Role of the Waqf Division, Kedah State Islamic Religious Council in the Implementation Land Waqf/Scheme: A Review

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Article History: Received: 10 November 2020; Revised: 12 January 2021; Accepted: 27 January 2021; Published online: 05 April 2021

Abstract: Waqf properties developed based on land waqf scheme has functioned as a branch of generating socio-economic development of Muslims in the Kedah state. However, at times, its existence remains unnoticed by some Muslims. Recognizing this, the Kedah State Islamic Religious Council (MAIK) took the initiative and innovative measures to strengthen these institutions by introducing the land waqf scheme. Waqf properties developed over the years help improve the state of Muslims compared to other races in the state. This article will discuss the general concept of Waqf and implementation of the land waqf scheme by MAIK. The data were obtained from the literature review, documentation, interviews with stakeholders, observations and a review of site as sources in the qualitatively conducted analysis. The study found that the land waqf scheme has been successfully implemented and has vastly contributed to the development of mosques and educational institutions in Kedah.

Keywords: Land waqf scheme, Kedah State Islamic Religious Council, wakalah, Mosque Committee.

1. Introduction

Waqf is derived from the Arabic word waqf, i.e. the waqf (masdar) of the verb waqafa and has various meanings according to the purpose and use of the noun itself. In terms of language, waqf means to stop, prevent or withhold (Ibn Manzur: 1990). The Fuqaha (al-Nawawi: t. t. Abd. Greetings: 1994, Ibn ’Abidin: 1994 and Al-Sarakhsi: t.t.t.) defines waqf in terms of language as al-Habs (withhold) as the meaning is closer to syara’.

Waqf is a form of property surrender whether in clear words (sorih) or vague (kinayah), in which the property concerned will be withheld and the benefits will be used for worthy purposes either general or specific reasons.

Literally, waqf means detention, to hold something to be used by others. The waqf property should be in good condition, permanent and with the purpose of being closer to God Almighty and benevolent to others. Also, the waqf (the individual doing the waqf) no longer has the right to the Waqf property (al-Syarbini: 1997). Muhammad ’al-Dusuqi Arfah (1980) explains that the benefits from the Waqf are entrusted to the right person within a specific period of time, in accordance with the will of the waqif. According to Ibn Qudaamah (1972) of the Hanbali Sect, Waqf means withholding the original and giving the benefits.

Management of Waqf land is placed under the states’ welfare as outlined in the Federal Constitution in the Ninth Schedule First List and Second List. The second act is the National Land Code (NLC) 1965 (Act 56) under section 4 recognizes the existence of the waqf land. For each state, waqf management is provisioned under the state’s laws on Islamic religious affairs governed by the State Islamic Council (MAIN).

There is a diversity of Waqf law in Malaysia caused by fractional power given under the Federal Constitution from the perpetuation of power left and valued since before independence. The Federal government did not have any legislative power on the welfare of Waqf and zakat. However, it is the concern of the federal government to improve the overall administration and management for improving the quality of services provided by all organizations.

2. Literature Review

Land Waqf

Land waqfs widely practised nowadays in Malaysia, especially in Kedah, as it is an effort to increase and to develop the number of waqf property. Given the increasing land prices which can be as high as RM100.00 per square feet, it is impossible for most individuals to purchase land for waqf purposes. Thus, the land waqf scheme
is one alternative to provide opportunities for more Muslims to join waqf. Simultaneously, helping the country develop the economy.

According to Zulkifli Mohamad Al Bakri (2012), land waqf is the act of donating property for charity purposes. The waqf management (authorities that manage the waqf) will buy the whole property before a person who intends to do a waqf (the Waqif) will buy it by fraction according to his or her preference for an agreeable price.

Land Waqf or waqf petak is also known as waqf lantai. The nazir or trustee for the waqf will buy the whole property. After which, the waqif will buy the land in small sizes (square feet) before donating it back as waqf (Mohd Shah bin Abu Bakar Firaq, 2005). The land waqf scheme is usually offered by educational institutions or certain agencies to fund their development activities. If the development projects have been completed, then the land waqf will be stopped. It will be divided into small lots and sold to people at a certain price. The purchased lands are required to be given back as waqf to the institutions or bodies concerned (Baharuddin Sayin, et al 2006).

The trustee or nazir will buy the whole property and waqif will pay the price according to the size of the square feet of his or her preference or which has been agreed upon. Land waqf enables the land to be bought by square feet, making it a joint ownership and that all of the landowners have agreed to give it back as waqf (Zaharuddin Abdul Rahman 2014). Land waqf also refers to purchase of land property according to size or square feet, which will then be given as waqf to the waqf trustee or nazir.

