

**THE ROLE OF PERTUBUHAN KEBAJIKAN ISLAM
MALAYSIA (PERKIM) FOR HELPING MUALLAF IN PULAU
PINANG**

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ABSTRAK

Kajian ini merupakan sebuah kajian lapangan, dimana ia menyentuh aspek-aspek tentang dakwah Islamiah, kajian ini juga mengkaji sebuah organisasi dakwah di Malaysia iaitu peranan Pertubuhan Kebajikan Islam Malaysia (PERKIM) dalam membantu muallaf, selain itu juga, kajian ini mengkaji tentang aktiviti yang disediakan oleh PERKIM, permasalahan yang di hadapi oleh PERKIM dalam menangani muallaf, dan juga permasalahan yang dihadapi oleh muallaf setelah memeluk agama Islam. Kajian ini juga telah memfokuskan kepada dua golongan sasaran iaitu, pihak PERKIM dan juga kepada muallaf yang belajar di PERKIM. Antara lain juga penulis telah menggunakan beberapa kaedah untuk menghasil kajian ini, iaitu melalui kaedah temuramah dengan pihak PERKIM, dan mengedarkan soalan (questionnaires) kepada muallaf. Dapatan daripada hasil kajian ini juga menunjukkan bahawa pihak PERKIM perlu bekerjasama dengan organisasi dakwah yang lain untuk melahirkan para pendakwah yang berkualiti serta masyarakat juga hendaklah memberi kerjasama mereka kepada pihak PERKIM untuk memastikan pihak PERKIM dapat mencapai matlamatnya untuk menyebarkan dakwah Islamiah kepada orang ramai. Selain daripada itu, kajian ini cuba menghuraikan tentang masalah yang dihadapi oleh pihak PERKIM dan juga muallaf apabila mereka memeluk Islam.

ABSTRACT

Generally, this is a field research about the aspect of Islamic 'dakwah'. This research also studies the role of one of the dakwah organizations in Malaysia, namely Pertubuhan Kebajikan Islam Malaysia (PERKIM) in helping the 'muallafs' in Pulau Pinang. Besides that, it also discusses the activities organized by PERKIM for the 'muallafs', the problems faced by the PERKIM organization and problems faced by the 'muallafs' after converting to Islam. It also focuses on two-target groups, the PERKIM organization and the 'muallafs' who study in PERKIM. Questionnaires and interviews were the tools used for data gathering purposes. These indicate that the PERKIM organization must cooperate with other dakwah organizations to produce a quality dais. Besides that, the society also must give its support and cooperation to PERKIM to ensure that it will achieve its goals in order to propagate the Islamic dakwah. Besides that, this research tries to investigate and explain the problem that faced by PERKIM and muallaf.

ملخص البحث

عموماً، هذا بحث الحقل، ماسّ حول الدعوة الإسلامية مظهر. هذا البحث أيضا بحث حول واحدة منظمة في ماليزيا، إنه دور بركيم في مساعدة مؤلف في بولو بينانج. أيضا الذي، هذا البحث يناقش التّشاطات التي منّظمة من قبل بركيم إلى، مؤلف ثم المشاكل تلك المواجهة بالمنظمة والمشاكل بركيم واجه من قبل مؤلف بعد تحويل إلى الدين الإسلامي. إذن، هذا البحث يركّز أيضا على مجموعتين الهدفين، هناك منظمة وبركيم مؤلف الذي تعلّم في بركيم . الإستفتاء والمقابلات كانا الأدوات استخدمت لأغراض حشد البيانات. اشار التي منظمة بركيم يجب أن يتعاون بالآخر الدعوة الإسلامية منظمة أن تنتج منصة نوعية، أيضا الذي، المجتمع أيضا يجب أن يعطي مساندتهم ويتعاون إلى بركيم في ضمن الذي بركيم سينجز هدفهم بالترتيب أن يكثر الدعوة الإسلامي.

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GLOSSARY

a.s.	Abbreviation of “ [‘] Alaihi Al-Salam” meaning “Upon him the Peace”.
hadith	Sayings of the Prophet Muhammad s.a.w.
muallaf	A person who convert to Islam.
r.a.	Abbreviation of “Radhi Allahu [‘] Anhu” meaning “Upon him the Blessings of Allah.
s.a.w	Abbreviation of “Sallallahu [‘] Alaihi Wa Sallam” meaning “Peace be upon him”.
sahih	Valid.
syar’i	Legally recognized by the shari [‘] ah.
sunnah	Sayings, deeds and approvals of the Prophet s.a.w.
‘ulama	Plural of [‘] alim, Islamic jurists.

TRANSLITERATION*

1. Consonant

Huruf Arab	Huruf Rumi	Huruf Arab	Huruf Rumi	Huruf Arab	Huruf Rumi
ا	-	ز	z	ق	q
ب	b	س	s	ك	k
ت	t	ش	sy	ل	l
ث	th	ص	s	م	m
ج	j	ض	d	ن	n
ح	h	ط	t	و	w
خ	kh	ظ	z	ه	h
د	d	ع	‘	ء	‘
ذ	dh	غ	gh	ي	y
ر	r	ف	f	ة	t

* Pedoman Translasi Huruf Arab ke Huruf Rumi (1992). Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka. Kuala Lumpur.pp.1-2.

