

A Revisiting Cultural Transformation: Education System in Malaya During the Colonial Era

World Journal of Islamic History and Civilization, 1 (1): 37-48, 2011, ISSN 2225-0883 © IDOSI Publications, 2011.

<http://idosi.org/wjihc/wjihc1%281%2911.htm>

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Abstract

This article sketches briefly the course of cultural change based on the education system both in the appearance of Malay vernacular schools and missionary initiatives in Malaya during the British administration. The fact is that cultural change becomes always salient pertaining the relationships between colonial administration and the native peoples. Cultural change was a compulsory process embedded in and planned by the foreign powers on behalf of the native people. Therefore, particularly via implanting a new education system was explicitly aimed to restructure the social pattern of native societies. Thus, it was inevitable for the natives to be the subject of cultural change and as a concrete development they were exposed to the western-type education in various levels including secular attempts of colonial administration and missionary initiatives.

The research object of this article is to draw attention into both Malay vernacular schools and also missionary attempts pertaining particularly educational plannings and implimentation in the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth century by the British administration in Malaya. What is the more striking is that new type of education system was not only based on a replacement of religious education with secular one, but also was very functional to remould the native people' worldview. For this purpose, the British tried to implement a new type of schooling known as Free School and then establishment of Malay vernacular schools in a modern sense of education either as personal initiatives at the beginning and later as a colonial educational policy. Missonary groups became a significant catalyst to inculcate western values to the native youths. The idea was, regarding the British authorities' point of view, that missionary attempts would both lessen the burden of the administration and ensure demanded improvements of native youths to be recruited for the various posts during the process.

Key Words: Malaya, Malay education, social change, colonial era.

Introduction

Modern education was commenced by the arrival of the British to Malaya. Particularly, the establishment of the British administration in Singapore in 1819 was a turning point of the history of education in Malay Muslims. This process was accompanied by a cultural transformation occurred gradually through various educational initiatives particularly such as Malay vernacular schools, which symbolized a modernized way of traditional Malay education; English schools and mission schools which were main vehicles of transmission of Western religio-cultural values. Among these institutions the involvement of the Mission communities into education system was a general application during the colonial governments in almost all geographies including Malaya. The existence of the mission communities is regarded as a supportive system to the restructuring of the colonial socio-cultural system beyond these communities' own principal target to be able to convert the indigenous people into Christianity. As a general influential method, the missionary groups followed the traders to initiate modern schooling facilities in native lands. In addition, though the relation between the missionary groups and the secular colonial administration is worth enough to be analysed, the limited pages do not allow it to be discussed here. But, as a strong indication of the close relations between these two Western agencies, both of which not only had mutual interests in colonized geographies but also contra-actions against each other whether to concentrate on religious affiliation or secularization of education.[1] Beyond this, both agencies as representatives of Western world-view caused a cultural strain and had a direct impact on the transformation of socio-cultural structure in Muslim Malay society. In addition, missionaries accompanied the secular governance of the British administration and focused on education not only in their own institutions but also in relatively late nineteenth century, the ones offered by the Colonial Office in the Straight Settlements. Due to shortages of qualified teaching and administrative staff, church members were recruited for the reletad posts as well. [2]

As discussed below, it should be reminded that the process of the cultural transformation which might be re-conceptualized by the term of modernization of education in Islamic world is generally regarded as the result of external factors such as direct involvements of missionary societies. When the historical developments are taken into consideration it can be witnessed that the Malay Peninsula is not an exception of this process. As taken into consideration of modernization process it is inevitable to realize what happened in Malaya during the colonial era in the context of education. Secularization-modernization process in the domain of education in Malaya during along the nineteenth century was accepted as a phenomenon such as emancipation of reason which was regarded as a motto in European Renaissance. [3] It is argued that the transformation in education system wholly led the Malay people to acquire a new way of life. Thus education was gradually to become a medium so as to reach worldly rewards, not to be in relation with the hereafter. This is the reason why the appearance of modern education is admittedly argued that it would be starkly contrasted with the traditional Malay education.

