined women's role in Islamist extremism. *Dāʿish* or Islamic State (IS) took a lead in this. In one study, it was analyzed that *Dāʿish* was using women both in active fields and at online platforms (Pearson & Winterbotham, 2017), which eventually became a trend in contemporary extremism confirmed by other studies as well (Sanchez, 2014; Shapiro & Maras, 2019; Fitchett, 2019). Works on female extremism expanded to identify various areas which were hitherto overlooked but could not remain so anymore due to the changing landscape of extremism. Recent studies identify that women are no longer only passive actors in extremism; rather they are driven by ideological and religious motivations just like men do (Cunningham, 2003; Cook, 2005; Leede, 2018). Men and women, thus share certain similar experiences that provide them incentives to join in extremist groups such as such as "socioeconomic disadvantage, a perceived lack of belonging and failed integration" at the community level (Pearson & Winterbotham, 2017). However, for women, the artificial construction of gender roles also contributes to creating grievances that motivate them to assert themselves through being parts of extremist groups such

when women are seeking revenge (Bloom, 2007); women are pining for equality and recognition but not in a western sense (Cunningham, 2003); and peer pressure (Sageman, 2004), although this list is not exhaustive. Islamist extremist groups—particularly IS —recruit women to perform various types of work, from being "IS brides" to assisting in domestic chores to being active participants alongside men in their fights. In fact, it was also pointed out, "some women were more radical than their husbands" in the IS who insisted their husbands and sons to join the terrorist group, while some others did not want to marry anybody except frontline fighters (Mironova, 2019). In fact, the issue of female fighters achieving 'fighter's agency' has often remained ignored or overlooked in the mainstream (Bond, *et al*, 2019), which has started to be recognized only in the past few years.

This gender aspect of women joining in extremist groups out of their own volition needs to be connected with the rising landscape of extremism to assess how they can be transformed into potential 'workforce' for extremists. In 2019, the US-backed alliance of Syrian fighters declared the territorial defeat of the IS. It was argued often that it led to the end of IS ideology as well, which has been proved to be wrong gradually. We have seen extremism, especially lone-wolf attacks being carried out in Europe, terrorist attacks taking place in Christchurch, New Zealand and in Colombo Sri Lanka in 2019. During the pandemic, initially it was thought that due to the particular nature of the Covid-SARS disease, terrorist activities might wane, although we have seen that the UN Secretary General António Guterres issuing warning in April 2020 that the pandemic might endanger 'global peace and security' (Spence, 2020). If the pandemic is not properly managed, the ensuing economic crisis may lead to vulnerability of people, which would make them easy prey to extremists' goals and objectives. On the other hand, the need to maintain the 'economic health' of people that led the mafia of Italy and Brazil to find ways to effectively manage the pandemic first—a warning that they took seriously than political leaders.

There was this general understanding initially that the pandemic will put a cap on extremism as people would have remain locked in which would impact upon the goals, objectives and targets of the extremists. In the past few months, however, it seems that extremists are reorganizing themselves. Not only there have been cases of suicide bombing, but also

that of female suicide bombing as well as extremists using the lockdown situation to strategize and emerge stronger than before (Reuters, 2020). In September 2020, the representatives of the Taliban, Al-Qaeda, and IS together declared that they are opening a Joint Terrorism Center of Excellence (JTCE), which was "intended to bring together the best minds of international terror organizations in an effort to streamline operations and standardize tactics" (OLeary, 2020). The declaration was made in the capital of the Helmand Province of Afghanistan. Thus, there are fears that terrorism is making a headway towards India and Afghanistan. Bangladesh may not be out of reach for such kind of extremism as I discuss in the next section how Islamist terrorism has been present here and how women are also an active part of that. In light of the ongoing discussions, in the next section, I highlight why there is a rising fear of women's involvement in extremism in Bangladesh, especially due to the pandemic situation.

Women as Agents of Violence in Bangladesh

The purpose of this section is to analyze women's involvement in terrorism in Bangladesh. While researching on this issue the first problem one stumbles upon is a simple lack of data on this. So far, no comprehensive work on profiling of female terrorists of Bangladesh has been done. In the existing literature review, Ali Riaz has a comprehensive study that profiles Bangladeshi terrorists but it also lacks a gender lens (Riaz, 2016). The work of Nazneen Mohsina very articulately analyzes the trends in female jihadists in Bangladesh by pointing out how often women are radicalized by their family members, while also they see this as a form of empowerment (Mohsina, 2017). This study is quite significant as this is the first study of its kind that draws attention on how Bangladeshi women see radicalization providing them with some kind of agency. The study, however, lacks comprehensiveness as it provides a general overview instead of being based on any specific set of data.

Historically, protests against the colonial rule started from the greater Bengal region, where women played significant roles. The works of Pritilata Waddedar and Kalpana Datta have inspired Bengal revolutionaries to fight against the British control. During Bangladesh's birth through nine-months of violent struggle too women have played significant roles, which have remained understudied both theoretically and empirically. Women during the Liberation War was very much a

part of the struggle either directly or indirectly. In Bangladesh's soul-searching over last few decades, a number of stories emerged in which we find how women actively participated through taking up armed trainings. It was not only educated and politically-aware urban women who decided to fight for independence but it is evidenced that women in rural areas also actively engaged in the fight. The contributions of Taramon Bibi, Geeta Kar, Hena Das and Dr. Captain (Rtd.) Sitara Begum among others are recognized as valiant freedom fighters of Bangladesh (Amin, Ahmed & Ahsan, 2016). Although the research on women's contributions in various capacities such as fighters, mothers or helpers during the liberation struggle is yet to be fully explored, but it is not surprising that they were very much a part of the struggle as active combatants.

The research on female terrorists and extremists that operated in the country has received the similar fate. As researches done on terrorism globally initially took an *agendered* approach, similarly in Bangladesh's cases, women's purported roles as mothers, wives or sisters in the cases of terrorists and extremists were not seen as essential to any serious scrutiny. An interesting observation in this case would be the case of family support to Bangla Bhai—the infamous terrorist who was the mastermind behind bombing 62 out of 64 districts of Bangladesh in a well-coordinated attack in 2005. When he was apprehended in 2007, the role of his wives or parents were not highlighted nor were researched to understand their involvement and support in terrorist acts. The first case of a female terrorist is believed to be apprehended on December 24, 2007. It is hard to believe that in a country, which has seen both leftist and Islamist terrorism for quite some period, that women were not associated with such acts. It is in this context, I add a short history of terrorism in Bangladesh to elucidate the point in question (Yasmin, 2019):

Table 1:History of Terrorism in Bangladesh

Phase	Name of the Militant/ Potential Militant group	Timeline and Origin	Use of Weapon	Target (Place and Personals)
First Phase	Muslim Millat Bahini (MMB)	1986; Pakundia, Kishoregonj;	Revolvers, Rifles, Bows and Arrows, Spears, Ammunitions	Abolished before involving in militancy
	Harkat ul Jihad Bangladesh (HuJI-B)	started in 1992 at Jessore; most active in late 1990s and early 2000s	Hand Grenade, Bomb; sometimes used 'suicide bombing' tactics	Secular political party, foreign envoys. Secular political party leaders, religious minorities, cultural programs
Second Phase	Jamaat e Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB)	Founded in 1998 by Shykh Abdur Raham; active in whole Bangladesh;	Bomb; sometimes used 'suicide bombing' tactics	Judicial Service, secular cultural groups, religious shrine, circus, cinema hall, Shia and Ahmedia community
	Jagrata Muslim Janata (JM-JB)	Founded by Siddique ul Islam (Bangla Bhai) in 2001-2; most active at Baghmara in Rajshahi	Bomb; sometimes used 'suicide vest'	Same as JMB
	Hijbut Tahrir	Yet to involve in militancy; originated in Great Britain	None	None
Fourth	Ansarullah Bangla Team (ABT)	Started recruiting members in 2004-05; emerged as Ansar-ul-Islam as AQIS in September, 2014	Initially only machete; later pistol and explosives	Secular bloggers, publishers, doctors, LGBT activists

	Neo Jamaat e Mujahideen (Neo JMB)	re-emerged as Neo JMB in October, 2015; Dhaka	Crude bomb, pistol, AK-22 Rifle	Mainly foreigners, Shias and Ahmedia minorities; police

There have been very few studies on the real number of female extremists in Bangladesh. In an unpublished study that profiles female extremists of Bangladesh, it has been found that 105 women were apprehended by the members of law enforcement agencies from December 2007 till October 2018 as extremists (Ibid). In primary data collection and analysis, a number of reasons are cited for the radicalization of women. In Bangladesh, research through primary materials show that families are gradually turning into a source of radicalization for all the members. In cases, where the father is radicalized, he can successfully radicalize other family members as well. Women are also radicalized via their husbands and brothers. Thus, one common trend in radicalization of women in Bangladesh has been influence of family members (Ibid). In this context, one might point out in a study undertaken by the Election Commission (EC) of Bangladesh, the EC contended that voting behavior of women during 2008 general election showed that they are increasingly pursuing independent decisions than being influenced by their family members. This is a significant finding that contradicts with general assumptions regarding the way patriarchy works in Bangladesh and women's choices are often influenced and determined by the male members of the house. The information regarding women being radicalized by their family members in all such cases—therefore, can be questioned.

In other cases, where women recruited other women, they stated that they did this out of their own volition—as they believed in the particular cause—although they denied so after they were caught. The case of four cousins in Rajshahi, who were apprehended by police for circulating pamphlets together that identified the celebration of Bengali New Year as *unIslamic*, is interesting (Dulal, 2018). When I interviewed them after they returned in their house, free on bail from the prison— they simply said they had no idea what they were circulating as these pamphlets were handed over to them by one other man and woman who were barely their acquaintances. All four of the women were studying for higher degree in local colleges, in their early 20s and unmarried.

There is this puzzle that remains unresolved—all four unequivocally stated they were not aware of what they were circulating and that they did not believe in Bengali culture as *unIslamic* but still carried out the act.

There are two cases of self-radicalization of young sisters— Momena Shoma and Asmaul Husna. The story of Shoma is that she was self-radicalized after her boyfriend went to Syria to join the IS and died while fighting. Shoma knifed her landlord after going to Melbourne, Australia, for higher studies. Whether Asmaul Husna was self-radicalized or influenced by her sister is unclear. However, she attacked police officers who went to investigate Shoma's whereabouts in her house. Another case to consider in this respect would an extremist woman—a mother—when cordoned by the police, threatened to kill her child if she was not provided a safe passage to flee (Bashar, 2019).

As I stated before in this section—the stories of women are puzzling, to say the least. As they cannot be reached for in-depth interviews, and even when one can, as they refuse to answer—one might surmise several things on the basis of the stories reported in newspapers. Did they really want to commit such acts to gain agency, or were forced or influenced to do so or simply chose to carry out the acts? It is in this context, I answer that some of these women—the number may not be considered as significant statistically—chose to carry out the acts out of their own will. One can certainly invoke the nature versus nurture debate here although that would also indicate that a part of 'nature'—human nature that is in Hobbesian world works for self-preservation—plays a significant role here. With the on going COVID-19 pandemic, Bangladesh is witnessing a feminization of joblessness, as Imran Matin has put it to refer to how women are generally the first layer of job cuts during a crisis (Power and Participation Research Centre, 2020). From the onset of the pandemic, it was being reported that female small entrepreneurs in Bangladesh were losing their jobs. Gradually, by September, it was reported that about 65 per cent women entrepreneurs surveyed had no income while 58 per cent women working in the informal sectors had no jobs in the pandemic (The Financial Express, 2020). As we have seen that one of the ways to recruit women is via online chats, there is potential of these women being recruited as extremist groups are reforming themselves in South Asia. It is also apprehended that in the COVID-blighted world, opportunities to work abroad have dried up—hurting

economies and creating a pool of underemployed young men at home and abroad (Pantucci, 2020), who can be easy targets of extremists but such analysis ignores the gender dimension of unemployment. Thus, for self-preservation, women can choose to work for the extremists—it is human nature to do so.