2. Vocal

Pendek			Panjang			Diftong	
ا	َ	A	ا	َ	A	أي	Ay
ي	ِ	I	ي	ِ	I	أو	Aw
و	ُ	U	و	ُ	U		

ABBREVIATION

Abd.	Abdul
B.	Bin
Dr.	Doktor
KUIM	Kolej Universiti Islam Malaysia
PERKIM	Pertubuhan Kebajikan Islam Malaysia
n.a.	no author
n.d.	no date
n.pl.	no place
n.pb.	no publisher
p.	page
pp.	pages
trans.	translator/ translated by
RA	radiya Allah ^ʿ anhu / ^ʿ anha / anhum
SAW	salla Allah ^ʿ alayh wa sallam
SWT	subhanahu wa ta ^ʿ ala
Vol.	volume
&	and

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the research

The title of the research is “The role of Pertubuhan Kebajikan Islam Malaysia (PERKIM) in helping the ‘Muallaf’ (Muslim converts) in Penang”. The Penang PERKIM was established in 1972. Initially, PERKIM’s office was rented at No. 135, Lorong Batu Lanchang, Pulau Pinang at the rate of RM350.00 per month. However, PERKIM had to move to another premise in 1981. (PERKIM Bulletin, 2000)

On 1 October 1981, PERKIM’s office was moved from 135, Lorong Batu Lanchang to a new premise at Lebu Pitt, Penang, for which the organization had to rent from the Majlis Hal Ehwal Agama Islam Pulau Pinang at the same rate of RM350.00 per month. Here, the organization carried out its activities such as spreading the Islamic faith, and welfare. (Ibrahim bin Md.Noor, 2002)

On 2 September 1985, the Secretary General of the Penang PERKIM, Dato’ Haji Ahmad Nordin offered PERKIM the building of a clinic. PERKIM at that time was closed due to financial problems and the PERKIM center was not giving full assistance to the PERKIM branches. PERKIM then agreed to move to the new building. (Ibrahim Md.Noor, 2002)

The Penang PERKIM finally moved to its present office at Burma Road, Penang on 1 November 1985. In this place, the organization was facilitated with a hostel and teaching center. It is named as the Institute of PERKIM-GOON by the late Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra al-Haj. In this building PERKIM had to pay only for the telephone bill, while the electricity and water bills were paid by the Institute of PERKIM-GOON. (Rosnani bt Bahari, 2002)

The objective of the establishment of PERKIM at that time was to create awareness among the non-Muslims and to attract them to the religion of Islam. The word “*muallaf*” or “saudara baru” came to our country since 1970. The term “*muallaf*” was taken from the Holy Quran, “*al muallafat qulubuhum*”. Normally, the preachers or missionaries who were of the same race as the non-Muslims were sent to propagate the teachings of Islam. Sometimes, non-Muslims who were ready to accept Islam would automatically come to PERKIM to get the knowledge and information that they need about the religion. (Ismail Abdul Rahman, 1991)

The statement above is relevant to the words of Allah:

وَتَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَىٰ وَلَا تَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ

“Help ye one another in righteousness and piety, but help ye not one another in sin and rancour: fear Allah: for Allah is strict in punishment.” (Quran, al-Maidah 6:2)

That verse tells about the importance of cooperation and help in the Muslim life. As a good Muslim, we must help other Muslims. Besides that, we are encouraged to help other people with good deeds, such as helping to get blessings from Allah with a good intention and to hope for reward from Allah in the afterworld.

So, this verse is appropriate to the objective of PERKIM, for example, to propagate the Islamic teachings to Muslims and non Muslims, besides helping our brothers and sisters who are Muslim converts by teaching them the Islamic values.

After 18 years since the establishment of the Penang PERKIM, today there are altogether nine branches in the state.

1. Balik Pulau (established on 6 January 1974).
2. Butterworth (established on 30 November 1975).
3. The northern Penang region (established on 6 February 1977).
4. The City (established on 19 Mac 1978).

5. Kepala Batas (established on 22 February 1981).
6. Bukit Mertajam (established on 21 June 1982).
7. Women's PERKIM, branch of Balik Pulau.
8. Women's PERKIM, branch of Tanjung (City).
9. Women's PERKIM, branch of Tanjung Tokong (North).

(Buletin PERKIM, 2003)

This research will focus on the role of PERKIM in helping the 'muallaf'. Besides that, it will also focus on the problems faced by PERKIM, for example financial problems, inadequate workers, lack of support from society and problems posed by the 'muallafs'. So, in this case, PERKIM must play a vital role in solving these problems efficiently. PERKIM is like a doctor waiting for his patient to give him the treatment needed. (Ismail Abdul Rahman, 1991)

Nowadays, the 'dakwah' programme (programme to preach the religion) is arranged by PERKIM whereby active, positive and dynamic approaches are taken to propagate the Islamic faith, and not the passive method that is being used by other organizations for the same purpose. PERKIM performs its activities in accordance to the requirements of the Quran and the 'sunnah', for example, making use of a good approach, use of pleasant words, and be able to accept the opinions of others. (Ismail Abdul Rahman, 1991)

To be *active* means to be brave in going forward to promote the Islamic faith with effectively, to Muslims and non-Muslims, while to be positive means to propagate the faith using a good approach and showing a good example to the public so that the public respect them and are attracted to participate in the activities planned.