Educational activities first time became a subject matter of modernization in the beginning of the nineteenth century. It is salient to follow the process of educational institutions in Malaya commencing from the early years of the British influence. In regard to this, it should be emphasized that there are three major steps which were gradually materialized by various socio-political circles. The first was the individual administrators who without any official plannings intentionally attempted to transform the native people's worldview based on their self-reflected

modernization. This approach might be regarded as a romantic one due to the individuals' empathy to the native's worldview. The second one was missionary groups which had always had mutual relations since the very early ages of the colonialism starting from the Portuguese influence in Malacca. Though the Portuguese with a small number of community members concentrated mainly on guarded trading activity, rather than tried to establish a strong Christian existence, they created an "enduring community of Catholic Euraisans". [4] In regard this, the unique sample of Catholic priest Francis Xavier came to Malacca (25 September 1545) just after few decades of the Portuguese colonial administration. During his two-year stay (1547) he initiated opening of a Christian school. Due to this very early establishment of a school in modern mindset, the name *sekolah* in Bahasa Melayu was borrowed from the Portuguese word, *eskola*. [5] And the last was educational policies of the colonial government to involve the transformation of the native pattern of social reality in official format. It is also interesting to witness that throughout these processes there were not only mutuality and symbiosis of the external and internal factors. For instance, the Chinese ethnicity's need for socio-cultural adaptation and building a new world view based on the new land's own values; future concerns of the Malay ruling elites regarding their power relations with their peoples (*rakyat*) due to feeling heavy pressure of foreign power; socio-economic mobilization of educated individuals; the needs of human capital of both the British administration and the liberal economic development and its various channels particularly in the Straits Settlements seem as some leading factors.

The second half of the 1880s, which is regarded as turning point of the Westernization of education, witnessed gradually the increasing demand among the Malay families to send their children to Malay vernacular schools. Before continuing the conditions in Malaya, it should be emphasized shortly the reason of the change in educational policies. The reason of giving much attention gradually to education of natives is related to the drastic changes regarding modernization process in Europe in the nineteenth century. The impact of this development also had some effects on colonial lands including Malaya. Particularly the educational development in Europe occurred as soon as nationalism and industrialism became significantly priorities of the states. What it is meant by this change is explained clearly by Furnial as follow:

"Under the combined impact of these forces education took on new functions. Schools were multiplied; and though mostly divorced from the traditional religion and secular in name; they became the shrines of a new idolatry, the worship of the State or Nation and aimed at making the children useful and successful. Formerly the child was taught his letters for his spiritual welfare and the love of God; now he was dragged to school under the sanction of a legal penalty for his material welfare and the greater glory of the State."

[6]

Whilst, based on some conditions, relatively less number of the pupils were accepted to the English schools, the British administration of education increased allowances more scholarships for more candidates. In fact, this attempt of improving schooling was a mutual benefit both for Malay families and the British administration. While the Malay started to experience to encounter with the foreign town settlers and felt a need of social mobility even in slow pace. The educated natives allowed the British administration to recruit more employees for increasing number of various levels of public works in line with the increasing administrative bureaucracy.

For instance, as one of the significant impacts of the education of the first generations at English schools would become the human capital for the gradually expanding number of the schools the graduants of the English schools would be recruited as assistant teachers. [7]

Cultural Transformation Via Education

Societal change is a crystal clear fact for human societies. However, the pace of the process is affected by various internal and external factors. Education is regarded universally as an inevitable vehicle to transform and restructure the socio-cultural structure concerning societal change. Besides, in its modern meaning and context, education is admittedly regarded as a medium to transform the traditional society in line with the economic developmental projects. This was very obvious target of the colonial office as mentioned in related parts of this article.

When this issue is thought regarding the subject matter of this paper, educated circles were regarded as qualified labour power in various levels in colonial administration. In this context, the process of societal change was given first a speed particularly by the purposes of the foreign aspect. And then the ruling elites' intentional participation contributed in its own way to the socio-cultural change in line with their own elitist interest. For instance, Sultan Abu Bakar of Johor became a unique example to lead the change in his community involving cultural acculturation of being an English gentleman intentionally. [8] Education run both by secular and religious circles and implemented by the foreign policy makers played a very significant role. In this context, educational initiatives of missionary and non-missionary actors separately had far-reaching effects. At the very outset of the British administration, Thomas Raffles initiated the educational change in Malaya. Hence, it is not deniable "that the most ambitious educational hopes of the early nineteenth century were not fulfilled" Raffles' attempt "certainly inspired some of his administrative successors". [9] Thus, it is enough safe to think about the efforts of Raffles are seen in the establishment of Malay vernacular schools in various regions of the Malaya.

