

ISLAMICHERITAGE
LEADS THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE UMMAH

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Editors

Hasan Bahrom
S. Salahudin Suyurno
Abdul Qayyum Abdul Razak

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Prakata

Sejarah warisan Islam telah memberikan dampak yang cukup besar kepada perkembangan dunia hari ini. Ia bukan sahaja memberi sumbangan kepada aspek kerohanian malah turut menyumbang kepada aspek ekonomi, politik, pendidikan, sosial, kesenian, kebudayaan, sains dan teknologi. Perkembangan ini memperlihatkan bahawa pentingnya ketamadunan ilmu kepada ketamadunan dunia. Perkara ini selaras dengan tuntutan al-Quran yang menyatakan dengan jelas bahawa Allah SWT memuji sesiapa yang berusaha menuntut ilmu dan juga bertaqwa kepadaNya. Namun sejak akhir-akhir ini, sumbangan hasil pensejarahan Islam sering dipandang sepi oleh generasi muda. Sejarah warisan Islam tidak lagi dijadikan panduan dan iktibar dalam melebarkan ketamadunan ilmu Islam. Mereka lebih tertumpu kepada ketamadunan Barat yang dikatakan 'kaya' dengan khazanah ilmu. Sedangkan kemajuan hari ini seharusnya berlandaskan kepada ketamadunan Islam.

Penelitian atau pengkajian mengenai warisan Islam perlu direncanakan sebagai ketamadunan dunia. Idea-idea baru mengenai sejarah warisan Islam perlu diketengahkan. Oleh yang demikian, menerusi *1st International Islamic Heritage Conference (IsHeC 2015)* dilihat akan dapat membantu kepada perkembangan produksi seterusnya menjana idea-idea baru khususnya untuk memperkayakan kajian dalam bidang sejarah warisan Islam kepada masyarakat. Dengan penganjuran seminar ini secara tidak langsung membantu untuk menjalinkan hubungan antara para sarjana dalam bidang sejarah warisan Islam. Ini adalah satu cabaran dan membuka peluang baru untuk membina satu perpaduan intelektual merentas sempadan dunia.

Buku ini merupakan kompilasi diskusi ilmu antara para ilmunan yang terlibat secara langsung dalam pembentangan kertas kerja mereka dalam *1st International Islamic Heritage Conference (IsHeC 2015)* daripada pelbagai platform ilmu Islam antaranya Kesenian, Ketamadunan, Komunikasi, Pendidikan, Kewangan, Sains dan Teknologi dan lain-lain lagi. Semoga curahan ilmu melalui penulisan ini mampu memberi sumbangan dalam menambah khazanah ilmu Islam kepada masyarakat.

Editor,

1st International Islamic Heritage Conference (IsHeC 2015),

Akademi Pengajian Islam Kontemporari,

UiTM Melaka.

Kata Aluan Rektor UiTM Melaka

Dengan Nama Allah Yang Maha Pemurah Lagi Maha Pengasih
Assalamu'alaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh

Segala puji bagi Allah, Tuhan seru sekalian alam, dengan limpah kurniaNya serta keizinanNya, kejayaan penganjuran *1st International Islamic Heritage Conference 2015* yang berlangsung di Hotel Mahkota Melaka pada 11-12 November 2015, telah menghasilkan banyak kertas kerja yang amat bermutu. Justeru, buku ini mengumpulkan puluhan penulisan para ilmuan dan cendekiawan dari dalam dan luar negara untuk bacaan semua.

Pelbagai isu telah dikupas termasuklah perihal seni Islam, budaya, politik, gendar, pendidikan, sejarah, kemasyarakatan, sains dan teknologi, ekonomi, kewangan, falsafah, bahasa dan komunikasi, kedermawanan dan pengurusan. Pembaca juga akan mendapati buku ini memuatkan kajian-kajian yang komited melaksanakan usaha mengintegrasikan antara ilmu duniawi dan ukhrawi. Ini membuktikan kesegaran keilmuan tamadun Islam itu sendiri.

Semoga perkongsian ilmu ini dapat meningkatkan komitmen umat dalam memartabatkan perintah Ilahi dalam kehidupan duniawi sebagai jambatan ukhrawi. Sekaligus ia bakal memberi manfaat pada alam sejagat.

Pihak UiTM Melaka merakamkan setinggi-tinggi tahniah dan ucapan terima kasih atas segala sokongan dalam bentuk material, tenaga dan sebagainya dalam merialisasikan seminar ini. Buat semua penaja yang telah memberikan sumbangan kepada wacana ini, sekalung penghargaan diucapkan. Semoga seminar dwi tahunan ini akan terus diperkasakan demi mengangkat martabat umat melalui kecemerlangan tamadun Islam yang diakui telah terbukti diseluruh jagat.

