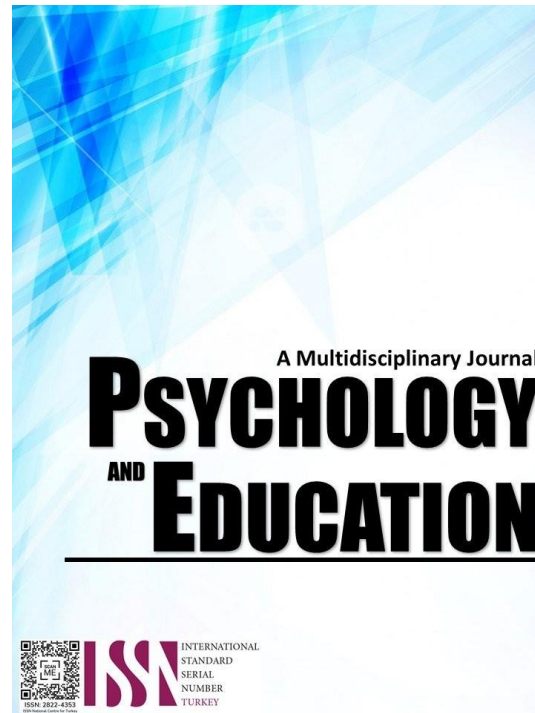


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The Unheard Voices of Jamiatul Waqf Al-Islami bil Filibbin Scholars in Promoting Jihad Through Education

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Abstract

This study aims to provide a different perspective on the discussion of Jihad focusing on its educational aspects. Specifically, it seeks to understand the significance of Jamiatul Waqf Al-Islami bil Filibbin in Marawi City particularly in its endeavor in the academe such as policies, curriculum and activities in promoting the concept of Jihad. Moreover, the study aims to accumulate responses from the talamidh (students), asatidh (teachers), administration and other Muslims, not directly affiliated regarding the alleged involvement of the madrasah in violent extremism. Despite its reputation, the madrasah gained notoriety for allegedly harboring the group behind the Marawi siege. This negative perception has led to stereotypes about the madrasah institution notwithstanding its contribution in cultivating individuals grounded in Islamic teachings. Considering this, the researchers believe that there has to be qualitative research that will explore the role of madaris like Waqf and how they implement the concept of Jihad through education. The study employs a qualitative descriptive approach, specifically using purposive sampling. Results of the study was obtained from the twenty (20) students, ten (10) ustadz and other administrators through oral interview. The researchers deliberately selected Jamiatul Waqf Al-Islami Bil Filibbin in Marawi City due to its extensive student body known for adhering strictly to Islamic standards. The findings of this study shows that that Waqf as a religious institution in Marawi City is created to secure the hold of Islam in Marawi City through its jihad in propagating the pure teachings of Islam. The institution's activities are rooted in educational and religious development rather than violent extremism. The association of madrasah with extremis mis largely driven by misconception and incident like Marawi Seige. Through this study, Waqf emerges as a center for Islamic learning promoting Jihad in its purest and peaceful context. Waqf serves as a religious institution committed to the peaceful propagation of Islamic teachings. The notion that is foster violent extremis mis unsupported by the narratives of talamidh, asatidh and the administrators. It is recommended that similar studies on other existing madaris institutions must be conducted

Keywords: *jihad in education, violent extremism, madrasah, Jamiatul Waqf Al-Islami Bil Filibbin, Islam*

Introduction

Jihad is by far the most misunderstood Islamic concept in the contemporary times especially in the West. This divine concept was associated mainly to violence and terrorism on the basis of the wars in the Middle East and the several attacks made against the Western nations. Having the means of delivering the news to public thru mass media, the Muslims who claimed to be "Jihadists" became celebrities branded as antagonists shown on TV. Thus, negative representation of this religious obligation became prevalent. Nonetheless, Muslims who understood the nature of Jihad were not affected and still continue to promote the idea. Unfortunately, this positive attribute of the concept was only confined to this group of people and majority are not aware for being consumed by how it is viewed in societies which had no proper understanding of Islam and its teachings.