Even though the religious education or Arabic schools conducted their services, the mutation of the education was given a pace by the direct involvement of the British administration. Thus, in the process, traditional Qur'an schools were replaced by Malay vernacular schools in rural areas where the majority of Malay population lived.[10] The aim of this transformation was to establish a certain strata in native society and among them certain types of members were chosen to be recruited for the administrative positions. On the one hand, Malay vernacular schools as secular educational institutions, in which "Malay reading and writing, Arithmetic and Geography" -and additionally Malay history- were taught, were first opened around the 1860s in the Straits Settlements. On the other hand, English schools concentrated on teaching at foremost English and other necessiated subjects such as Mathematics, History, Hygiene. As seen in some various authentic manuscripts, these issues were continuously taken into consideration by the educational administrations throughout the British existence.[11] For higher ideals of the foreigners, education system was regarded a positivist approach to lead the society by its graduates and change the worldview and life style of the natives through schooling. Individuals were to be mobilized in secular educational institutions which were the places the native youths were exposed Western curriculum and acquired colonial values. And the most significant issues is pertaining to the medium of instruction. As mentioned somewhere in the text, the ruling elite preferred to send their children to English schools which were regarded as a kind of incentive offered by the British administration. Attendance English schools meant for natives more than just to be

recruited for some posts in British administration. Being a subject of inculcation of a foreign language, the native children became members of the urbanized culture where mainly westernized life style was introduced and conducted.[12]

It seems that the very certain turning points in the implementation of new educational policy commenced by the 1870s. The first one is the year 1872 appeared as implementing double education policy of the British administration. And the second one, after the Treaty of Pangkor in 1874 which allowed the British administration became more dominant in almost all aspects of social life and institutional interventions except Malay religion and customs which were left to autonomous domains of each sultanate state.[13] On the one side, the British administration encouraged the mission to involve directly into school management by overtaking the schools in particularly towns and cities operated under the colonial office; on the other side, the administration focused on expansion of free Malay vernacular schools in villages.[14] From the years of 1880s in the Southern and Western part of Malaya vernacular schools commenced to give education to Malay children. Among these courses especially dissemination of modern sense of knowledge about Geography and History should be understood as a factor of emergence of Malay nationalism.[15] In fact, nationalism was itself a very dominant issue regarding dissemination of secular ideology in the region.

The role of the Malay ruling elites in the transformation process ought to be also emphasized. As a direct involvement of the British administration into the establishment of the future of Malay society the former designed special classes or schools for the sons of the ruling elite. For instance, the college in Kuala Kangsar (1903) which has always been a subject of comparison with the Eton in England is a pioneer and unique example. The transformation of the Malay society, which was slow and painful process, was realized by the hands of the educated class of Malay youths, particularly the sons of the ruling elite who were employed in various administrative level in the colonial office.[16] Beyond the influences of ruling families continued in the society after their children were educated at English schools, it is no doubt that the sons of the *rakyat* were also inculcated in some extent into British culture and world view. For instance, it is recorded that there were Malay boys studied in Malacca Anglo-Chinese School with boarding facility run by the Methodist mission.[17]

As the description of one of the witnesses, socio-cultural change was materialized by not only education but also conversions of some native people. These processes were encouraging the local people “to adopt European habits orientating themselves towards ‘performing civilization’ by direct involvement into “cultivating an ease in negotiating cultural crossing through education, language, cuisine, dress and deportment.”[18] As seen in the establishing of schools which were modelled after “the young ladies’ schools in England”, in particular, missionary educational attempts were to introduce the Western values especially to the girl students who were described as “character producing wonders of Malaya”.[19]

Thus, the foreign attempts could find a way to establish its own social engine by recruiting staff for the administrative mechanism from the new generations who were educated in secularized school system. The individuals’ attendance Malay vernacular school or later if they would succeed British schools were the compulsory processes which allowed the educated ones to be recruited for the various administrative positions in the civil service. This education system implicitly including westernization paradigm had an end itself to remould the native society if it is taken into consideration of individuals to have become representatives of western cultural

capital. Taken into consideration of “broader civilizing objectives of colonialism” this policy seems very consistent. In regard of this research, the main aspect of the aforementioned transformation was handled “indirectly” by the missionary groups which were allowed to lead education of the youths.[20] In this strategy, it should be focused on shortly about the nature of the relationship between colonial officers and the mission societies. The main concern of the British for the requirement of native staff was based on their acquiring of English as the medium of communication, modes of thought and culture. In fact, during schooling of the children of ruling elites and then the common people, the British aimed to inculcate the British way of thought and practice. The condition for the educational initiatives of missionary groups was also based on this aspect, say, provided that the missionary schools supplied necessary training as mentioned above, they were welcomed by the authorities.[21]