Concluding Observations

Gender issues are often sidelined in prevention strategies of extremism due to underlying assumptions of 'women as mothers', 'women are peaceful', and even when women are involved, they do so being influenced by the male members of the family. It ignores that women can often be a part of extremism willingly, global and Bangladeshi cases testify that. It is the extremists who have made the best use of such myopic view towards women, and therefore do not hesitate to use women as potent and unsuspecting weapon to carry out their activities. Also, women can voluntarily join due to financial constraints, as the pandemic is leaving many men and women without effective employment despite qualifications. While this leaves men vulnerable, it also leaves women just as vulnerable. In this article, throughout the discussion, I have shown, how women can make the choice to actively carry out violence. It does not however assert that women cannot be peaceful. But the article points out the danger of ignoring the silent but potent role that women have played and are capable of playing globally and in Bangladesh in relation to terrorism and extremism.

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Understanding Community Needs for Better Corporate Social Responsibility in Pulau Pinang and Its Educational Implications

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Abstract: Despite the positivity Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) brings to the corporate table, scant attention has been paid to understanding its impact on the communities. CSR practice is relatively immature as most companies fail to understand the community needs and the method to satiate these needs effectively. It is also believed that the social work profession shares common values that CSR attempts to address. The present study is a pioneer attempt to understand the gap in CSR delivery through the lens of its recipients by investigating current practices and perceptions on CSR function and the potential involvement of social workers in this field. In-depth interviews were conducted with eight CSR recipient communities in Pulau Pinang. The finding

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provides fresh evidence that has broadened the understanding of how efficient CSR specialists can optimize their roles, providing a basis for establishing an appropriate curriculum.

Keywords: Community needs, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Malaysia, Educational implications, Curriculum

Abstrak: Walaupun tanggungjawab sosial korporat (CSR) telah meningkatkan keuntungan dan nilai syarikat, perhatian yang diberikan dalam memahami kesan tanggungjawab sosial terhadap masyarakat setempat adalah terhad. Fenomena CSR masih belum matang kerana banyak syarikat gagal memahami keperluan masyarakat dan kaedah yang paling berkesan bagi memenuhi keperluan tersebut. Profession kerja sosial dikatakan berkongsi nilai yang sama dengan CSR. Kajian ini merupakan usaha perintis dalam memahami jurang yang wujud dalam pelaksanaan tanggungjawab sosial melalui lensa penerima-penerima CSR dengan mengkaji secara khusus amalan-amalan tersebut serta persepsi penerima manfaat terhadap fungsi CSR dan potensi penglibatan pekerja sosial dalam bidang ini. Temubual mendalam telah dilakukan bersama lapan penerima manfaat daripada program CSR di Pulau Pinang. Kajian ini memberikan dapatan baru dengan memperluaskan pemahaman tentang bagaimana pengamal-pengamal CSR dapat mengoptimumkan peranan masing-masing dengan efisien sekaligus membentuk asas yang kukuh dalam pembangunan kurikulum.

Kata Kunci: Keperluan masyarakat, Tanggungjawab sosial korporat, Malaysia, Implikasi pendidikan, Kurikulum

Introduction

There have been indications of CSR movement in Malaysia having peaked over the past few decades, making CSR a standard practice. CSR has become increasingly prevalent and visible in all industries and business institutions, as they have openly embraced CSR strategies for mass appeal and tax reductions. However, common perception views CSR practices as unfocused and just as an afterthought (Abdulrazak and Amran, 2018) while its impact on communities remained dismally low (Ismail et al., 2015). The perception might lend the perception to be an essentially contested concept that permits continuous disputes on its definition (Sheehy, 2015). These social initiatives may not reflect the

needs and demands of communities, and they are perceived as passive recipients who strongly rely on corporate assistance. Not only do these initiatives fail to respond to the needs of the affected, but also they are highly likely to be piecemeal and on a festive-season basis.

Despite its proliferation, the common issues on CSR are a lack of managerial or internal skills on CSR, qualified employees, and social awareness regarding the various community programs (Zahidy et al., 2019). Some perceive the practice as immature and still at its embryonic stage (Abdulrazak and Amran, 2018). Thus, this fact supports the contention that there is a chasm between the proposed CSR definition and how it is applied and abused by CSR practitioners.

At this juncture, education is recommended as one of the critical ways of enhancing corporate social awareness. Business schools have also started to include CSR and its purpose as part of the curriculum to educate future leaders and managers who will eventually experience environmental, economic, and societal issues throughout their careers (Azhar and Azman, 2021; Kolb et al., 2017). Interestingly, Gotea and Rosculet (2019) claimed that having social work professionals (people with a social work degree) in the corporate setting could help diagnose community needs and find viable solutions more effectively since the bottom line is not constantly money. Thus, to make CSR in business education meaningful for the business community and students, the awareness of students across all disciplines needed to be aligned. One way to do that is through collaboration among educators from various disciplines starting from the initial stages of curriculum formation (Barber et al., 2014). A plethora of studies have been conducted by local researchers in CSR (Apaydin et al., 2021; Rahman et al., 2019; Jie and Hasan, 2018; Radzi et al., 2018; Islam et al., 2016; Ismail et al., 2014; Ahmad, 2012), but none of them delved into the development of a CSR curriculum, particularly from the perspective of the recipients which is a vacuum in this field. This paper explores the recipient's community perspective of CSR programs since their voices are often overlooked or underemphasized, and scant attention has been paid to understanding the impacts of CSR activities on their lives. This study is initiated to address the above imbalances, and the evidence obtained was used to create a wholesome CSR curriculum that will benefit the students of various fields and industries later.

The study follows a qualitative strategy that aims to fill the void in the literature by posing two research objectives: (a) to understand the issues and current patterns of CSR activities for meaningful corporate contributions sought by the recipient communities seek and (b) to analyze perceptions, and opinions held by the recipients regarding current CSR functions and the potential involvement of social workers in this field.

Exploring the reasons behind their responses would be fruitful for this research. The results would provide favorable recommendations to the educators, particularly for possible addition in the future curriculum in business management and social work, ultimately leading to a more comprehensive, value-laden, action-oriented, capable of bringing meaningful societal change. This study also provides rich qualitative evidence for companies and industry professionals towards prospective hiring decisions on graduating students with relevant CSR knowledge (students with business management or social work degrees). These graduates would lead humanitarian initiatives for vulnerable groups and better understand the recipient communities and their needs.

Significance of Study

While much has been written about the need for CSR education, far less attention has been paid to exploring the CSR values at the stakeholder's level. For example, several studies have investigated how CSR and sustainability can be integrated into management curriculum (Thomas, 2018; Figuerio and Raufflet, 2015), while some authors conducted literature reviews explaining the role of universities as agents to drive CSR initiatives in their surrounding environment (Karatzoglou, 2013). This study extends previous work by offering an overview and reflection on the stakeholders' responses that facilitate in developing social responsibility curriculum.

This study is critical for at least two reasons, especially for educational institutions, to the best of our knowledge. First, curriculum content and delivery should acknowledge and incorporate stakeholders' views and opinions to increase their relevance and meaning, eventually enhancing the courses' ability to address social responsibility demands from the organizations and wider community. Second, business education has long been criticized for being geared towards the ethics of personal advantage. Therefore, the CSR curriculum will focus on

social values, empathy, and humanities, enhancing the educators' ability to frame future curriculum in the business/management or social work school.

This study can be viewed as an urgent call to modify business education in light of changing the ideas on CSR and providing a framework suited for the business or management education in the new post-crisis realities of curriculum and pedagogy. The study offers a unique insight into the CSR values of millennial business students vis-a-vis humanities and social science students. The findings are critical for designing an effective integrative and interdisciplinary learning curriculum and shaping the social responsibility behaviours of the next generation of managers and leaders.

Theoretical Framework

Stakeholder Theory and CSR

The stakeholder theory emerged in the theory of ethics in business and management, which promotes practical, ethical, and effective strategies in diverse environmental conditions (Harrison et al., 2015). This theory is known for its efficiency as it responds to positive attitudes and behaviours towards organizations and communities such as shareholders, customers, communities, and employees. The rising popularity of CSR has compelled companies to place greater emphasis on their business obligation in pursuing profit, nurturing their business, and embedding ethical values. Furthermore, companies with an active CSR background would benefit from sharing practice as part of their responsibilities to society. According to the stakeholder value creation interpretation, CSR activities consume valuable effects on shareholders' interest. This notion is based on the idea that when stakeholders support a particular activity, it is founded on stakeholders' best interests (Baron, 2008; Brown and Forster, 2012); for instance, it facilitates a high-performing workforce and retention of customers. CSR emphasizes value creation, accountability, and moral perspectives despite the financial commitments and loads of responsibilities.

Social Capital Theory and CSR

Social Capital Theory posits that individuals who work together in groups benefit themselves and the group they belong to (Teik-Aun and Bustami, 2019). Based on Putnam's (1995) definition and description,

there are two types of social capital: bonding social capital between people who share social and cultural traits (family, neighbors, friends) and bridging social capital between individuals who are of differing backgrounds (workmates, acquaintances). Anand and James (2015) found that a company from a region with a high social capital has a higher CSR. This study suggests that the company's CSR should not be solely driven by the self-interest of shareholders or managers but rather by the altruistic inclination of the region. Social capital should be considered when evaluating CSR initiatives, as it has been used to explain both broad social problem solving and business success. This practice usually refers to the operations of a business offsetting its social costs and other positive effects.

Literature Review

As the research is scant and CSR is still developing and crystallizing, it is time to review previous studies on CSR practices and identify the possible gaps in the literature. Thus, guided by stakeholder theory (Freeman, 1984) and social capital theory (Putnam, 1995), this study attempts to (a) to understand the issues and current patterns of CSR activities for meaningful corporate contributions sought by the recipient communities seek and (b) to analyze perceptions, and opinions held by the recipients regarding current CSR functions and the potential involvement of social workers in this field.

Issues and Current Patterns of CSR Activities in Malaysia

Malaysia is a peaceful, multiracial, multicultural country with Islam as its most professed religion. Nevertheless, CSR practices in Malaysia is perceived and shaped by different culture, religions, and diverse socio-economic conditions. Derived from divine commandments in the Holy Qur'an and Hadith, the concept of social responsibility in Islam, for instance, heavily emphasized reform and social solidarity. Mohammed (2013) posited that the main purpose of the Islamic social system is to enhance the good life (Hayat tayyibah) and to achieve success or falah (human well-being). Giving zakat and sadaqah to the poor is an emblem of Islam. Guiding this principle, Islam established a way of conduct, obligations, and relationship for the communities to respect the rights of others, safeguard various interests, and harmonize different interests, both individually and collectively. Interestingly, Nor et al. (2019) believed that the main reason Malaysian companies embrace CSR is

religiosity. Be it the Bible, Sutras or Vedas, all the religious scriptures influence day-to-day life and morals among their adherents.

