

## THE CONVERTS AND ZAKAT DISTRIBUTION IN STATE OF SELANGOR

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### ABSTRACT

*The knowledge about zakat distribution method is a vital issue because it leaves an impact to the converts regarding fairness and satisfaction. The aim of the study is to analyze the zakat distribution method in the state of Selangor. In addition, the study is to delve the statistics in the form of assistance programs received by the converts in Selangor. The study employs mixed method which adopts both quantitative and qualitative studies. The quantitative study employs the questionnaire instrument to 454 converts in Selangor. Meanwhile, the qualitative study employs the library study. The finding of the study indicates that there are twelve zakat distribution methods. The study also shows the statistics in the form of assistance program received by converts. There are fifteen forms of aid received by converts. In the one hand, the highest form of assistance program received by converts are hari raya allowance and monthly financial assistance which are amounted to 54.4% and 47.6% respectively. On the other hand, the lowest form of assistance program is printing and publication assistance which is amounted to 7%. The implication signifies that the zakat distribution method is disseminated either in the form of money as well as services. Thus, the study finds that the zakat authority in Selangor has fairly distributed the funds into 1/8 of the right of zakat recipients.*

**Keywords :** Zakat, Converts, Assistance, Statistics

## (MUALAF DAN PENGAGIHAN ZAKAT DI NEGERI SELANGOR)

### ABSTRAK

*Pengetahuan mengenai kaedah pengagihan zakat merupakan satu perkara yang penting kerana ia memberi impak kepada mualaf berkaitan keadilan dan kepuasan. Kajian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis kaedah pengagihan zakat di negeri Selangor. Selain itu, kajian ini juga mengkaji statistik bentuk bantuan yang diterima oleh golongan mualaf di Selangor. Kajian ini berbentuk kajian mixed method iaitu*

*menggunakan kajian kuantitatif dan kajian kualitatif. Kajian kuantitatif menggunakan instrumen soal selidik kepada 454 orang mualaf di Selangor. Manakala kajian kualitatif menggunakan kajian kepustakaan. Hasil kajian mendapati bahawa terdapat 12 kaedah pengagihan zakat. Kajian juga menunjukkan hasil statistik bentuk bantuan yang diterima oleh mualaf. Terdapat 15 bentuk bantuan yang diterima oleh mualaf iaitu sagu hati hari raya dan bantuan kewangan bulanan iaitu masing-masing menyumbang sebanyak 54.4% dan 47.6%. Manakala bentuk bantuan yang paling sedikit diterima oleh mualaf iaitu bantuan percetakan dan penerbitan iaitu sebanyak 7%. Implikasinya, kaedah pengagihan zakat diagih bukan hanya dalam bentuk wang semata-mata tetapi dalam pelbagai bentuk iaitu dalam bentuk perkhidmatan. Justeru, ini menunjukkan pihak zakat telah mengagih secara adil mengikut 1/8 hak asnaf.*

**Kata Kunci:** Zakat, Mualaf, Bantuan, Statistik

## 1. Introduction

The number of non-muslims who embrace Islam has increased gradually every year in Malaysia. The statistics of non-muslim who embrace Islam all across Malaysia in 1990-2004 as issued by JAKIM was estimated to total 82,500 people from various races, ethnicities, cultures and descendants (<http://www.islam.gov.my> 2004). Meanwhile, the total number of non-muslim who embraced Islam in the PERKIM Center as recorded in the PERKIM Yearly Annual Report in the year 2002 to 2012 has totalled 4,581 that represents various races and states (PERKIM Yearly Annual Report 2002-2012).

The study conducted by Mariam Abd Majid analyzes that 7553 converts in 2005 to 2009 are identified in the Head of section of the human development department of Selangor (Mariam Abdul Majid 2012). The number shows that less than 1500 people embrace Islam every year, where it only represents in the state of Selangor. Afterwards, the total number of converts who registered as Muslim in MAIS for the period 2008-2012 was 7079 people. Converts from Chinese, Indian, and the native descents had formed the largest groups as to compare to other minority races such as Iban, Bidayuh, Murut and Kadazan. And it is followed by foreigners from Philipine and Indonesia. According to the conversion record in the year 2010 to 2015, there were 10 489 people who had registered with the Selangor Islamic Council or *Majlis Agama Islam Selangor (MAIS)*. The current number of converts in Selangor is totalled to 28,051. This fact implies that the converts have really accepted Islam as their new religion (Laporan Bahagian Pembangunan Insan 2015 MAIS).

