INTEGRATED RADICAL AND RELIGIOUS EXTREMISM REHABILITATION PROGRAM IN MALAYSIA: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF SPIRITUAL AND CURRENT APPROACH

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Abstract - This article presents the ways of rehabilitating while terminating the security threat in Malaysia, particularly related to radical and religious extremism (RRE) cases. Several acts have been promulgated in order to secure the present and potential threats, which resorts the latest Prevention of Terrorism Act 2015 (POTA 2015) towards responding the current issues of religious terrorism. Attention is given to reinstating the detainees by supplying them the special module provided by the authority. However, the researchers assert that the use of the spiritual and religious elements should be the main course for detoxifying their misbehavior and wrong ideologies. The researchers advancing this solution to be compared with the methods that are currently taken in reintegrating the RRE offenders. Hence, this research assesses the efficiency of using the spiritual and religious element as the main course in the process of rehabilitating from other centers, theoretically and practically conducted. Data was collected using primary and secondary sources; acts; module books and pamphlets; key informants; and article journals. Collected data was sorted and being compared. It is asserted that such cases which rooted from the wrong and loss of self-value should be cured by fulfilling their spiritual, cum the cognitive and physical will be treated as well. Thus, the pros and cons of these integrated methods are able to be compared, shared and upgraded, solely for the sake of the future healthy generation.

Index Terms - Extremism, Radical, Rehabilitation, Spiritual Approach.

I. INTRODUCTION

The RRE cases are the global humanity concern and should not be taken granted. Besides of breeding the terrorists, it is also degrading the moral value of the whole society. The birth of these movements – either Islam or other religions, they are not coming out from the vacuum space, but surely, they have their own agenda and own justification [1]. Besides, to claim that these RRE as the representative of that claimed-religion is a big mistake for no religion in this world is accepting the extremism, cruel actions, killing the innocents, and et cetera. They ought not to be construed under that religion and has to be understood by the societies that they do not belong to any religion [2], [3].

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The extensive discussions have been conducted on the ways to deal with the offenders of the RRE. The punitive punishment and the conventional detainment are said to be inefficient to lower the rate of recidivism and serve as the preventive action. Amongst the highlighted reasons are; the prison may turn to be conducive haven in recruiting other prisoners; the offenders are not fully recovered from their previous belief; the grudge towards the government may increase, hence the upcoming attacks are highly being instigated, and others [4]–[7]. As an example; initially, Saudi Arabia conducted the way of hard punishment, harsh interrogation even execution, especially towards the followers of al-Qaeda. Nonetheless, this method has not proven to be successful in countering the radical movements by the bloody incident in May 2003 that killed almost 27 of innocents. Besides, the huge number of 2500 of them travelled to Syria in order to get themselves into the coalition of Daesh has shifted the approach of Saudi government into a new form of deprograming those offenders; i.e. soft approach [8].

This scenario is not only worrying Saudi Arabia, but it is the global threat that direly needed to be treated. Ergo, by considering the punitive punishment is analogous to pouring the kerosene into the burning fire; the rehabilitation series has been widely taken by the governments in dealing with the RRE offenders. Amongst the country that opting this approach is Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Egypt, Yemen, Uzbekistan, European countries, United States of America and sundries [9], [10].

Meanwhile, in Malaysia; the rehabilitation courses have already been conducted for decades in this country, especially in dealing with the terrorists and radicals. However, due the secrecy policy played by the government has provided less information to be presented and evaluated [11]. There are various acts

have been amended for the security purpose. Before the independence, British was introducing the Internal Security Act (ISA) for restraining the incoming and present threat of the Communism. However, this act remained to be in power to detain and rehabilitate, although the government is freed from the British intervention and the Communism has been successfully flattened. The issues pertaining the ISA such as the misusage of the act in amputating the opponent political activists, especially regarding the Anwar Ibrahim case and other unstated names has driven the society to press down the government to withdraw the act from the governance [12], [13]. The ISA is said to be a draconian and what had been feared by R.H. Hickling (original drafter of this act) that the government may abuse the 'detention without trial' has been actualized by the way of the authority locking up the opponents without any mercy and violating their rights [14], [15].

Eventually, this act was reported to be abolished on 2012 and replaced by the new Security Offences (Special Measures) Act 2012 (SOSMA) but has proved to be as weak and regarded as similar to the previous act, ISA. However, the country needs special act on responding to the security issue, especially on the arising cases related to Daesh, hence, on 2015, the new act namely as Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA) has been promulgated and enclosed with the Integrated Rehabilitation Module for Detainees (IRMD) courses. This new course is intended to recover the offenders from the excessive bigotry that may harm the security of Malaysia cum threatening the interests of many parties [13], [16], [17].