Malaysian companies are increasingly ramping up their focus on social responsibility. However, social evils such as education, poverty, health, and disease still pose a serious hazard, affecting society's livelihood (Gupta and Kumar, 2007). Undoubtedly, current awareness of CSR has increased dramatically among Malaysian companies as society becomes more educated and better at assessing CSR practices. The Malaysian Government has increased efforts to embrace CSR practices by establishing the National Vision Policy, National Transformation Plan, and the 9th Malaysian Development Plan (9MP), outlined in the national budget. With the nonstop support from the Malaysian government and massive pressures from stakeholders, social problems, economic and environmental issues are still cliché in this phenomenon. A study by Hatta and Ali (2013) claimed that while Malaysia proudly announced its success story in alleviating poverty, fragile, poor communities still existed, struggling in the face of globalization and liberalization, experiencing poverty for some geographical and societal reasons. It is one of the unchallenged successes that have been highly criticized. The above phenomenon demonstrates the importance of having genuine CSR to gain long-term success in any business venture.

The trends of CSR performed by Malaysian companies are more seasonal and focused on the programs that benefitted the benefactor. The poor communities, elderly, disabled, marginalized, companies will only notice female-headed households and orphans during the festive seasons (Apaydin et al., 2021; Mansor et al., 2021). Approaching the issue from this angle shows that most Malaysian companies have a narrow understanding of social responsibility and fail to take CSR down the line. As CSR is steadfastly rooted in business, many companies struggle with barriers to CSR implementation and shifting their theoretical assumptions to practical execution.

Notably, all business practitioners must commit to developing the best strategy to improve human life quality by embracing the correct sustainable cause. While philanthropy is commendable, it should not be considered the best or the only option because of its practicality in the current complex situation (Delbard, 2020). Although a rising number of companies have integrated the CSR concept within their business

processes, it is obvious that awareness of social responsibility is merely superficial. A shallow conception of corporate's role in society needs to broaden its scope, and sporadic, ad hoc interventions must become a more systematic and sustained effort. The advantages of CSR implementation in the local community are self-evident. Overall, a genuine commitment to CSR is demonstrated by achieving long-lasting results, maintaining a business continuity plan, and, most critically, helping shape a more sustainable community (Fordham and Robinson, 2019).

Many business schools have now introduced CSR into their curricula to resolve the aforementioned conundrum. Incorporating CSR into management education could play an essential role in addressing remarkably complex societal issues while fixing the tarnished social contract between business and community relations (Setó-Pamies & Papaoikonomou, 2016; Sherman & Hansen, 2010). A paradigm shift for business education is needed to prepare the students for the changing complexities of the business environment. The gap between business education and the skills and knowledge demanded by industry has been well documented by academicians. They agreed that educational systems need to change to enhance students' attitudes and worldviews, contributing to more profound social change (Haski-Leventhal, 2020; Person, 2020; Setó-Pamies & Papaoikonomou, 2020; Hughes et al., 2018; Leveson & Joiner, 2014). Storey et al. (2017) dictate that education can produce people highly equipped to meet community needs. Clearly, genuine CSR practices cannot be achieved without proper notion embedment in all levels and across educational system disciplines. Given the never-ending societal issues throughout the world, Hughes et al. (2018) suggested the business school curricula start adopting integrative learning, equipping the graduates with multi-disciplinary perspectives and enhancing their learning and professionalism.

CSR Functions and Potential Involvement of Social Worker in CSR

Zhang et al. (2019) cast some light on the various issues of CSR functions such as lack of corporate awareness of CSR, insufficiently qualified employees, a narrow perspective of corporate responsibility, a lack of transparency, and ignorance of the main facets of society. A few companies remained skeptical about their role in driving CSR function, believing it to be outside the scope of their existing profession. The situation becomes harder when faced with limited capacity and expertise,

resulting in low CSR performance (Loosemore, 2016; Loosemore and Lim, 2018; Zhu et al., 2011). Hamid et al. (2014) claimed that most of the time, no specific organizational unit is responsible for managing CSR as the company carries out CSR voluntarily. Lack of personnel expertise and knowledge on the CSR concept itself are also reflected in the extent to which CSR programs are implemented (Kuo et al., 2016; Zhang et al., 2019).

Social workers have a long history of promoting social and economic justice. The impact of social workers on communities and the people who live in them is substantial. Their involvement has expanded to crisis management, empowerment, and advocacy responsibilities. The major aim of social work is to improve well-being and assist people in meeting their basic human needs, focusing on the needs and empowering the vulnerable, oppressed, or living in poverty (Lorenz, 2015). Social workers are familiar with dealing with distressed people, and their experiences have formed the knowledge and expertise to know what services are needed in a community and how to satisfy those needs (Gotea and Rosculet, 2019). Social workers are more politically engaged than the general public, with up to 90% of social workers citing advocacy as an essential element of their job and 60% reporting some contact with government authorities is vital (Beimers, 2015). Social workers' involvement in the disaster phase is a catalyst that manages evacuation, rescue, and advocating for the community affected. Social workers also formed a support group, facilitator for fundraising, outreach social service providers and community health workers. They often fill these tasks instinctive while encountering issues such as a shortage of workers for a big population, a lack of practice experience, or a lack of familiarity with the profession of social work (Kamrujjaman et al., 2018). Social workers who participate in a company and become a part of their corporate structure are extremely meaningful and worthful, with social responsibility straddling both.

Methodology

This study employed a qualitative research approach by analyzing the data obtained from eight in-depth interviews. The interview questions were developed and revolved around the recipient communities' perceptions of CSR practices and determined how these practices impact their social well-being. An interview is prominently used for

the data collection, and it acts as an essential function in providing an in-depth understanding of a specific phenomenon (Elliott et al., 2017).

Eight respondents, including the recipients of CSR programs, were selected for the interview sessions. Among the beneficiaries' groups are relatively involved people who benefitted from the CSR programs: hospitals, social welfare institutions, B40 group, employees, and domestic clients. Given the nature of the research, data was collected using the purposive sampling technique obtained from databases of the corporations that actively performed CSR practices. Based on their responses, this study attempts to understand the gap in CSR delivery in Malaysia through the lens of CSR beneficiaries.

Each interview lasted from 30 to 40 minutes, with all the sessions being recorded and analyzed. In order to determine the reliability and validity of data gathering, a series of transcriptions and a careful selection of quotations were performed. Acknowledging that the interviews were conducted for academic purposes, the questions were asked in English. However, respondents were free to respond either in English or Malay. For data analysis purposes, thematic analysis was employed to identify patterns within an interview. Relevant quotes and themes were selected carefully to ensure reliability during the thematic analysis procedure. The data were manually analyzed using color-coding and pattern analysis techniques to assist in organizing and eliciting meaning from the data gathered and draws reasonable conclusions from it. The data analysis and procedure in this research involved four main steps: initial theme generation, creating core ideas from coded data, presenting the findings, and writing up a summary. These steps of thematic analysis are in line with the recommendations of Braun and Clarke (2006). In writing the research report and maintaining the participants' anonymity, all recipients were listed with numeric identifiers (R1 to R8). Research ethics issues such as consent letters and ensuring the respondent's identities' privacy and confidentiality were given paramount considerations.

Results and Discussions

Recipient Interviews

This study was conducted in Pulau Pinang, Malaysia and eight representatives of recipient communities of the CSR program were selected to represent their associations. Three of them had five to ten

years of working experience, the other four had more than ten years of experience, while one respondent had less than five years of working experience. They were required to provide a view based on their knowledge and experience as a person in charge of dealing with the end-to-end implementation of CSR programs. Besides, their personal backgrounds were dismissed since they represented their affiliated associations rather than themselves.

Research Objective 1: Views on the Impact of CSR

CSR is still too Ad-Hoc and Treated on Occasional Basis

As CSR has become a widespread practice in Malaysia, its effect on communities is worth exploring. The discussion with the recipient communities demonstrates several noteworthy findings. The respondents were asked to explain the current CSR practices and voice their concerns on CSR performance. All the respondents explained that the CSR approach performed by most companies are highly based on an ad hoc, with such practices being employed randomly and intermittently, especially during the festive seasons. Along the same vein, Apaydin et al. (2021) and Mansor et al. (2021) observed parallels in CSR growth as a luxury add-on performed sporadically. The majority of the recipients held a similar view on this issue, and some of their responses were as follows:

> "Well, I must say that most of them will reach out to the needy during festive seasons. For me, CSR program or campaign should be for life, not only for Hari Raya or Christmas (R1)".

> "Sorry, many companies see CSR practice as a nice-to-have item. They are championing their CSR mostly during festive seasons. I understand that is how they want to spread the festive cheer, but CSR should be beyond the holiday season, isn't it?" (R3).

> "My point is that they are not consistent with their practices. When it comes to CSR, they have no strategic plan for that. You know, CSR is a hot topic during festive seasons, but how about the rest of the year? Issues like poverty, hunger and homeless do not take a break between holidays". (R5)

> "Companies need to practice their CSR more consistently, not only during the holiday seasons. Performing CSR during

> Christmas, for instance, is only part of CSR…CSR is a year-round responsibility" (R7).

This insightful finding supported the evidence provided by Singh and Misra (2021), which showed a great disappointment among the recipients that CSR practices undertaken by many companies have been highly sporadic, with most engaged in a wide range of philanthropic gestures. It was a disheartening experience for the vulnerable recipient communities to receive passive funding, where the cash is given without a record of community development expenditure. According to Respondent 2, the touch-and-go approach for CSR is no longer significant in the world that embraces sustainability value.

Passive Philanthropic Element is No Longer Relevant.

Community perceptions and expectations are considered essential for effective CSR implementation. This notion is supported by Carroll (2021) and Williams (2014), who suggested that the success of CSR is primarily dependent on satisfying the community needs. Communities who have experienced the consequences of unsustainable practices will start to recognize that something has gone fundamentally wrong and will emphasize their true needs. In this study, recipients raised their concerns on the importance of companies having an active approach to philanthropy and deeper involvement in community development initiatives, showing that passive philanthropy is no longer relevant. With the recent COVID-19 pandemic, companies should navigate and revisit their purpose, commitments, and CSR initiatives towards contributing to the beauty of the community by meeting their ever-growing expectations. Given the unprecedented situation, it is time for companies to shine, react swiftly to the issues, and embrace agility, adaptability, and innovation in their programs since the outbreak has left some communities far more vulnerable with inadequate support. Here are some excerpts from the recipient interviews, where pertinent remarks on the issue were put forth:

> "We still benefit from this kind of passive philanthropy like how they issuing to us a one-time cheque, donation, or engaging in one-off volunteer programs. But what is ultimately more valuable, of course from everyone's perspective, is a program that left no one behind…a program of greater depth (R2)."

> "Most companies have long practiced some form of CSR,
> for example, donation, the most popular approach. But
> what they missed out was empowering individuals and
> communities to achieve their ultimate goals…like through
> education or sharing meaningful knowledge and skills to our
> disabled communities…These are among the programs that
> all companies must seriously invest in. I think that is more
> genuine rather than just being generous (R6)."

> "You give out money, provide us food and continue to do so
> for an unknown period. And we are going to stay like this
> forever, waiting to be spoon-fed. Well, it is an endless thing
> you see. Honestly, I think they misunderstood the concept.
> We really hope these companies can invest more in long-
> term causes like education enrichment or skills that can bring
> ongoing positive change to our community members. That is
> all I have to say (R8)".

In order to elicit more important information, the recipients were
specifically queried about their feelings on CSR and its effect on
communities. The purpose was to measure the happiness of all recipients
to find out if all the deliverables were achieved and a significant impact
on the community was realized.

