

# THE CONDUCT OF THE HAJJ AND ITS SOCIAL IMPACT ON THE MUSLIM COMMUNITY IN MALAYSIA 1975-2005

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## Article history

**Received date** : 4-2-2020  
**Revised date** : 6-2-2020  
**Accepted date** : 17-2-2020  
**Published date** : 14-3-2020

## To cite this document:

Ismail., S. (2020). The Conduct of The Hajj and Its Social Impact on The Muslim Community in Malaysia 1975-2005. *Journal of Islamic, Social, Economics and Development (JISED)*, 5 (28), 25 – 38.

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**Abstract:** *Hajj, the Muslim pilgrimage is the final pillar of Islam. The close association between hajj and the Malays as well as its status as a prominent religious foundation gives hajj a significant position in the society. Due to its religious significance and its unique position in the life of the Malays, the hajj has been a great interest to the Malaysian government and thus the government and its national hajj organization, Lembaga Tabung Haji (Tabung Haji) continuously undertakes a major role in the progress of the hajj institution in this country. Tabung Haji laid for the foundation and development of Malaysian hajj management. With the progress made in the pilgrimage management particularly during the period of 1975-2005, the hajj institution under the direction of Tabung Haji has experienced rapid expansion and reforms thus had direct social implications on the pilgrims and the hajj institution itself. Therefore, this paper examines the hajj institution in Malaysia under the administration of Tabung Haji. It also highlights the conduct of hajj from Malaysia with special reference to the roles of Tabung Haji and the hajj itself that have resulted in very important social consequences for all aspects of the pilgrims and pilgrimage. The researcher adopts a qualitative method that enables her to analyze and assess the material and information collected from the primary and secondary sources, interviews and personal observations. This study concluded that the period of 1975-2005 marked as a new transition era of the hajj institution in Malaysia into a more organized and modern hajj institution under the administration of Tabung Haji. The roles of Tabung Haji had considerably contributed to the significant changes in Malaysian hajj institution and led to transformative impacts on the conduct of hajj and on various social aspects of the Malaysian Muslim community life.*

**Keywords:** *Hajj Malaysia, Hajj Management, Hajj Social Impact, Lembaga Tabung Haji*

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## Introduction

Hajj is one of the most significant religious events in the lives of Malay Muslims in this country.<sup>1</sup> The pilgrimage is regarded as one of the greatest religious commandments prescribed by Allah (S.W.T) and the fulfilment of this act of worship is an aspiration of every Muslim. The history of hajj from Malaysia indicates that the hajj rites have special religious significance in the life of the Malays as this religious duty has been devotedly undertaken by the Muslims for centuries. Due to its special position in the life of Muslims, the hajj institution undoubtedly influences the lives of most Malaysian Muslims. The increasing influence of this religious institution over the Muslim community could bring enormous positive changes in their lives. Furthermore, the revolution initiated for the hajj institution in Malaysia and the significant roles of Lembaga Tabung Haji (Tabung Haji) in transforming the hajj institution have definitely transformed the conduct of the hajj for Malaysians and expanded the pilgrimage implications on the society. This article examines the significance of the hajj institution for Muslims in Malaysia. It also investigates the roles of this religious institution in reshaping the religious structures of the Malay society and its social impact on various aspects of the Muslims' life.

## Research Methodology

The researcher adopts a qualitative method that enables her to analyze and assess the materials collected from multiple sources such as reports, hajj programmes and archival data. These primary sources help furnish the study with solid accounts and evidence to examine the conduct of the hajj from 1975 to 2005 with special focus on the pilgrims' growth, the development of hajj management institution in Malaysia and the hajj influence on the Malay society. Available secondary sources are consulted in line with the given topics, and interviews and personal observations are conducted in selected areas in the states of Kedah, Perak, Pulau Pinang, Selangor and Kuala Lumpur. It is based on the assumption that these firsthand information and personal experiences would enhance the researcher's understanding in discussing the topics concerned from different perspectives.

## The Social Impacts of The Hajj

The hajj institution possesses a special position as well as a close relationship with the Islamic community in this country. As a socially oriented religious institution, the hajj institution in Malaysia does not only limit its functions as a religious institution but also plays the role as a dynamic and effective social institution. The inception of Tabung Haji in 1969 which marked a turning point for the conduct of hajj from Malaysia. The board had been thoughtfully structured under exclusive jurisdiction over pilgrimage management in Malaysia.<sup>2</sup> It was set-up as a statutory body that would enable Muslims to save their money for the purpose of performing hajj while at the same time manage pilgrimage operation for the Muslim community in the country.<sup>3</sup> Since the early days of its establishment, the organization has been constantly working towards the enhancement of hajj management and services for Malaysians, and providing appropriate means of saving and mobilizing Islamic deposits and investment services that are more conducive to the economic progress of the Muslims in Malaysia. This

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<sup>1</sup> Any discussion on Muslim pilgrimage from Malaysia refers to Malay pilgrimage. Not only are Malays constitutionally defined as Muslims, but they also make up nearly a hundred per cent of the total Muslim population and hajj participation from Malaysia.

