



SEKOLAH AGAMA RAKYAT: A CASE STUDY AT PENDANG  
KEDAH

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## AUTHOR DECLARATION

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ

I hereby declare that the work in this academic project is my own except for quotation and summary that has been duly acknowledged.

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Almighty Allah, the Merciful, The Compassionate, praise and gratitude are to Allah for His guidance and his inspiration. And my peace and all blessing are upon the beloved Prophet Muhammad SAW, the last Messenger of Allah Taala.

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## ABSTRAK

Kajian ini membincangkan tentang Sekolah Agama Rakyat, iaitu satu kajian yang di jalankan di Pendang Kedah. Sekolah Agama Rakyat merupakan institusi pendidikan tertua di negara ini. Wujudnya selepas era sekolah Pondok adalah untuk memberi pendidikan agama secara lebih tersusun kepada masyarakat. Sistem pendidikan sekolah ini lebih menekankan kepada bidang agama disamping pendidikan umum. Keadaan ini menyebabkan ramai ibubapa menghantar anak – anak mereka ke Sekolah Agama Rakyat supaya anak – anak mereka mendapat pendidikan dunia dan akhirat. Disini penulis telah mengkaji mengapa ibubapa menghantar anak- anak mereka ke Sekolah Agama Rakyat dan mengenal pasti adakah sistem sekolah ini bersesuaian dengan sistem pendidikan moden yang terdapat di sekolah kerajaan. Selain itu, penulis juga telah mengkaji tentang kesan pendidikan Sekolah Agama Rakyat terhadap pasaran kerja pada masa hadapan. Dalam menyiapkan kajian ini, penulis telah menggunakan beberapa kaedah iaitu kaedah penelitian, kaedah interview, kaedah soal selidik, serta kajian perpustakaan. Hasil daripada dapatan kajian ini menunjukkan bahawa sebab utama ibubapa menghantar anak-anak mereka ke Sekolah Agama Rakyat adalah untuk mendapat pendidikan yang seimbang di antara pendidikan agama dan pendidikan umum. Masyarakat menyedari tanggungjawab mereka cukup besar dalam mendidik anak- anak pada zaman moden ini. Oleh itu untuk memastikan anak- anak mereka tidak terjebak dengan pelbagai gejala sosial yang semakin menular akhir – akhir ini, jadi mereka memilih sekolah agama sebagai institusi pendidikan anak-anak mereka.

## ABSTARCT

This study discussed about Sekolah Agama Rakyat (SAR) a case study at Pendang Kedah. SAR is the oldest learning institution in this country. It's existence that came to light after the Sekolah Pondok era is to teach religious knowledge in a more organized manner. This system concentrated to religious knowledge besides general knowledge. It's the causes that these parent choose religious school, as they want their children to obtain knowledge that covers the worldly affairs as well as the hereafter. Here the writer evaluated why these parents sending their children to SAR and analyzed whether the education system of SAR is applicable to the modern education system that is seen in government school. Beside that, the writer also examined the effect of SAR education in job market. To complete this study; the writer used observation method, interview, questionnaire, documentation and library research. The result from this study showed that the causes of the parents sending their children to SAR are to get a balance education in religious knowledge and general knowledge. The community is aware of their huge obligation in educating their children in this modern era to ensure that their children will not be snared into negative symptoms that seems to be a norm in today's society.

## مخلص البحث

هذه الدراسة تناقش حول سكوله اكام رعية (المدرسة الدينية) في فندغ قدح. هذه المدرسة مؤسسة التعليم الأقدام في هذا البلد. إن وجودها جاء بعد عصر مدرسة فوندوق (الأكواخ) لتدريس العلوم الدينية بأسلوب منظم أكثر. وبسببها اختار الوالدان المدرسة الدينية. كما يريدون أطفالهم أن يحصلوا على المعرفة الدينية من الآن فصاعدا. هنا قيم الكتابة لماذا هؤلاء الآباء يرسلون أطفالهم الى سكوله اكام رعية (المدرسة الدينية) ويحلل سواء كان نظام التربية في المدرسة الدينية هو قابل للتطبيق الى نظام التربية الحديثة الذي يرى في المدرسة الحكومية. بجانب ذلك تمتحن, الكتابة أيضا إمكانية هذه المدرسة المنافسة في سوق العمل. لإكمال هذه، استعملت الكتابة طريقة الملاحظة، مثل عمل استبيان ومراجعة الوثائق والرجوع الى المكتبة. النتيجة من هذه الدراسة أن اسباب إرسال الوالدين أطفالهم الى سكوله اكام رعية ( المدرسة الدينية) يجمعوا بين المعرفة الدينية والمعرفة العامة. ان المجتمع يدرك أن مسؤوليتهم ضخمة في تربية أطفالهم في هذا العصر حتى يضمنوا أطفالهم الإبتعاد من الفساد ومن الآثار السلبية في المجتمع اليوم.