(Ismail Abdul Rahman, 1991)

1.2 Problem statement

This research is focusing on the role of Pertubuhan Kebajikan Islam Malaysia (PERKIM) in helping the 'muallaf'. Besides that, this research also looks deeply into the problem that happens nowadays, such as the problem of being 'murtad' (a Muslim who leaves his religion) among Muslims and 'muallafs' returning to the religion of their parents. Although we have many 'dakwah' organizations in Malaysia such as PERKIM, YADIM and ABIM, but the 'murtad' problem still happens in our country. As we know from our mass media today, many cases of 'murtad' have happened.

This problem can be divided into two categories. Firstly, 'murtad' among born Muslims, that means the Muslims convert to other religions. Normally this situation happens because they follow their non-Muslim spouses, and also they do not have a strong foundation in Islamic education so, they will make a decision without thinking about the effect on their future. Secondly, 'murtad' problem among 'muallafs' or "saudara baru" going back to their original religion. This situation happens because they have a lot of problems when they convert to Islam. For example, they do not have permission and support from their family when they convert. Besides that, they are faced with the problem of being neglected by the society whether Muslims and non-Muslims. (Ustazah Wan Zubaidah, 2004)

Although we have the 'dakwah' organization such as PERKIM, which performs its responsibilities to help the 'muallafs', it cannot force the people to love Islam. They can just give advice to them and try to help them when they have problems. The 'murtad' problem also happens when the non-Muslims convert to Islam with the reason of wanting to marry a Muslim. So, they do not sincerely choose Islam as their religion. Furthermore, they may also have Muslim spouses who are not strong enough in their Islamic faith or are ignorant of the religion and do not perform their responsibilities as Muslims, for example they do not perform the prayers, 'zakat' (giving of alms') and other duties that are stated by the Quran and Sunnah.

(ustaz Abdul Rahim,2003)

This research, therefore, wants to know how the organizations of 'dakwah' especially PERKIM perform their responsibilities to propagate Islam besides helping the 'muallafs', in addition to solving the 'murtad' problem. Besides that, this research also wants to know how PERKIM plays its vital role and what technique it uses to solve this critical problem, and how it approaches people to love the Islamic values and Islamic teachings. Furthermore, this research is also looking at whether PERKIM has problems in performing its work or duties, such as internal problems or external problems that are faced by PERKIM in their progress to help the 'muallafs' and to propagate the Islamic faith to Muslims and Non-Muslims. Finally, through this research we hope to get the answer as to why this situation still happens.

(Ann Wan Seng, 2003)

1.3 Aims of the research

This research aims to have an insight on the establishment of Pertubuhan Kebajikan Islam Malaysia (PERKIM) and how far the PERKIM can play its role in helping the ‘muallaf’, Besides that, this research is also looking at its activities, and problems that it faces and those faced by the ‘muallaf’, and finally, the effect of PERKIM on the ‘muallaf’.

1.4. Objectives of the research

The objectives of this research are:

1. Obtaining the roles of Pertubuhan Kebajikan Islam Malaysia (PERKIM) in helping the ‘muallaf’ and its activities.
2. Identifying problems faced by PERKIM when handling the ‘muallaf’
3. Identifying problems faced by the ‘muallaf’ when they convert to Muslims.
4. Determining whether the ‘muallaf’ are satisfied with activities organized by PERKIM.
5. Finding out how far PERKIM can propagate the Islamic teachings to the Muslims and non-Muslims.

1.5 Research Questions

1. What are the activities that are organized by PERKIM to help the ‘muallaf’?
2. How far can this organization perform its mission and objectives efficiently and effectively?
3. Why does a non-Muslim convert to a Muslim?
4. Are the ‘muallafs’ satisfied with the services offered by PERKIM?
5. What are the problems faced by a ‘muallaf’?
6. What are the problems faced by PERKIM in helping the ‘muallaf’?
7. How does PERKIM solve the ‘murtad’ problems among born Muslims and Muslim converts?
8. How does PERKIM propagate the Islamic teachings to Muslims and non-Muslims?

1.6 Definition concept/operational

Role

Role: means an actor's part in a play, film, etc.

People or thing's characteristic or expected function.

(Illustrated oxford dictionary, 1998)

Role also means a part or character in a play, film etc. to be played by an actor or actress.

(Collins English dictionary, 1998)

In this research *role* means, the role of Pertubuhan Kebajikan Islam Malaysia (PERKIM) in helping the muallaf, they also responsible to propagate an Islamic dakwah to Muslims and non-Muslims besides organize a good activities to the people so that the people can understand better about Islamic knowledge, and practice what was guided in Islam easily.

Help

Help means provide (a person etc) with the means towards what is needed or sought (helped me with my work)

(Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, 1995)

Help also means 1) to assist or aid (someone to do something) esp. by sharing the work, cost, or burden of something.

2) To promote or contribute to: to help the relief operations.

(Collins English Dictionary, 1998)

In this research *help* means the PERKIM organization must help the muallaf in Islamic teaching such to make an intensive class to them so that they can improve their knowledge about Islam. Besides that, PERKIM organization also must help them when they have problems after convert to Islamic religion for example give the support to tem by showing a good attitude so that they will confident with their new religion (Islamic religion).