<sup>2</sup> Laws of Malaysia, Act 8, Lembaga Urusan dan Tabung Haji Act, 1969, Laws of Malaysia, Act A168, Lembaga Urusan dan Tabung Haji (Amendment) Act, 1973, Laws of Malaysia, Act 535, Tabung Haji Act 1995.

<sup>3</sup> The corporation was established in accordance with Parliament Act 1969, Lembaga Urusan dan Tabung Haji Act 1969, (Act 8). See, Laws of Malaysia, Act 8, Lembaga Urusan dan Tabung Haji Act, 1969.

enables Muslims to perform hajj efficiently, at the least possible costs with less hardships on them and strengthens the socio-economic position of the Muslim community through its involvement in various economic activities.

In Malaysia, Tabung Haji was established as a quasi-government body to administer all matters concerning funds and welfare of pilgrims as provided by Pilgrims Act of 1969 and later Pilgrim Act of 1995. Tabung Haji act, therefore, provides the corporation exclusive jurisdiction and rights in Malaysian pilgrimage affairs. It was also to provide the hajj board leverage on hajj's financial aspects and matters concerning savings and investments permitted by Islamic laws. Hence, the scope of this statutory body, under direct control of the Prime Minister's Department, was extended from management of deposits, investments and commercial sectors to formulation of hajj policies, operation, management and services.

During the period that extends from the middle of the 1970s to 2005, Malaysian hajj witnessed a series of developments associated with the establishment of Tabung Haji. This period also marked a new transition of the hajj institution and management for the Muslim community in Malaysia into a more organized and modern institution under the administration of Tabung Haji. The board has been streamlining its own operating framework and other pilgrimage-related services in Malaysia and in the holy lands, aspiring to provide the best services to pilgrims throughout the duration of hajj. Intermittently, the board also keeps abreast with the developments in the pilgrimage management system, utilization of modern transportation and technology innovations, and strong cordial affiliation with the Malaysian and Saudi Arabian governments.

The establishment of Tabung Haji in 1969 not only contributes to the development of the hajj institution in this country but also functions as a high impact social transformation agent towards the communities in Malaysia. The establishment of this hajj entity as the sole institution in Malaysia that was given full authority in the hajj services has brought significant changes in the hajj management system. As the main hajj body in the country, TH has played its role in giving protection, regulatory control and welfare to all the Malaysian pilgrims in this country as well as in the holy land with world class hajj management services which abide by all international standards. The contributions of Tabung Haji have helped solved a variety of problems faced by the government, hajj related agencies as well as all the pilgrims before this and it has contributed towards the positive impact in the hajj management system and the Muslims' hajj experiences.

The primary objective of Tabung Haji is to provide services to Malaysian Muslims who intend to perform the hajj with their halal sources of savings and investments. Tabung Haji is now not only a proven financial corporation for Muslims and one of the economic key players in Malaysia, but has also become a tool in rectifying the socio-economic problems of the Malays. On hajj affairs, the board serves as a strong platform for hajj candidates in fulfilling their aspiration to achieve *haji mabrur* (accepted hajj by Allah Subhnanahu wa-ta'ala, S.W.T.) at reasonable costs and through a variety of professional services.<sup>4</sup> As soon as a candidate is registered for hajj, complete and meticulous arrangements will be undertaken by Tabung Haji on behalf of the pilgrim until his/her return. The board provides the necessary information

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<sup>4</sup> LTH, *Tabung Haji "A Catalyst for the Economic Development of the Ummah"*, (Kuala Lumpur: Author, n. d), 4.

pertaining to the pilgrimage, for instance, the required hajj expenses,<sup>5</sup> medical examination, travel arrangements, hajj courses and render comprehensive services to pilgrims throughout the duration of the hajj.<sup>6</sup> With all these preparations and services at home and abroad, pilgrims find that they only have to concentrate on attaining *haji mabrur*.

The Tabung Haji is a strong platform for the pilgrims to fulfil their aspiration to obtain *haji mabrur* with competitive costs but professional services. In terms of spirituality, Tabung Haji has helped the pilgrims fulfil two main prerequisites to attain *haji mabrur*, which are to prepare the expenses from halal sources as well as provide comprehensive hajj education that helps shape the Muslim personality as well as the completion of the pilgrimage. Various hajj guidance programme such as the hajj courses, publications in the print and electronic media, religious teachers' and experts' guidance are given free of charge by the Tabung Haji to provide understanding and help prospective pilgrims towards obtaining the accepted hajj. The success of Tabung Haji in providing the best hajj education for the Malaysian Muslims produces pilgrims who not only possess a deeper understanding of the religion but also possess praiseworthy characteristics that are in line with the hajj philosophy and the concept of *haji mabrur* itself. This at once strengthens the image of the Malaysian pilgrims at the global level as being knowledgeable, with quality as well as having good character.<sup>7</sup> Positive attitudes and high discipline shown by the Malaysian pilgrims not only put the name of Malaysia in a noble light in the eyes of the world but also save them from various incidents including injuries and deaths of other pilgrims in the holy land.<sup>8</sup>