In the local context, the madrasah in Marawi City called Jamiatul Waqf Al-Islami Bil Filibbin shared the same experience. This is because of the rise of the so-called Islamic Jihadist branded by the media as Maute-ISIS group who fought against the AFP (Armed Forces of the Philippines) in Butig and Marawi City that lasted for over a month and six-month periods respectively, which devastated both places. Some members of these group according to some sources are suspiciously students and graduates of Jamiatul Waqf Al-Islami Bil Filibbin. Thus, putting the madrasah in controversy. Thereupon, the mainstream media tend to generalize the issue and labelled madaris as a breeding of terrorist group. Several reports on the news says that most of the member of Maute-ISIS group came from madaris attributed to their background in Islam allegedly acquired from madaris. Even Islam has a say on this matter which this study would like to highlight in the content.

Research has highlighted concerns that some traditional Islamic educational institutions may inadvertently contribute to the spread of extremist ideologies. Notably, in Indonesia, allegations have surfaced linking certain Muslim clerics, including Abu Bakar Bashir, to terrorism activities. (Arif et al., 2017). In the analysis given by Alexander Evans in his article "Understanding Madrasahs" he highlightd that "Madrasahs, the religious schools that educate millions of students in the Muslim world, have been blamed for all sorts of ills since the attacks of September 11, 2001. Critics have denounced them as dens of terror, hatcheries for suicide bombers, and repositories of medievalism". Such allegations have tarnished the reputation of the madaris system, raising concerns about its potential impact on students and the broader community.

As the news spread widely, curiosity awakens the researchers and scholars to investigate further on the issue hoping to affirm a positive result. Truly such venture is dangerous and religiously insensitive. As these scholars became busy digging for the veracity of the issue, the madaris personnel went underground and vowed not to speak to any interested party unless trust is build. Some Asaatidh (teachers)

and Talaamidh (students) lost their confidence and sometimes would deny their association to any madaris for being afraid of taking the blame thrown to them. The lack of representation of their side and the bulky number of words they want to speak in public to clear their name is the principal inspiration for this study. This hopes to present clearly their side of the story by making Waqf as the representation of the unheard voices of the Islamic scholars working in madaris.

Literature Review

Jihad in Islamic Theology

The Quran Revealed: A Critical Analysis of Said Nursi's Epistles of Light by Collin Turner talks about the Jihad. The author emphasized that Muslim people have returned from the lesser jihad to greater Jihad. Said Nursi said that Muslim world must wage against its own shortcomings (Turner, C. 2013). His focus was on the need of safeguard and perfect belief, withdrawal from politics, rejection of militant jihad and gradual approach to social reform. He provides a great insight on what kind of Jihad should the Muslim wage. In this time of modernization, it is important to preserve the true Islam by finding the right part through education. This book provided deeper understanding about the necessity of Muslims to seek knowledge and refrain from militant jihad. It also offers constant new world of ideas which is accordingly beneficial for Muslims and for the future Muslim.

The book entitled Madrasa Education: Its Strength and Weakness by Muhammadullah Khalili Qasmi discuss about the evolution of madrasa from time to time, its history, the misconception regarding madrasa and its role in various field of life (Qasmi, M. 2005). He provides some contemporary issues that the madrasa has been facing such as on the rise of Taliban movement that pointed the madrasa as the source perpetrator. He established the importance of madrasa among the Muslims and even highlighted the necessity of seeking knowledge in Islam by citing some verses from Quran and sayings of the Prophet.

Islamic Doctrine of Peace

Peace in Islam in the light of Qur-an and Tradition of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) by Nazar Ul Islam, G K Sharma and Riyaz Ahmad Ganai, is a study that analyze whether Islam calls for peace or conflict. According to the study, non-Muslim possess biased notions on Islam due to which they interpret the religions texts of Islam without proper context and background. The author asserted that, the background and context of the events in Islam is very important to learn especially in the concept of "Jihad". Qur-an says "fight those who believe not in Allah nor forbid that which Allah and His messenger has forbidden nor follow the religion of "Truth" out of those who have been given the book until the pay "jizya" in the acknowledgement of their defeat not in Allah, nor in the last". (Islam, N., et al.,2014). The context and background of the verse in understood properly will clear the confusion that Islam doesn't declare any unintentional war on any religion. Indeed, no religion preaches violence nor divide the men. Therefore, there is no compulsion of religion in Islam. The same with the idea stated above, Islam is a religion which teaches non-violence and does not love "fasad" (violence). Islam is rich with central clause that promotes peace building and conflict resolution.