Muallaf

Muallaf (converter): a person or thing that converts

(Collin English Dictionary, 1998)

Muallaf(converter) means 1. Tr. (usu. Foll. By into change in form, character, or function.

2. Cause (a person) to change belief etc.

(Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, 1995)

Mualaf (converter) also means orang yang baru memeluk agama Islam (saudara baru).

(Kamus Dewan, edisi ketiga)

Muallaf also means one groups that qualified to receive the zakat, Allah said in Quran:

إنما الصدقات للفقراء والمساكين والعاملين عليها والمؤلفة قلوبهم وفي الرقاب
والغارمين وفي سبيل الله وابن السبيل فريضة من الله والله عليم حكيم (60)

“Alms are for the poor and the needy, and those employed to administer the (funds); for those whose hearts have been (recently) reconciled (to the truth); for those in bondage and in debt; in the cause of Allah; and for the wayfarer: (thus is it) ordained by Allah, and Allah is full of knowledge and wisdom.” (Al-Quran. At- toubah 9:60)

The muallaf also is a person that we hope can improve their belief about Islamic religion. (Ensiklopedia Islam untuk Pelajar, 2003)

In this research, muallaf means the people from non-Muslims convert to Islamic religion. That means they choose a new religion (Islamic religion) as their new believer and try to practice as a guideline in Islamic teaching. They also change their belief from multi God to the oneness of God (Allah).

1.7 The importance of the research

The importance of this research is due to several factors:

1. This research wants to know the role of Pertubuhan Kebajikan Islam Malaysia (PERKIM) in helping the 'muallaf'. For example, how the PERKIM performs its responsibilities to propagate the Islamic religion to Muslims and non-Muslims and the activities that are provided by PERKIM to the 'muallaf'. Besides that, this research looks deeply into whether the 'muallaf' is satisfied with the programmes they participate in.
2. This research also tries to find out the problems that are faced by PERKIM, in handling the 'muallaf', and why PERKIM cannot work efficiently in introducing the Islamic faith to Muslims and non-Muslims.
3. Besides that, this research tries to identify the problems that are faced by the 'muallaf' when they convert to Muslim. Nowadays, we can see a lot of 'murtad' cases occurring among 'muallafs'.
4. Next, this research wants to know the effect of PERKIM's activities on the 'muallaf'. So this research tries to find out whether the 'muallafs' are satisfied with the activities provided by PERKIM. Besides that, through this research, we can know whether the 'muallafs' understand what they learn about Islamic teachings and perform their responsibilities as Muslims with faith and good intention.
5. Finally, through this research we can know how far PERKIM can succeed in introducing the Islam to Muslims and non-Muslims. As we know, in our country we live in a multi-racial society where each race has its own belief. This situation allows obstacles for da'is to propagate Islam, for instance, by the Christian missionary movement. So, this research tries to identify the technique or methodology that is used by PERKIM to propagate the religion.

CHAPTER TWO

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The term 'PERKIM' is short for "Pertubuhan Kebajikan Islam Malaysia". PERKIM was established by the late Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra al-Haj, the first Prime Minister of Malaysia. The objective of PERKIM's establishment was to propagate the teachings of Islam to Muslims and non-Muslims efficiently and effectively. Besides that, PERKIM was also responsible in preaching Islam through the mass media while conforming to the enactment that is listed in our state law. PERKIM also performs welfare activities, for example, helping the people with donations and scholarships to the needy. They also provide alms to the poor and paupers. To make the Islamic 'dakwah' more successful, excellent and effective in the future, Pertubuhan Kebajikan Islam Malaysia (PERKIM) cooperates with other 'dakwah' organizations such as YADIM, IKIM, ABIM and etc. (M.Y. Jaafar, 1986)

2.1 The establishment of PERKIM

Besides that, PERKIM is also responsible in spreading the Islamic teachings among the Chinese, Indians, and other races in Malaysia to attract them so that they will choose the Islam as their religion. The main obstacles that tend to disturb the activities of PERKIM are the Christian missionaries who always try to attract people to adopt their religion. This situation was very common before because then, we had no alternative and organization to promote the Islamic 'dakwah' before the establishment of PERKIM in 1960. (Ibrahim bin Md. Noor, 2002)

2.2 The Islamic dakwah target and dakwah islahiyah

The success or failure of the PERKIM organization depends on the Islamic 'dakwah' field, so PERKIM's Islamic 'dakwah' has divided its target into three dimensions or "serampang tiga mata", of which they are:

1. 'Dakwah' or preaching to non-Muslims
2. "Dakwah' to born Muslims
3. 'Dakwah' to Muslim converts

(Ibrahim Md. Noor, 2002)

That situation is in accordance to the words of Allah:

"يَا بُنَيَّ أَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ وَأْمُرْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَانْهَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَأَصْبِرْ عَلَىٰ مَا أَصَابَكَ إِنَّ ذَٰلِكَ مِنْ عَزْمِ الْأُمُورِ" (17)

"O my son! Establish regular prayer, enjoin what is just, and forbid what is wrong; and bear with patient constancy whatever betide thee; for this is firmness (of purpose) in (the conduct of) affairs." (Al-Quran. Luqman 31: 17)

It is the duty of the Muslims to make the non-Muslims understand that the Islamic religion is the most perfect religion in this world, not a fanatical one and is also not one created by the human being. The methodologies that can be used in spreading Islam can be through forums or public talks, where explanations about Islam can be given in detail. Then the non-Muslims will be given the chance to make a decision, as to whether they would like to choose Islam as their new religion.