From the social aspect, Tabung Haji has provided a variety of incentives for the pilgrims to help lighten their burden even though the costs of hajj are continuously increasing from time to time. Tabung Haji works hard to maintain the costs of the pilgrimage at the minimum limit and implements many efforts to absorb the costs of the hajj every year. For instance, the cost of the hajj for pilgrims from Peninsula Malaysia from 1978 to 1989 was at the rate of RM4,000-5,000. Even though there was a little increase in the costs during that period, the costs imposed on the Malaysian citizens were much lower compared to neighbouring countries. The hajj costs for Malaysian citizens in 1985 was RM5,000 compared to Indonesia, which was RM7,000 and Singapore, which was from RM6,171-7,405.<sup>9</sup> In addition, Tabung Haji also provides hajj subsidies for first time pilgrims. For the pilgrimage season in 1432H (2010/2011), the total costs of the hajj for each mu'assasah pilgrim was RM14,340. However, the pilgrims only had

<sup>5</sup> Haji Ahmad Haji Yeop Abdul Hamid, "Management of Hajj", *Proceedings of the Workshop on the Organization and Management of the Pilgrims Management and Fund Board of Malaysia*, (Jeddah: Islamic Research and Training Institute, 1987), 32.

<sup>6</sup> LUTH, *Journey to the Holy Land*, (Kuala Lumpur: Author, 1986), 13.

<sup>7</sup> Interview with Mat Admara Alang Azizdin, General Manager, Hajj Agency Division, Hajj Department, LTH, Tabung Haji Headquarters, Kuala Lumpur, 6 August 2012, Interview with Mohamad Khadafi Rofie, Mohamad Khadafi Rofie, (performed the hajj in 1985, 1997, son of a *haji shaykh* in Kedah, Tabung Haji's religious teacher in Malaysia and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia), Sintok, Kedah, 7 March 2013, "Saudi Newspaper Sings Praises for Tabung Haji", <[http://ww1.utusan.com.my/utusan/special.asp?pr=PR11&y=2004&dt=0116&pub=Utusan\\_Express&sec=Front\\_Page&pg=fp\\_10.htm25](http://ww1.utusan.com.my/utusan/special.asp?pr=PR11&y=2004&dt=0116&pub=Utusan_Express&sec=Front_Page&pg=fp_10.htm25)>, (accessed 20 December 2015).

<sup>8</sup> LTH, *Laporan Tahunan 2005*, (Kuala Lumpur: Author, 2005), 5, Interview with Tengku Aziz Raja Abdullah, General Manager, Guidance Division, Hajj Department, LTH, Tabung Haji Headquarters, Kuala Lumpur, 6 August 2012.

<sup>9</sup> LUTH, *Rujukan Slide Aktiviti Masalah & Syor Dalam Urusan Haji Di Tanah Suci Bagi Mesyuarat Badan Perunding Islam*, (Kuala Lumpur: Author, n. d), 2.

to pay RM9,980 for their pilgrimage, which was the same price imposed by Tabung Haji on the pilgrims in the year 2009. This hajj subsidy is the highest given to Malaysians every year.<sup>10</sup> Besides that, the hajj management costs as well as the hajj operations in Malaysia and Saudi Arabia are borne by Tabung Haji without burdening the pilgrims. For example, in the year 2002, Tabung Haji allocated RM22 million to implement various welfare programme for the pilgrims as well as RM28 million for medical facilities excluding administrative costs that amounted to RM800-1000 for each pilgrim where for that year the total number of pilgrims was about 49,864.<sup>11</sup> Tabung Haji also prepares welfare funds for pilgrims who require them whether in Malaysia or throughout the hajj in the holy cities. To help sponsor the senior citizens who are financially incapable to perform the pilgrimage, a senior citizens' fund was established by Tabung Haji to handle the matter.<sup>12</sup>

Even though it is established as a corporate entity, Tabung Haji does not make any profit in the pilgrimage management. On the other hand, it uses the profits gained from its economic activities to sponsor the hajj management for the Muslims in this country. Besides that Tabung Haji also prepares comprehensive hajj services to Malaysian citizens beginning from the provision of the hajj savings facilities, hajj registration, and hajj operations in Malaysia and in Saudi Arabia until the welcoming arrangements of the pilgrims' return from the holy cities. All these services are not enjoyed by pilgrims of many other Muslim countries.

The competitive costs as well as the comprehensive hajj services provided by Tabung Haji have attracted and given opportunities to many members of the community from different backgrounds to fulfil their hajj. The introduction of the modern, comprehensive and best hajj management services for the pilgrims in Malaysia and Saudi Arabia is not only being lauded by the Malaysian pilgrims but also by the Saudi Arabian government. The services of the hajj organizer have also gained many awards as well as acknowledgements, locally and internationally.<sup>13</sup> Besides that, Tabung Haji and the Malaysian pilgrims are considered the best examples for many parties. Today, Malaysia and the Tabung Haji are recognized as one of the best hajj service providers in the world and serves as a benchmark for other countries. The success of Tabung Haji not only contributes towards the high reputation of this Islamic institution in the eyes of many races in this country but also contributes towards the positive image of Islam on the global stage. Besides that, this world class hajj service not only contributes to the social development of Muslims in this country but also to Muslims in other countries, especially those who have received services from the Tabung Haji.