The notion that Islam means peace has almost become a cliché in a world where Islam's relationship with peace is emphasized in an attempt to retain it from any association with terrorism. According to the book entitled The Role of Islam towards Peace and Progress by Arsheed Ahmad Malik, Menraj Din Sheik and Mohammad Zia Ul-Haq Razaqi, the best way to understand Islam is a thorough study of its Holy sources rather than practices of a few. The model of Islamic reality as preached in Qur-an and Hadith is completely different from the perceived by many (Malik, A. A., et al.,2002). In addition, Muslim is one who avoids harming other with his tongue and hands but still, there many non-Muslim who have never met any Muslim. The only time they hear about Islam is on the news and most of the time these references are connected with violence.

Generally, these mentioned literatures emphasized the importance of peace in every aspect of life. Muslim should have proper guidance from Quran and Hadith to fully understand Islam. Unfortunately, what the research wanted to find is the specification of these literature regarding on establishment of madrasa in Marawi City, and doesn't also have enough information about the uniqueness of madrasa from western type of education. In addition, there is no enough hadith about the Jihad on education and its role on community development. However, the first book cited was somehow informative since it gives a new and different idea regarding the compulsion of education to Islam. Nonetheless, this paper will shed light to the jihad of education and how the madrasa became a tool in jihad for the preserving of Islamic culture and legacy.

Methodology

This study utilized qualitative-descriptive type of research. Both primary and secondary sources were used in this study. Primary information was taken from both snowball and purposive type of interviews with people who are knowledgeable on the subject of this study. Purposive because the researchers intentionally select Talamidh and Asatidh from Waqf who are the key informants of this study and from that they recommended someone to the researchers who can be the potential informants that have ideas on the said topic. Furthermore, this study also employed focus group discussion (FGD) among the Asatidh as well as with the Talamidh to get their insights and other relevant opinions that contributed immensely to the study. Interview was also conducted through social media like messenger and Facebook. The secondary data was gathered through library works and online resources.

Data gathering was acquired from the series of interviews with different people who came from Waqf such as Asatidh, Talamidh,

administrator and those who know Waqf but not directly connected to the madrasah such as Mēranaw professionals as well as some residents in Marawi. The means of communication to reach out the respondents are through personal interview, focus group discussion and indirect communication via Facebook, messenger and phone calls. Secondary sources such as books, articles, news clippings and photos were also collected and integrated to supplement and corroborate the information gathered from the oral interviews.

Secondary Data Review was also conducted as means gathering information. This includes published and unpublished material such as undergraduate thesis, online articles, newspapers and books, magazines and journal from the MSU-IIT College of Arts and Social Sciences library.

Data which are both primary and secondary sources are collected from the oral interviews, books authored by Syed Fari, Osman Bakar, Muhammad Zulqifar, Muhammadullah Khalili Qasn, Danis Ventenskoy, Ben Kadil, Mamitua, Nazar UI Islam, GK Sharma and Riyaz Ahmad Ganai.

The principal portion of the study is composed of oral sources coming from the series of interviews with the twenty-two (22) key informants such as the President of Waqf Mohammad Sadiq Usman, the pioneering Missionaries, Asatidh (madrasah Teachers in Waqf), student who have finished his study in Waqf and; fifteen (15) respondents which constitute the Mēranaw Professionals and other residents from Marawi City. They provided large amount of information which can be accounted to more or less eighty percent of the total load of resource materials. Their personal experiences and close relation to Waqf are strong testimonies that will support the authenticity of the data gathered. Furthermore, photos of the madrasah before and after Marawi siege were retrieved via messenger from students in Waqf. While, other photos in the appendices were personally captured by the researchers. Moreover, information on the details of the madrasah educational system is only restricted to what was provided by the informants.