In dealing with this aforementioned issue, the government should not only master on the operational counter-terrorism but also able to grasp the idea of strategic counter-terrorism. In guaranteeing the successfulness of the deradicalization process, the offenders must be corrected on their misled information 10. Hence, the function of rehabilitation is serving the biggest role for this purpose. The correction on their cognitive aspect able to free them the chain of confusion and eventually leads them to the healthy lifestyle. Besides, their false enthusiasm previously able to be shifted towards the betterment of their life, especially upon release.

Hence, in changing their perceptions, there are various approaches taken in the rehabilitation course; psychology, religious, vocational, social, patriotism, self-management, financial management and others [3], [10]. However, as quoted previously, their misleading information needed to be purified, hence the most appropriate rehabilitation is to conduct the religious courses onto the detainees. This proposal is seconded by many thinkers as the main factor leading the offenders towards this movement is due to their misconception on the genuine Islamic understanding. Most of them were manipulated by the ideologue in order to achieve the visions and aims of the leader by the wrong religious motivation. The ideologues are inevitably skillful in twisting the verses of Quran and manipulate certain hadiths for justifying their devious purposes [18]–[20]. Usually, the affected offenders are coming from the group of the adolescent that is having a lack understanding of religion, looking for the best way of repentance, loss the self-value and trying to portray their heroic character for the sake of the religion [21].

Obviously, religious rehabilitation is strongly needed and should be centered on the reintegration purpose. Hence, there are numerous rehabilitation centers scattered around the world, opting the religious element as the main course for rehabilitating the offenders. Among the well-established centers are located in Singapore and Saudi Arabia [22], [23]. Both of these centers recorded the highest number of successful remark and become the example for other centers too.

Besides, the utilization of religious element as the core course of the rehabilitation also has proved the higher success rate in reinstating the drug abuser inmates compared to the conventional approach that is stated far from the satisfying rate. The centers that provide the religious modalities (Islam and non-Islamic) are Pondok Remaja Inabah, Darul Syifa's Spiritual Drug Addiction Rehabilitation, Jabat Sufi's Private Drug Treatment & Rehabilitation, Raden Suratman's Traditional and Spiritual Drug Addiction Rehabilitation, Hj. Salleh's Traditional and Spiritual Drug Addiction Rehabilitation, Christianity Spiritual Drug Addiction Rehabilitation, and Malaysian Association for the Study of Traditional Asian Medicine [24]. For instance, Pondok Remaja Inabah (PRI) is highly praised to efficiently reinstate the consciousness of the drug abusers, especially in Indonesia (main), Malaysia and Singapore (branches). Within the duration period between 1989 to 1993, 83.9% from 2722 individuals (the total number of the patients from eight branches of PRI) recorded to be completely recovered [24], [25].

III. DISCUSSIONS

Currently, the modules provided in the IRMD are considered to be an integrative syllabus and affiliated between three important departments; Prison Department (PRIDE), Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA) and Royal Malaysia Police (RMP). The main rehabilitation modules are social skills, self-management, patriotism, financial management and psychology [3], [17]. The summary of the syllabi is provided as below;

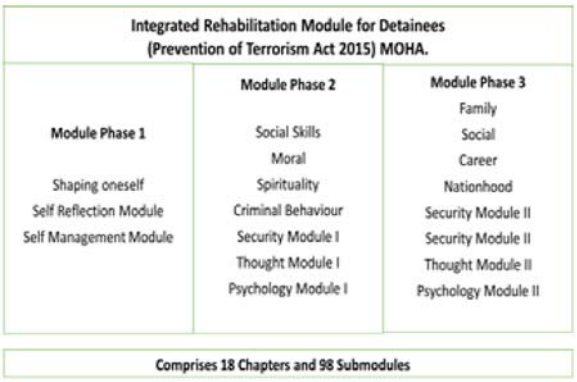


Fig 1. The summary of the Integrated Rehabilitation Module of POTA [17]

Meanwhile, the integrated evaluation and role of those three departments are illustrated as below;

Table 1. Integrated evaluation and scoring of three departments [17]

MOHA	PRIDE	PRM
Using evaluation from the aspect of: • Religion • Psychology	Using the evaluation that is already available	Digital Voice Stress Analysis (DVSA) Method
Scoring: 20%	Scoring: 40%	Scoring 40%

By referring to the aforementioned figures, the aspect of religion is having a less emphasis to be implemented onto the detainees. Fig. 1 indicates that the aspect of spirituality is only being focused on the second phase of the detainment. Meanwhile, the assessing procedure also allocated a minimum number of 20% on the religion aspect (which also being shared by the psychological evaluation as well), compared to the other assessments.

