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Methods Of Teaching Islamic Values Education Amid Conflict Situation: The Case Of Bangsamoro Development Agency (BDA) In Mindanao

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Abstract

Teaching Islamic values education is considered by Muslim educators as the solution to moral crisis encountered by contemporary Muslim society including the Bangsamoro in the conflict-affected area of Mindanao, Philippines. The purpose of the present paper is to re-examine the Bangsamoro Development Agency's (BDA) methods of teaching Islamic values education among its Muslim stakeholders in Mindanao. Through the use of the qualitative method of study, like content analysis of data gathered through library research and participant observation, the researcher found out that the BDA-tasked to determine, lead and manage development projects in conflict-affected areas of Mindanao-had successfully integrated Islamic values by applying the traditional Islamic method of education such as ta'lim, tarbiyyah, and ta'dib but through the language of modern education theory, adapted to the kind of situation they are in. Instead of using Islamic terminologies as such, the BDA used such term as experiential-learning method (lecturette, workshop, reflection and demonstration, and follow-through scheme). With this, the BDA had able to play its assigned role with the acceptance of its different stakeholders including government and non-government organizations. The present Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), which is established as a product of the MILF's struggle, may also consider BDA's experience to institutionalize its moral governance initiative to address the perceived corruption, manipulation, and ill-governance in this government.

Keywords: Bangsamoro Development Agency, teaching methods, Islamic values, Values education, Mindanao (Philippines)

Abstrak

Pengajaran pendidikan nilai-nilai Islam dianggap oleh para pendidik Muslim sebagai solusi krisis moral yang dihadapi oleh masyarakat Muslim kontemporer termasuk Bangsamoro di wilayah konflik Mindanao, Filipina. Tujuan dari makalah ini adalah untuk menguji kembali pendekatan

Badan Pembangunan Bangsamoro (BDA) dalam mengajarkan pendidikan nilai-nilai Islam. Melalui penggunaan metode studi kualitatif, seperti analisis isi data yang dikumpulkan melalui studi pustaka dan observasi partisipan, peneliti menemukan bahwa BDA, yang bertugas untuk menentukan, memimpin dan mengelola proyek pembangunan di daerah yang terkena dampak konflik di Mindanao, telah berhasil mengintegrasikan nilai-nilai Islam dengan menerapkan metode pendidikan Islam tradisional seperti ta'lim, tarbiyyah, dan ta'dib tetapi melalui bahasa teori pendidikan modern, disesuaikan dengan situasi yang mereka hadapi. Alih-alih menggunakan terminologi Islam seperti itu, BDA menggunakan istilah tersebut sebagai metode experiential-learning (ceramah, lokakarya, refleksi dan demonstrasi, dan skema tindak lanjut). Dengan ini, BDA dapat memainkan peran yang ditugaskan dengan penerimaan berbagai pemangku kepentingan termasuk organisasi pemerintah dan non-pemerintah. Pemerintah BARMM juga dapat mempertimbangkan strategi ini dalam melembagakan landasan tata kelola moralnya dalam mengatasi persoalan korupsi, manipulasi dan tata kelola pemerintahan yang buruk

Kata Kunci: Badan pembangunan Bangsamoro, metode pengajaran, nilai-nilai Islam, pendidikan Nilai, Mindanao (Filipina)

Introduction

Teaching Islamic values education in conflict-affected areas, such as Mindanao, is necessary to address the massive moral decline and corruption of the people¹ According to observers, this moral decline is caused by the dominance of foreign materialistic, relativistic, utilitarian, and egoistic values.² Like other Islamist groups, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), as the pioneering vanguard of the Islamic movement in the Bangsamoro land, used a variety of traditional ways of teaching Islamic values education under the umbrella of Islamization. This includes the use of *da'wah* (Islamic call) and strengthening of Bangsamoro Islamic educational institutions that operate according to the educational system of the MILF that is based on Salamat Hashim's philosophy of education.³ In recognition of the need for a long-term educational program for the Bangsamoro,

the MILF established basic to tertiary educational institutions offering a curriculum that taught studies on the Qur'an, hadiths, aqeedah, akhlaaq, ibaadaat, Islamic law and jurisprudence.⁴

As a realist Islamic movement, The MILF believed that *da'wah* and education are not sufficient for the moral recovery of the Moro people. Rather, it necessitates the creation of an environment where they can freely exercise their religion and Islamic way of life. Hence, the MILF established several military camps inside their claimed to be controlled areas that stretched throughout Mindanao.⁵ Among these camps, Camp Abu Bakar was once the most important one. It served as the headquarters of the MILF, a ground for military activities, a land of *hijrah*, a prototype of the Islamic community wherein justice and the moral system of Islam are showcased. In addition, it served

as a free ground for planning Islamic *da'wah* activities, rectification of wrong concepts and worldviews. Finally, it is a ground where Islamic values like truthfulness and honesty, patriotism, brotherhood, unity, solidarity, and cooperation among the Bangsamoro could be learned and practiced.⁶ In other words, these camps are not only military camps but Islamic communities.