The haji institution has significant roles and influence on the Muslims in this country. The importance of this haji institution can be seen through the increase of the total pilgrims over the years. Besides, this period between 1975-2005 also witnessed a remarkable growth not

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<sup>10</sup> Nor Baizura Basri, "Tabung Haji Likely to Give Higher Dividends this Year", *The Edge*, 13 July, 2012.

<sup>11</sup> "RM22 Juta untuk Kebajikan Jemaah Haji", *Utusan Malaysia*, 5 February, 2002, 12, Nazura Ngah, "Arab Saudi Jamin Keselamatan Jemaah", *Berita Minggu*, 6 January 2002, 5.

<sup>12</sup> LUTH, *Laporan Tahunan 1977*, (Kuala Lumpur: Author, 1977), 20-21, LUTH, *Laporan Tahunan 1984*, (Kuala Lumpur: Author, 1984), 13, LUTH, *Laporan Tahunan 1989*, (Kuala Lumpur: Author, 1989), 58-60, LUTH, *Laporan Tahunan 1991*, (Kuala Lumpur: Author, 1991), 436, LUTH, *Laporan Tahunan 1992*, (Kuala Lumpur: Author, 1992), 43.

<sup>13</sup> LTH, *Laporan Tahunan 1995*, (Kuala Lumpur: Author, 1995), 14, LTH, *Asia Pacific Quality Award Report*, (Kuala Lumpur: Author, 1999), 32, LTH, *Laporan Anugerah Kualiti Perdana Menteri 2007*, (Kuala Lumpur: Author, 2007), 126-127, Interview with Tengku Aziz Raja Abdullah.

only in the development of the conduct of pilgrimage but also in pilgrims' traffics. In 1900, the recorded number of pilgrims was 6,861. The approximate number of pilgrims by sea and air transportation was 9,702 in 1970.<sup>14</sup> However, there was a significant increase in the number of Malaysian pilgrims from 15,735 in 1975<sup>15</sup> to approximately 49,009 in 2005.<sup>16</sup> In the first part of the twentieth century, due to the costly journey of hajj, only a few Malays were able to perform it. Among these were the elite segments of the Malay society, members of the traditional ruling class and the upper levels of the peasant society.<sup>17</sup> However, from the 1970s onwards, a bigger number of the lower and middle income groups of the Malay society participated in the hajj, hence leading to substantial changes in the composition of pilgrimage in the last four decades.<sup>18</sup> Besides that, there is a stream of an increasing number of pilgrims performing the pilgrimage more than once every year. For example, from 1979 to 1987 from a total of 174,422 pilgrims, 5.8% of them had performed the hajj more than once.<sup>19</sup> The number of pilgrims from this country is also among the highest in the holy land. Therefore, the hajj gives a positive impact on the social and spiritual development of the community that is shown through the increasing number of pilgrims as well as the increase in the understanding and the tendency of the community towards Islamic teachings where a part of this effort is pioneered by the hajj institution as well as Tabung Haji itself.<sup>20</sup>

The Tabung Haji's high standard of efficiency and comprehensive services to the pilgrims, rapid development and related reforms initiated by the corporation for the hajj institution in Malaysia and support from various parties, had greatly alleviated the hardships and perplexities of the past over the performance hajj. In this process, the hajj performance under the administration of Tabung Haji influenced the conduct of the hajj and significantly transformed the religious experiences of the pilgrims and the performance itself. This development had further accelerated the pilgrims flow and expanded the pilgrimage implications for the society. Today, not only rural and elderly pilgrims but Muslims from all walks of life and a growing number of young Malaysian Muslims are participating in the annual hajj.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Zainal Abidin Abdul Wahid, Mohd Amin Haji Hassan, Muhd, Yusof Ibrahim, *Sejarah Perkembangan Tabung Haji Malaysia 30 Tahun*, (Kuala Lumpur: Jabatan Perdana Menteri, 1993), 176-179.

<sup>15</sup> LUTH, *Laporan Tahunan 1975*, (Kuala Lumpur: Author, 1975), 4, LUTH, *Laporan Tahunan 1992*, (Kuala Lumpur: Author, 1992), 25-26, LUTH, *Perangkaan Jemaah Haji, November 1992*, (Kuala Lumpur: Author, 1992), 2-3.

<sup>16</sup> The number of Malaysian pilgrims from 1995 onwards is subject to the quota system and the annual quota increment by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. This system allows only 0.1 percent of the population of each country to go for annual hajj. The quota system agreed in March 1988 by the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC). LTH, *Perangkaan Jemaah Haji Malaysia 1963/1383H-2015/1436H*, (Kuala Lumpur: Author, 2015).

<sup>17</sup> M. B. McDonnell, "The Conduct of the Hajj from Malaysia and its Socio-Economic Impact on Malay Society: a Descriptive and Analytical Study, 1860-1981," (Ph.D. Thesis, Columbia University, 1986), 77, Public Records Office and British Library, (Oriental and India Office Collections), "Report on Pilgrimage to Mecca 1927", Vol.6, 149, "Report on the Hajj 1949", Vol.7, 72-73, "Report on the Hajj 1950", Vol.7, 2, In Records of the hajj, a documentary history of the pilgrimage to Mecca, Vol. 3-8, (London: Gerrards Cross: Archive International Group, 1993).