3. History of Land Waqf Implementation in Kedah

Detailed information on the initial implementation of land waqf in Kedah is hardly available because it was never documented, and no detailed study has ever been done before. However, through an interview with Zakat Official, Tuan Sheikh Ahmad Zaki bin Ghazali (2019) and Former Head of Kedah Islamic religious affairs Council Dato’ Paduka Sheikh Abdul Majid bin Mohd Nor (2019), it was discovered that implementation of the land waqf was introduced in the 1960s by the Qudhiyat Kedah, which at the time, was Dato’ Sheikh Abdul Aziz bin Awang Besar. No precise date was recorded and researchers acknowledged it because Dato’ Sheikh Abdul Aziz died in an aeroplane crash in Bangkok in 1970 while still serving as Grand Qadhi. Dato’ Sheikh Abdul Aziz came from Village of Jerai Mukim, Kupang, Kedah, and served Sheikh Muhammad Ali bin Hussin bin Ibrahim bin Hussin Al Malik for seven years. During his years of service in the 1960s, he has been trying to urge people at that time to waqf coconuts from their coconut trees. He is also famous with the title Sheikh Botol when he introduced a system of donation (waqf) via collection and selling of glass bottles (waqf).

The land waqf was also one of his brilliant ideas. This has become a tradition and is practised by Muslims in Kedah as a religious act until now. Before this, it was impossible for Muslims without land ownership to do waqf; but if the land is divided to smaller lots and are affordable for the masses, as well as meeting the terms for waqf, then this approach has certainly opened up opportunities for more people to give waqf and thus, help improve the state’s economy.

Up until now, land waqf is still being implemented and have managed to develop dozens of lands all over the state, be it general waqf or special waqf as more less-capable waqifs would be able to donate waqf.

4. Kedah State Islamic Religious Council (MAIK)

Waqf properties are governed by State Islamic Religious Council (MAIN). Each state has different administrative and managerial procedures on waqf. Waqf management is very dependent on the organisational procedures and the policies of the state.

A precursor to MAIK was first established in 1948 as the Kedah State Islamic Religious Council and Malay Customs. The council was originally comprised of ten members. Council members were made up of five Muslim scholars and five experts of Malay Customs from the Kedah State. All of them were appointed by His Majesty, the Sultan of Kedah (KDYMM) and served under his rule for a period of three years in a term.

The Kedah State Islamic Religious Council (MAIK) was established officially on 1st August in 1964, replacing the Kedah State Islamic Religious Council and Malay Customs to overcome inefficient management due to shortage of staff as well as the lack of an appointed Secretary in managing and organizing meetings. Thus,
the state officials have taken the initiative to improve its management and administration by appointing a permanent Secretary.

MAIK was established according to the provisions under 33B in the Constitution of the state No. 32/ 1959 and in accordance with the provisions of Islamic Administrative Law (No.9/ 1962). MAIK’s foundation is based on the provisions of the Kedah State Enactment of Islamic Religious Administrative No. 9 in 1962 up until today.

The main function of MAIK is to assist the KDYMM Sultan and advises KDYMM Sultan in matters which are relevant to the Islamic religion in Kedah and is the policymaker in Islamic religious affairs of the state. Meanwhile, the Kedah State Islamic Department (JAIK) is the agency implementing the policies and manages all administrative affairs, as well as responsible for developing programmes, schemes or projects solicited by the Council. In addition, JAIK is also responsible for all Muslims in the state as well as to plan, manage and execute all policies and information related to Islam.

Since the establishment of MAIK was based upon Kedah State Enactment of Islamic Religious Administrative, the establishment of the Waqf Division is also in accordance with the same provisions meant to safeguard and reserve all waqf properties in Kedah. However, the exact date of the Waqf Division's establishment is uncertain because according to Sheikh Ahmad Zaki bin Ghazali, Head of Waqf Division (2019), its establishment is around the same time as the establishment of MAIK. MAIK’s main sources of financial support are from the Baitulmal, the Waqf Division as well as budget allocation from the Kedah state.

5. Research Methodology

The research conducted utilises two main approaches which are qualitative research method and field study. This method aims at obtaining high-quality information by using a small sample (Azizah Hamzah, 2010).

The study also utilises content analysis. The researchers will analyse the related documents to study the content and meaning (Nazarite, 1985; Ratna, 2004; and Muhadjir, 2003). Among the documents that can be used as research data include the website of the respondent party, pictures, graphs, reports, textbooks, letters, waqf forms, and magazines with related issues.

Interviewing is one of the methods of field study in the form of social inquiry (Anwarul Yaqin, 2007), which is a social interaction aimed at gathering information for the purpose of the study. Intellectual sessions such as open dialogues are conducted with respondents or the authorities on the study.