## 2. Problem Statement

Based on the statistics of conversion, the number of people embracing Islam has increased every year. The converts come from various backgrounds. Thus, several issues concerning *zakat* distribution emerged when there were an accusation towards the unfair distribution of *zakat* to converts.

The ultimate question of justice and equality principles in distributing *zakat* towards converts arises. For example, two converts have embraced Islam - one is working and another is a student at a higher learning institution. The one who has been working already has his or her monthly income, and plausibly will not require

any financial assistance from MAIS. Nonetheless, as the Hari Raya approaches, he or she will receive an allowance of RM500 from MAIS. However, the student who is still studying at a higher learning institution still requires monthly assistance and fees every semester until he or she completes his or her studies. Based on this fact, there has been an unfair distribution practice. Therefore, the need to review the distribution practice and its mechanism is necessary so as to ensure the preservation of justice among the converts.

Based on the issue above, the converts will require an accurate answer for issues regarding converts, especially those who are still new in Islam and whose faith is expectedly frail. Thus, this work will identify the *zakat* distribution method to converts according to the *asnaf* right of 1/8.

### 3. The History Of *Zakat* In The Era Of The Prophet And His Companions

#### 3.1 *The Era of Mecca*

Historically, the obligation of *zakat* was already decreed by Allah SWT to His Apostles and Prophets such as Ibrahim AS, Ismail AS, Musa AS and Isa AS. The same goes to the members of the Scriptures whereby in general, the obligatory *zakat* was already commanded, together with the obligatory of *solah* as mentioned in the Quran. Nonetheless, the *zakat* practice on religions prior to Islam was an absolute obligation, but it was only voluntary based on charity and assistance in a social group to help the poor. With the advent of the Shari'ah of Islam, the law of *zakat* was prescribed as obligatory and absolute, and it became one of the pillars of Islam. However, the command was gradually revealed, where the command of donation (*sadaqa*) was introduced by Allah SWT when Muḥammad SAW was still in the city of Mecca, before he moved to Medina.

The act of alms giving during the Mecca Era was still voluntary by nature and highly encouraged. The act was flexible due to the absence of particles rules in *zakat* such as the requirement of *nisab*, *hawl*, and *amil*. The situation in this time demonstrates that the command of *sadaqa* was still seen as an urge for the people to do good deeds to the poor and the needy. (K.Ali 1980: 33). The statement implies that Islam takes a great attention on the issues of poverty alleviation by helping the poor and the needy through alms giving since in the era of Mecca. In fact, al-Quran ordains to donate the wealth in the way of Allah by phrasing “feeding the poor and inviting them to eat” or with “giving away some of the subsistence to the people in need”, “giving the rights of the people who ask around, who are poor and who are sick while traveling”. This command creates awareness among Muslims to greatly involve in social obligation by helping the poor and the needy. However, as mentioned earlier, the rules of *zakat* is enacted through a gradual revelation through a form of urge by praising the people who implement it and reprimanding who neglect it.

A gradual ruling in *zakat* might tolerate the people to exercise the act due to the scarcity of muslim and novelty of Islam at that time. It is due to the fact that people may have difficulties in leaving certain acts which were very familiar for them. As a result, many people embraced Islam since a gradual obligation enacted by Allah through revelation might ease them in practicing certain devotions and strengthening their faith.

### 3.2 *The Era of Medina*

*Zakat* is a very unique act of worship. Despite the element of worshipping (*ta'abbudi*) and the act of succumbing the commands of Allah, it also emphasizes the principle of social obligation and functions. This act of worship was enacted for the Muslims in the second year of Hijra (Sayyid Sabiq 1968:5). Al-San'anī (n.d: 120) stated that, most scholars like Ibnu Ḥajar Asqalanī (n.d 171) opined that, the property of *zakat* was made obligatory in the second year of Hijra after fasting in Ramadan and *fitriah*. With regards to the verses of Mecca, conversely the verses of Medina explained the rules of *zakat* in the form of strong assertion and clear instruction of impletemation. Allah says in the Quran (2:110): *Then you have to perform solah and zakat*, which defined as a compulsory act to the entire populace of Muslims.