Results and Discussion

Madrasa in the Philippines

In the early 13th century, Muslim missionaries arrived in the Philippines. They came as traders who eventually propagated Islam upon observing animism as a dominant practice adopted by the natives. It was first established in the Sulu archipelago thru the missionary works of Karim-ul-Makdum, Raja Baguinda, Sharief Maraja and Sayyid Abu Bakr who relentlessly propagate Islam leading to its firm hold in the island. Subsequent visit of Arab traders strengthens the Islamic faith in the Philippines concentrating in the south and reach as far as north. As part of Arab's missionary works, they taught the natives about the basic principles of Islam and Arabic language. This is the reason why Arabic language is rapidly gaining speakers all over the world particularly in the Muslim community. However, it is important to note here that there was still no madrasah that were built at that time. Native students were being taught only in masjid, in their houses and on some other empty spaces (Gowing, 1979).

Until 1956, the Jamiyatul Muslim Mindanao was established in Marawi City which claimed to be the oldest and biggest madrasah in the Philippines. It is one of the few Arabic schools in the country offering the complete levels of Islamic education with 132 branches throughout the Philippines predominantly in Mindanao and an active member of the League of Islamic Universities based in Cairo, Egypt. Among the prominent madaris in the Philippine are Zaid bin Thabit in Marawi City, Al-Maarif Educational Center in Baguio, Shafie Clan Islamic Institute in Taguig, Inc, Da'ro Rahmah Litahfidhel Qur'anil Kareem Inc. in Cotabato City, and Jamiatul Waqf Al-Islamie (Jamiatu Muslim Mindanao Explained).

In the Philippines, madaris (plural form of madrasa) were sustained through the collected zakkah from the Muslim community. Having a few numbers of Muslims who are willing to fulfill this religious obligation, make madaris as a backward institution. This lack of budget could not provide enough salary for Asaatidh and good facilities and logistics for the Talamidh. Furthermore, sometimes in one room, it is occupied by either two or three classes which led to poor acquisition of knowledge. As commented by Marjanie Mimbantas:

“Sometimes in one room, there are two or three classes. I don't know if you have experienced that or if you have been informed of that. They just put the blackboard in the middle and one class in other side and another class from this side... Can you imagine, you know, most of the ustadh are just receiving within the bracket of... now maybe just 600 but before it's like 500 to 1000 or 1500. So, if someone wants to work with that amount only, I think he or she cannot survive with that amount only.”

In the Philippines, madrasah is categorized into three, (1) traditional madrasah (2) ALIVE (3) Pilot madrasah (Bangsamoro Autonomy Act No. 18, Bill no. 70, March 29, 2019). Traditional madaris are those built in a community strictly based on the curriculum of middle eastern countries like Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Egypt, etc. Financial assistance comes from the collective zakkah of the people within a Muslim community. The second type, ALIVE which stands for Arabic Learning and Islamic Values Education is a program advanced by the Department of Education which integrates Islamic school to primary and secondary education. Lastly, Pilot madrasah is created under the DO 81, s. 2007 that provide assistance to private Madrasah by giving incentive to adopt the standard curriculum as Authorized under DepEd order No. 51, s. 2004. This aims to completely mainstream Madrasah Education as a component of the National System Basic Education (e.g. As-Salihein Integrated School, Binnor Pangandaman Integrated Madrasah, Inc., Ganassi Arabic Islamic Institute, Inc) (Fernandez, M.J.C. et. al., 2019) Jamiatul Waqf Al-Islami bil Filibbin on the other hand, belongs to the traditional madrasah.

Foundation of Jamiatul Waqf Al-Islami bil Filibbin

The Jamiatul Waqf Al-Islami Bil Filibbin, or Islamic Endowment Foundation of the Philippines, is a premier Islamic institution based in Marawi City, a hub of Islamic culture and values. Prior to its establishment, the city had only a few small madaris catering to a limited number of students. Recognizing the need for Islamic education, Mohammad Salih Usman, a Meranaw from Marawi, envisioned building a madrasah to preserve Islamic values and principles among young Muslims. Usman's concern about the potential erosion of Islamic culture led him to pursue higher education in Islamic studies. He attended Al-Azhar Islamic University in Cairo, Egypt, for his high school education and later completed his college degree at the Islamic University in Madinah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Equipped with knowledge from prestigious institutions, Usman aimed to train Asaatidh (Islamic teachers) to spread authentic Islamic teachings. Upon completing his education, Usman was elected president of an organization formed by Meranaw Ulama in Saudi Arabia. Upon returning to the Philippines, he dispatched these Ulama to various parts of the country to teach Islam to Filipino Muslims, with their salaries supported by the Saudi government. This initiative marked the beginning of the Jamiatul Waqf Al-Islami Bil Filibbin's mission to promote Islamic education and values in the Philippines (Personal interview with Mohammad Salih Usman in March 2017).