(Rosnani bt. Bahari, 2002)

'Dakwah' to the 'muallaf' is carried out in such a way that they are taught about Islam to full understanding so that they become firm believers and are loyal and faithful to their Creator and to lead a perfect life as a good Muslim. Besides that, they are taught about 'tauhid' and 'usuluddin' with detailed explanations. Then they are also given chances to ask questions about problems that relate to the teachings of Islam and others. (Rosnani Bt. Bahari, 2002)

Then, as for the 'dakwah' to born Muslims, as we know, not all Muslims understand their religion well and practice the Islamic way of life as guided by the Quran and Sunnah because they do not have adequate Islamic education when they are children. So, here the dais PERKIM must try to create an awareness among them to understand and love the Islamic teachings, such as stated in the Quran, surah Abasa, verse 4:

أَوْ يَذَّكَّرُ فَتَنْفَعَهُ الذِّكْرَى (4)

"Or that he might receive admonition, and the teaching might profit him?"

We believe that the "admonition" is good teaching as proposed by Islam. We know that "nobody is perfect in this world except Allah" and the human being is always careless and forgets his or her responsibility as a Muslim. To make them aware of their duties, the dais must always give admonition and advise them about their responsibilities. The one who receives the admonition must accept and try practice it.

(Nasrual Apisah Bt. Rejab, 2003)

2.3 To produce a "wibawa" quality dais

The 'pendakwah' or dais is an important person in promoting the Islamic teachings to get 'marthatillah' "مرضات الله". According to the Kamus Dewan, (a prominent Malay dictionary), third edition, "wibawa" means "seseorang yang istimewa atau kuasa yang ada padanya yang boleh mempengaruhi orang lain" which means 'a special person with power and authority to influence other's'. (Ismail Abdul Rahman, 1991)

From that, we can know the quality of a dais, that is an important person that has a special attitude that can lead people towards a true way. So, the reality is, the quality of a dais is found in our prophet “Muhammad S.A.W”, a perfect person who was chosen by God (Allah) to obtain the trust to convey the ‘wahyu’ (teachings) to all vicegerent in this world, to help in propagating the Islamic ‘dakwah’. This is to save the human being in this world and hereafter. History tells us that our prophet was changed from time to time, from Adam to Muhammad S.A.W., after whom we do not have any other prophets to continue to convey the Islamic dakwah to the people. As a result, we are responsible to continue the duties of propagating the Islamic ‘dakwah’.

(Rosnani Bt. Bahari, 2002)

The Muslim is a vicegerent on this earth that was obligated by Allah to perform the responsibilities in propagating the Islamic ‘dakwah’ after our prophet Muhammad S.A.W. The prophet and his history can be as a guideline or our role model, because he was a good example. Then, the dais can refer to the Quran and ‘sunnah’ to know the way of performing the ‘dakwah’. Therefore, the dais from PERKIM must produce a good dais that has these qualities:

- I. Honest and sincere
- II. ‘Istiqamah’
- III. Ready to sacrifice
- IV. ‘Siddiq, amanah, tabliqh, fathanah’
- V. Alert to wrong doings
- VI. Have knowledge and good attitude
- VII. Strong mentally and physically
- VIII. Creative thinking and motivation
- IX. Tawadduq
- X. Clean and responsible
- XI. Brave to point out wrong doings

(Yusoff Al-Qardhawi)

2.4 The Pertubuhan Kebajikan Islam Malaysia's (PERKIM's) welfare target

Generally, more of the welfare work performed by PERKIM is concentrated on the 'muallaf' who always face problems. According to a PERKIM officer, about 70% of the 'muallaf' have problems when they convert to Islam. Normally the problems that they face are such as family problems, place to stay, and also their employers terminating their jobs. Besides that, the welfare target is converged on: -

1. 'Sedekah' (alms) to the poor or destitute in Ramadhan

Every year PERKIM will organize a ceremony to contribute the 'sedekah' to the poor and destitute whether at the level of Wanita PERKIM Negeri (State Women) or at branch level.

2. Help in teaching

3. To give aid to orphanages

PERKIM also helps the orphanages that need help.

4. Help during the time when school begins

PERKIM also gives donations to the Muslim parents who have many school-going children when the school is starting.

5. Wisma perlindungan masyarakat (Building to shelter the society)

The Penang PERKIM suggests to build a 'wisma perlindungan masyarakat' or a building for someone to seek refuge. Now PERKIM is looking for a suitable place to set up the building. The objective of the 'wisma perlindungan masyarakat' is to house 'muallafs' who not have a place to stay after being dismissed by their family when they convert to Islam. Besides that, this 'wisma' also gives incentives to those who are interested to lead their daily life without depending on the sympathy of others. Meanwhile, PERKIM will give them lessons on the Islamic religion and knowledge that they do not have. In doing so, PERKIM must cooperate with other parties to make this program a success. (ustazah Wan Zuraidah, 2004)

2.5 The activities of PERKIM

Based on the annual report, the Penang PERKIM must organize good activities for the ‘muallaf’ if they want to produce a quality and responsible dais. The program or activities organized by PERKIM are:

The intensive class for ‘muallafs’

The intensive class will be on during office hours and held in the PERKIM office. PERKIM missionaries conduct this class.