Sekian, terima kasih. Wassalam

PROF. MADYA DR MOHD ADNAN BIN HASHIM

Rektor ,
UiTM Melaka.

THE IMPACT OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY TOWARDS RURAL COMMUNITY IN UNDERSTANDING ISLAM

Abdul Hapes bin Mohammed⁵⁰⁹
Nurul Diana bt Mohamed Iqbal

ABSTRACT

Islam has derived into this world to bring civilization to mankind. It is a gift from Allah to all human beings on this earth. After an extensive period of Islam based in Malaysia since the time of the Malacca Sultanate, it has grown swiftly and become the official religion of Malaysia. As we know, this country is now moving towards the developed countries. Innumerable efforts and initiatives engaged by the government to safeguard that Malaysia continues to advance in all aspects and one of it is science and technology. This is aligned with our country's Vision 2020, "The sixth is the challenge of establishing a scientific and progressive society, a society that is innovative and forward-looking, and one that is not only a consumer of technology but also a contributor to the scientific and technological civilization of the future". That's why it's a requirement for us to understand and mastering the skills in the arena of anything you want endeavour. Things would be much easier with the support of science and technology. This paper will show how science and technology can contribute a positive influence to the community, especially for those living in rural areas regarding the understanding the matters of Islam which related in their lives.

Keywords: *ICT4D, Rural Communities, Information Technologies, content development, BDD*

In the era of globalization, where technological development is especially rapid, it has become crucial for every developing nation to use and cultivate information and communication technology (ICT) for development purposes. This is especially more prevalent in the developing countries which are still striving to develop ICT especially in the rural areas where there is little penetration if ICT. However, this cannot be sidelined as incorporating ICT in the daily lives of these rural people would also subconsciously nurture development. Though there might be several challenges in doing so, both the governmental and non-governmental organizations should work hand-in-hand in making this a reality for the benefit of the people in particularly. It is the aim of many countries worldwide to make ICT available, affordable and usable by each level of the society existing in their population. Hence, this leads to the formation of policies by some government such as subsidizing the implementation of public telephones. This is also extended towards profit-seeking ICT companies that aim in knowing in which region or provinces that is best targeted in order to aggrandize revenues apart from knowing if there are other ICT companies present as a competitor. Though they are varying factor which influences the penetration level of ICT in rural areas, one of it is because the people itself chooses not to use a given type of ICT, whereas in other areas, the providers do not make the products or services as widely or easily available (Pitikom Temtrakul, 2011).

Other obstacles faced in granting universal access to ICT would be accounted to the perception of the capitalistic firms. These firms believe that when investing in the rural markets, it is simply not profitable. Hence, is it not worth to invest a huge some of capital into it. In a world where capitalists are governing development alongside the governmental and non-governmental organizations, profits and returns are the best assets of ICT development

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apart from motivating reinvestments. This barrier must be overcome, to bring forth the installation and utilization of ICT in the rural areas. Illiteracy in ICT is also another large problem to be tackled. Take the Internet as an example. The Internet is information based and knowledge intensive, hence it requires users to communicate to certain extent with the computers in which a small amount of basic education is essential (Akshay Mathur, 2005).

According to (Hassan Bakhshizadeh, 2011) ICT is also used for as a tool in combating poverty. However, this is not especially applicable globally. In country such as India, where electricity supply is still unavailable in certain places, where telephone lines are yet to be installed, ICT has failed to do so. It is also said that ICT has the ability to increase the betterment of the social services, increasing the state of information for supporting food security, increasing knowledge by combining the local knowledge with innovative strategies in agricultural fields, providing equal opportunities for everyone in the village to be able to gain information and other advantages which is also inclusive of their social, culture as well as political issues in the rural community (Hassan Bakhshizadeh, 2011).