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**ARABIC WORDS TRANSLITERATION SYSTEM**

**TRANSLITERATION TABLE**

**ALPHABET**

<u>Arabic</u>	<u>Latin</u>	<u>Example</u>	<u>Transliteration</u>
ء	,	فأر	fa`r
ب	b	برد	burd
ت	t	تال	tall
ث	th	ثوب	thawb
ج	j	جدار	jidar
ح	h	حليب	halib
خ	kh	خادم	khadim
د	d	ديك	dik
ف	f	فيل	fil
ق	q	قلب	qalb
ك	k	كلام	kalam
ل	l	لب	lubb
م	m	مال	mal
ن	n	نجم	najm
ه	h	هول	hawl
و	w	ورق	waraq
ي	y	يم	yam

## 2. Short vocal

<u>Arabic</u>	<u>Latin</u>	<u>Example</u>	<u>Transliteration</u>
_____	a	كتب	kataba
_____	I	علم	'alima
_____	u	غلب	ghuliba

## 3. Long vocal

<u>Arabic</u>	<u>Latin</u>	<u>Example</u>	<u>Transliteration</u>
ا،ى	a	عالم، فتى	'alima, fata
ي	I	عليم، داعي	'alim, da'I
و	u	علوم، ادعو	'ulum, Ad'u

## 4. Diphthong

<u>Arabic</u>	<u>Latin</u>	<u>Example</u>	<u>Transliteration</u>
و	aw	نوم	nawm
ي	ay	ليل	layl
يَ	iyy	شافعي	shafi'iyy (lasted)
وَ	uww	علو	'uluww (lasted)

**ABBREVIATION**

Etc	- et cetera
Ibid	- ibidem
n.a	- no author/ no artist
n.d	- no date/ no year
n.pl	- no place
H	- hijriah
M	- milādiyyah
p	- page
pp	- pages
S.A.W	- Sall Allāhu alayh wa sallam
SWT	- subhānahu wa ta'ālā
Vol	- Volume
SAR	- Sekolah Agama Rakyat
SMKA	- Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Agama
Prof	- Professor

## GLOSSORY

*Tauhid* - Means declaring Allah to be the only God. It is ones the Lordship of Allah; Tauhid – ar- Rububiyyah to believe that there is only one lord for all the Universe and He is its Creator, Organizer, Planner, Sustainer and the Giver of Security and that is Allah.

*Wahy* - The revelation or Inspiration of Allah to his Prophets.

*Fiqh* - (الفقه) Islamic jurisprudence.

*Zakat* - (الزكاة) A certain fixed proportion of the wealth and of every kind of the property liable to zakat of a Muslim to be paid yearly for the benefit of the poor in the Muslim community.

*Sunnah* - (السنة) The legal way or ways, orders, acts of worship and statements of the Prophet Muhammad, that have become models to be followed by the Muslims.

*Ihsan* - (الإحسان) The highest level of deeds and worship (perfection i.e. When you worship Allah or do deeds, consider yourself as if you see him and if you cannot achieve this feeling or attitude, then you must bear in mind that its sees you.

*Hadith* - (الحديث) (Plural: A hadith أحاديث) The sayings deeds and approvals accurately narrated from the prophet صلى الله عليه السلام. Following are the few classification of Ahadith.

*Fard 'Ain* - (فرض العين) it is an individual duty- an obligation essentially to be performed by each individual.

*Fard kifayah* - (فرض الكفاية) It is a collective duty – an obligation which, if performed by one person, suffices for the rest; as it does not have to be performed essentially by all.

*Ash- Shahadah* - (الشهادة) (i) Testimony of faith. (ii) None has the right to be Worshipped but Allah, and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah.

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

Malaysia's learning institutions have expanded rapidly, parallel to the government's effort to establish Malaysia as a country with an international level of education. There are basically two types of education in Malaysia - the mainstream and the religious stream that has been the focus of many debates regarding the country's education system as each side claim that their system is of superior to the other.

Those debates lead to controversies as many scholars claim that dualism is the main corpus that contributes to the youths' diminishing moral. Dualism in the education system separates the traditional education system from the modern. Those of religious stream practices the traditional education system resolves mainly on religious knowledge and neglects modern knowledge whereby the modern education system taught in secondary schools focuses more on modern knowledge, neglecting religious knowledge.<sup>1</sup>

Sekolah Agama Rakyat (SAR) is the oldest learning institution in this country. It's existence that came to light after the *sekolah pondok* era is to teach religious knowledge in a more organized manner. During those days, SAR was respected as they succeeded in producing graduates, who are not only ulama', but also patriots. Analyzing statistics produced by the Ministry of Education Malaysia, one can find

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<sup>1</sup> Mohd Hanif Mat Nor. 2003. "Sekolah Agama Rakyat mengapa menjadi pilihan ibubapa". Agama & Falsafah. Kuala Lumpur. KarangKraf. Mac.p 14.

that the public is optimistic of religious education. SAR recorded an entry of 70000 students in 1999 as compared to 62000 in the year 1990.<sup>2</sup>

This statistic shows us that the public is still in favor of the religious stream of education. The positive growth has given proof to us that the public is gradually realizing the importance of the religious knowledge institutions that offers many discipline of Islamic knowledge that is aimed to create a faithful generation. Seen from a historical aspect, SAR was from a *pondok* learning system that has been established in Malaya (now Malaysia) since the coming of Islam. During the colonial era, religious education was formally taught and the people during that time operated religious schools (*pondok*), al-Quran classes, Fardhu Ain classes and also *madrasah* voluntarily.

The reason behind the establishment of SAR was to support and protect the needs of the religious education in terms of akhlaq and ibadah of the Muslims from the non-Muslims' as well as the West's negative influences.<sup>3</sup> After the independence of Malaya, during when there was an increment in the awareness of Islam, education became the main issue and became the driving force that made parents send their children to religious (Islamic) schools.