Monday-Friday – 9.00 a.m –5.00p.m

Saturday - 9.00 a.m –1.00 p.m

This class covers the Islamic teachings such as ‘fardhu ain, fardhu kifayah’, which includes the theoretical and practical aspects. Besides that, this class concentrates on the basic knowledge about Islamic to make ‘muallaf’ easy to understand and practice what is given in ‘rukun Islam’ (the Islamic rules). (Annual Reports, 2003)

The intensive class at branch level

The Penang PERKIM also conducts intensive and class at branch level. This is to ease the ‘ muallafs’ who stay in that area so that they can follow the lessons, besides strengthening the ‘silaturrahim’ (friendship) among them. The class is held four times per month during the weekends, either Saturday or Sunday. This class is also held at every branch on Penang Island and the mainland.

a. North west	- 4 x 12 month = 48 times
b. North	- 4 x 12 month = 48 times
c. City	- 4 x 12 month = 48 times
d. Butterworth	- 4 x 12 month = 48 times
e. Kepala Batas	- 4 x 12 month = 48 times
f. Bukit Mertajam	- 4 x 12 month = 48 times
Total	= <u>228 times</u>

(Annual reports, 2003)

The general speech

Nowadays, the government of Malaysia encourages the forming of a loving society, so, PERKIM feels that they must organize public speaking sessions to relate to the people. In this way; the government will achieve its goal to produce a loving society.

To achieve that goal, PERKIM holds the general speeches so that it can strengthen the ‘silaturahmi’ with ‘muallafs’ besides increasing their Islamic knowledge.

(Annual Reports, 2003)

The celebration of important dates in Islam

PERKIM also encourages every PERKIM branch to celebrate the important dates in Islam, for example, ‘Hari Raya Aidilfitri, Hari Raya Aidiladha, mulidurrasul’, the first of ‘Muharram’, ‘Israk Mikraj’ and so on. (Annual Reports, 2003)

Nadwah kefahaman Islam (Understanding Islam)

The Penang PERKIM organizes “Nadwah Kefahaman Islam” to teach the ‘muallaf’ and Muslims so that they understand about the Islamic teaching besides enriching their knowledge and also to make them closer to Islam.

(Annual Reports, 2003)

The objectives of “Nadwah Kefahaman Islam” are:

- a. To assemble the ‘muallaf’ and the Muslims to make them understand about Islam and to foster the ties of ‘silaturahmi’ among them so that through this way, they (muallaf) can avoid themselves from having low self-esteem when they are among the society.
- b. To Convey the Islamic teaching through the ‘ceramah’ or speeches on topics that appropriate and easy to understand.

- c. Give opportunity to the participant to ask questions about the Islamic religion that they have not understood before.
- d. To produce a Muslim society that is dynamic, active and always practicing the Islamic way of life.

The “Nadwah Kefahaman Islam” was organized in every branch two times per year.

(Annual Reports, 2003)

Nadwah peningkatan pelajaran saudara baru

This program works to enrich the learning and knowledge among the ‘muallaf’. The objectives of this program are:

- a. To gather the ‘muallaf’ from multi-races to promote understanding and foster good ‘silaturahmi’ among them.
- b. To introduce the Islamic teachings through speeches or ‘ceramah’ on suitable topics which are easy to understand.
- c. Give opportunity to the participant to understand better about Islamic teachings through the “*usrah*” and intensive class.
- d. To introducing Islamic teachings theoretically.
- e. To produce an active and dynamic Islamic society.
- f. To encourage the participants to perform the activities like ‘amal jariah’ to the people in need, such as poor people and so on. (Annual Reports, 2003)

‘Dakwah’ through Audio-Visual Aids

The objectives of dakwah through audio-visual aids are:

- a. To make it easy for the ‘muallaf’ and Muslim to understand something when they learn it individually at home or office by using a cassette or video.
- b. Besides that, by using a cassette or video, they can follow it practically, for example they can perform their ‘wudhu’, fardhu haj’, or recite the Quran and Muqaddam easily.

- c. Give an opportunity to the ustaz or ustazah (teachers) to perform their duties effectively. (Annual Reports, 2003)

2.6 The problems faced by PERKIM when they handle the muallaf.

The problems faced by PERKIM are:

Firstly, there is a lack of capable workers. This situation happens to the Penang PERKIM, which has three workers only. This factor can hinder the PERKIM organization from propagating the Islamic 'dakwah' effectively and efficiently.

