

Pursuing Economic Growth and Human Development

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Pursuing Economic Growth and Human Development through Education: a Lesson from Andalusia Golden Age

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Abstract

This paper is aim to explore, describe and discuss the history of the Moslem Golden Age in Andalusia as a heritage and awakening point to pursue Moslem economic growth and human development condition through education. Andalusia is the witness of the glory of Islamic civilization in Spain that makes the Islamic civilization as a leading civilization. At that time Islam has civilized and educated human resources, with prosperous economy, as a result of the adoption of Islam as a complete and total way of life, which promoted through education. These conditions contrast with the contemporary conditions of Muslims; underdevelopment, poverty and ignorance are the condition in many countries with majority religion is Islam. The key to restore the greatness of Islam is to look back at the factors that brought Islam to the glory in the past. Education is one factor that will bring improvements in human resources that will build a great civilization hence the prosperous.

Keywords: economic growth, human resource, education

INTRODUCTION

Studying Islamic history provides many benefits for Muslims, among those benefits are to give pride and also a warning to be cautious. Knowing that Muslims in the past have experienced Glory in many aspects for several centuries will certainly generate pride as a Muslim. On the other hand, knowing the Muslims suffered a deterioration, backwardness, and poverty will cause resuscitate consciousness for Muslims to pursuing a better conditions and try to achieve some progressess.

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One of important history is an occasion that has ever happened in Andalusia.

Al-Andalus is the name of a place in the Iberian Peninsula

(Spain and Portugal). This empire was ruled

by Muslim Moors between 711 and 1492M.Muslim domination of Iberia began the teamsbattl

e Guadalete Umayyads under the leadership of Tariq ibn Ziyad defeat the Visigoths who

controlled Iberia This incident proves excellence of Islamic civilization over Europe in a

physical world through the occupation of Islam in the Iberian Peninsula, or

more specifically Asbania Andalus. It also shows that Islam has spread to beyond the

European continent. The existence of Islamic civilization in Andalus Islamic proven that provides many benefits through the enlightenment of knowledge in the West when they suffered the Dark Ages. ^[1]

Islam is *rahmatan lil'alam* which provides kindness for all humanity, aiming to create prosperity, justice and benefit for humans, so that Moslems are people who represents the best potential resources in this earth. However, empirical evidence shows different facts, the moslems population in many countries which moslems as majority residence are still in quite weak economic condition and has minimum potential human resources. This is inferred from the data of the human development index of countries which are members of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC).

From out of all OIC member countries only approximately 7% are countries with very high human development, 15.79% are countries with high human development, 49.12% are the Medium Human Development countries and approximately 24.56% are the Low Human Development Countries. ^[2] This indicates that majority of the Moslem community has medium and low human development index.

Human development index is a measurement of the ratio of life expectancy, literacy, education and living standards to all countries around the world. HDI is used to classify whether a country is a developed country, developing countries or underdeveloped countries and also to measure the impact of economic policies on quality of life. Hence we can say that condition of life expectancy, literacy, education and standard of living for countries that most of its residents are Moslems are still in the calcification of developing countries or underdeveloped countries.

This condition is certainly contrary to what had happens in moslems society in Al-Andalus, medieval Spain at the moment, along with three other cities; Cordova, Seville and Granda are centers of learning and commerce. ^[3] The Islamic world's were both highly prosperous and civilized, as well as quite advanced in several fields of sciences as in their social live. ^[4] This contrary facts made us interest to explore, describe and discuss

the history of the glory of Islam in Andalusia as a heritage and awakening point to improve current Moslem economic and human development condition through education.

History of Al-Andalus: The Golden Age Moslem in Medieval Spain

Science in Al-Andalus

Islamic Spain were have a great contribution for Europe and Western Civilization, since it had contributions in passing the scientific, technological, and philosophical legacy of the 'Abassid period into Europe. During the reign of 'Abd al-Rahman III (921-961) Islamic Spain began its role in developing civilization. 'Abd al-Rahman III was interested in sciences, he imported books from Baghdad— a place that have great flourishing civilization during the 'Abbasids—and actively recruited scholars by offering hand some inducements. Soon, scholars, poets, philosophers, historian, and musicians began to migrate to Al-Andalusia. An infrastructure of libraries, hospitals, research institutions and centers of Islamic Studies flourished, developing the intellectual tradition and educational system which made Al-Andalus notable for the next several hundred years. Soon, too, there were many scientists who are potential human resources which were establishing the great civilization. As a result Islamic Spain have contributed in mathematics, economy, medicine, botany, geography, history, philosophy and also developed and applied important technological innovations. [5]

Generally, Andalus Muslim communities have enjoyed education. Education curriculum in Andalus is universal. It begins with the knowledge and exegetical reading the Quran and the knowledge of other religions as well as extensive knowledge of philosophy, poetry, rhetoric, history, geography, Arabic and others. [6] It's clear that there is no dualism or separation between religious knowledge and worldly knowledge as well as other social science. The education system in Andalus is an integrated world that emphasizes the mastery of knowledge and eschatology. [7] as a result of such system, has appeared many famous figures of Islamic scholars in various fields in Andalus.