Not only that, parents want their children to receive a well-balanced education – a system that contains both conventional academic subjects as well as religious subjects. Typically, parents and the Islamic society believe that religious schools are able to produce excellent students in terms of discipline and also religion (fard ain).

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<sup>2</sup> n.a. 2003." *Sekolah Aliran Agama: Mercup tumbuh Sebagai Pendidikan Alternatif*". i. Kuala Lumpur. Karangraf.April.p 50.

<sup>3</sup> Fauziah Amir.2003." *Mengapa sekolah beraliran Agama menjadi pilihan*". i. Kuala Lumpur.Karangraf.April.p 12.

The government itself has consolidated religious education in secondary schools since the education reformation in the year 1983 and the subject Tasawwur Islam was introduced alongside Fard Ain classes (KAFA). In secondary schools, the subjects added since the year 1987 are Tasawwur Islam, Hadith and Quran, Aqidah, Ibadah, Akhlaq and Sirah Nabawiyah. Students are given the choice to include additional subjects like Arabic Language and Quran and Sunnah to their Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) examination. Schools that have 13 subjects (with additional subjects) include Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan (A) Kedah, Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan (A) Yan, Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan (A) Perempuan Perlis and Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan (A) Irshad, Pulau Pinang.

The fact is, a multitude of parents wanted their children to study in government sponsored religious schools, but are hampered by the high requirement needed to enter the schools. With that, many chose to enroll their children into many Sekolah Agama Rakyat that are sponsored by various sponsors. Interestingly enough, students graduated from these schools are able to further their studies in religious fields in universities inside or outside the country. In an allotment under the Education Act, there stated that parents are allowed to make a choice of school. In order for students in religious schools to partake in the PMR and SPM examinations, the schools are to include integrated extra co-curricular programs initiated by the government.<sup>4</sup>

There are schools that have extra curricular programs that do not expand in that they only focus on the fields of Tafsir, Syariah, Usuluddin and Aqidah but not on professional fields. In Selangor, Sekolah Agama Rakyat under the state's Religious Council's sponsorship enjoys beautiful buildings, trained teachers and also good co-curriculum. But, there are schools that are sponsored by various private sectors and personnel that consist of bad-conditioned buildings, non-expandable subjects, non-trained teachers and also teachers with low pay.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> n.a.2003." *Menyelesaikan Isu Sekolah Agama Rakyat dengan Bijak*".i. Kuala Lumpur.Karangraf.April.p.14.

<sup>5</sup> *ibid*, page 14.

This happened as they depend solely on the government's grant and also on the parents' and public's contributions. Recently, things are more complicated when the central government has decided to stop financial aid to religious stream schools as the governments believe that those schools are the places to sow seeds of hatred towards the government by those who are anti-government. Hence, those who manage SAR have to prepare effective study techniques in order to create wise students as high-civilized followers of Islam not only are excellent in material aspects but also in the spiritual aspects.<sup>6</sup>

The public's awareness in sending their children to religious education institutions ought to be appreciated. Likewise, the organizers of such religious schools should find a wise formula to transform the religious schools into knowledge institutions that include Fardhu Ain and Fardhu Kifayah for the sake of the students', religion's, nation's and the country's future.

Rationally, the SAR issue has to be resolved in an academic manner, in a sense that this issue is to be brought forward and discussed in seminars and workshops in order to produce an integrated education model by the Ministry of Education, the ruling party, as well as prominent education figures specializing in this field. The model produced should not reduce the essential components in religious stream as well as the mainstream in order to produce an ensconced generation in their worldly affairs and also in the hereafter. If this educational issue is approached knowledgeably, academically, and unified, it can be resolved and produce positive effects.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> n.a. 2003." *Sekolah Aliran Agama: Mercup Tumbuh Sebagai Pendidikan Alternatif*". i. Kuala Lumpur. Karangraf.April.p.50.

<sup>7</sup> n.a. 2003." *Menyelesaikan Isu Sekolah Agama Rakyat dengan Bijak*". i. Kuala Lumpur, Karangraf.April.p.15.

## **1.1 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

An interesting question to be focused is that of the public's interest towards religious-streamed schools. Actually, religious schools are attracting more and more parents especially after they started introducing academic programs and attained increasing success academically. These parents chose religious schools, as they want their children to obtain knowledge that covers the worldly affairs as well as the hereafter.

The high enthusiasm of parents in sending their children to SAR is because of the society's confidence towards these schools especially in terms of the quality religious education and moral education. The community is aware of their huge obligation in educating their children in this modern era to ensure that their children will not be snared into negative social symptoms that seems to be a norm in today's society. They expect that the religious teachings that are taught in those schools will be able to hamper and lower their burden in educating their children.

## **1.2 RESEARCH SCOPE**

This research will be done at Sekolah Agama Rakyat (SAR) in the vicinity of Pendang, Kedah. In order to obtain adequate information, the writer will be interviewing at least 50 respondents that have children studying in SAR to know why did they send their children to Sekolah Agama Rakyat when in that vicinity itself, many schools were built by the government for education purposes such as MRSM, primary schools and also secondary schools. So, the writer will choose parents that sent their children to SAR to obtain information. With the interview, the respondent will be giving out accurate information regarding this research.

### 1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

- 1) The writer wants to examine the factors that influence parents to send their children to SAR and why the rise of SAR students every year.
- 2) To do a research on the education system of SAR – is it applicable to the modern education system that is seen in secondary schools.
- 3) To know the effect of SAR education in generating knowledge to the youth and is it appropriate in today's work demand.
- 4) The writer wants to know the differences between SAR and government schools like SMKA.
- 5) To examine what is the best manner to upgrade the education level and facilities of SAR to make it at par with other government schools.