(Ismail Abdul Rahman, 1991)

Secondly, the fund is insufficient, because the PERKIM organization does not get any support from any party; even though the statistic of 'muallafs' has increased from year to year. So PERKIM must spend its fund carefully to make sure the 'muallaf' can learn comfortably. (Ismail Abdul Rahman, 1991)

Thirdly, is the attitude of the Malay society, where they have negative thoughts about the 'muallaf'. Besides that, they also do not give their support to PERKIM in teaching the 'muallaf' because to them, PERKIM accepts the 'muallaf' without investigating the intention of the 'muallaf', whether they are sincere or otherwise. They are also worried if the 'muallaf' that converts to Islam only has a reason such as wanting to marry a Muslim. (Ibrahim Md.Noor, 2002)

The next problem is the attitude of the staff in the Islamic department that performs their duty with lots of birocracy and gives problems to PERKIM. As a result, there is a conflict between the PERKIM staff and the staff of the Islamic department, making it difficult for PERKIM to deal with the Islamic department when necessary.

(Rosnani Bt. Bahari, 2003)

PERKIM also faces problems where it does not have enough staff who are experts in IT (information technology). So, it is difficult for them to store data in the computer, when, nowadays, all management is done by using the computer.

(Nasruah Apisah, 2003)

2.7 The problems faced by the ‘muallaf’.

The problems that are faced by the ‘muallaf’ are the negative thoughts by the non-Muslims, especially the Chinese. They think that when someone converts to Islam, automatically he becomes Malay, who from their point of view, is of a low status and does not deserve any respect from them. (Berita Minggu, 1995)

The Deputy of PERKIM responded to the problem by bringing to light the fact that actually, the Chinese in China had accepted Islam a far longer time compared to the Malays in Malaysia. Here, the Chinese have a wrong perception when they assume that the word ‘Islam’ means ‘Malay’. (Mustaffa, 1995)

Besides that, most ‘muallafs’ face domestic problems, such as a woman ‘muallaf’ who becomes the second wife and not a citizenship of Malaysia. Most of them are divorced by their husbands and do not have a place to tell their suffering. When this situation takes place, they will give up and make the decision to revert to their old religion (murtad). (Wan Zulkifli Wan Yaakob, 1991)

Then, there are 70% of despondent ‘muallafs’ who face the problem of being dismissed by their families when they convert to Islam, and not inheriting any property from their parents. Although they try to communicate with their family, not all are ready to accept their reasons and understand them.

This is because their families cannot accept the reality that their children or siblings have converted to another religion and thus express strong dissent. (Darul fitrah, 2003)

Besides that, 48% of the 'muallafs' face relationship problems with their race, for according to latter, converting to another religion is a very dirty act. Furthermore, the 'muallaf' who works in a private firm that belongs to a Chinese does not receive a good treatment like other workers do. A 'muallaf' from Kelantan was invited by the employer's wife to eat pork, which is forbidden in Islam. They are also not aloud to perform the 'solat' (the daily prayers). Finally, they resign because they love Islam more than other things in this world. Besides that, we also have some cases where 'muallafs' keep their identity secret so that the society, especially their own races will not dismiss them from their life. (Darul fitrah, 2003)

Besides that, the wrong perception from the Malay society towards the 'muallaf' also happens. They are reluctant to accept the 'new brothers or sisters' because they think that the converts turn to Islam with certain hidden motives. For example, they convert to Islam because they want to marry a Muslim. They must choose Islam to solve their problems. This perception always happens in our country among the Malay society. They like to interfere with culture and religion. If we see the phenomena today, we can see the 'muallaf' is better than the born Muslim. Most Muslims do not carry out their responsibilities such as performing the 'solat', giving out alms (zakat), and performing the 'haj' that are laid out in the Islamic teachings. Instead, they like to do what is forbidden in Islam. (Wan Ros, 1991)

Then, 'muallaf' are also jeered by the people especially Muslims because they are not well versed in the Islamic teachings. This situation will happen when they recite the Quran, for they always have problems in pronouncing the Arabic words. This is because of insufficient teachers (ustaz and ustazah) to train them besides the lack of Islamic reference books whether in the Malay language, English, Chinese or Tamil. When this situation always happens, they feel very sad and ashamed because the societies have very negative perceptions of them. Actually, in this case, the persons responsible to help the 'muallaf' are the Muslims. As Muslims who care about Islamic 'dakwah and ukhuwah Islamiyah', we must give our support in helping the 'muallaf'.

(Wan Ros, 1991)

2.8 The strategy of Pertubuhan Kebajikan Islam Malaysia (PERKIM) to propagate the Islamic dakwah.

The Penang PERKIM propagates its Islamic ‘dakwah’ through the “ziarah and kebajikan”(visit and welfare). Every Muslim has the responsibility to propagate or introduce the Islamic ‘dakwah’, even with one word. The dais must cooperate with each other to bring a good effect to Islamic ‘dakwah’. Besides that, the activities to propagate the Islamic ‘dakwah’ are not limited to the ‘ustaz’ or dais only but those that do not have Islamic education, which means they can introduce Islam with their knowledge and their own expertise can practice the ‘dakwah’ activities.

(Ann Wan Seng, 2003)

Islam is a perfect religion that covers all aspects in our life, and it is a religious knowledge that can solve all the problems of Muslims by referring to the Quran and ‘sunnah’. Islamic religion not only covers the ‘fardhu ain’ aspect, but it also touches on the issues in society. So, to make Islamic ‘dakwah’ a success, we must have a method or “*modus operandi*” that can make enable the society to understand about Islamic ‘dakwah’ and the good values in Islam.