'Bolt-on' to 'Built-in' Social Responsibility

The findings revealed a reasonable view of the CSR performance from
the recipients' perspectives. All recipients were requested to score their
experience on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 representing negative effect
(extremely dissatisfied), 5 representing pleasurable experiences and 10
representing life satisfaction (extremely satisfied). No recipients ranked
their feelings as a 10 out of 10. Five of them were quite pleased with
how they benefited from CSR activities, with a score of 6 and three
recipients rated their experience as a 7. All respondents agreed that
CSR should not be regarded as a program to be bolted on to business
activities. Instead, it must be embedded into business strategy for a
more effective and genuine approach. Some of their general answers
were as follows:

> "Honestly so far we are thankful and quite happy to be part
> of their programs. We are really grateful for their generosity
> and kindness. But at this point, they appeared to be 'bolted
> on' rather than 'built-in'. I hope CSR should be 'built- in'

and becomes critical to the business. So, I will score it at 6 (R5)."

"It is good to receive a little bit of something than nothing at all. But I still think of them as "bolt-on" tactic. They are not deeply integrated CSR into their systems. I score them at 6 (R1)"

"Majority of the companies nowadays are doing quite well, and of course we are happy with that. We really appreciate what they did especially in time of pandemic. Business will continue to prosper if they put CSR at their heart. So, I rated my feelings at 7. (R7)"

The finding highlights the gap between the needs of the communities and the current CSR initiatives. This finding also revealed the misalignment of expectations between the types of CSR initiatives carried out by most companies and communities' expectations. As such, there is a strong distinction between corporate social responsibility and communities' expectations. Also, it is important to understand that religion makes a strong imprint on Malaysia's cultural and social fabric. Guiding this study's assumption was that strong religious beliefs and personalities somehow has spurred business practitioners to become attentive to CSR and help the less fortunate. Perhaps, this is why CSR is performed sporadically, guided largely by philanthropic acts and donations to local communities. The concept of CSR has failed to take hold in Malaysia, mainly in meeting the actual needs of local communities. The insights revealed in this study might be useful for companies to identify and balance the interests of all recipients in Malaysia, which may allow for a better harmonization of CSR programs.

Research Objective 2: Current CSR functions and Potential Involvement of Social Workers

Too much extra-role involvement in CSR functions

The first dimension of the analysis poses who should be accountable for a company's CSR programs and objectives. To highlight its rationale, some probing questions were raised. The recipients were asked who is usually responsible for CSR in a company. All the recipients replied that CSR programs were normally handled and dominated by the public relations, marketing, or human resource department. This notion is supported by Mansor et al. (2021), who claimed that CSR initially

emerged as an interest of the specific departments but possessed a lack
of a clear understanding of CSR function. The findings indicate that,
instead of appointing a specific person (CSR manager or officer) to
oversee the CSR initiatives in the company, situating CSR in an existing
organizational function (corporate communication, marketing, or public
relations) could dilute the motives behind CSR. Direct ties to any of
these functions have caused mixed CSR messages to be delivered to
stakeholders. As a result, CSR is then placed under the responsibility
of that particular department or, in the worst case, detached from the
lifeblood of the organization. According to Respondent 2:

> "There is no specific person or unit to handle and oversee
> the CSR. The person in-charge with CSR came from various
> backgrounds and departments such as human resource,
> public relations, or marketing (R2)."

Lack of Managerial Expertise and CSR Knowledge

Along a similar vein, a shortage of qualified personnel with relevant
CSR knowledge and experience will also create additional challenges
for making impactful social responsibility practices in the community
(Osagie et al., 2016). A lack of knowledge followed by poor management
skills and professional advice are the main contributing factors to why
CSR has failed to meet the community's various needs. Different
researchers have highlighted this issue in existing CSR literature (Kuo
et al., 2016; Zhang et al., 2019). As mentioned by one of the recipients:

> To tell you the truth, they are usually lacking both knowledge
> and skills, unable them to deal with complex social issues.
> Too much is squandered by incompetent CSR practitioners
> that ultimately fail to get the desired result(R2)."

The aforementioned scenarios lead to the emergence of another theme:
the importance of hiring individuals with full CSR knowledge and an
appropriate level of understanding of the company's impacts on the
community. According to many, companies need to employ individuals
with CSR knowledge (with degrees and backgrounds in business
management or social work) to rectify the great ills committed. For
example, one recipient made the following remark and postulated that:

> "This is the best time for CSR management to be
> professionalized as much as possible. Companies can
> appoint someone who really have a good knowledge of what

> CSR actually is…a good CSR specialist with a business management background or social work profession. These people can select beneficiaries, identify needs, and establish interventions. They can help diagnose and solve our issues (R5)."

There is heightened attention to enhancing CSR awareness at all levels in Malaysia. Evidence has suggested that education and training are two important components to strengthen managerial skills and foster a strategic CSR implementation. Battaglia et al. (2014) supported the logic as their study found that a lack of education and training is the primary reason CSR has been poorly understood by many companies, causing hurdles for CSR practitioners. CSR specialists who drive and oversee CSR operations should be educated and qualified to be well-versed in dealing with complex societal problems. A similar finding was reported by Prabawati et al. (2017) that persons who engage in CSR must possess specific skills and competencies to determine the real needs of communities, and such competencies can be developed through education.

'CSR specialist' with a specialization in the field of Social Sciences (such as Social Work) is required

Nevertheless, the recipient communities have voiced the same concern regarding the potential involvement of social work professionals in CSR. Based on the findings, questions on their thoughts about the benefits of a CSR specialist specializing in Social Sciences (such as Social Work) to promote social change are worth studying. Here are excerpts of the discussion.

> "Regardless of what professions you held, in order to stand out in a positive light, it is vital for a CSR specialist to have more affective empathy. And as we know, social workers often have great empathy for the feelings of another. This is where a sense of unity is created (R1)".

> "Individuals that can promote wellness and social consciousness…who really can understand us and have moral sense, civic sprit, tolerance, willingness to help vulnerable groups. I believe social workers are an ideal math for this position because they are able to step into our shoes and understand our needs (R2)".

> "A good CSR specialist should have safeguarding well-being skill, social marketing and social work knowledge to produce better social projects, be it for corporate image and for combating the existing social problems in the community (R4)".

> "Social work professionals are able to understand the needs of the recipients with more and more humanitarian programs likely to be developed for vulnerable groups. They can develop a good rapport with the affected communities. Each community has its own needs. This will help make decisions on prioritization for programs that leave a greater positive impact on community (R6)".

> "A good specialist in CSR is ideally positioned to identify, manage, and assist those affected to claim their rights. Social workers are the "tip of the spear" for community improvement programs and make communities better because they have the experience in dealing with distressed populations (R7)".

Industrial Social Work as One Option for CSR to Take

In this context, a good CSR specialist should maintain constant contact with recipient communities and help in innovation and problem solving. There is no other option but to train the CSR professionals to possess the sufficient knowledge and skills relating to human development and behavior, social policy, and industrial law. Industrial social workers who possess a foundational understanding of social dynamics and skills with special reference to industrial organizations will be a great asset for any company. Industrial social work, for example, is a great fit for the aforementioned position since they operate in a range of settings and help improve problem-solving skills, which will help the community reach its most important goal of development in the long term (Cheeran and Renjith, 2015). Presently, companies that patron a certain social cause could benefit from having a social work professional as part of their corporate structure. Therefore, the findings established that the link between CSR and social work would create a significant interconnection and act as a fundamental element in solving various social problems.

Educational Implications and Recommendation

The past decade has been marked by the increasing development of educational curriculums that envision a sustainable future, including

CSR and ethics (Haski-Leventhal, 2020). The function of the universities' role in this new era is to provide society with experts and intellectual capacity and create current and future 'CSR implementers'. Hughes et al. (2018) reinforced the importance of universities to foster greater interdisciplinary and integrative learning in their curricula design and education. The curriculum is designed for teaching different disciplines by integrating knowledge and methodologies from different fields to solve various issues. In other words, the business school needs to explore the interlink between CSR and management and find new ways to collaborate across disciplines, particularly the social sciences. This realization implied the role of higher education in propagating CSR not only as part of their university programs but also into numerous disciplines of study, such as business management and social work courses (social sciences). As Gotea and Rosculet (2019) postulate, the social work profession shares similar ideals that CSR aims to address; hence the relationship and interconnection between the two disciplines are worth exploring.

Recognizing this inadequacy, evidence from the recipients provides a meaningful, complete, and nuanced picture of CSR impacts on themselves. Based on the findings, this study developed a CSR curriculum (see Table 1) that can be used as part of the institution's efforts in designing an effective business curriculum, aiming to enhance the social responsibility values for the next generation of managers and leaders. It is argued that educating the future business community will help to promote a better tomorrow for future generations. Those who have been equipped with adequate knowledge and skills, be it in the field of business or social work (social sciences), can be an essential element in shaping corporate policies centered on the idea of respecting and fulfilling community needs. This leads to the desirable professional attributes in enhancing business acumen and the community. This appears to be the logic, considering that professionals from different disciplines work together in the real world outside of the universities.

Table 1 Curriculum outline

Week	Course
Week 1	The meaning and importance of corporate social responsibility.

Week 2	Corporate social responsibility and social legitimacy.
Week 3	Understand the characteristics of vulnerable groups.
	Identify what the psychosocial consequences of vulnerable groups are.
Week 4	Define what social vulnerability means
	Recognize some concepts and theories related to social vulnerability
Week 5	Understanding the diversity issues (race, religion, age, gender, social orientation, social class)
Week 6	Ethical responsibilities to practice settings
Week 7	Ethical responsibilities as professionals
Week 8	Ethical responsibilities to the broader society
Week 9	Community service learning
Week 10	Strategic corporate social responsibility and sustainability
Week 11	Sustainability challenge
Week 12	Systematic thinking and problem-solving approaches
Week 13	Demonstrate how knowledge, values, and skills in qualitative interventions enhance the social well being of individuals, groups, families, and communities who are vulnerable.
Week 14	Case studies in organizational, economic, and societal issues

Armed with stakeholder and social capital theory, universities in the twenty-first century are not only preparing corporate managers for the realities of business life, given that addressing the complex community needs of the world today will be remarkably different. Thus, the 14 weeks course program educates, trains, and exposes candidates to the theories and best practices to various social issues in the context, concept, and theme in identifying, planning, and managing CSR practices. As articulated in the Millennium Development Goals and Agenda 21, this program's strength lies in the specialization to produce candidates

who can apply business theory, social competence, and practices to assess local needs and resources more effectively. As a result, cases on community issues will be better managed, more humanitarian efforts for vulnerable groups will likely be formed, and, most significantly, the requirements of recipients will be better understood.

Conclusion

The initiatives of CSR, even in the year 2021, are mostly associated with inconsistent activities to support the community and avoid a total breakdown. A lack of CSR knowledge and expertise has led a majority of companies to ignore the true meaning of CSR. It is now more than just simply donating to a good cause. The purpose of CSR is to have a year-round commitment to serving the community more consistently. In this context, low interest in addressing community needs among the CSR specialists demonstrate a superficial understanding of social issues.

Concerning the focus on community, gauging the views of these recipients is important. As far as they are concerned, this can be identified as a crucial assessment in establishing a more fruitful approach towards genuine CSR. A poor degree of CSR understanding and lack of social consciousness, particularly among the companies, raised the essential question of educating and spreading awareness on this matter.

A lack of CSR knowledge is a contributing factor that hinders many companies from practising CSR initiatives. Zou et al. (2021) suggested that this situation could somehow be improved through intensive education programs, aiming to develop CSR knowledge of the CSR specialist and employees working in different sectors in Malaysia. More importantly, without upgrading the knowledge, companies are still uncertain about the devastating effects they may cause from their actions towards the community.

Changes are happening. Universities of the twenty-first century, unlike their predecessors, act as a center of knowledge generation and dissemination and are expected to be actively addressing the world's societal and environmental issues by promoting sustainable solutions. As the education on CSR is far from the mainstream to business or social work programs in Malaysia, CSR should be made compulsory at business and social work schools to sensitize students about sustainability issues. Students graduating from such programs

will develop into sustainability-driven individuals, cultivating a global outlook which is a prerequisite for a sustainable world.