## 1.4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### Subject Determination Method

Before the writer starts the research in a more detailed manner, the writer has to determine the research subject and questions regarding the research problems. Therefore, the writer has to truly understand and clear of the problems that are to be focused so that the writer will not be lost and deviate from the main objective.

The research subject of the writer is about Sekolah Agama Rakyat (SAR) in the vicinity of Pendang to know on why do parents send their children to SAR. To know why the parents did that, the writer utilized the purposive sample technique towards the parents and the school's staffs to obtain information regarding this research.

### Data Collection Method

When the research objective is clear by using the aforementioned method, hence, the writer has to collect the data needed. So, to obtain information, the writer has used these methods:

#### a) Observation Method

Observation method is a data collection method that is essential in an observation as through this technique, the observer will be able to observe an event or situation live. This method is a primer method that holds an important position towards an observation in a data collection frame. Thus, to get clear information, the writer went to SAR to know the educational environment as well as the facilities there. The writer hopes that the data needed are of valid data and the collection of the data are smooth and fluent.

b) Interview Method

In order to complete the data obtained, the writer used the interview method in the collection of data. The interview method is a way of collecting data that is done through a question and answer session to obtain an answer to a specific problem. This method can be done individually or in groups. That is why the writer used this method to know the opinions, feelings, confidence and much more from the respondents. Hence, this method is of importance to know the parents' opinions. Besides that, the writer also interviewed the school's headmaster and staffs to complete the information needed.

c) Questionnaire Method

This method is carried out through distributing written questions to respondents. This method is similar to the interview method except that they differ by means of implementation. The questionnaire method is done through written questions and answers while the interview method is done through meeting the respondent directly. With the questionnaire method, the writer will distribute question forms to parents that sent their children to SAR in order for the writer to know their opinions on the problem that the writer is researching.

d) Documentation Method

Aside from the aforementioned methods, the writer also used the documentation method. This method is a way to collect data obtained through documents or notes that are in form of either historical, graphics, or writings that the writer attained from education bodies or from certain individuals that are of relevance to the problem in study.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Hasan B. Hj Mohd Zen. 1981. " *Sumbangan Pondok Pasentran Al- Ma'had Al – Islami Terhadap Kehidupan Keagamaan Masyarakat Desa Batas Kubu – Mayo- Patani Thailand*". (Bachelor Thesis). Al-Jami'ah Al Islamiyah Al- Hukumiyah Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta Indonesia.

e) Library research

The writer did the research using reference books at Islamic University college of Malaysia, International Islamic University, University of Malaya, National University of Malaysia, National library and Islamic Center library.

## 1.5 LITERATURE REVIEWS

According to I (2003). Moral decay among teenagers is the main factor why do parents send their children to the Islamic traditional school. Most of them think that sending their children to this kind of school can solve the moral and religion problems.<sup>9</sup> Parents and Muslims as a whole believe that religious schools can educate their children about Islam and the good code of conduct.

Besides that, refer a project paper on topic; “Islamic Education and its Changes’ Challenges”, presented by IKIM mentioned that, in 20 years backward, more parents and teenagers interested in learning deeply on Islamic education. This might be cause of worrying on the social problems among teenagers now and want them to possess a good behavior. Instead, they may also want their children have a balance education – academic as well as religion education.

According to a research, in Dewan Agama & Falsafah stated most of the teachers in the religious schools are more committed in their professions because of the belief in Islam. Work is an ‘Ibadah’. They are very exuberant to improve the quality of religious as well as the race. Religious schools are concerning more on how to reduce the social ills among the society, how to create a family-school environment and how to practice a good relationship between the members of the school. Furthermore, the education is stressed more on developing a good manner and belief in Allah and His laws. The teachers are willingly to teach here even though the school’s facilities are not sufficient.

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<sup>9</sup> n.a. 2003. “*Sekolah Aliran Agama: Mercup Tumbuh sebagai pendidikan Alternatif*. i. Kuala Lumpur. Karangraf. April. p.50.

Regarding to the statistic from the Malaysian's Education Ministry, the number of students of *Sekolah Menengah Agama Rakyat* (SMAR) increased up to 70,000 from 1998 to 1999. On the other hand, *Sekolah Menengah Agama Negeri* (SMAN) received more about 63,000 students in 1998 and this amount is predicted to be increased in the next year.

Beside that, *I* magazine mentions that what is more interesting are, students from the religious stream are having a great opportunity to continue their study at the higher level. Those who are taking 4Thanawi or *Sijil Tinggi Agama Malaysia* (STAM) can further their study in religious field at the overseas universities i.e. Mesir and Jordan or local universities i.e. University Of Malaya (UM), National University Of Malaysia (UKM), Islamic University College of Malaysia (KUIM), and International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM).

Refer to Dewan Bahasa & Falsafah. In reality; normal secondary schools are facing a serious social problem among their students as compared to religious schools. A statistic from the Malaysian's Education Ministry, in 1999 there were 16,215 juvenile cases, which part of that are stealing, bullying, drug abusing, extorting, etc. This phenomenon makes parents become more worry to send their children into these schools.