In that time, Muslims were multitude and their faith had already strengthened. This refers to the verse in the Quran that called upon them as “You the faithful” which signifies the increasing number of Muslims and the formation of Islamic state. At this time, the Shari’ah injunctions that govern the relationship between man and Allah (*ibadat*) and relationship between man and his fellow man (*muamalat*) were revealed gradually. Until the detailed injunction to pay *zakat* is ordered, the ruling is no longer became a burden to the people, and yet they were very excited to devote themselves closer to Allah.

Thus, the obligations of *zakat* are manifested by certain rules. In terms of the resource and decision, it is decided that any asset should have its own portion of *zakat* and the total amount of *zakat* to be paid (*wajib muhaddad*). In brief, there are some major changes that occurred in the teaching of *zakat*. These important changes in the teaching are very much related to the increased role played by Muhammad after his move to Medina. The hijra to Medina had made the Prophet no longer functioned solely as a religious leader, but also as a leader of a state. In other words, Rasulullah SAW was an Apostle and at the same time was an administrator (William 1961: 94-95).

As a leader of Muslims, the Prophet SAW was responsible to uphold justice and the well being of the people. Despite of various taxes system in that time such as *jizyah*, *kharaj*, *ghanimah*, and *fai'*, he also included *zakat* as one of the mechanism to increase the wealth of the state. According to K. Ali, the Prophet SAW was the first person who initiated this kind of taxes system in Medina. (K.Ali 1980:77).

Unlike the situation in Mecca, Muslims were prevented from carrying out their religious duties. However, Medina has developed their own district, strength and administration. Therefore, Medina was the centre of Islamic state that carried out a religious and political duties and developed the laws and regulations to shape the society based on the Shari’ah guidelines. There were particles rules were made especially in the rules of devotional act (*ibadat*) and human affairs (*muamalat*). This could be manifested by the implementation of *zakat*. The Prophet SAW asserted that there must be a portion of *zakat* for particular type of wealth, the conditions of wealth that is eligible to be paid, the magnitude of it, the target of *zakat* and the agency who responsible to arrange and administer it.

Thus, in the second year of Hijra, the rate of *zakat* was decided from particular types of assets and it was explained in detail. The verses that was passed down in Medina also asserted that the *zakat* is obligatory in the form of strict commandment and clear instruction for implementation. The verse in *surah* al-Tawbah handed down on the ninth year of Hijra was one of the verses in the Quran that paid a great attention to *zakat*.

### 3.3 The Era of *Khulafa al-Rasyidin*

After The demise of the Prophet pbuh, the ruling power of Islam had extended to Abū Bakar al-Siddīq. Abū Bakar al-Siddīq had faced a serious issue following the Muslims' refusal to pay *zakat* and the emergence of pseudo-prophets (Azhari Akmal 2006: 211). During the era of this first Caliph, Abū Bakar had reigned strictly especially in the matters of involving the implementation of *zakat*. This is because there were a group of Muslims who refused to pay *zakat*. As a result, Abū Bakar declared war to the people who refused to pay *zakat*. He asserted in a speech, "By Allah, if they refuse to pay even one rope to tie a camel, which is what they should have paid to Rasulullah SAW I will declare war to them for their reluctance (Abdul Wahab t.th: 37).

Besides the obligatory act and a part of pillars in Islam, the decision by Abu Bakr was to protect the financial and the strength of Islam. He also realized that *zakat* was a catalyst to boost the economies and society as well as to promote political strength. If Abū Bakar had not declared war to the asset owners, it may create a harmful since the state needed the sources to spread and protect the religion of Islam to the society. The initiative of Abu Bakr had also led to the preservation of *zakat* itself in its original form.