This study faces some limitations, especially concerning the sample size and opens up a new horizon for upcoming research in the same field. Future research may expand the strength of this study with a larger sample of affiliations and more diverse in terms of geographical area, which may also include different states. Again, it is important to highlight that this is an exploratory study aimed to understand the perceptions of the CSR recipients. Nevertheless, we hope this study can serve as a kick-starter to even more comprehensive future studies with careful interpretations of the valuable insights obtained.

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Waqf and Its Legal Framework in Sri Lanka: A Preliminary Study[1]

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Abstract: *Waqf* or religious endowment refers to an institution with the religious intention to do good acts for the benefit of the beneficiaries. However, the implementation and management of *Waqf* all around the world (Muslim and non-Muslim countries) have witnessed a deterioration since the fall of the Ottoman Empire. Many researchers and experts speak about the *Waqf* revival. In this relation, the *Waqf* institutions in Sri Lanka in particular, have gone through several reforms including the introduction of the ministry of *Waqf*. This paper examines the historical evolution as well as the status quo of *Waqf* governance in Sri Lanka. The study employs doctrinal analysis based on past literature as well as the laws governing *Waqf*. This study also explores the origin of the *Waqf* under Islamic law. It also discusses the application of the *Waqf* Act in Sri Lanka and identifies the current challenges and issues of the *Waqf* legal framework for the Muslim Mosques Charitable Trusts or *Waqf* Act (MMCTWA) in Sri Lanka. The findings reveal positive development in *Waqf* management, but overall awareness is necessary. The legal framework requires sustainable support and cooperation from the community, private sector, and the government.

Keywords: *Waqf*, *Waqf* Act, Legal Framework, Charitable Trust, Sri Lanka.

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Abstrak: *Waqf* atau wakaf agama merujuk kepada institusi yang mempunyai matlamat agama untuk melakukan perbuatan baik untuk manfaat penerimanya. Walau bagaimanapun, pelaksanaan dan pengurusan wakaf di seluruh dunia (negara Islam dan bukan Islam) telah menyaksikan kemerosotan sejak kejatuhan Khilāfah Uthmaniyyah. Pada hari ini, ramai penyelidik dan pakar bercakap tentang kebangkitan semula institusi wakaf. Dalam hubungan ini, institusi wakaf di Sri Lanka khususnya, telah melalui beberapa pembaharuan termasuk pengenalan kementerian wakaf. Artikel ini mengkaji evolusi sejarah serta status quo tadbir urus wakaf di Sri Lanka. Kajian ini menggunakan analisis doktrin berdasarkan literatur serta undang-undang berkaitan wakaf. Kajian ini juga meneroka asal usul wakaf di bawah undang-undang Islam. Ia juga membincangkan penggunaan Akta Wakaf di Sri Lanka dan mengenal pasti cabaran dan isu semasa rangka kerja perundangan wakaf untuk Amanah Amal Masjid Islam atau Akta Wakaf (MMCTWA). Kajian menunjukkan perkembangan positif dalam pengurusan wakaf, tetapi kesedaran umum pelbagai pemegang taruh adalah perlu. Rangka kerja undang-undang ini memerlukan sokongan dan kerjasama yang mampan daripada masyarakat, sektor swasta dan kerajaan.

Kata kunci: Wakaf, Akta Wakaf, Rangka kerja undang-undang, Sri Lanka, pertubuhan amal

Introduction

Waqf or Islamic donation as an organization begins along with a religious and pure intention to do good deeds for the benefit of societies and beneficiaries. In other word, one of the best theological dedications of wealth is *Waqf* or Islamic endowment. It involves the dedication of part of one's wealth or its benefit for other people who are in need with good intentions that the dedicator (*Wāqif*) will receive a continuous reward from Allah (SWT). Furthermore, *Waqf* institutions have contributed to society by supporting social organizations and playing significant roles in economic and social development (Sadique, 2010).

Waqf institution has witnessed deterioration since the end of the Ottoman Empire in Turkey (Dafterdar, 2016). Nevertheless, since then, *Waqf* institutions have gone through several reforms such as the introduction of the Ministry of *Waqf* or *Awqaf* or a specific department of *Waqf* has been created independently or with the support of the Muslim jurists. Presently, many countries have introduced specific *Waqf* statute

to legally manage and maintain *Waqf* properties.[2] In Sri Lanka, *Waqf* properties are being managed and maintained by one legal framework for the whole Island and known as the Muslim Mosques and Charitable Trusts or *Waqfs* Act (Widger, 2018).

This paper attempts to analyses the Sri Lankan *Waqf* legal system with the aims to explore and appreciate the implementation, challenges and provide recommendations when necessary. The study involves understanding the concept of *Waqf*, the conflict of jurisdiction between *Sharī'ah* court and civil court as well as the issue where endowment has to be administered either as an endowment or as a charitable trust. Moreover, this study creates awareness about the existing *Waqf* legal framework in Sri Lanka and deliberating on the challenges in the enactment of the policy and law especially in the context of Sri Lanka as a minority Muslim country.

Meaning of *Waqf*

In Arabic lexicons, *Waqf* is used to denote 'stop', 'contain', or 'preserve'. In Islamic purview, however, it means a religious endowment, such as the voluntary and irrevocable dedication of one's wealth or a portion of, movable and immovable property. For an example, a dedication of a piece of land or a horse and cow-like cattle, as well as its disbursement for *Sharī'ah* compliant projects like mosques and Islamic educational institutions.

The *Waqf* and charity (*Ṣadaqah*) are both a means of worshiping Almighty Allah, but there is a difference between them, the charity is only permissible for those who need it among the poor. In addition, it is valid to own, sell, and dispose it as a gift, or to derive benefits from all of it, whether it remains for a period or finishes once used as food and clothing (Fahmīyy, 2013). Furthermore, al-Nawawīyy (1996. Vol. 6), stated that the charity is permissible for the rich people without dispute. So, it is permissible to give to all, but the poor are the most deserving for it (p. 225).

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[2] For example, in Malaysia, there are 7 states which have their own Waqf Enactments including Selangor, Melaka, Negeri Sembilan, Terengganu, Johor, Sabah dan Perak. Some states are working closely to introduce a specific Waqf enactments including Pulau Pinang and Wilayah Persekutuan Kuala Lumpur.

However, the *Waqf* is a permanent donation once it is created it can never be rescinded or donated as a gift nor inherited and sold. This is supported by the *Ḥadith* of Khaybar narrated by al-Bayhaqīyy that, "Nāafiʻ Ibn ʻUmar (RḌ) said: ʻUmar came to the Messenger of Allah said:› O Messenger of Allah, I have found land in Khaybar, Wālllahi (I swear by Allah), I have never acquired property more valuable for me than this, what do you command me, he said: "If you like, endow it as a *Ṣadaqah* for them and hold their origin". Thus, ʻUmar (RḌ) did not sell, donate or inherit the land, but he donated charity to the poor people, the needy, and the traveler, and in the way of Allah" (al-Bayhaqīyy, Ḥadith No. 12012, Vol. 9, 134, 1996). This is very important *Ḥadith* related to *Waqf*. It is the first *Ḥadith* that provides the rules and regulations on *Waqf*.

Accordingly, the majority of Muslim jurists agreed that the character of perpetuity is important in the *Waqf*, and it should be always possible to use permanence. This opinion was also clarified by al-Sharbīnīyy (1995. Vol. 2), who said that one of the significant conditions of *Waqf* is the perpetuity of the property, and it is intended for permissible use (p. 511). Hence, the *Waqf* property cannot be temporary in nature (Mohamad & Abdul Kader, 2017), but it is always as continually on the beneficiaries and needy people. Moreover, its disbursement of returns is done following the endower's wishes. On the contrary, charity is a much wider concept. It encompasses grants (it grants) alms inheritance and even *Waqf*.

Definition of *Waqf*

The definition of *Waqf* has been interpreted differently by various academics, but the principles remain the same. The Kufan school headed by Abu Hanifā dictates *Waqf* is defined as the holding of a particular thing in the ownership of its founder or creator and dedicating its usufruct in charity to the impoverished or other good goods through loan, lending, or commodity loan. (Mahamood, 2006). Furthermore, the Māliki school of thought as defined by (al-Sāwī, 1988, vol. 2), commands *Waqf* as the improvement of a special thing, even by lease, where the ownership of the thing remains to the founder or creator (*Wāqif*) (p. 296-297). Nevertheless, the owner is just an owner of a trustee who has to carry out the duty as trustee. According to the concept of *Waqf* lease, the beneficiaries only can take any declaration of *Waqf* for the whole period with agreement by the *Waqif*. When the specific period of lease is over,

the *Waqf* property returns to its original status. The same concept is applicable in *Waqf Mu'aqqat* or temporary *Waqf*.

The school of Shāfī defines *Waqf* as the detention of *Waqf* property by taking advantage of that and it remains in perpetuity by detaining the property in the ownership of Allah SWT (al-Nawawīyy Y. S., 1988, p.247). Based on this definition, the ownership of the *Waqf* property should not give anyone a right of that *Mawqūf al-Fīyyh*, and the usufruct is given to the beneficiaries or the charity that the founder (*Wāqif*) is mentioned in his agreement. Similarly, this *Waqf* property cannot be sold, made a gift or passed to the next of kings through the law of inheritance. Moreover, the Ḥanbali school of thought defines the definition of *Waqf* is that the detainment of useful property by somebody who has a full breaking point by suspending the breaking point of working the property, and to commit its usufruct towards blessing Allah (SWA) (al-Bahuti, 1982, vol. 4, p.240 - 241). It seems that this definition does not differ much in comparison to the definition of the Shāfī School. As well as, 'Abu Zahrā', states the definition of *Waqf* as follows: "the prevention of a benefit-generating estate from corporal disposal from movable and the donation from immovable property respectively but its management is in anyone, as a *Mutawallī* or *Nāzir*, on behalf of Allah which he legally owns, and its usufruct and benefit may be used as charity for the needy and other beneficiaries" ('Abu Zahrā', 2007). He further clarifies in his definition of *Waqf* that the donation must be an immovable property, thus the opinion that the given *Waqf* should be in perpetuity. This includes the fundamental ideas proposed by various jurists.

In all the definitions, the common principal matter of discussion among jurists scholars is the ownership of the *Waqf* property, which is divided into two categories; first, the ownership that belongs to Allah, and second, the ownership that belongs to the *Wāqif*. Abu Hanīfah opined that the ownership remains with the *Wāqif*. However, two of his disciples held a different view, stating that the ownership is transferred to Allah. Correspondingly, the majority of the scholars such as Shāfī, Ḥanbalī, and 'Abu Zahrā' accepted the same thought that ownership is with Allah, as well as Mālik, who leaned with the majority of jurists in his one view and in another opinion with Abu Ḥanīfah. So, the analysis of the argument among all the jurists is that "the ownership of the *Waqf* property belongs to Allah", which means it is absolute in nature and this is a principal matter in the law of *Waqf*.

In short, the ownership of *Waqf* property (*Mawqūf al-Fīyyh)* is subject to various debates and opinions among the jurists. This conversation may be divided into two categories. The first is the view of the Ḥanafī school of thought that the ownership of *Waqf* property remains with the donor (*Wāqif*). The second category is the view of the majority school of thought that the ownership of the *Waqf property does not remain with* the owner, but it goes to Almighty Allah SWT. Therefore, after donation of the *Waqf* property, the donor (*Wāqif*) or his any family member does not have any right to the property, but he can appoint anyone as a manager or *Mutawallī* to manage the *Waqf* property in order to realize the intention of the *Wāqif*.