## CHAPTER TWO

### FINDINGS

#### 2.1 Introduction

##### The Emergence of The Madrasah System

The insertion of colonial power in Malaya has brought a lot of problem to the Muslim community. The colonists were not only interested in the fields of economy and politics but also in the field of socio-tradition. They tried to change the Malay's socio-traditions through the secular educational system brought from the West. Initially, the change was done by Christian priests that were brought to Malaya along with the English colonists. During the 1930s, the English government took the initiative to expand the West's secular educational system amongst the community by constructing English and Malay schools.<sup>11</sup>

The emergence of English schools in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century brought a big impact towards the Muslim community in this country. The Muslim community that holds dear to the teaching of Islam was worried and curious of the expansion of English schools. In the year 1816M (1232H), the first Malay school – Penang Free School was established by the London Missionary Society followed by the establishment of Sekolah Melayu Gelugor (Penang) in the year 1819M (1235H).<sup>12</sup>

This fact has brought awareness towards students with religious education, especially those that received their education in the Middle East to establish a modern Arabic religious school as an alternative to government schools. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, an Islah movement, imported from the Middle East, started its move and expanded in East Asia and also India. This movement was led by Syed Jamaludin al-Afghani

<sup>11</sup> Prof.Dr. Muda @ Ismail Abd Rahman. 1999, “*Cabaran Islam Di Abad Ke – 21*”. Yayasan Islam Terengganu. n.pl. p.56.

<sup>12</sup> Abdullah Jusuh, 1990. “*Pengenalan Tamadun Islam Di Malaysia*”. Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia Kuala Lumpur. Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka. p.16.

(1839-1897M / 1255-1315H) and Syed Muhammad Abduh (1849-1905M / 1266-1323H).<sup>13</sup> They brought a big change in the education system in the university of Al-Azhar. The return of this group of students to the country brought a new stream in the Islamic education and also the birth of local prominent figures in the likes of Syeikh Tahir Jalaludin al-Falaki and Syed Syeikh al-Hadi. They united in building madrasah.

With the birth of the madrasah system, it seems more systematic and formal than pondok system. With the madrasah system, Islamic subjects are not focused only on Ibadah and Tawhid, but it turned out to be more comprehensive with the addition of new subjects in its curriculum such as Arabic Language, Mathematics, Geography, and other subjects that are of help in providing a complete form of education. Most of the madrasah are built in small cities or outer districts by appending certain conditions to students who wanted to enroll such as age limit, study fees and uniform.

With the dedication and determination of the Muslim community, in the year 1906M (1323H), the first religious school was built – *al-Madrasah al-Masriyyah* at Bukit Mertajam, Seberang Prai, Pulau Pinang. This madrasah was founded by Tuan Haji Salleh Masri followed by the formation of Madrasah *al-Iqbal al-Islamiyah* in Singapore in 1908.<sup>14</sup> After the formation of those 2 madrasah, the madrasah system started to gain popularity amongst the Islah ulama and the Muslim community in peninsula Malaya. In 40 years duration (1900 – 1940), an impressive amount of madrasah has emerged throughout peninsula Malaya. This started the history of Sekolah Agama Rakyat in the educational system in Malaysia.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Dr. Harun Din dan Dr. Sobri Salamon. 1980. “*Masalah Pendidikan Islam Di Malaysia*”. Kajang. Sincere Press Sdn. Bhd. p.19.

<sup>14</sup> Abdullah Jusuh. 1990. “*Pengenalan Tamadun Islam Di Malaysia*”. Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia Kuala Lumpur. Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka. p.17.

<sup>15</sup> Dr. Harun Din. Dr. Sobri Salamon. 1980. “*Masalah Pendidikan Islam Di Malaysia*”. Kajang. Sincere Press Sdn. Bhd. p.20.

The establishment of religious or Arabic schools has their own objectives. First, it is to obstruct the movement of Christian Missionaries from seeping into the Malay community. Second, it aims for reformation in the educational means in pondok institutions that was thought as conservative and thirdly, it hopes to prepare an academic way of learning to balance the need of today's era.<sup>16</sup>

The birth of Sekolah Agama Rakyat is followed by the emergence of religious schools that is governed by state governments and Religious Council. The annex of the religious school's expansion came about with the emergence of Islamic College as the first religious secondary school that was put under the indirect observation of the Ministry of Education in the year 1971.

Religious school or madrasah in Malaysia, generally, can be divided into 4 categories:

- i) The public through administrative body handles religious school/madrasah that is built by the community and the administration. Most of this type of schools receives financial support from the central government, state government, or religious council.
- ii) The state's religious school/madrasah that is administrated by the state government through the religious council, while the state government supports the financial needs.
- iii) Religious school/madrasah under the legislation of the religious council and zakat.
- iv) Religious school/madrasah under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>Prof.Dr. Muda @ Ismail Abd Rahman. 1999. "*Cabaran Islam Di Abad Ke – 21*". Yayasan Islam Terengganu.n.pl.p.56.

<sup>17</sup> Dr. Harun Din. Dr. Sobri Salamon. 1980. "*Masalah Pendidikan Islam Di Malaysia*". Kajang. Sincere Press Sdn.Bhd. p. 22.

## 2.2 Background of School

### The History Of The Emergence Of Al-Islah Religious School

Originally, this madrasah was of pondok educational institution (*Umumi system*). It was built on a piece of waqf land in Batu Hampar, about a mile from Pekan Pendang. This pondok was formed before the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War resulting from Tuan Guru Ibrahim bin Haji Said's effort, a respected ulama at that time. His effort was continued by his son, Tuan Guru Haji Abdul Aziz. He was educated in a pondok in Kampung Kenali, Kelantan under Tuan Guru Haji Yusof, better known as Tok Kenali.

