

Volume 3 (2025)



RMU e-Bulletin



Research Management Unit
Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Kedah

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eISSN : 2805-47 5X

Published by : Universiti Teknologi MARA
08400 Merbok, Kedah Malaysia

Printed by : Perpustakaan Sultan Badlishah
Universiti Teknologi Mara Cawangan Kedah
08400 Merbok Kedah

e ISSN 2805- 47 5X



9772805 475 000

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Embracing New Horizons: A Fresh Start for 2025



As we stand at the threshold of a new year, I welcome you to RMU4U Third Edition (January 2025). The start of a new year symbolizes renewal, an opportunity to recalibrate our aspirations and refresh our collective commitment to academic excellence, research endeavours, and impactful scholarly contributions.

The year 2024 saw significant progress within our academic and research community. It was a testament to the passion, perseverance, and creativity of all members of the UiTM Kedah family. As we reflect on those accomplishments, let us also look ahead with determination to elevate our efforts in research, publication, and innovation. Let 2025 be the year we chart new pathways for discovery and collaboration, bringing our work to greater heights.

This year, I encourage all of us to reaffirm our scholarly goals by setting clear, measurable targets for research outputs, impactful writings, and knowledge sharing, aiming to contribute meaningfully to society both locally and globally. Let us strengthen research collaborations by building networks across disciplines, faculties, and institutions to foster cross-disciplinary solutions to real-world challenges. At the same time, we must focus on innovation by exploring new ideas, embracing digital tools, and pioneering creative solutions that align with global trends and local needs. Above all, let us support each other by sharing expertise, mentoring the next generation, and collaborating to overcome challenges, creating a thriving research ecosystem where everyone uplifts one another.

Let this be a year where we balance ambition with reflection, passion with purpose, and innovation with impact. The Research Management Unit (RMU) remains steadfast in supporting your research journey through resources, platforms, and opportunities for growth.

As we embark on this new chapter, I wish each of you the strength to pursue your aspirations and the resilience to overcome any obstacles. Together, let us make 2025 a year of breakthroughs, achievements, and shared successes.

Here's to a productive and inspiring year ahead.

Sincerely,

Prof. Dr. Roshima Said

Acting Rector, UiTM Kedah



A Message from the Chief Editor

Dear Readers,

I am pleased to announce the return of the RMU4U Bulletin with Volume 3, showcasing a diverse array of academic inquiries and professional perspectives across multiple themes. This edition continues our commitment to facilitating intellectual exchange and presenting research that engages with contemporary issues.

In this volume, the Law & Policy theme stands out with the highest number of contributions, featuring 14 papers that explore significant aspects of governance, justice, and societal well-being. These papers highlight the role of legal frameworks and policies in addressing current challenges and contributing to societal development.

Highlighted works include topics such as "Enhancing Access to Justice: The Role, Challenges, and Future of Small Claims Courts in Malaysia" and "Environmental Public Interest Litigation: Broadening Locus Standi to Safeguard Collective Interests," which examine the evolving landscape of legal rights and public interest. Additional discussions, such as "Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) in Islamic Banking and Finance in Malaysia" and "Balancing Nature and Faith: Protection and Conservation of Water Resources from the Perspective of Islamic Law," shed light on the interplay between ethics, faith, and law in addressing societal challenges.

In addition to the focus on Law & Policy, this issue covers a range of topics that contribute to understanding innovation and societal change. Articles such as "AI-Driven Recommendations in Mobile Shopping Apps," "Podcasts, Animations & Gen Z: Revamping Organizational Behavior Learning," and "The Role of Social Media in Shaping Islamic Entrepreneurship" explore the intersections of technology, education, and culture in today's world.

This edition represents the collaborative work of our contributors, whose insights and expertise have shaped the content of this bulletin. We encourage readers to engage with these ideas and consider their implications for further research and practical applications.