What the unique aspiration of the missionary education is that it originally had certain common targets as with the secular colonial administration. As seen in the designation of the educational policy the main purpose “to create a corps of suitably trained locally recruited minor officials and clerks for the colonial service”. [22] It should be emphasized that there was a mutual interest of both missionaries and secular circles symbolized as colonial powers in the native lands. On the one hand, missionaries needed material conditions to be able to reach the far eastern regions and to be protected by unknown dangers in alien lands. Beyond the missionaries their own individual perspective and self-oriented attempts, colonialization efforts by the hands of secular economic circles such as individual traders and trade associations led the church circles directly or indirectly enjoin the process of colonialization in native lands. These secular circles guaranteed the security of the efforts and material existences of the missionaries by their own administrative and military power. These conditions allowed more missionary groups to be able to reach the native lands for their specific aims to introduce their creeds. Owing to this relatively comfortable conditions the missionaries were to improve their self-oriented religious activities which were materialized in curriculum or extra curriculum activities and supported by preparations of Christian literature in Malay language, such as “Bible stories, religious tracts, hymns, a Malay version of the Bible”. [23]

Malay Vernacular Schools

The transformation of traditional pattern of education commenced by the influences of the British since 1786 then onwards gradually in Malaya. Thus, as mentioned above, a single, informal pattern of traditional education was accompanied at the same time by the establishment of English schools and Malay vernacular schools. It is admitted that the aim of establishing Malay vernacular schools was to transform the traditional Qur’an classes in the indigenous villages.[24]

Secular education which also included Malay vernacular schools, started in the Straits Settlements in 1871 and in the Malay States (Kelantan for example) in 1903, 32 years later.[25] The former initiative regarding secular education seems to be expedited after the administration was substituted of East India Company to Colonial Office in the Straits Settlements in 1867. Thus all youths of all races were taken into consideration to be supplied free vernacular education and became a Colonial Office policy since the year 1867 based on the contemporaneous educational development in England titled as universal education.[26] Because of partly ethnic background and partly governmental policy, there emerged two categories of

schools during the British period. First, the vernacular schools differentiated on the ethnic background such as the Malay, Chinese and Tamil vernacular schools. Second, the English schools which were often concentrated in the urban areas where the immigrant races tended to congregate.[27]

Though the British policy not to interfere into the religio-cultural existencies of the Muslim Malays was considered, at the very first hand, as a type of *laissez faire* policy, the fact of secular and missionary education aimed to introduce the natives “English in speech and outlook”.[28] It is itself a determination to change the way of life of the natives from their own way of thinking and living. On the other hand, it cannot be said that the adoption of new education system by Malay parents was easy and straightforward. Instead, at the very first phase they concerned much and resisted to send their children to Malay vernacular schools due to the assumption of dissemination of Christian or Western values theoretically and practically. This cultural distance from the western one denuded Malay children from the educational facilities, at least for some decades. As seen in the approach of Malay parents described as “indifference and suspicion”, this new religio-cultural climate moulded either by the secular British administrators or missionary groups for the Malays was one of the factors not to give positive response, but just a small number of Malay pupils had access to English education.[29] The years around 1920s were turning points for some majority of the Malay parents to adopt the Western type of education either Vernacular Malay schools or in English schools and relatively missionary ones.[30] The significance of the aforementioned years was based on economically well-being social condition of the minorities in Malaya. And well-being positions of the minorities in society was regarded as an inducement for Malay parents. The Malay parents not be left as backward in their own land they adopted the new socio-cultural environment and encouraged to send their children to various types of schools including the ones run by missionary societies. The Malay children became subjects of the interactions appeared in Western-oriented cultural environment at schools due to the nature of education. It means that they were not needed to be inculcated for their acculturation in formal educational sessions conducted in classrooms. In addition, it cannot be argued easily that there were any types of cultural-filtration to protect the school-aged children from alien cultural domain. Though this approach of the Malay parents were regarded as bias and prejudices by various circles, they -at least intuitively- were reactions towards cultural transformation. This type of vernacular schools, though it carries the name of Malay in the title, were perceived no doubt as cultural catalysts in the process.