Those respondents interviewed are Dato’ Paduka Sheikh Abdul Majid bin Mohd Nor (The Former Dipertua MAIK), Dato’ Wan Muhammad bin Dato’ Sheikh Abdul Aziz (former Director-General of JAKIM), officers of the Waqf Division MAIK Sheikh Ahmad Zaki bin Ghazali (Heads of Waqf Division) and Pn. Norhairani Binti Saad (Assistant Religious Affairs Officer) and Dato’ Hj. Noh bin Hj Dahaya (Secretary of MAIK), Haji Zakaria bin Md Zain (Treasurer, Masjid al-Badr Committee), En. Hussain bin Jusoh (Chairman of Darul Quran), Haji Bukhari bin Abdullah (Secretary, Masjid Aman Committee). Also interviewed was En. Ibnu bin Hubain (Marketing Officer) and En. Azman bin Hasan.

6. Discussion

As the organisation responsible for managing matters relating to the waqf property in Kedah, MAIK performs its duties in accordance with provision 52 of the Kedah Islamic Law Administrative Enactment (2008) which states that “notwithstanding any provision any instrument or declaration establishing, controlling, or affecting the matter, the Council shall be the sole trustee of all waqfs whether general waqf or special waqf....”.

Based on the enactment above, it is clear that MAIK is the sole trustee in safeguarding waqf property in Kedah and it is a huge responsibility for MAIK to be entrusted with waqf in Kedah. Hence, MAIK has the right to develop the waqf properties in the state. Based on the provisions, MAIK is also the administrator or trustee of waqf where the waqfs can give their property to MAIK.

Therefore, based on the above explanation, it is clear to us that waqf property including the execution of land waqf in Kedah are being administered and regulated by MAIK under the management of the Waqf Division. As the sole trustee of a waqf property, MAIK reserves the right to undertake any development activities on the property and also collect any proceeds from it.
In the land waqf scheme, MAIK is the responsible trustee because the land that has been identified will be pre-informed to MAIK. MAIK will also regulate the waqf collection via a committee from the organisation as well as representatives appointed from the public based on the size / square foot.

The Land waqf scheme is done when an interested party has no land and has identified a piece of land to be developed in the form of waqf for the development of religious schools, national schools, mosques and cemeteries. This said party intends to buy the land from the owner but has inadequate funds. To solve this problem, the parties intend to sell the land (per square feet) by means of land waqf to the public. According to the procedure, the parties would first need to apply with MAIK. Permission will only be issued by the Yang DiPertua MAIK (the head of the Council) to sell this land. A committee will be appointed with the responsibility to ensure that the development project is progressing smoothly.

The proposed land shall be granted to MAIK with the title or grant of the land registered under its name. Agreement for ownership transfer between the owner and MAIK will be made. Subsequently the proposed land will be broken into smaller lots of one square foot each. The sales value per square feet is dependent on the committee and is usually able to cover land prices, development and management expenses. MAIK only allows the sale of this land waqf in Kedah only. The authority to sell these lots is only given to certain individuals who have received wakalah in the form of Wakalah certificates from the MAIK Secretary. This Wakalah Certificate should be displayed during the sale and acceptance of this waqf.

The committee is also responsible for preparing the land waqf certificate according to the format provided by MAIK and the sale receipt shall have a MAIK seal. Sales that were made must be recorded from time to time and MAIK is responsible for regulating the proceeds of the fund to ensure that there is no laundering and that it runs smoothly according to law. Wakalah beneficiaries are entitled to receive rewards not more than 10% of the sales as determined by MAIK.

Sales proceeds usually take quite a while depending on the committee's efforts and when all square foot lots have been sold the land’s ownership will be transferred to MAIK.

The Kedah State Islamic Council as the principal trustee in managing the waqf property has carried out its obligations by introducing several innovative, creative and proactive mechanisms to provide Muslims with various opportunities to engage in welfare according to their capacity such as general waqf, special waqf, waqf musyarat, land waqf and shares waqf. These new mechanisms are in accordance and coincide with the purpose of waqf which is for the betterment of Islam and Muslims.

7. Conclusion

Waqf property is highly potential, valuable and could even be further developed if and only if, the property is managed appropriately. Even though the original intention of a waqf is simply to give waqf for religious fulfillment (for himself and Muslims in general), it is bestifwaqf property is developed at an optimum level in line with Islamic values so that principle and concept of waqf could be fully applied.

Implementation of land waqf scheme in Kedah has started to show its success, especially in highly commercialized areas. It is hoped that the current system will be able to solve a few problems, specifically waqf property with small scale development. Procedures and requirements set by MAIK for land waqf are made to ensure no deviation and misuse of power in sales and collection of waqf proceeds. MAIK will have to ensure that the implementation is monitored closely so that the purpose of this waqf is achieved.

8. Acknowledgement

This article is a part of findings from Fundamental Research Grant Scheme which is financially supported by Ministry of Higher Education.

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