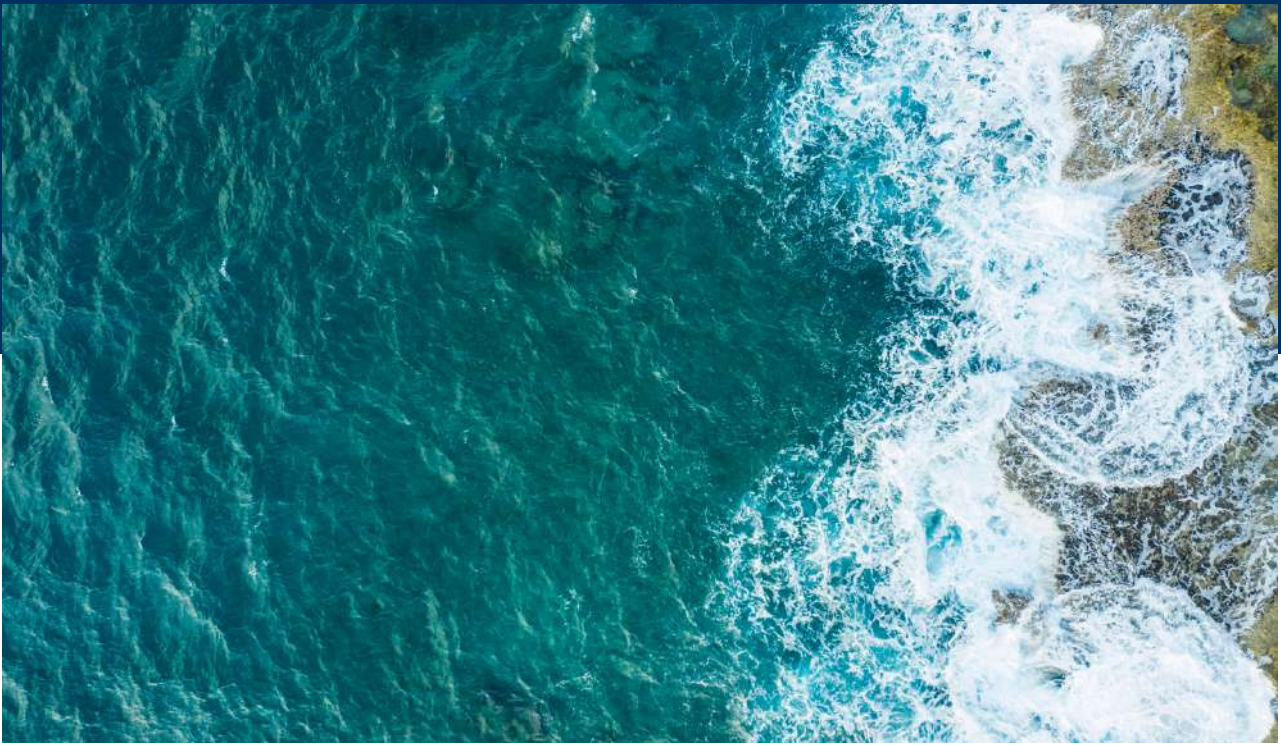
I would like to thank the authors, reviewers, and editorial team members who made RMU4U Bulletin Volume 3 possible. We hope this publication serves as a resource for understanding key issues and inspires further exploration.

Thank you for being part of this endeavor. Let us continue to learn and exchange ideas

Warm regards,

Dr Azyyati Anuar
Chief Editor, RMU4U E-Bulletin





BALANCING NATURE AND FAITH: PROTECTION AND CONSERVATION OF WATER RESOURCES FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF ISLAMIC LAW

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Water is indispensable to life, a resource critical for the survival of all living beings and the sustenance of ecosystems. In Islam, water holds both practical and spiritual importance, regarded as a blessing from God and a shared trust that must be protected, conserved and equitably distributed.

Rooted in the Qur'an and the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), Islamic principles emphasize water as a communal resource, its management as a collective responsibility, and its preservation as a moral obligation.



This article emphasises on the crucial importance of water in Islam, focusing on Islamic legal principles for managing water resources, and their relevance and application to the current challenges. With its base on Islamic teachings, it provides insights into fostering sustainable water resource management rooted in faith, equity, and environmental stewardship from the Islamic viewpoint.

The Importance of Water in Islam

Water, indeed holds a truly vital place in Islam, as it symbolises life, purity, and divine mercy. It also carries some immense spiritual and practical significances. The Arabic word for water “maa” has been mentioned for multiple times in the Qur’an, underlining its essential role in sustaining life and shoring up human civilization. The Qur’an, in many instances, repeatedly draws attention to the miraculous properties of water, as seen in various verses such as: "Do not the Unbelievers see That the heavens and the earth Were joined together (as one Unit of Creation), before We clove them asunder? We made from water Every living thing. Will they Not then believe?" (Surah 21:30).

In Islamic tradition, the concept of water surpasses its physical properties, encompassing into the spiritual realm and law. The term Shari’ah, often translated as Islamic law, literally means "the path to a watering place or source of water." This linguistic meaning truly highlights the idea that divine guidance guides believers to the source of truth i.e. ultimate truth.

The importance of water is further emphasised through its integral role in acts of worship. Water as a way of cleansing and purification, for wudu(ablution) and ghusl (full body purification), is a prerequisite for performing ibadah (worship). These practices highlight how much physical cleanliness is being stipulated in Islam as a foundation for spiritual purity. Additionally, Islam places a strong emphasis on hygiene, with its teachings that often urge upon washing of hands, face, and other parts of the body regularly with water. Thus, this not only reflects concern for personal health but also concedes water as a purifying component.