The year 1872 marked an important stage in the development of Malay education, since the educational Inspectorship was proclaimed in that year. Thus, after the establishment of Education Department in the British administration, A. M. Skinner, the newly appointed Inspector of Schools established Malay language schools based on the Qur’an classes. Since there were significant reactions from the Malay parents towards the newly established vernacular schools. This social reaction among the Malays became quandary for the healthy implimentation of the British education policy. Thus Skinner realized that no progress could be made in Malay education until and unless the teaching of Malay was seperated from the teaching of the Qur’an. Though it seems that the Qur’an classes were perpetuated, this implimentation was just a starting phase of the transformation of the traditional educational system. Skinner also realized that he could ill afford to incur the displeasure of the religious teachers whose livelihood depended to some extent on their teaching the Qur’an. These early Malay schools which originated in the

Qur'an classes were partially assisted by the East India Company during the early part of the nineteenth century. Later, State Governments took over this role. In time, these early schools developed into Government Malay schools which were financed from public funds and were the forerunners of Malaysia's present day National Primary Schools.[31]

Skinner also played a salient role in gradually improving educational facilities in the Malay language as well as English. In this manner, it should be mentioned that Skinner introduced Romanized Malay in Malay schools.[32] Though differentiation of secular and religious education was the British policy of education, the language in the vernacular schools was Bahasa Melayu in the forms of Arabic (*Jawi*) and Romanized scripts. Generally conducting four-year education in rural areas, the vernacular schools functioned as the primary level of education since the beginning. Though Malay language was taught at initial periods not only in Arabic but also Romanized scripts, "the British gradually pushed for the latter". Thus this change of policy was considered as a sign of the modernization process in education.[33]

Education in British colonies was based on a balanced educational policy. On the one hand, the British, as a general policy, had a tendency to promote English education, on the other they did not want to displease native peoples by abolishing their cultural institutions.[34] This sensitive issue is seen in some articles in relation to giving total rights to protect and to be the patron of its own religio-cultural implementations mentioned in treaties conducted between the rulers of states and the British. Despite this, obstacles as mentioned in some places in this article, impeded attempts after a while except in Malacca.

In order to overcome some major problems such as low attendance, resistance and concerns of the parents the British administration had to include the Qur'an classes as a restructuring of schooling to attract the attention and interest of the Malay population to Malay vernacular schools which are regarded utilitarian approach of the British colonial officers to cultural matters. But the implementation of Qur'an classes were differentiated sensitively from morning classes. Though the implementation of this new policy convincingly overcame the concerns of the Malay families,[35] this process, at the same time, was a transformative impact on the traditional Qur'an classes in Malay settlements. While the Qur'an classes were differentiated from the secular implementation of morning classes and conducted in the afternoons, the religious teaching was gradually regarded to be limited a private domain of the individuals.[36]

In a simple statistical data it can be proved that the number of the Malay vernacular schools gradually increased in the process. Nearly at the end of the nineteenth century the number of Malay schools reached 130 in FMS, beginning of the twentieth century it became 171. The years 1900-1920 it reached 400 with the total registered 20,319 students. On the other hand, the states out of the Federation such as Kedah and Johor the number of schools was 129 in the year 1920 with total registered 9,000 students. By 1920, the number of students studying at 757 Malay vernacular schools was 46,000 whose age groups was diversified between 5 and 15 which was 12% of total Malay population.[37] What all these figures proves that the attitude of Malay parents to send their children to Vernacular and English schools were dramatically change

Missionary Phenomenon and Initiatives

The educational attempts of various missionary groups go back very early stages of the colonial influences in native lands in Southeast Asia and East Asia. Beyond the plannings of the colonialist to be able to establish a monopoly on trade business and then political hegemony in native lands, this era is considered more significantly if the domain of education, which was a medium in the hands of the colonialists to transform the native societies, is taken into consideration. The colonial administration led missionary circles conduct educational facilities for the natives' youth either allowing their autonomous attempts or demanding directly from these groups which had more experienced in the implimentation of educational institutions historically. The transformative power of the missionary groups seems radical since missionaries' attempts in the field of education was regarded as a part of crusade to enlarge Christendom in native lands.[38] This phenomenon was materialized when mission groups established their schools, either throughout their own initiatives or grants-in-aid approach of the colonial administration, they built up church buildings. Thus, the mission groups could find opportunities to “teach the fourth ‘R’ -religion or the Christian faith-, beyond conducting the three ‘R’s’.[39]