The *Waqf* Act of Sri Lanka has a very long history. Traditionally, the donor makes a gift such as a land title or any other wealth, etc. with a condition that they either managed the property by themselves or their successors had to have the interest to manage the gift under the management of mosques. Sometimes, the public had requested that the donor should manage the mosque's property but there was no proper law to govern them. After some years, three laws were vitally amended to manage the mosque›s property. In 1931, the Muslim Intestate Succession and *Waqf* Ordinance had been amended and known as Act of Muslim Charitable Trust (Mahroof M. M., 1985). However, the Trust law of Sri Lanka had firstly come from three laws which were the Trust Ordinance (No. 9 of 1917), the Indian Charitable Trust Act and English Trust Act.

Jaldeen M. S (1993) notes that under the Sri Lankan law system, it does not even contain a definition of the term *Waqf*. The reason is that the rest of the Act appears to have been derived from civil law sources (p. 324). Mahroof (1998) also notes that the Sri Lankan *Waqf* Act statute does not contain a definition of the term "*Waqf*", unlike the corresponding Indian and Malaysian legislation. Furthermore, it is clear from the provision of the Sri Lankan *Waqf* legislation, which is the Muslim Mosques and Charitable Trusts or *Waqfs* Act (MMCTA), that the *Waqf* term is used here to refer to any Islamic charitable purpose generally: this would include poverty elimination among the Muslim community, education of Muslim and promotion of Islam in general. On the other hand, according to a scholar of Sri Lanka, who is a member of All Ceylon Jamiyyathul Ulama (ACJU) and its incorporated council,

this council is also not mentioned about *Waqf* and its definition with the ownership of the *Waqf* property in their proper document. If anybody, however, refers to them the *Fatwa* (definition or interpretation) relating *Waqf*, their answer (*Fatwa*) may be based on the thought of Shāfī school. This school of thought has influenced statutory provisions and laws which can be also applied to religious charity law governing Muslim affairs. Dou to, the majority of Muslims in Sri Lanka are Sunni Muslims, and most of them follow the Shāfī school of law (Mahroof M. M., 1995, Vol 6, No. 1).

History of *Waqf* and its Legal Framework in Sri Lanka

The first legislation governing Muslims was the Code of Muhammadan Laws which was introduced in 1806. However, it did not cover *Waqf* or Muslim charitable trusts (Zarook, 2018). The statute covered Muslim marriages, divorces, and inheritance. In 1931, The first attempt to establish a *Waqf* legal framework in Sri Lanka was made. The legislation was passed as an ordinance by the Muslim representative of the Legislative Council. Prior to this enactment, Waqf was governed by the Trust Ordinance, 1917 as a Charitable Trust. In 1921, some issues were later identified and resulted in the introduction of another Ordinance. Mahroof M. M., (1985) explained the need for a separate ordinance for *Waqf* since the Charitable Trust Ordinance of 1917 initially adopted from the Indian Charitable Trust Act and The English Trustee Act. Therefore, it had several issues and challenges. For instance, the manager (*Mutavalli*) of the trust cannot manage the *Waqf* properties directly. The manager, however, can manage the person who is in charge of the Mosques. Therefore, the 1931 Muslim Charitable Trust or *Waqf* Ordinance came to fruition. Nevertheless, this Ordinance too was not comprehensive enough to manage *Waqf* (Jaldeen, 1993).

Having acknowledged the shortcomings of the Muslim Intestate Succession and *Waqf,* Justice M.T Akbar recommended for the establishment of a special committee of justice. In 1952, a committee consisting of a representative from Muslim Parliamentarians and Senators was formed to examine the issues comprehensively. As a result, the Muslim Mosques and Charitable Trusts or *Waqfs* Act (No.51 of 1956) appeared as the first legal document providing a preliminary legal framework for *Waqf* and trusts in Sri Lanka. This regulation came into effect in 1957 (Zarook, 2018).

The governing body of Muslim Mosques and Charitable Trusts or *Waqfs* Act (MMCTWA) came under the Department of Muslim Cultural Affairs and managed by the office of the Commissioner. The implementation of this Act proved to be difficult after it came into effect. Lack of manpower resulted in a gradual decrease in the litigation of *Waqf* properties. At the same time, Muslim scholars disputed with the Act as it did not fully reflect the *Shaī'ah* principles (Mahroof M. M., 1985).

This Act was amended twice since then, in 1962 and 1982. Hence, the current law of MMCTWA in Sri Lanka is Act No. 33 of 1982. The major improvement in 1982 was to establish *Waqf* Tribunal to settle disputes regarding *Waqf*. The introduction of the Tribunal was a visionary effort done by the government in 1982 while such tribunal may be still an early bell in some Asian countries. Prior to this amendment, the hearing took place at the District Court where the *Waqf* property was located. The major drawback was some of the judges were primarily lacked in *Shaī'ah* knowledge. Hence, there was a need to separate the *Waqf* related disputes from the District Court. Therefore, the Honorable Minister M.H. Mohammed brought this amendment and passed it in the parliament to settle *Waqf* Tribunal under the Muslim Mosques and Charitable Trusts/*Waqfs* Act (No.33 of 1982). The *Waqf* Tribunal was established to resolve any disputes relating to Waqf properties under the *Waqf* Act. The first *Waqf* Tribunal was established in 1985 in Colombo, the capital of Sri Lanka.

Some of the new insertions made in 1982 are shown below:

Section	The Amendment of Waqf in 1982
(a)	The relief of poverty among Muslims or any section thereof;
(b)	The advancement of the education of Muslims or any section thereof;
(c)	The advancement of Islam generally;

(d)	The management of any mosque or Muslim shrine or place of religious resort or performance of religious rites or practices as such mosque, shrine or place or in any other place whatsoever;
(e)	Any purpose beneficial to Muslims or any section thereof; and
(f)	Any other purpose recognized Muslim law as religious, pious or charitable[3].

The new matters incorporated in 1982 shows the improvement made for better management of *Waqf* in Sri Lanka. Apart from having the Tribunal, the emphasis on objective or *Waqf* intention is crucial to help the Department to smoothly realize the *Waqf* objectives.

Muslim Mosques and Charitable Trusts or *Waqfs* Act

By the introduction of the MMCTW, all mosques or any other Muslim shrines and places of religious resorts, whether incorporated or not, come under the purview of MMCTW. MMCTW also prescribes the powers, duties, and functions of the trustees of registered mosques and Muslim Charitable Trusts or *Waqfs* (Zarook, 2018, p. 7).

Provision the *Waqf* Act is divided into 7 parts, namely as follows below on the table:

Table No 1

Muslim Mosques and Charitable Trusts or Waqfs Act	
Part-I	The Staff, the Board, and the Tribunal
Part-II	Registration of Mosques
Part-III	Appointment, Power, and Duties of Trustees

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[3] The Muslim Mosques and Charitable Trusts or Wakfs Act No. 51 of 1956 as amended by Act No. 21 of 1962 and Act No. 33 of 1982.

Part-IV	Muslim Shrines and Places of Religious Resort
Part-V	Muslim Charitable Trusts or *Waqfs*
Part-VI	Muslim Charitable Fund
Part-VII	General Provisions

The first part of the Act specifies in detail the responsibilities of the Director and the *Waqf* Board as follows:

a) The Director means the Director of the Mosques and Muslim Charitable Trusts or *Waqfs* (MMCTW) and the Deputy Director shall be appointed by the Minister of Muslim Affairs (Sec 58). The Act clearly provides that a non-Muslim person shall not be appointed as the Director or Deputy Director (Section 2 (2)).

   The Director of the Department of Muslim Cultural Affairs is different from the Director of MMCTW. The Director of the CTW is the one eligible to attend the meeting of the *Waqf* Board. (*WT/220/2014 (Zahira Mohammadan School, Badhulla)*. Furthermore, the Director or Deputy Director can personally inquire or investigate matters related to *Waqf* properties or through an authorized officer appointed by him. The Director or his Deputy can bring any action to the Board and defend any action or proceeding as may be necessary for the Tribunal or in any Court (Sections 20A, 21.22, and 29 of the Act.)

   The Director authorizes to manage the Muslim Charities Funds (MCF) and he can take action against the person who interferes with the *Waqf* property. Director must attend all the Board meetings and carry out the management given by the Board. When the Board has dissolved or completed its period, the Director must hold office and discharge the works of the Board until a new Board is appointed. (Section 39 of the Act).

b) The *Waqf* Board means the Board of the Mosques and Muslim Charitable Trusts or *Waqfs* (MMCTW) (Section 5 (1). This Board is established for the purpose to manage the MMCTW. The Board comprises of the Director and seven other members

with a chairman appointed by the Minister. Only a Muslim can be appointed as a Board member. When one of the Board members becomes a Member of Parliament, he loses his membership of the Board inevitably. The Minister shall appoint the members of the *Waqf* Board and this appointment is valid for three years from the date of their appointment. The Minister may appoint one of the members, other than the Director and seven members, to be the Chairman of the Board (Sec 15(3). Moreover, this appointment will be disqualified by their earlier vacates, dies or removed by the Minister (sec 8).

c) The Chairman of the Board shall lead every meeting, and during his absence, any member of the Board can preside over the meeting. The responsibilities of the Chairman are as follow:

   (a) to summon and compel the attendance of witnesses.

   (b) to compel the production of documents; and

   (c) to administer any oath affirmation to witnesses.

If the Chairman or any Board Member fails to attend three meetings consecutively, the Minister may dissolve the Board. The table describes the duties of the *Waqf* Board and the Director based on the Act.

Table No. 2: Scope of Power

No	Scope of Powers	Director	Board of Waqf
1	Appointed by the Minister	Yes	Yes
2	Non-Muslim Member	Not allowed	Not allowed
3	Appointment of Deputy	Yes	No
4	Power of Inquiry	Yes	No
5	Number of People	Only One Person	Seven Members

6	May manage the MCF	Yes	No
7	May manage the MMCTWA	Yes	Yes
8	Duration of Appointment	3 Years and Until the New Board Takes Over	3 Years

The Director is also the principal executive officer, subject to the direction of the Board (sec 3). He should be in charge of the Department of MMCTW. Since he has the manpower, the machinery of the law is put under his purview.

Chart No 1: Structure of the Current Management of Waqf System
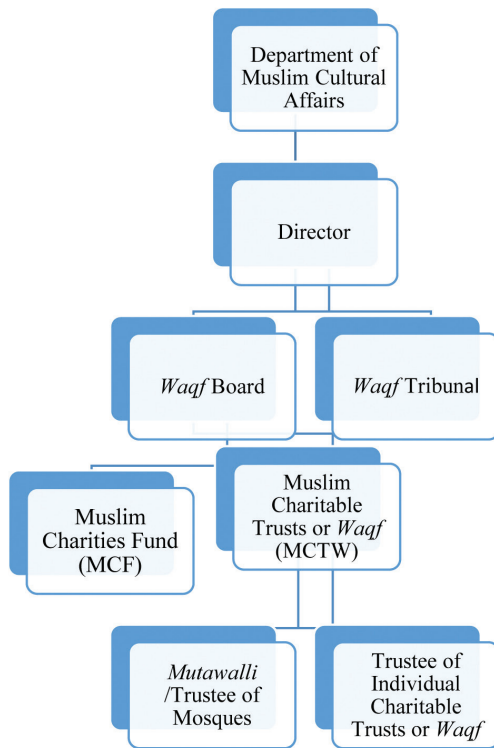
The structure above shows that the organization of the cycle of the *Waqf* management in Sri Lanka. Moreover, the preceding discussion shows the details of the MMCTWA. It has clear provisions about the appointment, roles, and responsibilities, suspension and removal of trustee or trustees of Mosques. Hence, revealing the fact that laws governing the management of *Waqf* in Sri Lanka are in place.