In the year 1960, Tuan Guru Haji Abdul Aziz transferred about 50 pondok in Batu Hampar to Seberang Pendang. He bought a 1.2-hectare of land and placed the pondok there. Starting at that point, many a people came to learn from him and stayed there. The expansion of the umumi system has initiated the formation of religious schools in Kedah.

The emergence of this religious school with the name of Madrasah al-Islah came about from the effort of Tuan Guru Haji Abdul Aziz's son – Tuan Guru Haji Soffian. He was educated in a pondok school in Bunut Payung, Kelantan under his teacher, Tuan Guru Haji Tahir. With a feel of awareness and obligation and also strong support from his wife, Ustazah Khadijah Md. Khir, he guided and developed Madrasah al-Islah. These two people became the main teaching power and the first to serve there.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Hj Sopian Hj Abd Aziz. 2003. "School principle of Sekolah Agama Islah Pendang Kedah". Interview. 15 November.

The first building used as a school is a waqf house (1960M/1382H) that housed only one class. In the early stage, the students of the school consisted only of female students of about 30 students. At the same time, male students continued their studies in nearby pondok under the teachings of Tuan Guru Haji Abdul Aziz.<sup>19</sup>

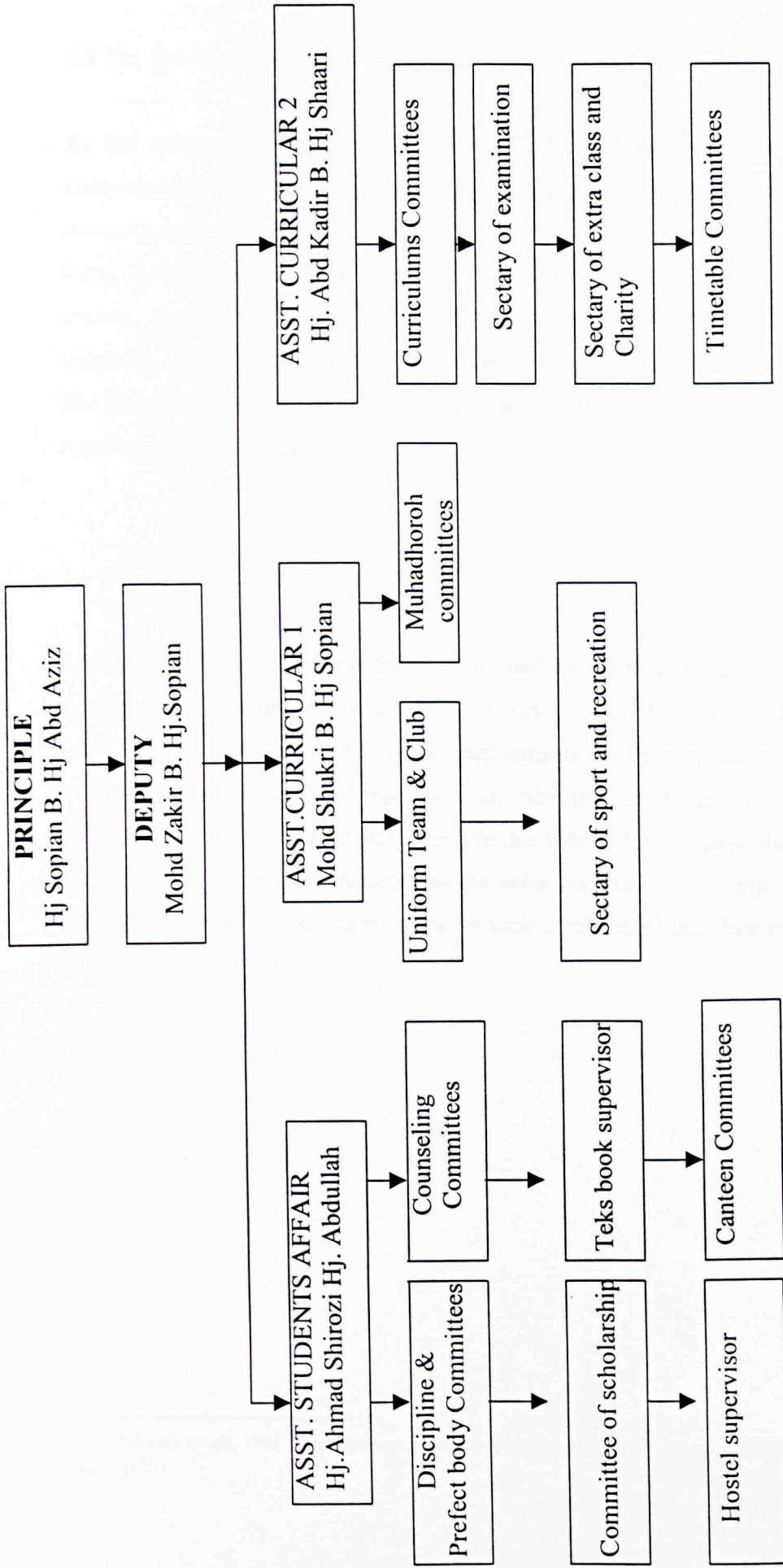
In the year 1962, a two-level building was built to house male students. This building consists of 6 classes where each one can fit around 30 students. In following year, a one-row building that consists of 3 classes was built to sustain the increasing number of female students. Until the year 1975, this madrasah has 9 classes altogether. By the end of 1970s, this madrasah has enjoyed facilities like a main building that has one headmaster's room, an office, a staff room and 10 classrooms. With the significant increase in the number of students, 2 temporary buildings were built that has 5 "floating" classes.