In addition, it should be kept in mind that the missionary works were not limited only with the educational attempts, which were conducted by the church people who were named as “educational missionary”, instead as will be seen somewhere below, the missionary groups were able to reach the Muslim Malays through medical mission groups.[40]

How and when the initiatives of the mission groups increased is also worth of mentioning. The increasing of missionary works in native lands was a direct result of the developments in Europe. Associated with the developments in Europe at the end of the eighteenth century the colonial policy was commenced to be reshaped and it had some influences contemporaneously “revival of missionary zeal” and “a new impulse to the foundation of schools for propagating Christianity.”[41] Due to this fact, various Christian churches from diverse countries as the most idealists circles were involved in education voluntarily. Thus, it is safe to argue that the religious institutions and their human capital stock functioned as catalyst of the transformation of native societies even though these attempts were needed much time and energy for implimentation of the long term educational projects.

In fact, the missionary ideas were put implimentation since the beginning of the colonialism. When the pioneer Western European people set off their journeys for the aim of intercontinental trade business, the sailors and traders were also accompanied by religious figures in various degrees not only save the souls of the European Christians in far lands, but also to introduce their creeds to native societies. Thus, as some writers argue for the Pacific Ocean context, this is also regarded as a fact for the Indian Ocean trade interactions where *missionization* cannot be separated from merchantile attempts.[42] It should be said that based on the restructuring education, there is no doubt that Mission schools have played a vital role in the early evolution and subsequent development of education in Malaya.[43]

Even though the general approach of the British colonial administration did not aim “to Anglicize and Christianize the native populations” it cannot be overlooked the role and function of the missionary socities. Though missionary schools started educational attempts in early stages of British rule in Malaya, the colonial administration also invited missionary groups to involve and take the responsibility of government schools almost at the end of the nineteenth century, such as the Perak government “turned over the Government Girls’ School in Taiping”

the same as the one in Kuala Lumpur, when the former met either internal or external difficulties to take part in particularly education.[44]

At first, the initiator of the missionary schools was Catholic groups which attempted to open English schools.[45] The successive developments of the missionary initiatives is worth of following. The first schools were established as a result of personal and some missionary groups' initiatives in the Straits Settlements. In regard this, the first educational establishments were the Free schools in Penang and Malacca as a direct result of the influence of British church.[46] Penang Free School in 1817 was followed by Thomas Raffles's attempt of establishment an education institution in Singapore in 1823. Even though the latter did not give a concrete development in a relatively short period of time, it was regarded as very constructive for the future aspirations of the British administrators starting from the opening of English boys' school in 1837.

The foundations of secular education was immanent in the thought of Thomas Raffles, the pioneer figure of the British administration. His attempt to establish an educational institution in Singapore is regarded admittedly as the very first initiative when he consulted the ruling elit and nobilities. His intention of opening an institution would include the youths from all various ethnicities living in the city at that time and they would be educated in their own native languages. The reason to define this attempt in line with secularization is based on the thought of Raffles that religious education ought *not* to be included in curriculum so as to establish a union among the ethnicities, instead it would include Mathematics, Geography, History etc due to liberal education. Munshi Abdullah himself emphasized that the type of education would be secular minded as planned by Raffles and it would be open to all distinct ethnicities. During this first phase of educational development, the Malacca Free School was established in 1826. This institution where pupils from various racial background such as Malay, Chinese and Euroasians, was regarded one of the first samples of the secular-minded education. As a catalyst of socio-cultural transformation this school was significant in the history of Malay education system.[47]

In Province Wellesley following the opening of the Malay Branch of the Free school of Penang in Gelugor another school was established in 1821. It was only after this that missionaries started their efforts to give education to Malay children in Singapore and Malacca. Two Malay schools were built in Singapore; one in Telok Belanga and the other in Kampong Gelam in 1856. As for Malacca, there were nine Malay schools opened between 1858-1863. Although the two schools built in Singapore in 1856 were run by Christian missionaries, they were highly appreciated by the Sultan of Johore. The British government of Singapore did not hesitate to offer aid to the schools.[48] Regarding to this first period witnesses of Munshi Abdullah, who should be regarded as a native intellectual and a unique native source, is worth to mentioning. When Munshi Abdullah regarding how the missionaries tackled the problem of attendance among the Malay pupils, he mentions that they requested him to be a moderator to convince the Malay parents about the intentions of the missionary school management.[49]

The second stage was carried out in 1867 when Straits Government tried to tackle the problems of Malay education by establishing vernacular schools where the medium of instruction was Malay both in Arabic and Romanized scripts.[50] After these phases the improvement was relatively very slow, even though some administrations stated the importance of the native people, the material conditions were not realized in line with these ideas. As soon as the British

politics was directly felt in various Malay states such as Perak there were some educational institutions immediately commenced their schooling programs some of which are King Edward VII in Taiping (1880), and Victoria Institution in Kuala Lumpur (1894).[51] Taken into consideration the fact that those schools under missionary management were funded in some kind, it is strongly regarded that the mutual understanding of educational activities between the missionaries and the secular British administration.