During his time in Saudi Arabia, Mohammad seized the opportunity to enlighten the Arab community about the state of Islam in the Philippines. He proposed establishing a madrasah to strengthen Islam's presence in the country. Fortunately, his initiative received a positive response from Arab leaders, including Mohammad Ibrahim Al-Kaod and Malik Salman Abdul-Aziz. They spearheaded an effort to collect donations from fellow Arabs, paving the way for the construction of Waqf. According to Mohammad Sadik Usman, son of former President Mohammad Salih, this endeavor marked a significant milestone in promoting Islamic education in the Philippines.

'Waqf Jamiya Al-Islami was founded through the two men from Saudi who is Mohammad Ibrahim Al-Kaod and Malik Salman Abdul-Aziz, who assumed high positions in Saudi. Mohammad Ibrahim Al-Kaod is the director of the Islamic Guidance in the Ministry of Awkaf Wadda'wa and Malik Salman Abdul-Aziz is the Assistant Minister of Education for the women sector (Personal interview with Mohammad Salihh Usman in March 2017)

Following the successful fundraising effort, Mohammad Salih was entrusted with the necessary funds and returned to Marawi City to oversee the construction of the madrasah. Upon its completion, a convocation of esteemed Filipino Ulama and two visiting Arab scholars was held to consecrate the institution. After deliberation, the assembly unanimously adopted the name Jamiatul Waqf Al-Islami Bil Filibbin, or Islamic Endowment Foundation of the Philippines, in recognition of the institution's foundation as a charitable initiative supported by Saudi benefactors (Personal interview with Mohammad Salih Usman in March 2017).

Waqf was founded in 1984 on Osmeña Street in Marawi City, with its inaugural structure comprising a single storey that initially catered to around 100 Talamidh (students) of both genders. As the student body expanded over time, the existing facilities became insufficient. Although donations had been pledged, budgetary constraints hindered immediate expansion plans. Fortunately, upon receipt of the allocated funds from Saudi benefactors, the institution was able to undertake a major expansion, adding two new storeys to its original structure (Personal interview with Mohammad Salih Usman in March 2017).

In adherence to Islamic principles emphasizing gender segregation in public and private spaces, a separate facility was established in Lilod, Marawi, catering exclusively to female Talamidh. This initiative aimed to prevent interactions between male and female students, thereby minimizing the risk of fitna (corrupted intention). The four-storey building, although incomplete on its uppermost floor, provided a dedicated space for women. Architecturally, both Waqf buildings are characterized by their simplicity, harmonizing with their natural surroundings without incorporating distinct Middle Eastern design elements. Regrettably, the structures sustained considerable damage during the 2017 Marawi crisis, with evident signs of bullet marks on their walls (Personal interview with Mohammad Salih Usman in March 2017).

The Asaatidh (Islamic teachers) at Waqf are divided into two distinct categories: Missionary and Ordinary Ustadh. The Missionary Ustadh, a group of approximately ten (10), hold qualifications from the University of Madinah in Saudi Arabia and are remunerated by the Saudi government, with salaries ranging from 60,000 to 100,000 pesos per month, commensurate with their academic credentials. Conversely, the Ordinary Ustadh, numbering around forty (40), are Waqf alumni who receive compensation from a combination of community zakat (charitable donations) and student tuition fees. As per Ustadh Jabbar, their remuneration is determined by the number of subjects taught, with a daily rate of 30 pesos per subject. Typically, Ordinary Ustadh instruct five to six subjects per week, yielding a monthly stipend of approximately 1,500 to 2,000 pesos (Personal interview with Mohammad Sadiq in March 2017).