Until the 2000s, the MILF was noticeably doing well in the field of Islamization. It had able to maintain the Bangsamoro enthusiasm for advancing the Islamic cause. However, this trend was badly affected by the government armed forces launching of all-out war against the MILF camps across Mindanao, Sulu, and Basilan Islands. Since the government armed forces had managed to overrun the MILF controlled areas. The MILF, in response, declared an all-out jihad against the government forces and installations. This situation was further aggravated by the 2001 United States declaration of war on terror which was directly or indirectly aimed at Islamic organizations like the MILF. As a result, Islamic programs and activities were branded terrorist-related activities.

In response to this situation, the MILF leadership when it agreed to resume peace negotiations, pushed for the creation of Bangsamoro Development Agency (BDA) as a legal organization to continue its

Islamization program. In this capacity, the BDA played a significant role in the continuity of inculcating Islamic values in the Bangsamoro in times of conflict between the MILF and the Philippine armed Forces because of the priority it gave to the values transformation of the Bangsamoro stakeholders it served. Since researchers paid no attention to this phenomenon, the present researcher examined the BDA's methods of teaching Islamic values education. The output of the study will be an immense contribution to the continued search for the appropriate and relevant methods of teaching values education for peace and development in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao areas.

Method

The method of the study utilized in this paper was the qualitative content analysis method of research. The data gathered through library research and participant observation methods were analyzed. Both methods of data gathering are deemed most appropriate and reliable because of the involvement of the present researcher in the BDA programs and activities when it was in its formative years that covered 2003 to 2010. As a former staff of the Agency and one of the main authors of its VTT manual, the researcher had easily accessed the data needed. The researcher

analyze the available materials like the training manual of the BDA on Values Transformation Training Program, publications of the organization, reports, and other related documents.

Results and Discussion

A. Understanding BDA

Bangsamoro Development Agency (BDA) was established in 2001 under the GPH-MILF Tripoli Agreement of 2001. Run by an Executive Director, with Board of Directors as the policy-making body, the BDA as the development arm of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) with a quasi-legal personality, was tasked to determine, lead, and manage relief, rehabilitation, and development projects in the conflict-affected areas (CAAs) in Mindanao. Since its establishment up till now, the BDA considered values transformation as the right starting point for the reformation of the Bangsamoro society. The BDA agreed on the principle that self-change first before overall development takes place in society. In that year, the BDA through the support of the World Bank developed the module for the VIT that shall guide the agency in conducting the training for its staff, partners, and stakeholders.⁷

B. Values and Values Education in Islam

As stated in its manual on values transformation training, value according to the BDA is “something that a person preferred over other alternatives because of the importance he/she attributes to it.”⁸ The BDA adheres to this definition of values but with some reservation. In my observation, the BDA shares with Muslims' understanding of value as a belief of choice in behavior and actions under normative guidance prescribed by the Qur'an and Sunnah.⁹ This observation can be substantiated by reading and analysis of the content of the curriculum that the BDA offered.

Muslims believe that the sources of Islamic values include the Qur'an which was revealed to Prophet Muhammad PBUH through Jibril and written in a Book, then practices exemplified by the Prophet Muhammad (Rasulullah PBUH), and the universally agreed positive value. The value and the truth that come from revelation are absolute and binding, and therefore must be able to direct and motivate every Muslim to perform correctly in servitude to God, according to a prescribed path as stated in the Qur'an and Sunnah.¹⁰

As a process of education, BDA's Value education conforms to the idea that value education aims at instilling good values in students. This idea is covered by Akhlak (character, moral, or ethical)

education. and, the concept of value in Akhlak education is based on the Qur'an and Hadith and aims to develop good people. Good people are human beings who possess moral virtue, as exemplified by Prophet Muhammad PBUH, which encapsulates all universal values as well as special values distinct to Islamic teaching.¹¹

So, the purpose of values education is for acquiring not only an intellectual but also a religious basis of values, the science of purification of the soul (heart), and molding the nature and character of an individual so that they can collectively live by Islamic values as prescribed by the Qur'an and exemplified by prophet Muhammad.

C. The Goal/Outcomes of BDA's Values Education

Hence, the goal of BDA's values education program includes the establishment of a pool of BDA development catalysts with enhanced knowledge, appreciation, and practice of Islamic values that will help them in serving the Bangsamoro communities. Specifically, the participants are expected to be able to: 1) analyze the Islamic values that serve and promote development; 2) demonstrate appreciation for the significance of Islamic values in the development planning and implementation process; 3) rationally explain the role of *Imaan* (Islamic belief) and

Tbaadat (Islamic worship) in developing and sustaining Islamic values; 4) develop guidelines in applying Islamic values in the communities and; 5) express commitment to practice Islamic values in development work and in dealing with the different stakeholders of the Bangsamoro community.