During the reign of 'Umar bin Khaṭṭāb for 10 years, people had enjoyed prosperity and wellbeing in all Muslim regions. It could be said that peace had spread everywhere. Evidently, there was not even one poor person lived during the administration of Mu'ādh bin Jabāl in Yemen. Mu'ādh bin Jabāl was Rasūlullāh s.a.w' officer who was sent to collect *zakat* in Yemen. In the era of Caliphs Abū Bakar and 'Umar, Mu'ādh bin Jabāl continued to serve at the same district. Abū 'Ubayd stated that during the time of the second Caliph of 'Umar bin Khaṭṭāb, Mu'ādh bin Jabāl used to send the yield of what he had collected in Yemen to 'Umar in Medina, where he could not find anyone who qualified to receive *zakat* in Yemen. However, Caliph 'Umar had returned it. When Mu'ādh bin Jabāl sent one third of the *zakat*, Caliph 'Umar returned it again and said, "I do not select you as the collector, I select you to collect *zakat* from the wealthy people there and to distribute it among the poor among themselves". Mu'ādh bin Jabāl then answered, "If I found any poor person there, of course I would not have to send the money to you (Abu Ubayd 1986: 562).

Then, during the time of 'Uthmān bin 'Affān, the administration of *zakat* management had reached the peak of success at par with the advancement of Islamic administration in various fields (Didin Hafhifuddin 2002: 5). Only during the time of 'Uthmān that *zakat* grant came in the form of gold and silver, and trading assets were released to the owners for them to distribute to their *mustahiq*, on the premise that both the assets were confined under *batiniah* assets, quantity of which sometimes increased drastically. Meanwhile, for physical items, (*zahir*), liek agricultural yield, fruits and livestock were paid to Baitulmal. Other than that, *zakat* had increased so much so that the Baitulmal was full of *zakat* properties. As a result, the Caliph had authorised the people who should pay *zakat* to distribute his own wealth to the recipients by himself. Then, in terms of the *zakat* distribution system, 'Uthmān had appointed Zayd bin Tsabit as a treasury of Baitulmal and responsible to distribute *zakat* to the recipients.

After 'Uthmān was killed, people in the society had paid *zakat* to the government and some of them gave to the people who were qualified to receive it- the *zakat* was either in the form of physical and spiritual forms. Meanwhile, previously, 'Uthmān only approved of the distribution of spiritual *zakat* by the society. One of the

people who directly gave *zakat* to the qualified *asnaf* was ‘Abdullāh bin ‘Umar. This is because the rulers at the time did not really get the trust from the society.

The political will of defending *zakat* in the time of Abū Bakar had slowly faded after the passing of Sayidina ‘Uthmān. During this time, some Muslims did not pay their *zakat* to the government or ‘*amil* appointed. This happened during the transition period of leadership - ‘Uthmān bin ‘Affān to ‘Alī bin Abi Tālib as the fourth Caliph. Back then, Muslims started to argue about performing *zakat* to the government. Some of the people reluctant to pay *zakat* through the state instead of paying directly to *mustahiq*. The reason is because the society no longer trusted the ruling power (Yasin Ibrahim 2004:59).

#### **4. Research Methodology**

This study employs a *mixed method* which combines the qualitative and the quantitative studies. The quantitative study adopts the distribution of questionnaire and survey. Abdul Majid Konting (1997) stated that the method of obtaining the data through questionnaire is an efficient method in the data collection mechanism. The respondents of this study are randomly selected. It involves 454 respondents among the converts in Selangor. Selangor is a chosen state to be studied because the number of converts are greater than other states in Malaysia. Selangor is divided into nine districts namely Petaling Jaya, Hulu Langat, Klang, Gombak, Kuala Langat, Sepang, Kuala Selangor, Sabak Bernam and Hulu Selangor. The qualitative study adopts the library study method to analyse the method of *zakat* distribution to converts in Selangor.

#### **5. Study Findings And Discussions**

##### **5.1 The Zakat Distribution Principle**

The findings of the study indicates that there are six principles of *zakat* distribution to *asnaf* (Abdul Monir 2011) and they are:

1. *Isti’ab* (comprehensive)

The property of *zakat* must be distributed to all *asnaf*. According to Quran, there are eight recipients who are eligible to get the portion of *zakat*. The portions can differ according to the needs and the priority of the recipients. This principle addresses two main groups of recipients where the first group should be prioritized over the second group. The former indicates *al-fuqara*, *al-masakin* and *al-amilin*, whereas the latter would be the *al-muallaf*, *fi sabi lillah*, *ibnu sabil*, *al-riqab* and *al-gharimin*. The *zakat* properties can also be distributed according to the needs of the *asnaf* based on priority. The transfer of allocation from one *asnaf* to another is allowed based on the existing needs and excess.