In the aftermath of the Marawi conflict, the madrasah was forced to suspend classes for an extended period of nearly six months. The institution has since relocated to a temporary satellite campus in Cadayonan, MSU, which is considerably smaller than its original facilities. The three-storey building allocates only the third floor to Waqf, with the first two floors serving as residential quarters. According to President Mohammad Sadiq, the institution has not received financial support from the Saudi government since the Marawi crisis, necessitating reliance on personal funds and zakat (charitable donations) from concerned Muslims. This limited budget has resulted in suboptimal facilities and insufficient space to accommodate the pre-crisis student population of 4,750. Consequently, students have had to endure challenging conditions, seated on the floor, amidst ongoing safety concerns in the surrounding areas. The

limited capacity of the satellite campus has also necessitated the discontinuation of studies for some students, particularly those in college, with only primary and secondary level students able to be accommodated (Personal interview with Mohammad Sadiq in March 2017).

School of Thought followed in Jamiatul Waqf Al-Islami bil Filibbin

The Arabic word Madh'hab literally means 'way to act'. Madahib in Arabic word means a school of thought within fiqi'hi (Islamic Jurisprudence). There is a record of one hundred fifty (150) Madahib (school of thoughts) that emerged after the death of the Prophet Muhammad SAW. Among them are the prominent four (4) school of thoughts widely acknowledged by the Sunni majority namely Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi'e, and Hanbali. Hanafi was the earliest school of thought formed by Imam Abu Hanifa (699-767 C.E) of Kufa which uses high degree of reasoning, avoids extremes, and lays great emphasis on the ideas of the Muslim community (ijma). (Alatas, S.F. 2014). The Maliki school of thought was founded by Imam Malik bin Anas (d. 795 C.E) of Madinah which rely more on the traditions associated with the Companions of the Holy Prophet SAW. While, Shafi'e school of thought was founded by Imam al-Shafi (d. 820 C.E) who was a disciple of Imam Malik which placed great importance on the Traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad SAW and explicitly formulated the rules for establishing the Islamic law. Hanbali school of thought on the other hand, was founded by Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal (d. 855 C.E) of Baghdad, it insists on the literal injunctions of the Holy Qur'an and the Hadith and are very strict in the observance of religious duties. ('Ahmad Ibn Hanbal', 2018)

Waqf similar with the other madaris followed these four schools of thoughts but they rely heavily on the ideology advocated by the Hanbali school of thought. Madhab Hanbali was not properly established in its early years but rather it was advanced by his disciples and followers ('Ahmad Ibn Hanbal', 2018). This asserts the idea of carefully following the traditions of the Prophet Muhammad SAW as well as the verbatim words of the Qur'an which disregards own interpretations and opinions of humans. Further, Hanbali prefers Ahadith graded with daif (weak) over reasoning. As for the nature of the Qur'an it affirms that it is the "uncreated Word of God" (kalām Allāh ḡhayr makhlūk). Imam Ahmad further described that Qur'an is "not just an abstract idea but the Quran with its letters, words, expressions, and ideas—the Quran in all its living reality, whose nature in itself," and it eluded human comprehension ('Ahmad Ibn Hanbal', 2018). Hanbali being placed in the last generation among the four madhahib makes it more authentic and credible as it combined all the ideas advocated by the first three scholars. Followers of Hanbali are mainly found in Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Oman, Bahrain, Yemen, Iraq and Jordan.

Curriculum, Policies, Disciplinary Guidelines, Activities and Scholarship and Grants

The Jihad of education in Waqf is demonstrated thru their curriculum, common activities, policies and disciplinary guidelines. This will show how the madrasah function as an institution effectively working on the extensive propagation of Islam as defined in the concept of jihad.

Curriculum

Madrasah is similar to other educational system which could not exist without a curriculum. Unlike the standard curriculum followed by existing educational system in the Philippines, Waqf has a different set of subjects primarily aligned to the in-depth discussion in understanding Islam. Furthermore, this curriculum was modelled from the adopted curriculum of the Islamic University in Madina, Saudi Arabia. The Asatidh having been graduated from the said university brought the curriculum here in the Philippines. (Personal interview with President Mohammad Sadik Usman on April 04, 2018.)