<sup>18</sup> LUTH, *Perangkaan Jemaah Haji, November 1992*.

<sup>19</sup> LUTH, *Laporan Kajian Mengenai Jemaah Haji Menunaikan Haji Lebih Daripada Sekali*, (Kuala Lumpur: Author, 1988), 50-51.

<sup>20</sup> Interview with Ahmad Ruzman Ahmad Razali, General Manager, Domestic Operation Division, Hajj Department, LTH, Tabung Haji Headquarters, Kuala Lumpur, 6 August 2012, Interview with Tengku Aziz Raja Abdullah.

<sup>21</sup> LUTH, *Perangkaan Jemaah Haji, November 1992, Perangkaan Jemaah Haji Mengikut Jantina, 1981/1401H-2015/1436H, Perangkaan Jemaah Haji Mengikut Negeri, 1994/1414H-2015/1436H, Perangkaan Jemaah Haji*

As an Islamic social organization, Tabung Haji has made Islam as an organizational guide where the core of the operations and activities of this hajj body stresses on the obedience to Islamic laws. The concepts of submission towards Allah (S.W.T.) as well as brotherhood in Islam have also become the main practice in this hajj organizational management. The Islamic universal principles become the backbone of Tabung Haji's values thus helping to promote impeccable working ethics. Besides that, various human resource and human capital development programme are implemented by the Tabung Haji to produce professional and productive staff based on Islamic values.<sup>22</sup> In the effort to produce committed and highly motivated staff, Tabung Haji has prepared a conducive and interesting working environment through attractive remuneration packages, training and staff development programme to enhance their professional development, promotions, as well as staff welfare programme in which their personal, physical and spiritual needs are taken care of.<sup>23</sup> This approach has turned Tabung Haji into one of the most advanced organizations in performing their social responsibilities for the staff compared to government agencies and other statutory bodies. The approach utilized by Tabung Haji has created *Bumiputera* potentials through high performance working culture besides allowing them to generate higher income through highly skilled workforce.<sup>24</sup> The workforce generated by Tabung Haji consists of a myriad Muslim professionals in various fields, contributing to the success of this hajj body as one of the most well-known Islamic organizations in the world.

This hajj body also utilizes the service approach to its customers based on Islamic work ethics.<sup>25</sup> The Islamic services and approaches prepared by Tabung Haji with the purpose of heightening the Islamic symbols not only attract more Muslims to deal with Tabung Haji but they also become examples for other Islamic bodies as well as becoming models and missionaries for customers and the community in general. Tabung Haji services, which are expanded through its branches across the country, also provide benefits to the Muslim community in this country. Besides fulfilling its marketing strategies, the establishment of Tabung Haji branches enables this Islamic body to contribute towards the spiritual and socio-economic development of the local communities through various services as well as facilities.

As a public social institution, Tabung Haji also plays an important role in the social development of this country. Generally, the close ties between the hajj body and the community have contributed towards the success of Tabung Haji as a global Islamic entity. Tabung Haji's corporate social responsibility programme (CSR) are seen as an important element for this hajj agency to contribute back and share its success with the stakeholders

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*Mengikut Kumpulan Umur, 2005/1425H-2015/1436H, )* In LTH, *Perangkaan Jemaah Haji Malaysia 1963/1383H-2015/1436H*, (Kuala Lumpur: Author, 2015).

<sup>22</sup> LTH, *Anugerah Kualiti Perdana Menteri 2007*, 54, Interview with Tengku Aziz Raja Abdullah, author's personal observations and fieldwork study at Tabung Haji's branches in Jitra, Kedah, Alor Setar, Kedah, Bayan Lepas, Pulau Pinang, Teluk Intan, Perak, Klang, Selangor, Shah Alam, Selangor, Kelana Jaya, Selangor, Tabung Haji Headquarters, Kuala Lumpur in 2010, 2011, 2012, and 2013.

<sup>23</sup> LTH, *Asia Pacific Quality Award Report*, 41.

<sup>24</sup> Interview with Abdullah Talib, Senior Manager, Health Division, Hajj Department, LTH, Tabung Haji Headquarters, Kuala Lumpur, 7 August 2012, Interviews with Ahmad Ruzman Ahamad Razali and Tengku Aziz Raja Abdullah, Khazanah Nasional Berhad, "Program Transformasi GLC", *Wacana Fikrah Ummah Agenda Pemerkasaan Bumiputera: GLC Sebagai Pemangkin Ekonomi Negara*, 27 November 2014, 21.

<sup>25</sup> Author's personal observations and fieldwork study at Tabung Haji's branches in Jitra, Kedah, Alor Setar, Kedah, Bayan Lepas, Pulau Pinang, Teluk Intan, Perak, Klang, Selangor, Shah Alam, Selangor, Kelana Jaya, Selangor, Tabung Haji Headquarters, Kuala Lumpur in 2010, 2011, 2012, and 2013.

through organizing various social service and community development programme from time to time such as educational and humanity aids, development funds in and out of the country and many more.<sup>26</sup> Besides handling its responsibilities to its main stakeholders who are the depositors and Malaysian pilgrims, Tabung Haji CSR programmes also encompass the target groups who need them, students, business partners of Tabung Haji as well as members of Tabung Haji themselves. In exercising their corporate social responsibility, various community programme have been carried out towards bringing together Tabung Haji and the community.<sup>27</sup> This social responsibility programmes are important base for every Islamic organization including Tabung Haji because they befit the Islamic principles and because they contribute to the social well-being and development of the community. Besides that, programme like these bring the Tabung Haji closer to the community as well as provide the opportunity for the community members to internalize the concept of the establishment of Tabung Haji based on the sharing of blessings which means that all profits from Tabung Haji are shared amongst the community. It is also a platform for Muslims to help each other, to do good.