Referring to the MMCTWA, the appointment of the trustees is made by the *Waqf* Board based on the selection done by the *Jamā'at*[4] or the local society (Jaldeen, 1993, p. 340). In the case of a private trust (*Waqf Khās*), the creator may appoint their family member as the trustee of their *Waqf*. However, if the *Waqf* Board deems the appointed person ineligible to act as trustee then the Board may appoint an eligible person as a trustee whom it deems suitable for it (Jaldeen, 1993, p. 335).

The Current Practice of *Waqf* in Sri Lanka

The practice of Waqf in Sri Lanka, the *Waqf* legal framework has been created by the Muslims Mosque Charitable Trusts or *Waqf* Act (MMCTWA). Under this Act, the *Waqf* Board has been appointed by the Minister to monitor and manage all mosques and its *Waqf* properties. This Board comprises with the in-active director and seven other members including the chairman,[5] and they have the authority to act as a regulator (*Qāḍi*). Furthermore, the Manager (*Mutawallī*), of *Waqf* property either under the management of mosque or charitable trust respectively, are referred to as a manager (*Mutawallī*) managing the *Waqf* property. This is the existing law of the administrators of *Waqf* property in Sri Lanka (Jaldeen, 1993, p. 307).

Under this Act, every mosque has a board to manage the mosque and its properties, this board comprises the president and nine members in a *Zāvīyyah* and *Takkīyyah* mosques and eleven or thirteen members in the Jummah mosques with a president, deputy president, trustee, deputy trustee, and other members. Similarly, the charitable trust also has a board to manage its properties. This board may constitute ten members where some of the members are from the endower's family and others

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[4] Jamā'at meaning here is that the people who are living surround of the areas of the Mosques.
[5] The Muslims Mosque Charitable Trusts or Wakf Act (MMCTWA) No. 51 of 1956 as amended by Act No. 21 of 1962 and Act No. 33 of 1982.

will be independent members, but the control of management will be always with the family member. This should be based on the constitution of the charitable trust. This kind of charitable trust management has several issues and challenges in the practice in Sri Lanka presently. Also, they do not have any proper provision in the Act to disqualify and terminate the position of manager of the family member from their charitable trust.

The same issue and challenges are happened in early time of the family *Waqf* management. To solve the situation, the contemporary Muslim jurists used it as a way to abolish the family *Waqf* management. This practice came out especially during the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century (Mohsin M. I., 2016). The application of the abolish family management used and continued after colonization, which took place in almost all Muslim countries. Even after independence, the centralization of *Waqf* management continued with the introduction of a new law in Egypt, which abolished family *Waqf* in 1952. The same law followed on its heels in Syria and later in Tunisia in 1954 (Cizakca M. , 2016).

Based on the solution of some countries, Sri Lankan *Waqf* Act and *Waqf* Board should take an action and follow other Muslims countries' practice to solve the issues and challenges in order to the family *Waqf* management. Accordingly, the family manager removes his responsibility of *Waqf* management by himself, or the *Waqf* Board eliminate him as a regulator, while the Board take over the supervision of the *Waqf* affairs automatically. Moreover, when the manager or *Mutawallī* becomes failed on his performance of management of *Waqf* or if find out any guilty of him in related to his management, while the Board or the ruler could take action of dismissing him from his duties. In related to this regulation, al-Nawawīyy (1995. Vol. 5) mentions that the endower also has a right to dismiss immediately the manager or *Mutawallī* when he observes any kind of guilty, then he hands over his duties to another qualified person (p. 349). Hence, the regulator has the authority to disqualify the manager or *Mutawallī* who has the correct of the debauchery (*al-Fisq*), betrayal (*al-Khiyānah*), and the mentally ill (*al-Majnūn*). In the practice of Sri Lanka, the *Waqf* Board under the MMCTWA is as a possession of a regulator, and the Board of a mosque or a charitable trust is as a *Mutawallī* or manager. Therefore, the *Waqf* Board has a right to eliminate and terminate the position and duty of

the manager of the family *Waqf* of the endower or others who are found guilty under their management of the charitable trustee and *Waqf*.

Analysis and Findings

The *Waqf* and Muslims charity legal framework in Sri Lanka has gone through several amendments in order to protect and enhance the management of *Waqf* properties and to execute the objectives set by the *Waqif*. This effort is commendable as the legal framework is developed in a minority Muslim country which represents 10% of the population. However, there are several issues in the application of the Act and thus there is a need to consider revision of the Act for further improvement.

Firstly, there is no clear definition of *Waqf* in the Act (Mahroof M. M., 1985). Having a clear definition of *Waqf* is necessary to differentiate *Waqf* with other similar acts on non-religious in nature. As practice in some other countries like Malaysia, *Waqf* is clearly associated with the element of '*Taqarrub*' or to get the blessing from Allah SWT. Similarly, a clear definition of *Waqf* shall distinguish a mere act of donation or trust or a *Waqf* which is subject to more stringent management as compared to another trust deed. The emphasis on the element of perpetual is crucial to ensure total protection of *Waqf* property and any change of use must be done with a proper procedure through *Istibdāl* (change or exchange of *Waqf* asset). Furthermore, all *Waqf* properties come under the purview of the respective mosque's committee in that area. The wide authority and lack of monitoring have resulted in mismanagement of *Waqf* properties. This study[6] reveals that most of *Waqf* properties are given on lease and some of the agreements have not been renewed.[7] This has resulted in mosques collecting low rentals, which are significantly lower rates as compared to market rates. In many cases, the lessee subleases the property and earns a significantly higher amount, and the mosque does not benefit from it. Often than not, the lessees who are also, the trustees of the mosques give more attention to their private dealings rather than acting to the benefit of the mosque. This results in conflicting

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[6] The study means here that the feel of the case study, but this is not recorded by newsletter, article, or court cases.

[7] This is observed, in the area that the Waqf properties are located, by the researcher's investigation, and it is found by discussing with the trustee, manager, and lessee of the Waqf properties.

of interest. Hence, for a better administration, the Act should specify who is eligible for the lease, matters on the bidding process of the lease must be clear, the renewal period must be transparent, calculation of lease amount and the prohibition of sub-lease must be made known, etc. The absence of all these has brought to the problem of mismanagement and other misconduct by the mosque committees or their counterparts.

There are instances where the *Waqif* or the person who gives the property as *Waqf* has specifically identified the trustee to deal with his *Waqf* assets.[8] This is commendable since it may reduce the possible mismanagement of the Mosque committee. Sometimes, after two generations, the managers of the *Waqf* property tends to take back the rights of the property as the value has immensely increased. Hence, the Act should also specify that the property should go under the management of the *Waqf* Board, or the property should be managed by those whom the *Waqf* Board considers suitable after a generation.

Furthermore, there is a lack of funds to develop the *Waqf* properties. This is a global phenomenon. Countries like Malaysia and Singapore have implemented cash *Waqf* or *Sukuk* (bond) *Waqf* to overcome this challenge and develop the *Waqf* assets. However, there are no such provisions in Sri Lanka. It is important that the Act at least give ways in which *Waqf* properties could be developed so that the objective of *Waqf* is achievable and sustainable.

Although it is commendable for having *Waqf* Tribunal as provided by the Act, but the current location of the Tribunal in Colombo only has restricted the function of the Tribunal (Thabith, 2019). *Waqf* properties are scattered in all parts of Sri Lanka and the law should provide for a better mechanism for the management such as by having a Tribunal on the move or consider having more committees in the Tribunal who can cover major areas. Alternatively, if the budget permits, the Act should allow for *Waqf* Tribunals to be established in all provinces so that to speed up the resolving of issues and also to tackle all the issues that did

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[8] Deed of Trust endowed by Mahath Hajiar Maraicar Mohamed Ehuthar Hajiar, Mathirisa, Registration No: D 46, No.3891, Madrasah al-Sa'diyyah, located in Kinniya eastern province was established in 1899.manager, and lessee of the Waqf properties.

not come under the purview of the Colombo Tribunal because of the logistical challenges. For this, the *Waqf* Board for each province may provide a better solution.

There is no proper accounting and auditing of *Waqf* properties and their financials (Jaldeen, 1993, p. 343). This should be made in a systematic manner and transparent. This information should be accessible to the public. This transparency will increase the accountability of the trustees and other the management Committee thus build the trust of the people. The Act should also provide for the tax exemption in order to encourage more members in the society to contribute to *Waqf*. It is important to emphasize that *Waqf* has no limit to Muslim or non-Muslim. All can contribute and the benefit should also reach all parties. No race or religion shall curtail the benefit of *Waqf*, but *Shari'ah* determines that the *Mutawallī* must be a Muslim and the activities must be *Shari'ah*-compliant.

Conclusion

This paper elaborates on the legal framework of *Waqf* in Sri Lanka. Moreover, this study analyses the Muslim Charitable Trusts or *Waqfs* to give insights to the strength and weaknesses of the *Waqf* act. In Islam, the *Waqf* is the principal tool for poverty reduction. Although in the case of Sri Lanka, the institution of *Waqf* has not entirely been able to support the whole society, it has contributed considerably to the Muslim community. Further, the transparency of *Waqf* law and management is an issue, though this varies in degree and it may be the case for all *Waqf* institutions in Sri Lanka. As a result, the Sri Lankan *Waqfs* Act has various issues that need to be addressed particularly in terms of administration, management, and development of *Waqf* assets and manpower. This paper highlights the vital issues that need to be resolved urgently so that *Waqf* properties will be protected and developed for the benefit of all people in Sri Lanka especially the Muslims.

The significance of this study is manifold. It discusses the weaknesses in the current implementation of the MMCTW Act so that the *Waqf* Board could make significant changes in its management and operation. The study also highlights the current challenges in implementing the provisions in the Act. With a proper understanding of the law and *Sharī'ah*, the Muslim community may help by self-monitoring the Mosque management or another *Waqf* trustee. A proper check and

balance either through proper government mechanism or self-help are commendable to better improve *Waqf* administration globally.

The limitation of the study is that no specific interview involving members of the *Waqf* Board was carried out due to time constraints and the current instability in the country. Future research may proceed with empirical research to gauge their day-to-day operational challenges to give more comprehensive coverage of the research. It is also acknowledged that the recent event of tensions among the Muslim and non-Muslim in Sri Lanka may slow down the effort towards improving the Act. Future research should also consider more quantitative research approaches to enhance or revise the findings of this study.

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Book Review

**Oliver Leaman, *Islam and Morality: A Philosophical Introduction*.
London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019, 205 pp.
ISBN: HB: 978-1-35000-6318-1**

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Oliver Leaman, one of the most current and active orientalist writers
on Islam, has offered another book on fundamental themes of Islam
after his *The Qur'an: A Philosophical Guide* and his initial works had
addressed the development of Islam's history and philosophy. Islamic
morality is the area of choice which is pivotal not only to accommodate
the problematic human behaviours in the world, but to also participate
in the increasing attention to the praxis and core aspect of humanities
in postmodern research including philosophy and religion. From the
Muslim side, the subject matter has also been dealt with lately by
several philosophers, namely, Abdullah Draz and Taha Abd al-Rahman,
in revisiting the role and relevance of Islam in solving problems of
human affairs and the resurgence of a global Islamic civilization.