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY IN RURAL COMMUNITIES

Based on a study conducted in India (Akshay Mathur, 2005), it is seen that science and technology has opened up a vast range of possibilities for the rural communities. In fact, by providing this opportunity to the rural communities which makes up a huge population of India, it is seen to be the next revolution waiting to happen. Driven by a wide dissemination of knowledge, a developing country such as India has made minor improvements in their attempt of utilising ICT for development. In a state that reeks of poverty and where the majority of the people have yet to be connected to the electricity, the idea of utilising ICT appears to be farfetched. ICT would provide the villagers a much better channel to make their complaints apart from being their problems into the limelight. This helps the rural people tremendously as they do not have to go through bureaucratic hierarchy in urban areas. One such project is the "Gyandoot" project. "Gyandoot" means 'messenger of knowledge'. According to a detailed survey in 2001, the Dhar district in madhya Pradesh, India has a population of 1,741,000 where 74% of them live below the poverty line. Only 27% of the population are literate and the economy in Dhar is driven by agriculture as in most parts in India. This government initiated program serves the purpose of creating an intranet in the district by the setup of rural public cyber cafes' alongside data connectivity. Launched on November 29, 1999, it is officially authorized in January 2000. The entire project was executed over a period of 51 days with a cost of INR.2, 500,000 (~ \$ 57,000 USD). A number of 21 rural cyber cafes called "Soochanalya" provides services to about 20-30 villages with a population ranging from 20,000-30,000 people which is strategically located at Block headquarters, village markets and bus pots. The intranet covers 5 out of 13 blocks of the district, serving a population of about half a million. The central hardware of the Gyandoot is based at Dhar district government headquarters with a computer configured as a server possessing a 450MHz Pentium III processor, 128MB RAM, and a 40GB disk drive. To help overcome the problem of illiteracy, local youths are given training to operate these cafes. This project has successfully addressed the difficulty burdened by transaction costs linked with government services. Several hundred villagers travel miles away to these government offices from their remote village with a tiresome journey that could extend up to days. During this period, there are also losses of income and having to put up with the harassment of corrupt and uninterested public officials. The Gyandoot solves this plight for over a half million rural villagers with various access to various government and market related access.

The following survey research (Amirhossein Alibiyagi, 2011) was conducted to investigate the effectiveness of rural ICT Centres in the development of e-governance in the rural communities of the Kermanshah Township, located west of Iran. In Iran, almost 34 percent of the whole population lives in villages. Therefore the government intends to facilitate ICTs to most of them. This is because, if people living in the rural areas do not

participate in the activity of using or sharing ICT, a new challenge would be posed in their development aspect. In a very rapidly advancing world, they would then have to address the problem of information gap. The main purpose of this study is to assess how effective is the ICT centres located in the villages of the Kermanshah Township. The objectives are: 1) to assess ICT centre effectiveness based on achieving their goals and based on benefits received by the households and communities, and 2) to assess the accessibility of these centres. The design of the study was that of a descriptive survey, focusing on 6218 rural households heads of which 367 was selected through stratified random sampling. The data collection was done in two phases where in the first stage a Delphi technique was utilized. This was carried out by the participation of 15 ICT experts to determine the effectiveness indicators. The Delphi technique is described as a group process used to solicit, collate, and direct expert response with the aim of reaching consensus. It can also be explained as a mean of securing and refining group opinions while substituting computed general agreement for the case of an agreed-upon majority opinion. Also, it has been noted that this particular technique is most effective in order to obtain a general agreement from an advisedly elected group of experts. In the second phase, a structured interview was employed using a questionnaire. It is found that the majority of the people choose to not use the internet services despite being easily accessible in the ICT centres. Also, these ICT centres have low impact in improving the villagers' household income, employment rate, diffusion of agricultural information among farmers, and e-commerce. Nevertheless, they do slightly impact the migration rate to urban area, the frequency of the trips to near cities, and postal requirements have all been reduced as a result of e-governance in the rural areas.

Table 1: Delphi Technique-Round One. Level of Agreement With Effectiveness Indicators (n=15)

Indicator	Agree (%)
E-commerce	88.2
Filling leisure time of rural youth	87.1
Improving postal services	84.2
Reducing trips to urban areas	83.6
Improving employment opportunity via job searching	82.3
Increasing access to telephone	81.8
Official registrations by Internet	80.2
Reduction in rural-urban migration	78.8
Developing crop insurance	77.1
Business services	76.2
Growth in the number of community businesses	75.5
Access to rural cooperatives information	73.2
Increasing value of agricultural sales	72.5
Access to information about agricultural markets	71.4
Access to information about agricultural inputs	69.8
Access to agricultural weather information	67.5
Awareness of event in a country	66.1
Reduction in monetary cost to obtain information and communication	65.5
Reduction in time to obtain information and communication	65.4
Access to information about agricultural input and output prices	64.9
Changes in household income	46.1

As displayed in the table1 above the panel's members agreed that 22 items represents the major indicators for assessing the effectiveness of rural ICT centers. E-Commerce with 88.2% agreement was the highest recorded. Over 80% of the panel's members agreed on another six additional categories which were also important indicators in order to measure the

effectiveness of ICT centers. The other six indicators included were filling leisure times of rural youth, improving postal services, reducing trips to urban areas, improving employment opportunities via job searching, increasing access to telephone, and official registrations through internet. Overall, it can be said that ICT when implemented is definitely effective in the development of the rural community. Also, rural ICT centers have been proven to help the development in the rural community in the west of Iran with the aid of, for example, e-commerce and dissemination information which is very much needed. Since most of them are farmers, ICT has aided them with the information provided regarding agricultural product and marketing, agricultural subsidies, cooperatives, insurances, finances, and public credits.