2. *Ikhtisas* (stipulated)

The funds of *zakat* are distributed towards eight recipients based on the command of Allah swt in the quran (Taubah: 60). Therefore, this injunction in the Quran gives complete details of the commandments where there is no room for *ijtihad* in determining the recipients except for the matters of its implementation of distribution

among the recipients. Any legal deductive process (*qiyas*) also must be in the area of eight recipients mentioned. Zakat is distributed to those who are residing in the state where zakat is performed in the stipulated duration.

### 3. Right

Zakat is a right of all *asnaf*. Therefore, *zakat* properties must be distributed to all *asnaf* accordingly. The distribution policies and procedures must be developed in order to make the process of distribution of *zakat* is well organized and eventually protect the right of *asnaf*.

### 4. *Muraqabah* (Monitoring)

All distributions of *zakat* must be carried out through proper monitoring and controlling of the rulers. Any dubious *zakat* distribution must be referred to the Committee of Fatwa and Committee of Zakat and Fitrah. Every stage of approval and decision must be decided based on the quality of fear of Allah, sense of responsibility, honesty and trustworthiness.

### 5. *Al-Kifayah* (Sufficient)

According to Imam Shafi'i and Imam an-Nawawi, the *zakat* distribution to the very poor and the poor must be distributed according to possible and sufficient portion in order to resist themselves from asking the help live in sufficiency. Therefore, the granting of *zakat* must fulfill the needs of *asnaf* as a mechanism to alleviate poverty. With regards to this fact, Saidina Umar RA had made effective policy of *zakat* distribution especially towards the very poor and poor people so that they can fulfill their necessity and never ask for assistance from the rich.

### 6. *Fauran* (Immediate)

This principle implies to distributing *zakat* to the *asnaf* immediately without delay or deference. The officer who administers the application should take an immediate action which adheres to the principle of *muraqabah*. The practice of expediting the *zakat* distribution including *fitrah* towards the qualified *asnaf* is the sunnah of Rasulullah s.a.w and followed by the companions.

In addition, every *asnaf* deserves to get fair distribution of *zakat* as it is ordained by Islam. 'Fair' indicates that every group deserves to receive *zakat* and they are not neglected by giving them the assistance to what they are supposed to get. What is meant by 'equitable' is the rate or quantity distributed which might be able to achieve the goal and purpose of the distribution (Abd Monir 2011).

## 5.2 *The Analysis of the Zakat Distribution Method in Selangor*

*Zakat* is substantial to the protection of *asnaf* and the *ummah* at large. Therefore, Selangor Zakat Department will make sure that the *zakat* collection in Selangor can be maximised and well managed, transparently and comprehensively organized where eventually it is distributed to the qualified ones. *Zakat* distribution applies to eight *asnaf* as stipulated in the Quran. Basically, *zakat* is distributed to eight groups- the very poor, the poor, amil, converts, *fisabilillah*, *riqab*, *gharimin* and *ibni sabil*, where

the definition leans on the Committee of Fatwa for the state of Selangor. The objectives of the zakat distribution in Selangor are as follows:

- (a) To execute *zakat* distribution as commanded by Allah SWT.
- (b) To channel *zakat* distribution to the *asnaf* efficiently.
- (c) To create a balanced society in terms of the economy, spirituality, worldliness and the Hereafter.
- (d) To reduce the rate of poverty in Selangor.
- (e) To enhance the laws of Islam in Selangor.
- (f) To boost the confidence of the payers of *zakat* and the society at large
- (g) To diversify the *zakat* distribution program appropriate with the *asnaf*'s current needs.

Selangor Zakat Department has stressed on five programs namely the Social Development Program, Economic Development Program, Education Development Program, Religious Institution Development Program and Human Development Program. Through the programs, Selangor Zakat Department has formulated an agenda in forming *asnaf* who are not just able to escape from the cocoon of poverty, but also able to fulfill their spiritual needs and become humans of *rabbani*. The orientation of the programs prevails to three main *asnaf*, namely the very poor, the poor and the converts. The appointed committees from the institution carry out the selection of *asnaf* where the qualification of *asnaf* is evaluated based on the stipulated household incomes (*had al-kifayah*).