Leaman begins his book by highlighting the need of the
philosophical study of religion as a vital area of study. He asserts that
the main problem suffered by the approach of Muslims to morality is
the lack of an analytical approach which is vital to face the changes
in human society, especially in the age of disruption. The traditional
approach which he refers to as *khutbaization* (sermon) of ethical
discourse including in academic research is not meaningful and lacks
objectivity and thoroughness. He refers to it as a serious dearth that
requires remedy by our experts because "These principles are what the
Qur'an is arguing for and they express the moral essence in Islam" (p.
viii), which is being underestimated by the Muslims themselves.

Leaman's book challenges Muslims on two fronts. Intellectually, he indicates that the analytical methodology is not completely appreciated in our approach to morality, but also the Qur'an is not sufficiently explored despite it actually having a "sophisticated account of moral behaviour" (p. x). Other references namely the Sunnah of the Prophet and interpretive principles established by the traditional schools of law in fact, enjoy more privilege. He also criticizes hermeneutics, which only serve to obscure the main message of the Qur'an. As a result, he opines that the Muslim masses are a community without clear and applied principles of Islamic morality. On the aspect of practice, he observes the weakness of the moral performance of the Muslims where Muslims struggle to the challenge of producing a moral society that truly exemplifies the Qur'anic miracle.

With such sweeping statements, the author's position suffers several glaring weaknesses. Though his main objective is to focus on the morality of the Qur'an as he set earlier and "not get involved in much of this supplementary material, except to point out how far it often is from the Qur'an itself." (p *x*), his entire discourse, however, is replete with commentary on supplementary materials, especially disagreements found in jurisprudence and theological matters**.** His entire discussion discursively responds to current Muslim views, perceptions and practices, ranging from fundamental theology to the status of particular Prophetic traditions; from various schools of thought including the Shiites and Sufis to the Muslim practices at specific locality. The author's attempt becomes overly ambitious as discuss every major issue pertaining to Islam. The discussion in the chapters and sub-chapters conflates subject matters ranging from morality, principles, conflicts, sin, to core values such as justice, each of which requires a long and subtle discussion. Other matters touch on *asbāb al-nuzūl,* abrogation, linguistic analysis, and juridical discourse on *maqāṣid*. He takes much trouble to remark on varied Muslim inclinations of thought and practices ranging from traditional piety to conservative reactionaries and radical reformists.

The task is ambitious but his limited knowledge about Islam is arguably the obvious weakness of the book. He begins with a problematic definition of morality by tracing the word *akhlaq* to *makhlūq* or creature in relation to *khāliq* as creator, instead of *khulq,* which holds the singular and correct meaning of morality. His exploration of metaethics becomes

reductionist as he is unable to capture the gestalt or configuration of Islam's concept of morality.

The book's Orientalist treatment of Islam and modernist framing of morality explores the Islamic framework as problematic. The author is thus unable to grasp the Qur'an's moral purview on its own terms. The author somehow expects Islamic morality to magically hold forth general principles and, at the same time, provide precise answers for what is good and bad in all area of applications with the most details that it can be for all walks of life. He plunges the strength of dynamism from general formulations of the Qur'an into weakness at one point, and ready to claim of a rigidly autocratic system of unctuous probity at another. In expecting for specific answers as inherent solutions of Islamic morality, all types of in-house Muslim disagreements in jurisprudence, theology and Sufism are dealt with in a cynical way but without hint of solutions linking to the Qur'an.

Furthermore, the author expects that the moral principles to follow a subjective basis of personal reasoning that refuses to bow to any set of rules including those perfectly clear on their prohibitions with rational basis in the Qur'an, for instance, on gambling, drinking and usury. "Not really" he writes, "it is open acceptance of a fact of life that for most people alcohol is part of their lives." — and again: "… yet our experience of the world brings out the ubiquity of alcohol, the fact that its consumption is often without obvious negative effects on both those who drink and those who do not.' (p 197) He also insists to permit the practice of gene editing and euthanasia as permissible actions.

It is not surprising that the author's conception of the relationship between law and ethics becomes problematic, inconsistent and full of conflicts. He begins with squabbling jurists to track the basic tenets of Islamic ethics. He then posits that law cannot be based on ethics since causes for human actions are obscured by divine motives i.e. everything is 'up to God' so to speak.

In addition, the author's attempt to make the entire moral law into teleological ethics is rather unacceptable. His reductionism is exacerbated by his strict subjection of moral rules to the theory of *maqāṣid*. Although morality in Islam is receptive to teleological aspects as it is obvious in the Qur'an's language, the application of *maqāṣid* theory to unabridged moral concerns would bring strange consequences since *maqāṣid* is more

to juristic solutions. After all, exploring general principles of morality found in the Qur'an requires a far deeper discussion than what the author inadequately indicates. Such a discourse supposedly begins with a world view that regards the nature of Man and his moral responsibilities from an Islamic perspective. In addition, principles of morality are further divided into tenets that govern rules, values and practical aspects. Ideal expectations of human actions are themselves a complex yet vital topic to understand the general principles of morality described in the Qur'an. As for the practical aspect of morality, gestalt Islamic morality concerns theistically derived principles from revelation along with dynamics that will let each person to choose his or her actions. Consequently, instead of shedding light on the philosophical foundation of Islamic morality in a holistic manner, the author's overly ambitious aims misrepresents the moral principles of Islam as an unorganized system by breaking them into all sorts of disagreement and wide array of questions.

Despite these shortcomings, this book is a 'must read' for Muslim scholars to understand about the current image of Islamic and Muslim morality from an external observer point of view. The book is a wake-up call for a properly developed framework for Islamic ethics based on the Qur'an to sustain its relevance and actively respond to inevitable social and environmental changes and challenges.

Conference Reports

The International Symposium on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism in Malaysia and Southeast Asia ((ICVE 2021)

ICVE 2021 was a multi-disciplinary symposium that brought together scholars, researchers and practitioners from around the world to promote collaboration, present research findings and policy recommendations in the PCVE (Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism) sector. The symposium focused on themes of VE (Violent Extremism) drivers and enablers, security and public safety, intervention, deradicalization and rehabilitation, narratives and counter-narratives, terrorism financing, women and family, and the history and politics of VE. Originally intended to be organized as ICVE 2020 in March of that year as a face to face symposium to enhance networking and collaboration, the symposium was instead postponed due to Malaysia's various MCOs (Movement Control Orders) in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. ICVE 2021 was then reorganized as a virtual symposium spanning the period between January 12 and 27 with programmes conducted in 7 days as a challenge of the new normal.

ICVE 2021 was in fact the culmination of IIUM's (International Islamic University Malaysia) ongoing flagship project called 2LEAD4PEACE (Peacebuilding and Civilizational Development) and her collaborative research activities with START (National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism), University of Maryland (UMD), in the field of PCVE. In relation to this research collaboration, the research team has recently concluded a study on migration and VE in Sabah at the end of 2021. ICVE 2021 was co-organized by IIUM and START, UMD. In 2022, research, engagement and consultancy activities are planned throughout by the flagship, for example, the expected web portal launching for PCVE, co-developed with MPI (Malaysia Press Institute), USM (Universiti Sains Malaysia) and SEARCCT (Southeast Asia Regional Centre for Counter Terrorism); and finalizing the co-development of Malaysia's NAP (National Action

Plan) for PCVE as consultants for Malaysia's MOHA (Ministry of Home Affairs) and UiTM (Universiti Teknologi MARA).

The burgeoning scholarship on PCVE (Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism) today can perhaps be described as an industry in the context of the 20-year-old GWOT (Global War on Terror), changes since the post physical IS (Islamic State) or Digital *Dāʿish*, the rise of FRE (Far Right Extremism) and other forms of religious and ideological extremisms. Prior to the UN (United Nations) call for a Plan of Action for PCVE in 2016 to support national, regional and global efforts, there had been a significant lack of a quadruple helix stakeholder engagement model for collaborative initiatives and platforms to address the challenges of extremist discourse via national action plans on PCVE in Malaysia, the Southeast Asian region and the world at large means that there are potentially significant gaps of understanding the phenomenon. Since then, there have been a growing number of countries in the international community developing their national plan of action. In this region, Malaysia in 2021 has decided to follow the footsteps of Indonesia and the Phillipines in developing our own plan i.e. NAPPCVE (National Action Plan for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism. The plan is expected to be ready for the 2022-2025 period of collaborative implementation that emphasizes on desecuritization and resilience components in the four thrusts of nationbuilding; prevention; intervention and deradicalization; and rehabilitation and reintegration. It was in line with the anticipated expansion and requirement for PCVE capacity building following the soon to be realized Malaysia's plan of action that this symposium was conceived. This symposium also marks as a launchpad for IIUM to contribute to future PCVE development in Malaysia.

The objectives of ICVE 2021 are:

a. To showcase activities of collaboration between IIUM and START on Profiles of Individual Radicalization in Malaysia (PRIM), Geospatial CVE (GIS based study of terror threats) and ICONS CVE simulation through the student scholar visitation programme;

b. To present PCVE modules and programmes for the purposes of networking, training, public engagement and capacity building that can be organized by IIUM; and

c. To share with homeland security policy-makers, researchers and practitioners with novel instruments and the necessity of data-driven research findings on the drivers and consequences of VE.

The ICVE 2021 IIUM and START committee received over 30 paper submissions from which the blind reviews accepted 12 for presentation during the symposium. 6 of the 12 accepted papers were also selected as top papers of the symposium. The total number of participants in the symposium totalled to more than 250 global participants from the 5 sessions inclusive of paper presentations, student scholar sharing experience and a networking session to close out the programme.

The symposium was officiated by the Rector of IIUM, Emeritus Professor Tan Sri Dato' Dzulkifli Abdul Razak, and US Ambassador Kamara Shirin Lakhdir followed by the collaborative project overview by Associate Professor Dr. Danial Mohd Yusof of IIUM and Dr. Amy Pate, Executive and Reseach Director of START, UMD. A special panel was organized on the efforts of Malaysia and the US in CVE comprising of Deputy Commissioner Normah Ishak who is Principal Assistant Director of the RMP (Royal Malaysian Police) Counter-Terrorism Divison (E8), Barbara Paoletti, CVE Advisor, Bureau of Countering Violent Extremism, and Dr. Ahmad El-Muhammady as CVE practitioner and CT (Counter Terrorism) expert. The special panel fielded questions ranging from the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for CVE in Southeast Asia; the future of collaborative CVE efforts between the US, Malaysia and also Southeast Asia during and post-COVID19; the challenges, best practices and recommendations in relation to national security and public safety; the relationship between CVE and CT; and specific areas of CVE that Malaysia needs to focus on, including regional and international cooperation and collaboration.

In the subsequent sessions, presentations, sharing, and networking were made. As mentioned earlier, 6 papers were selected as the top papers in the symposium from 5 countries i.e. Malaysia, Australia, Phillipines, Indonesia and Bangladesh. They ranged, for example, from topics on the *Validity of Counter Violent Extremism (CVE) Strategies in South East Asia: ASEAN's Centrality on Regional Peace-building and Security*; *Mechanisms of Policy Implementation of Counter Violent Extremism (CVE) in Malaysia*; *The Vicious Utopia: Indonesian*

Government Gender Specific Policy for Ex-ISIS Women Returnees; to *Understanding Women's Agency in (Counter) Violent Extremism in Post- Conflict Poso (Sulawesi).*

As mentioned earlier, the symposium was in line with the anticipated expansion and requirement for PCVE capacity building following the soon to be launched Malaysia's plan of action for 2022-2025. Throughout 2022, IIUM's 2LEAD4PEACE flagship will also continue its PCVE activities and engagement with Malaysia youth and youth leaders, and another programme on Malaysian women and family role in peacebuilding.

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Associate Professor Dr. Danial Mohd Yusof
Chair of ICVE 2021

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