Then came a problem for the students that live quite far from the school especially for female students. The madrasah's administrator with initiatives from the teachers applied for the government's aide in order to build a dormitory. In the year 1981, with a cost of about RM125000 a dormitory that can provides place 100 female students was built. Kedah's religious council had also subsidized for helping the madrasah in its establishment.

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<sup>19</sup> Hj Sopian Hj Abd Aziz. 2003. "School principle of Sekolah Agama Islah Pendang Kedah". Interview. 15 November.

In the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester of 1972 in the school calendar, as there were some critical problems, under the order of Jabatan Agama Islam Kedah (JAIK), the madrasah was closed down for 4 months. In November 1972, this madrasah was reopened as a religious school under the administration of JAIK with the name Maktab Pelajar Kedah. The name remained until the year 1989 where it was changed to its former name, Madrasah al-Islah. Until now, this school has undergone a rapid expansion especially in the increasing number of its students from time aside from the academic excellence that it has enjoyed.



**ADMINISTRATION OF ORGANIZATION**

### 2.3 The System Of Sekolah Menengah Agama Islah

As the religious school now is practicing the *nidzami* system which is more comprehensive and effective, the school becomes more systematic compared to the *umumi* system; meaning that a system which they study by sitting together in a round form, listening to the lecture without any teaching instruments.<sup>20</sup> In the *nidzami* system, it concerns on the age of students, the period of study, the systematic timetable, and others. Besides, in this system it also includes the academic subjects like history, mathematic, etc. This is the system, which is used in *Sekolah Menengah Agama al-Islah Pendang*:

### 2.4 The New Intake Pre-Requisite

To register for the form one in this school, candidates should be at least 13 years old. Besides, he / she must seat for the Ujian Penilaian Sekolah Rendah (UPSR) first and get at least 1A in the exam. Additional requirements are the candidate must know how to read and write in *jawi* and read al-Quran. Able to read al-Quran and write in *jawi* are the qualifications for student to study in this school. It is because, there are certain subjects that are taught in Arabic and the prior knowledge will help them to study better. Students will be allocated based on their UPSR result and their reading skill of al-Quran.

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<sup>20</sup> Hj. Abdullah Ishak. 1995. “ *Pendidikan Islam dan Pengaruhnya di Malaysia*”. Dewan Bahasa Dan Pustaka.p.203.

## 2.5 The Syllabus

Normally, the syllabus for each religious school differs to one another. This is because the different in administration and the system of each school. The Principle and the executive board of the school determine the syllabus. This school is using the syllabus that is taken from the Ministry of Education. All the textbooks are also just the same as the government schools. Meanwhile, the textbooks for Arabic subjects are taken from al-Azhar University in Mesir, which is invigilated by the Majlis Agama Islam Negeri Kedah.<sup>21</sup>

The syllabus is follow:

ISLAMIC EDUCATIONS	
1. Al Quran	11. faraidh
2. Feqah	12. Mantiq
3. Tafsir	13. Ulum Hadith
4. Tarikh Islam	
5. Tajwid	
6. Tauhid	
7. Usul Fiqh	
8. Quran Sunnah	
9. Syariah Islamiah	
10. Hadis	

Table: 2

<sup>21</sup> Hj Sopian Hj Abd Aziz, 2003. "School principle of Sekolah Agama Islah Pendang Kedah". Interview. November.

<b>GENERAL SUBJECTS</b>
1.Mathematic
2.Malay Language
3.History
4.Geogrphy
5.Science
6.English Language
7.Living Skills
8.Islamic Knowledge

Table: 3

<b>ARABIC LANGUAGE SUBJECTS</b>	
1. Qawaid	11.Balaghah
2. Qiraah	12.High Arabic Language
3. Khat	
4. Muhadasah	
5. Mahfudzot	
6. Imla'	
7. Sorof	
8. Ta'bir	
9. Insyak	
10. Nusus	

Table: 4

## 2.6 Examinations Which Are Taken By Students

TYPES	FORM
PMR	THREE
SMRA	FOUR
SPM	FIVE
STA	SIX
SHAHADAH	SIX

Table: 5

## 2.7 The Opportunity To Further Study

**STA** – Al-Azhar University in Mesir or other Universities in the Middle East.

**SPM / STPM** – any local universities like University of Malaya, National University of Malaysia, International Islamic University Of Malaysia, North University Of Malaysia and others.

**School's Shahadah** – in the process of getting the certification from Institut Agama Islam Negeri (IAIN) in Medan, Indonesia.

## 2.8 Facilities

At first, Sekolah Agama al-Islah's condition is worse. However, as the time goes on, the school's condition has improved. It has all the facilities that give a convenient environment to its students. One of the infrastructures that they have is a computer lab. Thus, students are enhanced with the knowledge on information technology in line with the government's effort to make its citizen knowledgeable in Information Technology (IT). To make the learning session more proactive, students are given tuition classes by the experts.