Besides that, the subsidiary companies of Tabung Haji also carry out their own respective CSR programme to contribute to the community's social development. TH Properties Sdn. Bhd., for example, is involved in educational and community welfare activities. Various CSR programme are also designed to develop the economy by creating a friendly market through smart sharing and support for the local entrepreneurs and vendors. Further, it also stimulates the development of the local community socio-economy through development programme that are carried out. The farming sector, for example, is Tabung Haji's main business sector through its subsidiary, TH Plantations Berhad. The local community shares the benefits from the development of the land for plantation through job opportunities as well as improved infrastructure. Besides, it also opens opportunities for businesses that nourish local entrepreneurs through financial, professional, and expert assistance and experience which would then help the community to enjoy higher income. The involvement of the Tabung Haji subsidiaries in the farming and construction sectors also brings awareness to these organizations to their responsibilities towards the environment. This awareness is translated through various efforts such as the care and conservation of the environment by minimizing as well as regulating the effects of the activities carried out. Among the approaches taken are by creating environmentally friendly industrial areas, land conservation as well as agricultural methods which are more environmentally friendly.<sup>28</sup>

Based on the feeling of responsibility to provide facilities to prospective pilgrims, in preparing the equipment needed for the holy land as well as a more complete pilgrimage, Tabung Haji has carried out a Tabung Haji Corporate friendship programme. This programme is one of the initiatives under the Tabung Haji CSR programme that provides opportunities for various agencies including corporate bodies and private companies to contribute in helping the pilgrimage preparation whether it is in financial assistance or equipment needed for the hajj. This programme which was first introduced in the 1980s sees the uniqueness in combining the

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<sup>26</sup> LTH, *Laporan Tahunan 2005*, 47, LTH, *Anugerah Kualiti Perdana Menteri 2007*, 44-47, Interview with Tengku Aziz Raja Abdullah.

<sup>27</sup> Interview with Ahmad Ruzman Ahamad Razali.

<sup>28</sup> LTH, *Laporan Tahunan 2005*, 52-63, LTH, "Corporate Social Responsibility Efforts by Subsidiaries of TH", <<http://www.tabunghaji.gov.my/corporate-social-responsibility-efforts-by-subsidiaries-of-th>>, (accessed 23 April 2014).

participation of many corporate organizations, major and minor private companies in one corporate social responsibility programme which was activated by Tabung Haji towards the social development of the Islamic community, especially for the Malaysian pilgrims.<sup>29</sup>

In strengthening the ties between Tabung Haji and the pilgrims, Tabung Haji has carried out a brotherhood gathering programme among the pilgrims (the Hujjaj Assembly Program, HISHAJ) in each state and district. The main purpose of this programme is to unite the ummah in line with the philosophy as well as the spirit of the hajj itself. Besides, this programme acts to maintain the spirit of the hajj within the participants through events on knowledge promotion. The main aim of this programme is the formation of a hajj generation which will become missionary agents and the front liners in the development of the community and country. The implementation of programme like these provides a guide to the potentials of the hajj institution and its influence towards the social reformation in the community.<sup>30</sup> Besides that, the brotherhood network amongst the pilgrims nationwide is strengthened through these programme as well as the efforts carried out by various parties in the recruitment of the hajj generation as agents of social transformation contributing towards unity, prosperity as well as positive changes in the members of the community.

Since the beginning of the 1970s, the rise of religious awareness and the Islamization movement in this country have led to a strong influence towards the community. The Islamization process has also gained attention from various parties including the government. The government is also involved in the rise of Islam which began in the early 1980s where Islamization policies have become important aspects in the national administration policy. This development becomes the catalyst for the spiritual development among Muslims in Malaysia. The religious awareness, which was triggered by the Islamization process in this country, has also contributed to the development of the hajj institution in Malaysia. This development also encourages the increase in the number of people performing the hajj. The increase in the number of pilgrims as well as Muslims who acquired the *haji mabrur* contributes towards the social transformational process within the community as well as the welfare of the country. Besides, it also provide positive effects on the development of Islam as well as the preservation of the Malaysian Islamic civilization.