The next case study (Andreea-Diana, 2014) is focused on the importance of ICT towards the pupils in the rural area of Romania. When talking about a community, it must be put into consideration that there are many levels of society that's involved. Hence, in this next study, the subject is primarily students and teachers of the rural area. This is also important to be addressed as knowledge is best instilled at a young age as this is a point where the mind is still developing therefore, able to enhance creativity in these pupils. Where ICT is concerned, the rural students too should be able to benefit from it. This paper addresses the educational progress and the importance of using ICT skills and tools by the pupils in Romania. Nevertheless, the primary focus will be on how far the pupils from the rural areas are involved in using ICT to keep in par with the requirements of the European Union. There are different aspects which are also analyzed such as the importance of involving students from the rural area into different ICT projects, which is essential for their personal development in this particular field alongside the progress made by both students and teachers in their skills. The purpose of developing ICT skills is very important by both students and teachers to enhance the quality of the current education system. According to the study *Implementation of Methodology and Tools for Monitoring and Evaluating the Rural Education Project-Second Longitudinal Study-Summary* (REP) which was conducted in Romania, the final report exclaims that students have developed a liking to learn further about informatics from their teacher. Their teachers on the other hand reckons that the software used be updated to further facilitate teaching lessons. However, there are also limitation factors that hinder the progress of the rural students. Among them are the ownership of a computer and the ease of access to the computers.

This is observed from a study lead by the *Pupil's Time* which sees the time spent on the computers by the pupils as a crucial factor in determining its importance to the pupils.

Table 2: Time Allocated For Computer And Their Residential Area

Residential area	Average daily	Average working days	Average weekend
Urban	42'	36'	1h6'
Rural	12'	12'	48'

Source : (Andreea-Diana, 2014)

The urban students spend more time on their computers than that of the rural students as they have greater opportunities to access the computer. This is an important fact that must be looked into by the government and non-governmental organizations of Romania. If this is over-looked, then the prospects of developing the rural students through the application of ICT would not be able to be attained as one of the basic tools in ICT is not yet available or accessible to those living in the remote areas. Without the tool, it is difficult to thoroughly study the impact of ICT on them as the result may be biased.

This following study (Hassan Bakhshizadeh, 2011) was also conducted in Iran in the Ardabil province involving the Sardabeh village. In general, whilst some already has access to ICT, others are soon to be connected to the privilege that ICT has to offer.

Table 3: Population Situation in Sardabeh Villages

Family	Population		Villages
	Whole	Man Woman	
4,367	20,579	10, 495 10, 084	25

Source : (Amirhossein Alibiyagi, 2011)

As shown in Table 3, the Sardabeh village involves 25 villages with a population of 20, 579. Also, in this county, most of them are either farmers or dairy farmer; hence, there are a lot of rooms for development to take place with the usage of ICT. The Ministry of IT and Communication of Iran is particularly interested in developing these abandoned and desolated areas for the benefit of those living in Sardabeh village. IT Companies in Iran has also come up with a slogan of “better village, better life with ICTs” to work alongside the Iranian Ministry in aiding the development of the rural community. This is in accordance with the Iranian fourth development program. The focus of the program is to use ICT as a tool whilst providing numerous services to enhance villagers’ skills and also to provide job opportunities. Up to date, there are 9950 villages apart from Sardabeh that is utilizing ICT with another 9912 rural ICT centers to be set up soon. For this particular study, both qualitative and interactive planning was used. The fundamental view of interactive planning is that, to understand every problem, they must be looked from a general point of view. This process can be divided into five stages. They are; 1) ordering the disorders; 2) purpose planning; 3) instruments planning; 4) sources planning; 5) implementing and controlling the plan. The first step taken was to investigate the positive and negative point of ICT to determine the possible problems followed by structured and semi-structured interview and finally group discussions to obtain additional information. The findings are such that in the first stage, environmentally, there is no negative point, the positive points includes a reduction in emigration for job purposes and an increase in villagers’ knowledge. For cultural and social issues, the positive point is saving time and energy among villagers and the negative point is the unfamiliarity of villagers with ICT. There is no negative point regarding economical issue and its positive point is an increase in the participation of the villagers’ in decision making. Among the purpose that must be completed in the second stage would be the decreasing the information gap among urban and rural regions as well as enhancing economy through marketing. The third stage planning would be to increase the number of telephone and mobile lines. The fourth stage would be an inclusive of sufficient facility to promote the tourism industry as Sardabeh is rich in cultural heritage. The final stage would be to have the government, non-governmental organization and IT companies working alongside one another and the villagers to provide the needed plans.