Economic Growth

Economic growth, especially in agriculture, occurred during the reign of Abdurrahman II. The arid lands have turned into productive land by undertaking an intensive study of the soil, and fertilizer, use new technology and improvement of irrigation

system. Progress in the field of trade is also very beneficial, including customs fees, import-export. Developments in the economic field is sustained by a well organized and planned of monarchy spending planning. (Sou'yb, 1981: 221) ^[8]

The Life Style in Al-Andalus

In the land of Al-Andalusia, there was commercial wealth, wealth in term of consumption, productivity, exchange and also wealth of information. Learning was emphasized, pointed by a fascinating sciences, Arabic literature and philosophical discourse on reason and faith. ^[9] Overall, the state was very prosperous, through its intensive agriculture, its urban handicrafts and its trade. ^[10] No wonder Al-Andalus became the center of learning and commerce.

Present Condition of Moslems Community

In order to know the current condition of the Moslem community (ummah), we use the data of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) members from Human Development Report in 2009. One measurement of human resources is ⁴ the Human Development Index (HDI). The HDI measures average achievements of a country in three basic dimensions of human development, namely: (1) ³ a long and healthy life is measured by life expectancy at birth [Life expectancy index], (2) knowledge, as measured by rates of literacy in adults (two-thirds weight) and the combined enrollment rate in primary, secondary, and upper or gross enrollment ratio (one-third weighting) [education index], (3) a decent standard of living is measured by GDP per capita or gross domestic product / gross domestic product in purchasing power parity in U.S. Dollars [GDP index].

Conditions where the majority Moslem community is in the clasification of medium ⁵ and low human development index, as we presented above, show that the conditions of life expectancy, literacy, education and standard of living for countries that most of its residents are Moslems are still in the group of developing countries and underdeveloped countries. These countries still have weak economic conditions—in terms of GDP—compared with countries of the non OIC members. This fact shows that the eeconomic policies implemented by the state government does not yet have a positive effect on quality of life of its people.

Level of Education of OIC member's countries is lower than the majority of non-OIC countries. This is caused by lower adult literacy rate and also lower combined (primary, secondary and upper level) gross enrollment rate in many OIC member's countries, which are generally more dominated by the low enrollment rates in secondary and upper schools, as many OIC member countries have high adult reading ability level but low combined gross enrollment rate. This fact was caused by the condition that the majority of the population of those countries have graduated or been in school (although not until graduation) at the primary school. This condition informed us that education has not become a priority and emphasized by many Islamic countries.

In terms of research, in many Islamic countries it is still lacking and the quality is still not as good as other countries of non OIC members. This condition is due to the lack of research facilities, infrastructures and budgets, and also the availability of the researchers.^[10] Even, the researchers who are actually resident of Islamic countries, not a few of them more interested in doing research aboard the country which is considered provide more support in research field area.

Another facts found from the data available is within OIC member countries, there are few number of state which have high index of education —more than 0.9— but have low human development index, as in the State of Turkmenistan , Guyana, Tajikistan, and Kazakhstan. This is caused by the low level of state income and life expectancy. The weak economic condition and low growth rate effect on human resources development.

Lesson to be learned from the History of Al-Andalus

Based on the discussion above we can underline some points that had been done in the past during the golden age of al-Andalusia that have not been done by Moslem nowadays, which is, according to our humble opinion, crucial factors to be done in order to achieve the prosperous and optimum human development condition. First, during Al-Andalus period in medieval Spain, learning was emphasized. This is important factors that can robust the economic growth and development of human resources, since it is known that education as one of variable in human development and quality of life; the better the condition of

education in a State, the better off the quality of State human resources .^[11] Empirical studies show that high public spending on economic growth is not encouraging improvements in indicators of human resource development and in the economy, on the contrary greater public spending on human development not only improve the indicators of human development but also improve economic growth.^{[12][13]}

Second, the facilities of education become an important point of interest of the government in order to establish the intellectual traditions and educational system; ie: **infrastructure of libraries, hospitals, research institution, centers of Islamic studies** and the providability of books. Third, the government policy should in line with the effort to improving quality of education; such as; using the education system that emphasizes the mastery of knowledge and eschatology (universal curriculum), actively recruited scholars, encouraged research in many fields of sciences, and emphasized learning as a life style.

Fourth, in term of economic policy, the government should encourage the effort of its residence to be independent economically, by making rules which is making easier for citizen to trade or to be entrepreneurs, support the development of economic creative and home industry. In line with the second point, the government should encourage the research in science and technology that support the innovation that is needed in the development of agricultural and improving business competitiveness.^[14]

Conclusion

The gap in the condition of Moslem in Al-Andalusia—medieval Spain—and nowadays is triggered by some factors; i.e.: **the weakening of economic and human resources strength caused by the unawareness of countries with majority Moslem population to education.** Thus, it is homework for Islamic countries to restore the glory of Islam by implementing Sharia in all aspects of life to pursue a better condition. Since spending more in education has more important role in developing human resources and economic growth than spending more in economic, Islamic countries should emphasizing on education as an initial point in developing potential human resources and creating advance economic growth. Support from government goodwill and policy in education—research, policy or rules, infrastructures availability—is needed, since the government is the one who in charge to run the country that will bring a nation better off or worse off.

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