As a social institution, the hajj institution is also seen as an agent of change of a community. From the Islamic perspective, the hajj institution has an important role in the development of individuals and the community because the concept of the hajj itself can be made into the main core of capital development and Islamic civilization development. Performing the hajj, for example requires adequate knowledge, preparation as well as positive change in attitude which underlie in the hajj philosophy itself. Various formal and informal learning mediums such as readings, courses, seminars, discussions and so on and the various efforts carried out by

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<sup>29</sup> Interview with Abdullah Talib, Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia, *Kejayaan Institusi-Institusi Agama di Bawah Menteri di Jabatan Perdana Menteri*, (Kuala Lumpur: JAKIM, 2013),143, “Program Sahabat Korporat TH Beri Manfaat”, *Utusan Malaysia*, 9 August, 2014, “Program Sahabat Korporat TH Ringankan Jemaah”, *Mingguan Malaysia*, 4 August 2013, “Sahabat Korporat Tabung Haji Makin Ramai”, *Buletin Tabung Haji*, October 2009-January 2010,5, author’s personal observations and fieldwork study at the Tabung Haji Complex, Kelana Jaya, Selangor, 8 November 2010 and 26-29 October 2011, author’s personal observations and fieldwork study at the Tabung Haji Complex, Bayan Lepas, Pulau Pinang and Pulau Pinang International Airport, 16-17 October 2011.

<sup>30</sup> Interviews with Tengku Aziz Raja Abdullah and Mohamad Khadafi Rofie, LTH, “Program Himpunan Persaudaraan Hujjaj (HISHAJ)”, < <http://www.tabunghaji.gov.my/program-hishaj> > , (accessed 9 August 2015).

Tabung Haji and the pilgrims themselves from time to time will definitely produce hajj graduates who are knowledgeable with good characteristics. The hajj institution through the educational approach of the “hajj school” and “hajj education” before, during and after performing the hajj will definitely produce a righteous community possessing positive values as well as capable of contributing and influencing attitudes and good values towards their families and the surrounding community. The spiritual and human development process that produces righteous and pious believers through the hajj education and knowledge development contributes towards social development.

Moreover, the pilgrims have the potential to become agents of social transformation in a community. The community generally views highly those who have performed the hajj because they have completed the last pillar of Islam. The pilgrims, especially those who came back from the pilgrimage and showed positive changes, gain more respect and are seen as examples in the society. Furthermore, most of the pilgrims who came back from Makkah have higher religious awareness and try to apply the Islamic model in various aspects of life besides protecting the way of life and the behaviour as an individual who was invited as a “guest of Allah (S.W.T.)”.<sup>31</sup>

Having performed the hajj also brings positive changes towards the pilgrims. For example, they become more productive after coming back from the hajj, wiser in balancing their daily lives, and are diligent in becoming better believers as well as having the desire to improve themselves and the community. Besides, the pilgrims also have the desire to inculcate positive values within each member of their family as well as the local community. They work closely with the local community, play active roles and perform community activities besides being more alert on current issues and development.<sup>32</sup> Their perseverance to change themselves and the community towards goodness and social wellness besides receiving positive response from the community towards their efforts would definitely contribute towards social transformation and reformation in the societal structure. This development would definitely lead to changes within the community which then would contribute to the well-being of the country. Besides, the manners of the pilgrims would also influence the attitudes and behaviours of members of other communities. The members of the closest community to them would be encouraged to perform the pilgrimage together so as to feel the same experiences. This pilgrimage chain would lead to the social transformation process of the community from time to time.

The education process or *tarbiah haji* indirectly contributes towards the development of the human capital which becomes the main asset of an organization and the country because it plays a big role in shaping the direction and the goals of an institution or country. The human capital is a group of knowledgeable, confident, morally good, ethical, polite, disciplined, dynamic, innovative, creative, healthy, patriotic, fair, progressive and competitive individuals.<sup>33</sup> The hajj education processes indirectly produce these individuals with the said

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<sup>31</sup> Interviews with Mat Admara Alang Azizdin, Abdullah Talib, Tengku Aziz Raja Abdullah and selected Malay pilgrims who performed hajj from year 1949-year 2012.

<sup>32</sup> LUTH, *Laporan Kajian Mengenai Jemaah Haji Menunaikan Haji lebih daripada Sekali*, 35-36, 39-45, 48, Interviews with Tengku Aziz Raja Abdullah, Ahmad Ruzman Ahamad Razali, Abdullah Talib, Mat Admara Alang Azizdin, Mohamad Khadafi Rofie and selected Malay pilgrims who performed hajj from year 1949-year 2012.

<sup>33</sup>The Prime Minister’s Office of Malaysia, “Pembangunan Modal Insan”, <<http://www.pmo.gov.my/modalinsan/index.html>>, (accessed 12 February 2012).

attributes.<sup>34</sup> The hajj institution helps produce the balanced human capital not only in terms of the acquisition of knowledge and skills but also possessing ideal personality with a strong grip of the religion. It would also contribute towards first class human capital capable of fulfilling the needs of the individual, family, community and nation development through the acquisition of knowledge and higher skills, proactive attitudes, high morality as well as the culture to contribute towards development and mutual benefits. Such components help to produce holistic human capital which is a critical element in achieving the national agenda.

Besides that, as a result of better religious awareness through hajj, Muslims see their careers and work as religious duties and claims which should be implemented as best as they could. This religious motivation creates internal strengths within the Muslims to continuously improve the quality of their careers from time to time. Also, with the positive values inculcated during the pilgrimage such as positive attitudes, discipline and valuing time, they indirectly influence the pilgrims' improved self-performance and work ethics. They also have clearer goals in their careers and have the desire to contribute effectively towards their organization.