According to the findings of this study, ICT when utilized is able to promote communication among the villagers, for instance in spreading the latest information apart from catering to most of their needs especially with the help of the Internet. Most of the rural communities are also very welcoming towards the incorporation of ICT into their daily lives. They believe that it has a lot of advantages to be offered especially in increasing their knowledge in agriculture. This study also proves that ICT should be based on local organization and local control should be fitted to local specification and characteristics. This is essential to prevent the negative aspects from overthrowing the positive aspects of ICT.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY IN UNDERSTANDING ISLAM

Science and technology plays a very significant role in raising awareness of rural communities to the knowledge of Islam. It is a starting point in making them as informative community and sensitive towards current information developments. I have conducted several studies to distinguish how ICT can aid rural communities in their daily lives in the village.

Based on my study (Mohammed, 2011), the findings shows that rural communities intend to utilize ICT in their live if the content are related to their needs. From the data that has been collected, it indicates that most of the respondent need information related to religion. Based on this result, I've developed a web based information kiosk that offers the information about Islam and then a pilot test study being conducted using the villagers. To be specific, in this research I focused on one set of respondent which is the senior citizen. From the result of the pilot study, I found that 97% believed the content that has been provided are related to their needs and a clear cut 100% decision from all the respondents where they agreed if the related content being extend to other sections of information.

From another study (Abdul Hapes Mohammed, 2014) that I conducted, I focused on another set of respondent which is women who work as a farmers and fulltime housewife. The method that I used to extract the information by using face to face interview and 40 respondents involved in this session. Based on the outcome from the interview, I found that these set of respondents interested in several type of information and the highest percentage is on religion aspect which carry 72.5% followed by health and medicine 57.5% and education also 57.5%. After I analyzed the result, a platform were setup that combine all three type of information that classified as religion, health and education. Using the same technique, to identify whether the content able to attract them to practice ICT a pilot study being conducted and 30 respondents involved in this session. Result shows 100% respondents agreed to the content offered to them because it's related to their needs and they also agree if the content being use by all communities.

The result from both studies backing the ideas that there is a strong relationship between understanding the knowledge in islam and the knowledge of using ICT as a tools.

DISCUSSION

A success of a project can be seen by the impact it has on people. Where ICT is concerned, various studies has indeed proven that it does give a major impact in enhancing the development of rural communities in aspects such as information gathering, business, economy, agriculture, and etc.

For example, by the execution of the "Gyandoot" project in India, has been able to provide commodity marketing and information services. Apart from that, land records has also been made much easier as a printout is easily available rather than having to go through meticulous steps in obtaining one. Corruption on the other hand makes the scenario much worse adding difficulty to an already difficult life of the rural community. Applications registrations and governmental complaints are also made much easier. The ICT does not only improves the quality of life for the rural community, but it is also subconsciously promoting the betterment of the nation itself with better management practices and the managements of risks through microfinance. Private sector companies are also more willing to invest and work alongside the government as they see real and viable opportunities present.

Apart from that, this is also proven through from the case study conducted in the West of Iran where the effectiveness is focused on services and e-commerce apart from increasing information dissemination among them. The same impact can be drawn from the Sardabeh case study.

The same is observed in Romania. The rural school children, has progressed in their ICT skills and tools as feel a strong need in mastering it. It has also changed both teaching and learning habits, hence, increasing the quality of education there.

Whereas in Malaysia, there might be a different story and challenges. Although rural society realize that the importance of ICT in their lives, still some of them still perceive ICT will adversely affect them. This is a challenge that must be confronted by the various parties, whether government or NGOs in ensuring penetration of ICT in rural areas could be improved. Even so, with only depends on the provision of infrastructure alone is not enough to safeguard the success of this idea because it depend on the rural community itself. They need to realize comprehend these things from a positive perspective that their understanding in a variety of things, especially things correlated to Islam may be increased from time to time.

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