In the Qur’an, the stories of the Prophets further illustrate the profound connection between faith and water. Prophet Nuh (Noah) is remembered for the great flood, a symbol of divine power and mercy. Prophet Musa (Moses) is linked to the parting of the Red Sea, which demonstrates God’s intervention and deliverance. Even Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham) is connected to the well of Zamzam, a miraculous water source that continues to quench the thirst of millions of pilgrims in Makkah. Through these examples, Islam not only presents water as a physical necessity but also a spiritual metaphor. Its presence in the Qur’an and its role in the daily lives of Muslims reflect its profound significance in nurturing a connection between humanity, creation, and the Creator.





Islamic Legal Principles on Water Resources

Due to the significance of water in Islam, Islamic law provides a comprehensive framework for managing and protecting water resources, rooted in the principles of equity, conservation, and shared responsibility:

1. Water Resources as Public Property

Water, in its natural state and as a natural resource, is considered a common property in Islam, belonging to all humankind and other living creatures. It cannot be monopolized or privately owned unless effort has been invested to collect, move, or store it—for example, water contained in pool, pond, or a private well. Even in such cases, access to water cannot be denied to those in need (Nadwi, 2020). The state holds water resources in trust for the community, ensuring equitable distribution and preventing monopolization. This is echoed in the Qur'an's reference to the people of *Thamud*: "*And tell them that The water is to be Divided between them : each one's right to drink Being brought forward (By suitable turns).*" (Surah 54:28). The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) further emphasized the communal nature of water in his saying: "*Muslims [humankind] are co-owners in three things: water, fire, and pasture.*" (narrated by Muslim).

2. Water Rights

Islamic law recognizes the rights of individuals and animals to access water. These rights are not absolute but are balanced to ensure survival and livelihood (Hashmi et al, 2024). Humans have precedence over animals in water usage, and drinking water and domestic uses take priority over agricultural irrigation. This hierarchy ensures that life-sustaining needs are met first.

3. Water Equity

Islam promotes fairness and proportionality in allocating water resources. The prioritization of usage follows a structured order: i) Quenching thirst (humans and animals), ii) Domestic uses, iii) Irrigation for agriculture. Water use for irrigation is often restricted only to amounts necessary for the specific areas being cultivated, ensuring that resources are not wasted and are distributed equitably.



4. Prohibition of water pollution

Apart from that, preservation of water quality is a key principle in Islam. The religion distinguishes different water types and their uses, ensuring that water remains uncontaminated and safe for consumption. Acts which can pollute water, as seen in defecating or urinating near water sources, are explicitly prohibited (ur Rahman, 2021). These measures are meant to safeguard public health and preserve ecological balance.

5. Conservation of Water Resources

Conservation is fundamental in Islamic law, as the preservation of water is often considered to be essential for the continuation of life. The principle that "what is indispensable to preserve life is itself obligatory" underscores the magnitude of safeguarding water resources. The Islamic practices such as the establishment of Hima (protected zones) and Harim (sanctuaries) are substantial conservation strategies. Hima areas are set aside for grazing and biodiversity protection (Gari, 2006). Meanwhile Harim zones protect water sources by prohibiting activities like digging wells near existing canals or water bodies, preventing overexploitation and ensuring the sustainability of groundwater (Abdullah et al, 2024).

6. Prohibition of Wastefulness

Extravagance and wastefulness in water usage are strictly forbidden in Islam. The Qur'an cautions and is truly against excess as seen in this verse: "O children of Adam! wear your beautiful apparel at every time and place of prayer: eat and drink: but waste not by excess for God loveth not the wasters." (Surah 7:31). The teachings encourage moderation, even when water is abundant.

Water, as the essence of life, occupies a central place in Islamic teachings, both as a divine blessing and a shared trust. For its fair distribution, sustainable management, and conservation, the Qur'an and the Sunnah provide a strong moral and legal foundation on this matter. In the legal principles of Shari'ah, Islam emphasises, among others, the sacred duty to protect and responsibly utilise this vital resource

The Islamic approach to water management harmonises between environmental sustainability and social equity. It also recognises water as a public good while at the same time balancing individual rights and community welfare. Its prioritisation of essential needs, prohibition of wastefulness, and establishment of protected zones reflect a deep commitment in preserving water resources for all living beings.

As our world today is still grappling with issues like water scarcity, pollution, and inequitable access to water resources, the wisdoms embedded in Shari'ah principles could provide valuable insights and guidance. By integrating Islamic principles of conservation, fairness, and stewardship, policymakers and communities can address today's challenges while fostering a sustainable future for the next generations.

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e ISSN 2805- 47 5X



9772805 475 000

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