By the turning of the twentieth century and following decades witnessed pervasion of the missionary schools. Due to some reasons Malay parents changed their attitude against the western type of education such as improving of methods of teaching by the Lady Supervisor and commenced “eagerness for the education of their girls”.[52] For instance, one of the late official annual report regarding the year 1949 stated that “out of a total of 34 English Girls’ schools in the federation 27 are maintained by Missions”. This statistics put the fact that the missionaries particularly aimed to elevate social and economic status of the girl youth among the Malay community. It might be said that Mission schools’ intention to educate girls are distinguished. This is itself a resolute challenge since educating girls at schools in traditional values was not uncommon and always compromised by public interest. Whilst missionaries in a challenging way tried to convince parents and change their indifference approach towards sending their daughters to schools, they also at the same time commenced inevitably an attitudinal change among the native people towards to get accustomed to the system of schooling such as Vernacular and English schools.[53]

The inevitable contribution of the missionary schools were even valid in around the mid of the twentieth century. This aspect is mentioned in the Annual Report of the year 1949 as follow: “...Malaya owes much to Missionary teaching bodies, which were early in the field of education and which even today supply English education on 60.5% of children in Government and Grant-in-Aid english schools.”[54] Even though that the exclusion of the Muslim Malays from the Missionary involvements, due to very early treaties, was believed as a common issue, there were some samples, like in the year 1933, that “many educated Malays had attended church mission schools and urged a more sustained effort”.[55]

As a general view regarding colonial era in line with cultural change, missionary schools were considerably significant in the context of transmitting the colonialists’ culture to native folks. English language which was a medium of instruction not only at English schools which were under direct control and administration of the colonial power, but also autonomous missionary schools as well. Pertaining to this, missionary schools are regarded “as a cultural force” of the colonial administration.[56] A significant reason stated in various sources that the expansion of the missionary schools is on the basis of its medium of instruction. In addition to the English schools which were not found everywhere, the mission schools afforded education in English by their own European cadres. Missionary attempts to open educational facilities were encouraged by the colonial administration due to some technical difficulties which did not led them conduct themselves in a total aspect of education, but needed constructive help of the various missionary groups which were historically much more involved in education. Missionary activities including mainly education have been undermining impact on the cultural values of native societies by building up a new world view different from the native one(s), particularly inculcating the Western values in a systematic way among the native youth. Regarding modernization process of

differentiation of native people as rural-urban based, or educated non-educated, missionary attempts of schooling were segregative effects on the native people's world view.

This is a proof that the missionaries were consequent in their educational efforts even though they were not regarded successful for recruitment of native Muslims throughout their existence in Malaya. It is important to ask when and why the British colonial administration needed the help of the missionary circles. In various regions, the British started their economic attempts regarding regional and international trade. During this period their general policy was to rule indirectly the native countries. However, after a while, the policy was changed in line with the substituting the political rulership of indirect for direct one. Regarding the second phase of administrative approach, the British needed much the native human capital stock to continue the whole system in native lands. During this stage, not only a limited selected youths from the native elite circles but also from the common peoples' youth were necessitated to be educated and "trained on Western lines". The medium of instruction of those schools established by the various missionary circles was Bahasa Melayu. Hence, the content of curriculum and the hidden curriculum represented Western cultural background, not Oriental one.[57]