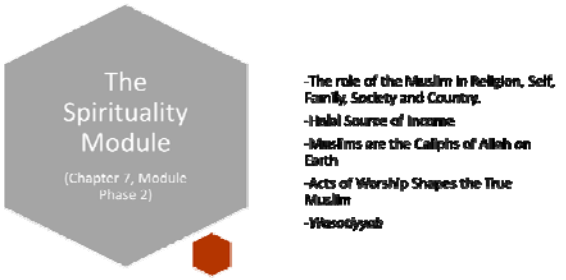


Fig 2. The Spiritual Module in IRMD [17]

Meanwhile, fig. 2 demonstrates the submodules in chapter seven, The Spirituality Module. There are five topics to be discussed: 1) The role of the Muslim in religion, self, family, society and country, 2) Halal source of income, 3) Muslims are the caliphs of Allah on earth, 4) Acts of worship shapes the true Muslim, 5) Wasatiyyah (moderation). All of these submodules are important in shaping the sahsiah (personality) of the detainees. However, in considering the misleading information that violating the core foundation as a true Muslim, it is a need for them to be re-exposed to the very principle of Islam which is tawhid. Without the concrete understanding of tawhid, a person will never grasp the essence of truth and other disciplines [26]. Besides, by the real understanding of tawhid will secure their physical and mental in behaving and thinking soundly. As Allah is known for His mercy and forgiveness; a real Muslim that understands it will never accept the cruelty to be done amongst the same creatures, much less when it carries for the sake of God. Besides, if the extensive exposure on the essence of tawhid is shared towards the detainees, it will slowly crash the idea of their binary thinking or exclusiveness. The statement of, "I am the only good and others are evil" would never attach the sound mind that believes on the genuine tawhid [26], [27]. Ergo, the act of killing, exploitation, manipulation is considered to be unacceptable.

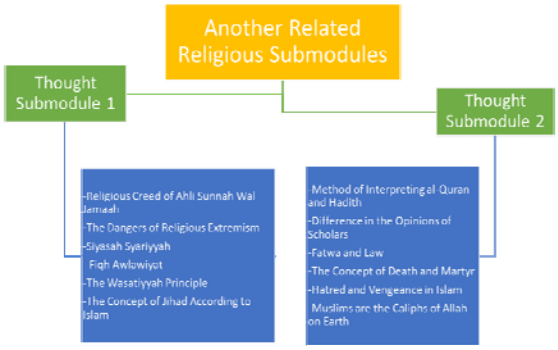


Fig. 3 Other related religious submodules in IRMD. [17]

However, another related religious course is put under the thought submodules 1 and 2. All of the submodules listed in fig. 3 are inevitable important to purify the mindset of the offenders. Besides, the understanding of Ahli Sunnah wal Jamaah in Malaysia is a vital key point to secure the harmonious living in this country. To be in the mainstream is a serious aspect that should be emphasized since the difference in the basic understanding will not benefit them in the process of reintegrating into the society.

The remaining thought submodules are seen to be comprehensive and have a strong stance to quiver the belief and cognitive of the offenders towards their previous worldview. It is also a complementary part if the facilitators able to quote the authentic source of seerah of previous prophets and the Muslims successors, especially related to the wars, jihad [27]. Hence, the twisted facts by the ideologues are easily be questioned, cum eradicates their false beliefs and worldviews.

CONCLUSION

Concerning the current worldwide scenario, the issue of RRE should not be taken lightly by all parties [28].

It requires an integrative support and helps from various agencies, both government and non-government, society and family members. If the terrorists are able to shift the mentality of an individual and lend a hand on their shoulder, how much more the better way that we can offer as their kinfolks.

As for the IRMD is relatively new, hence, the chance for improvised is still needed. The integration between the conventional and Islamic approach should be fostered and receive major attention from the authorities, in order to appropriately response to the condition of the detainees. It is a hope that the current and the proposed additional syllabi able to regain the consciousness of the detainees, cum securing the stability of the ummah and the country as well.

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