Besides, the school administrative has provided two rooms for the Living Skills subject. These rooms are accommodate with all the instruments needed in this course. There is a library that has a lot of references in Arabic, Malays, and English. They also have a meeting room for teachers and staffs, a musolla, a canteen, a Principle's room, two teachers' rooms, an office and fifteen classrooms. The classrooms are provided with all equipment and furniture's. All of these are located in the four buildings that they have. Besides that, the school also provides hostels to accommodate students who stay far away from the school. The hostels are able to accommodate 40 male students and 100 female students.

### 2.8.1 Library

This library was established in 1994. In the beginning, it only has a few of references such as Arabic language academic books. In 1996 this library was moved to a new building. It provides with various academic references in Arabic, Malay and English. Besides, the facility is more comfortable and bigger in size.

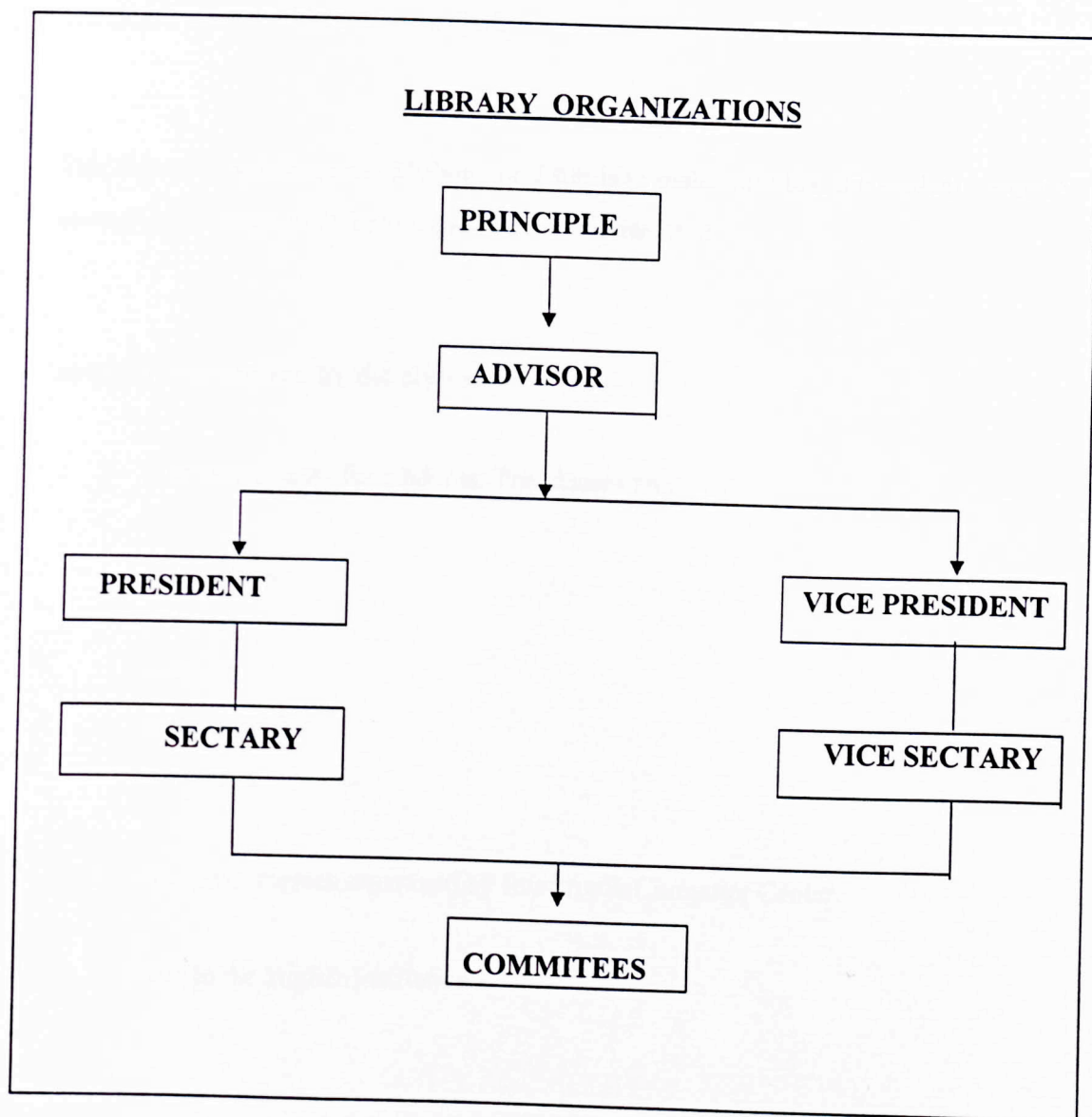


TABLE: 6

## 2.9 Co – Curricular Activities

The co-curricular activities are very important to be joined, as the input in this activity is not taught in the class. Some of the societies are *Red- Crescent Society (PBSM)*, *Pergerakan Putri Islam*, *Seni Silat Gayung*, *Persatuan Club*, *Taekwondo club*, *Malay Society*, *English Society* and *Muhadhoroh Society*. There are also a few clubs like *Football Club*, *badminton club*, *netball Club*, *table -tennis Club*, *Da'wah Club*, *Art & Handcraft Club*, and *Multimedia Club*.

The objective of having the *Multimedia Club* is to make sure that the students acquire enough knowledge in IT before they go to a higher level.

### Activities organized by the club are:

1. Software classes for students. The classes are:
  - a) Windows
  - b) Excel
  - c) Word
  - d) Power point
  - e) Internet
2. Computer classes organized by Intertronik Computer Center.
3. Visits to the Higher Institutions.