It is significant to keep in mind that although the missionary activities were supposed to be involving directly conversion of non-Christian individuals, the outputs of the missionary initiatives especially in relation to education could not be as it should be planned. This matter is very crucial, if it is asked what the function and role of missionary schools in educating Muslim pupils in Malaya were. One of the reasons of this unexpected situation in missionary education was based on the colonial governments' priorities. As a general tendency, the British administrators did not want to involve directly the religio-cultural issues of the natives, including Muslim Malays as well-structured in the treaties with the various states in Malaya. This political commitment was also a type of restriction on the educational initiatives of missionary societies. If the colonial administration saw any beneficial development such as similarities in their policies, they gave privileges to these groups.[58] Even the prohibition was a certain point considered much in the agenda of the British administration, some mission groups or individuals such as Bishop McDougall in Kuching, Sarawak involved directly in Malay Muslim community via establishing educational facilities, including the translation of the Prayer Book into Malay. And the other significant attempt was materialized in Malacca by the Medical Mission in the year 1911. This mission, beyond its medical services to Muslim Malays, expanded its service mindset by founding a Sunday school which was a place where the interested parties among the Malays were given education. Schools run by Mission groups practically were the places where the Bible was taught and some religious services were held and without any bias and rejection of Malay parents -as stressed that there were such "very few absentees"- Malay pupils also attend these activities.[59]

Care was also taken to avoid offending Muslim susceptibilities, by wholly prohibiting Christian mission proselytizing among the Malays; and attempts were made to render government vernacular schools more attractive to parents who feared a Christian bias in teaching by arranging for the appointment of special Qur'an teachers, a measure which resulted in secure employment for many village ulama".[60] As seen in almost all colonized lands, missionaries had a common interest to education. And the Malaya land was not an exceptional in the implementation of missionary educational facilities. Even though the educational reports written

in around the last quarter of the nineteenth century prove that there was no direct control of the colonial office on missionary schools. For instance, E. C. Hill mentions in his report of the year 1894 that "... English education of the colony is almost entirely in the hands of missionary bodies or of committies over which government has no direct control." [61]

The missionaries were well established regarding to teaching staff and the methods which had been seen as an extra burden on the Colonial Office. Especially, these schools attracted attention of particularly Chinese and Indian ethnicities since the medium of instruction was English. After having completed these schools, the youths of the minorities could find relatively easily jobs either at colonial offices or private trade offices. [62] Among the missionary groups, London Missionary Society was a leading organization since the year 1815 in Malacca and took the responsibility of the implementation of colonial educational policies. [63] When this relation is considered, it is seen that there was very practical and utilitarian aspect of this relations between the colonial office and the respected missionary groups. For instance, in regard of the problem of recruiting qualified teaching staff which was a handicap for the colonial office was overcome by the missionary groups. A report emphasizing this problem put the fact clearly that 80% of the English schools were under the management of the missionary groups in 1914. The youths of minorities were the majority of attendances of English schools. Regarding the report of the year 1924 among the total 32.873 students 90% were from immigrants communities "with the Chinese pupils forming the majority of over 61%. Indians %14, while the Euroasian constituted %11- although they formed less than 2% of the country's population". [64] Even though the number of the Malay pupils who attended the missionary or English schools were relatively less, it does not mean that the missionaries attempts to transform the Muslim Malay society was out of question. On the other hand, if it is remembered that the missionary agencies involved not only in educational institutions but also some other social institutions such as hospital. This was the result of an understanding that "education and medical work are part of evangelistic task of the church". [65] The educational policy of the missionaries either as implementer or administrator of the system pertaining of dissemination of Christian values theoretically and practically was a reason of concern for the Malay families. This new religio-cultural climate for the Malays was one of the factors not to give positive response, but just a small number of Malay pupils had access to English education. [66]

Conclusion

By this article the writer aims to throw light on the results of the missionary education and its impact on Malay society. It is not wrong to argue the missionaries, due to their socio-cultural backgrounds, might have been possibly the pioneers of modernization, say, socio-cultural changes in native lands, either through establishing educational institutions or their interactions in various social levels in communities. Beyond this, some distinguished members of various missionary groups were also the moulders of Malay education and culture due to their scholarly works conducted in Malaya during their service years. [67]

By the end of the nineteenth century there had been striking improvement regarding vernacular education. On the other hand, "there were still more pupils in the English than in vernacular schools." These developments proves that both vernacular and English schools were accepted in the society even though there were some cultural concerns among the Malay people. Regarding

to great demand for English educated staff, not only government schools but also private ones were founded mainly by various missionary circles.[68] Based on these initiatives, it may be argued that the change of British educational policy and the idealistic intentions of missionaries were coincided to implement a new school system in native land. Though there were relatively small number of Malay students educated in these missionary schools, this new type of private education had a considerable importance in itself to have some impacts inevitably on social reconstruction in Malaya land.

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