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To develop the culture of high performance work, moral factors such as integrity and character become the main driving force of such transformation. Besides, the spirit of cooperation together with teamwork culture are among the main elements that contribute towards the improvement of quality and work performance. These are the basics enshrined in Islamic teachings that are manifested implicitly and explicitly in the hajj worship itself. A strong grip in religion together with deep internalization of the concept and philosophy of the hajj itself would lead to the development of a first class human capital and high performance work culture.

The hajj, which is the biggest annual world Muslim assembly, is a symbol of equal relationship, brotherhood and unity. For many Muslims, this is their first contact with the outside world. For the majority of the Malaysian pilgrims, the hajj in the holy land is their first experience in global interactions. The pilgrimage gives them the opportunity to meet and interact with Muslims from around the world. Even with language limitation and various background barriers, the relationships among the pilgrims from around the world are still forged in various ways. Such experiences and exposures gained through the interactions and observations in the holy land broaden the knowledge and understanding as well as the perspectives of the pilgrims. The hajj has created awareness on Islamic unity and brotherhood across racial and ethnic borders globally and universally. It breeds equality and respect among and between individual pilgrims.

Besides that, the hajj also becomes a medium to forge brotherhood among Muslims in this country. As they all come from the same country, they inculcate closer relationship within family members and the community when they attend the hajj programme in the homeland, in the holy land and as well as after returning home. Besides, the hajj also gives the pilgrims the opportunity to meet new acquaintances while in the homeland or in the holy land. Such Islamic

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<sup>34</sup> LUTH, *Laporan Kajian Mengenai Jemaah Haji Menunaikan Haji lebih daripada Sekali*, 35, Interviews with Ahmad Ruzman Ahamad Razali, Abdullah Talib and Tengku Aziz Raja Abdullah.

<sup>35</sup> Interviews with Ahmad Ruzman Ahamad Razali, Mat Admara Alang Azizdin, Abdullah Talib, Tengku Aziz Raja Abdullah, Mohamad Khadafi Rofie and selected Malay pilgrims who performed hajj in 2012.

relationships would continue to remain strong after returning to their homeland. The pilgrims also tend to inculcate better relationships with family members and their local community as demanded by the Islamic teachings. They gain more comprehension of the Islamic teachings after coming back from the holy land.<sup>36</sup> This development would reduce the individualistic values towards the priority of communal life as enshrined in the context of the hajj practice itself. The social implications from this brotherhood and social interactions would result in unity and solidarity within the community, thereby contributing to the formation of a harmonious community.

Social unity is the main issue emphasized by the government because it is one of the important components in national development. In a multi-racial, multi-religious and multi-cultural country, it is important for Malaysians to practise tolerance, mutual respect besides understanding of each other to guarantee racial unity. The Islamic teachings and the hajj philosophy itself require each individual to respect each other, to be tolerant, help each other and promote equality without looking at the individuals' background. Their hajj experience in Makkah would definitely widen the pilgrims' thinking and knowledge. The Muslim congregation from the whole world not only fosters bond of brotherhood amongst them but also opens their eyes and minds towards the variety of culture, language and the human race.<sup>37</sup> Such experience indirectly improves their perspectives on their lives as well as reduces racial sentiments within the individuals.<sup>38</sup> This development helps breed a community with high racial tolerance, respecting the diversity within the country, coupled with positive thinking in various fields. These are the characteristics implicit in the understanding and unity in a multi-ethnic country like Malaysia and such features would become the catalysts to an excellent Malaysian civilization.

## Conclusion

The conduct of the hajj from Malaysia under the administration of Tabung Haji has transformed the lives of most Malaysian Muslims for many years. The hajj organization has been phenomenally successful in building its reputation as one of the strongest Islamic financial institutions, owned and managed by Muslims and pioneer of the modern concept of hajj management in the Muslim world. In fact, Malaysia's modern concept of hajj management is considered among the best in the world and serves as a benchmark for other countries. In socio-economic terms, Tabung Haji does not only provide Malay Muslims with a new Islamic avenue to invest their money and secure their savings, but also spurs progress for the society. From social and religious perspectives, the conduct of the hajj is not only an ancient religious duty but it also brings to Muslims new religious perspectives, enlarger their contact with other people, strengthens their feeling of Muslim solidarity and introduces some changes in their lives. In summary, the Malaysian experience shows the hajj gives positive impacts on the social situations of the Muslim community in this country. The institution of hajj and Tabung Haji also prove their capability as important instruments in handling the various issues in the

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<sup>36</sup> Interviews with Tengku Aziz Raja Abdullah and selected Malay pilgrims who performed hajj from year 1949-year 2012.

<sup>37</sup> Interviews with Mohamad Khadafi Rofi, Tengku Aziz Raja Abdullah and selected Malay pilgrims who performed hajj from year 1949-year 2012.

<sup>38</sup> LUTH, *Laporan Kajian Mengenai Jemaah Haji Menunaikan Haji lebih daripada Sekali*, 48, interviews with selected Malay pilgrims who performed hajj from year 1949-year 2012.

Malaysian society. This is proven by the significant and abundant contributions of the religious institutions towards the country's social development.

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