### 5.3 *The Method of Zakat Distribution Rights to The Converts*

- i. To fulfill the basic needs of the converts, their families and people under their care and responsibility, especially those who are neglected by their original families.
- ii. To help in preparing the converts to be more independent.
- iii. To help in cases that require legal assistance.
- iv. To obtain the services from educators, counsellors and professionals in order to fulfill the objectives above.
- v. To distribute to groups and NGO among converts recognised as having the credibility to do so.
- vi. To distribute to groups and NGO which have programs that concentrate on converts.
- vii. To distribute to groups, NGOs and programs to make the non-Muslims get closer to Islam.
- viii. To provide the capability programs that cover children, teenagers, also youth among the converts' families encompassing economic, welfare, social and religious programs.
- ix. To create a periodic program to strengthen the ties among converts and the local community.
- x. To provide various educational facilities and needs covering the infrastructure, human resources, reference materials, reading materials, equipment, clothes and so on deemed appropriate for the converts.
- xi. To create a specific program to involve influential non-Muslim individuals so they can become more attached to Islam.
- xii. To benefit from the visitation and travelling programs to destinations that are

seen to be able to strengthen one's faith, practice and solidarity in Islam.

#### 5.4 Statistics of Recipients of Zakat Aid

Table 1. The Form of Aid Received

The form of Aid received	Frequency	Percentage
Hari Raya Allowances	247	54.4%
Rental Assistance	119	26.2%
Printing/Publication	7	1.5%
Circumcision Assistance	16	3.5%
Marriage Assistance	84	18.5%
Home Repair	9	2.0%
Training Course	43	9.5%
Talks for Converts	49	10.8%
Legal Firms	-	-
Others (Please state):	1	0.2%
Study Donorship	44	9.7%
Protection Home Assistance	10	2.2%
Business Capital Assistance	12	2.6%
Study General Assistance	23	5.1%
Individual Home Construction Assistance	10	2.2%
Monthly Financial Assistance	216	47.6%
Basic Religious Class Attendance Allowance	271	59.7%
Financial Assistance	20	4.4%
Emergency / Retail Assistance	52	11.5%
None	28	6.2%

Table 1 shows that 247 converts (54.4%) received their Hari Raya allowances, 119 (26.2%) received rental assistance, 7 (1.5%) received printing/publication assistance. Afterward, 16 converts (3.5%) received circumcision assistance, 84 (18.5%) converts obtain marriage assistance, 9 converts (2.0%) received home repair assistance, 43 converts (9.5%) obtained training course assistance, 49 (10.8%) received talks-for-converts assistance, 1 (0.2%) received other forms of assistance, 44 (9.7%) converts received study donorship assistance, 10 (2.2%) converts received protection home assistance, then 216 (47.6%) converts received monthly financial assistance, 271 (59.7%) converts obtained allowances for attending basic religious classes, 20 (4.4%) converts obtained financial assistance, 52 (11.5%) converts obtained emergency /retail assistance and 28 (6.2%) converts do not get any assistance. To sum up, it can be concluded that the greatest form of assistance received by converts is in the form of religious classes, Hari Raya allowances and monthly financial assistance.

Looking at the statistics of assistance received by converts, they are not only assisted merely in terms of money, but also through services that can help them

continue their lives as Muslims. This indicates that the statement on unjust distribution of *zakat* is wrongly accused by some of the converts. Despite to the lack of knowledge and understanding about *zakat* distribution, they are reluctant to take the information of *zakat* issues and without consulting the authority (Mohamad Noor Sahidi Johari 2013). The same goes to the issue of understanding as raised by Syarul (2015) where the study demonstrates that the converts' level of understanding is still at the moderate level. Therefore, the access of information on *zakat* distribution needs to be improved by the institution where it would enhance the impact of *zakat* towards the converts.

## 6. Conclusion

In sum, the *zakat* distribution method is done fairly by the authorities. It is not given merely in the form of money, but it also covers assistance in the form of services. The *zakat* distribution can help the converts move on with their lives as Muslims. This is due to the fact that both service assistance and business capital are provided. It is hoped that *zakat* assistance would help them to remain their religion in Islam and subsequently to strengthen their faith to Allah swt.

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