Policies and Disciplinary Guidelines

Waqf has a unique way of taking disciplinary measures in response to a perceived misconduct of both Asatidh and Talamidh inside the campus. This is accordingly among the finest attributes of the madrasah compared to others, and was truly appreciated by parents of sending their children in Waqf.

Madrasah Activities

The madrasah used to celebrate foundation day once in a year. On this event, two separate and different activities for male and female Talamidh are held. The male Talamidh activities are more on participating sports like soccer, basketball, volleyball, badminton, etc. In the assessment of learnings acquired in their classes, Qur'an memorization and reading as well as conducting group Quiz show were part of the activities to grace the occasion. (Personal Interview with Saipoden Sulaiman on April 25, 2018.)

Like the other schools, Waqf also follow the same tradition of electing or appointing campus and class officers such as President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Auditor, P.I.O and Muse. All the first five higher positions must be occupied by male talamidh and only muse is reserved for a female talamidh. The only function of a muse is limited to the calling of female talamidh in assembly when there are important meetings within the madrasah. Aside from these officers in the campus, there are also officers selected inside the classes. (Personal Interview with Abduljabbar Saipoding on April 25, 2018.)

The inter-school competition was participated by numerous madaris and toril nationwide. This was held in 2014 which aims to bring together highly intellectual asaatidh and hafidh in showcasing their talents in Qur'an reading and memorization and; memorization of a four hundred Ahadith (Personal Interview with Jamen on April 25, 2018). Some of the participating prominent Islamic institutions

are Zaid ibn Thabit Qur'anic Institute, Almaarif Educational Center, Inc., Ma'had Kuwait and Matampay Madrasah. According to Alrahji shared his experience in the event, according to him, on their way to the venue, they rode on a jeepney which only accommodate some of them. Thus, Alrahji and his classmates take a walk going to Ma'had Kuwait, venue of the program.

The Qur'an competition in 2015 was participated by different madaris and toril from Marawi City. Among the participating hafidhulqur'an (memorizer of the Qur'an) are students from Waqf who successfully made it to the top three (3).

Scholarship and Grants

Waqf offers scholarship grant to the Talamidh who excel in the class. Free tuition grant is awarded to Talamidh who met the required general weighted average of at least ninety percent (90%) or referred as muntaj. While, talamidh who had a weighted average of eighty-nine percent (89%) to eighty-five percent (85%), their tuition fees will be deducted with one-hundred (100) pesos (Personal interview with President Mohammad Sadik Usman on April 04, 2018.)

Those Talamidh scholars who had at least ninety percent as a weighted average can qualify to apply for a college scholarship offered in the Islamic University of Madinah and will be finally accepted when he/she can pass the qualifying exam and the interview. Alrahji, a college student of Shari'ah was able to pass the exam and interview and he is expected to go abroad and joined the students in the Islamic University of Madinah by July, 2018.

Responses of Waqf and other Mëranaws on the Issue of Violent Extremism Involvement

Studies on countering violent extremism is the prevalent topic in today's researches since the Marawi crisis in May 2017. Making Shari'ah prevail as the central cause of the Maute-ISIS group on why the group came into existence, added to the negative reputation of Islam in the country.

The issue became worse when some people affirmed that this militant group are from the madaris. Like the people who spread this rumor, the researchers believed that the concerned people must be ask also of their side. Having no media in their side, no person in power to speak for them, no scholar to explain those words uttered only to their fellow are the reasons of having this study conducted. As the issue revolved around them, it is imperative to hear these unspoken words in public thru this study because this concern not only the madaris as a system but also the entire Muslim community in the Philippines.

The interview begins with the common notion of madaris being the breeding ground for violent extremism ideology which Marjanie Salic Mimbantas, former member of the MILF Implementing Panel, responded:

“Well, you used the word accused, so that's not true, it's an accusation. If you have heard the one of the lectures of Dr. Hamid Barra when he said that if they are accusing the madrasah as training ground of the terrorist groups, they should close the Islamic studies in UP. Because they have the Islamic studies there.” (Personal interview with Marjanie Salic Mimbantas in March 2017)

Salic further added that observing the religious practice of reading a Qur'an should not reflect the entirety of the story and should not conclude the terror action to madrasah. Instead, according to him, the observant must also recognize the people surrounding that Qur'an reader who are mostly Professionals and product of other secular schools.