Besides using explanations, the ‘dakwah’ can also be introduced by showing a good example, or by being a good role model to the public. A good relationship must be formed between Muslims and non-Muslims.

The Muslims and dais especially must use all chances that they have to be close to their friends, neighbors, officemates, and anybody that they know from the non-Muslim groups. This situation can be realized through visits from house to house especially during festivals. From these activities, we can produce a good relationship and ‘silaturrahim’ between Muslims and non-Muslims. This relationship must be strengthened from time to time to create a good atmosphere in our multi-racial society.

(Ann Wan Seng, 2003)

Nowadays, 'visits' or 'ziarah' is one custom that is neglected by Muslims. In addition, the concept of 'ziarah' is also very limited, for example the society assumes the word 'ziarah' to mean returning to the village, visiting siblings, and attending a funeral. If we want the activities of Islamic 'dakwah' to be excellent, we must widen the scope of 'ziarah'. 'Ziarah' can be practiced anywhere and by anybody, especially those who are poor, 'muallafs', the old, orphans, patients in hospitals, and single mothers.

'Visits' and welfare must exist together where both elements must work together. Every Muslim must have awareness and responsibilities for helping their friends and those not able although they are from the non-Muslim group. Besides that, Islam encourages the Muslims to practice good deeds, which would be rewarded by Allah. Everything we do is to be done with a good intention.

Through the 'visits' and welfare, we can form a good relationship among the people in this world, and help the dais to propagate the Islamic 'dakwah' and upgrade the Islamic values in our unique society. (Ann Wan Seng, 2003)

Then, "*akhlak islamiah*" is one method to foster close ties with the non-Muslim society. Every religion in this world claims to practice good deeds. A good value in our attitude is a basis for every religion in this world. The religion that does not care about a good values, and ethics is not a good religion. A good attitude is very important in societies that have a religion and believe in the existence of God. Although the concept of God is different between every religion, the reality is, every religion must have a good value that guides the follower through life spiritually and show good mannerism, "adab" when we submit ourselves to God.

(Ann Wan Seng, 2003)

Islam does not only teach us about moral values, but also something that relates to “akidah” such as the belief in oneness of God. Islam is a good religion that rewards all good Muslims so that bad actions like war and terrorism can be solved. The coming of our Prophet Muhammad S.A.W showed a good image and also a role model for the Islamic ‘dakwah’ in propagating Islam to the Muslims and Non-Muslims. Our prophet Muhamad S.A.W introduced the ‘dakwah’ with a good approach, for example with politeness, diplomacy, and without force as said by Allah in the Quran:

لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ قَدْ تَبَيَّنَ الرُّشْدُ مِنَ الْغَيِّ فَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِالطَّاغُوتِ وَيُؤْمِنْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدْ
اسْتَمْسَكَ بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُثْقَىٰ لَا انْفِصَامَ لَهَا وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ (256)

“Let there be no compulsion in religion: Truth stands out clear from Error: whoever rejects Evil and believes in Allah hath grasped the trustworthiest handhold that never breaks. And Allah heareth and knoweth all things.” (Al-Quran. Al-Baqarah: 2:56)

This verse means that we are free to choose any religion in this world. Although Islam is a good religion, it is not a compulsion for us to choose it.

In Islamic ‘dakwah’, our prophet faced many restrictions and challenges but he was still cool and patient, did not give up but tried to talk with the people. The good attitude that was shown by our prophet Muhammad S.A.W gives a good effect in Islamic ‘dakwah’. Most people at that time were interested in Islam and finally chose Islam as their religion. So, the Muslims must follow how the Prophet used this good attitude to attract the Non-Muslims to convert to Islam.

The Muslims must practise the Islamic teachings in their life before they can introduce it to others. They must be a good role model to the society that is their ‘dakwah’ target. Islam is a universal religion so that the ‘muallaf’ can easily practice Islam in their life. The Muslims must be careful in teaching the ‘Muallaf’, for example teaching them what they do not know about Islam, loving them while forming a good relationship with them. In Islam, the good people in the ‘eyes’ of Allah is a person who always does good deeds and have full faith in Allah. (Ann Wan Seng, 2003)

CHAPTER THREE

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This study is exploratory and descriptive in nature as it attempts to analyze the social, cultural, and emotional aspects of the difficulties faced by PERKIM organization and muallaf. It is also intended to uncover the underlying reasons for the unfriendly attitude converts face from all groups of people.

The focus of this study is Muallaf in PERKIM, Penang who had converted to Islam. The data is collected from questionnaires distributed at random to a section of converts and from interviews with officials from PERKIM.

This chapter also explains about the research design, instruments used in collecting data, procedural details and analysis of the data.

In this study the tools used were this questionnaire survey, which was designed in three sections. Section A is demographic in content and is used to explore the personal characteristics of the respondents, such as age, marital status, level and nature of education. The selection of these independent variables is based on concerns thought relevant to the research problem and is supported by general observations and past findings. Some of the independent variables may turn out to be of no significance at the end, but they are considered worthy of being included for the purpose of the study.

Section B analyzes their reasons for converting to Islam; while Section C is about the perception of 'Muallaf' on PERKIM' s organization and the problems that were faced by the 'muallafs' when they were in PERKIM.