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THE FUTURE OF PONDOK EDUCATION IN MALAYSIA

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Abstract

Pondok system has grown up in Malaysia long before independence 1957. It is a continuation of informal method of studying religion in Malay society which can be traced back up to when Islam first came to this region. It started with classes held at personal houses and mosques and spread up to having a proper place called “pondok” built surrounding the Tok Guru’s house. The pondok system rapidly developed when Tok Gurus gained a good reputation in society and they started built their own pondoks with the help of society. Many pondok flourished in some states like Kedah, Kelantan, Terengganu and Pahang and despite some has died up today there are some still maintain up to this day, beside many new pondoks have been established in last two decades as can be found especially in Kelantan. One of the main struggles of pondok system today is to face the modern education which offer a far better condition compared to pondok. Despite that pondok still survive and able to make their presence in society and give their intellectual services up to a certain level of study. In this paper we will try give perspectives to pondok system and to foresee their future survival in Malaysia.

BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO PONDOK SYSTEM

'Pondok' in its Malay original term denotes a humble small house built for a temporary purpose. The term however has been used also for traditional Islamic religious centre of learning in Malay world. The name of the centre as 'pondok' is actually in conjunction with the nature of the centre which surrounded by the small houses occupied by the students who attend to study at the center. There are three main features of pondok as a center of learning, namely, the teachers known as tok guru, the students who used to be known as budak pondok who stay at the pondok, and the talaqqi/halaqah system of learning, which learning is concentrated on reading kitab from cover to cover. The Tok Guru is someone whose specialty is in Islamic

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