Mohammad Ryan Limpao, a student from Ibn Taymiyyah in Marawi City, also denies the issue and point out that the issue should not be generalized and be directed to madaris which had no association to any terror activities. Both the ustadh and students agreed that madrasah had no relation to the charge on terrorism but they differ in justifying the side of the madrasah. Samerah touched on the religious context from the Qur'an which she believed as being misquoted by the “men in black” diverting the Muslims into a different belief. Further, she insisted that the complete ayah in the Qur'an must be presented completely including its tafsir (meaning of the Qur'an) without any cut. (Personal interview with Mohammad Ryan Limpao in April 2017)

Cliché as it is, the primary aim of madrasah is to produce an individual that is imbued with Islamic worldview and outlook in life. These individuals are armed with an authentic knowledge of Quran and on the Hadith of the Prophet Muhammad SAW which finds its expression in all aspects of their practical lives.

Marawi City is predominantly Muslim composed of 99.96%, thus, building madrasah is very common among them because this is where the hundreds of thousands of Muslim children acquire their primary and perhaps the only formal education in terms of educating them on Qur'an and Hadith. As a matter fact, madrasah is considered to be very important from amongst the Meranaw individual because in Islam, seeking knowledge is an obligation.

In the local context, madrasah plays an important role in the life of the Mëranaws in Marawi. Being labelled as “Islamic City of Marawi”, madrasah is part of their identity. Since the establishment of Jamiatu Waqf Al-Islamie bil Filibbin in 1984, it continues to impart sound knowledge on Islam with an understanding of the practical implications of its teachings in the contemporary world and equip its Asatidh with the ability to invite others to embrace Islam in a peaceful and non-aggressive manner.

Conclusions

Jihad is broadly divided into two types. Firstly, the lesser jihad the deals on defending Islam by force if necessary. Second is the greater Jihad that has something to do with inner struggle which is living out the Muslim faith within as well as possible. Once this is understood, Jihad is of various kinds. On the other hand, there is a type of Jihad which the common people are not familiar; this is called the Jihad in Education. It is basically a Jihad which involved educating one-self and the community. Islam put great emphasis on the importance of education in Islamic community.

The Jamiatu Waqf Al-Islami bil Filibbin in Marawi City founded by Muhammad Salih Usman was among those madaris which propagate the jihad of education. With the financially support of Arab missionaries has always been there in helping to preserve the Islamic culture. It is claimed to be one of the prominent madrasas in the city where young individuals acquire their primary and perhaps the only formal education in terms of learning the Quran and Hadith. Recently, the Ustadh, students and even the institution itself unfortunately linked to the Maute-ISIS terrorist group. Several reports say that this madrasa has become the breeding ground for violent extremism and that the siege was accordingly participated by the students of Waqf. Nonetheless, the President of Waqf doesn't agree on this and even condemned these violent acts. He emphasized that they never had a connection with this violent group, they don't represent Islam and that it's their cruelty that led them to do so not the religion.

Waqf being the bastion of Islamic education since 1984 up to date had proven and demonstrated the concept of Jihad of Education through its curriculum; voluntary services to Islam particularly by spreading its pure message free from bid'ah (innovation); conducting of Islamic seminars in different barangays in Marawi City and; its active role and persistence in defying violence as evident from the teachings within the institution. Furthermore, Waqf is also treated in high elevation of establishing good reputation as among the prominent Islamic institutions delivering quality education within and outside Marawi City. Even up to date, this obligation of spreading the beautiful message of Islam based on the context of jihad still continue and was received by a massive number of audiences regardless of their beliefs. Thru this kind of jihad, this paper conclude that jihad of education can be both a sword and shield to avert from violent extremism.

To better understand the concept of jihad of education, similar studies on other existing madaris institutions must be conducted. Further studies on Jihad must be taken into account. This very concept would help correct biases and bend the lopsided image of the Mujahideen all over the world. To delve into the hearts of the Moro people, recognizing their religious practices and obligations must be studied. This will invite understanding and may devise peaceful resolutions friendly to both parties.

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