Given this, the expected output of this educational intervention includes Committed Development Catalysts who apply Islamic values, and a set of guidelines to apply Islamic values in daily life and particularly in development work. In my assessment, BDA had relatively succeeded to attain its goal. From 2016 – 2019, BDA-RMO Central Mindanao actively conducted 1,003 VITs across the 11 provinces participated by 23,972 development catalysts.¹² Most of the holders of the key positions in the present BARMM government are either former BDA officials or members who also underwent the process of values transformation.

D. Content

BDA's values education curriculum comes with various topics, like Values Transformation and Personal Values Clarification, Faiths and its Articles, the Role of Faith in Developing Islamic Values, Role of Ibaadat in Cultivating Islamic values, Set of Islamic values in dealing with

non-Muslim and Ethical Leadership in Islamic Perspective. It is usually conducted in three days.¹³

E. Methods of Teaching Values Education

The BDA's method of teaching the content of Islamic values education is Experiential Learning also known as Learning-by-Doing Approach. Although this concept is new to Islamic education thought, it well accords with the Muslim tradition of teaching education. For instance, the components of this teaching method like lectures, workshops, games, demonstrations, small and big group discussions, reflection, and follow-through scheme techniques, are all in agreement with the Islamic educational methods of *tarbiyyah*, *ta'dib*, and *ta'alim*. *Tarbiyyah* is the process of education that emphasizes the physical and intellectual development of an individual; *ta'dib* is the process of education that emphasizes nurturing good human beings with knowledge of the faith and the noble codes of conduct/ethics approved by Islam, so that they may place himself and deal with others in society with justice; and *ta'lim* is the process of education that is based on teaching and learning.¹⁴

E.1. Lecturette

Based on our personal observation as once member of the BDA pool of

trainers, lecturette is the contemporary application of *ta'alim*. Lecturette is a process of teaching knowledge related to Islamic values to the learners. It aims to explain and inculcate knowledge related to Islamic values. The BDA introduced it as an alternative to the traditional, monotonous, and boring way of giving information to the audience. To avoid boredom, the time usually allotted for this method of teaching is only fifteen to twenty minutes every session. Throughout this process, the facilitator, using a visual aid, instills and inculcates knowledge related to Islamic values using an interactive or participatory method of imparting knowledge in which he sees to it that the learners actively participate in the process. He frequently asks questions to encourage the learners to think and contribute their perspective and realization about the issues on hand. After all, he processes the answers of the participants while confirming the correct answers, and rectifying the wrong ones.

During this part of training sessions, a training facilitator inculcates and imparts knowledge on such topics as values clarification, sets of Islamic values, Eemaan (faith), Islaam, and ibaadaat and their roles in motivating individuals to live by Islamic values, and developing and nurturing *akhlaaq* (moral character). Relative to *eemaan*, the lecturer inculcates knowledge

on the concept of eemaan and its articles; the role of faith (eemaan) in motivating individuals to live by Islamic values. About the topic Islaam, the lecturer imparts knowledge on Muslim's understanding of Islam as a way of life that includes a belief system, ethics and morality (akhlaaq), and a law.

Finally, a lecturer highlights the important role of Islamic ibaadaat in educating Muslims and developing Islamic values like sincerity, honesty, Truthfulness, Ihsaan, Itqaan, Patience and Perseverance, Knowledge, Justice, Fairness, and Equity, Unity and Cohesion, Kindness, Generosity, and Selflessness, Sense of Responsibility and Accountability. These are in summary, the content of lectures as a method of teaching Islamic values that the BDA imparted and inculcated to the Bangsamoro development catalysts.

E.2. Workshop

Based on the BDA practice, workshop is a process of generating ideas about a certain issue or subject whereby every member of the group is given a chance to express and contribute his ideas or perspective. This method of teaching Islamic values is an extension or complementation to lecturette, because whenever the training facilitator comes across a topic that needs the learners to

evoke and contribute their knowledge on what and how this knowledge is supposed to apply or put into action. For instance, when the training facilitator discusses the topic on the Islamic faith and its role in developing Islamic moral values, after defining the concept of faith in Islam, and identifying and explaining the branches of faith, he would group the participants into six groups and assign each group subject for the workshop. One group may have their workshop on the concept of eemaan (faith or belief), the process of eemaan, and the manifestations of eemaan in all aspects of human life especially in the areas of akhlaaq (ethics) and mu'aamalaat (transaction). The other group may discuss among themselves the values, character, and attitudes that one may develop once he adheres to any of the articles of faith in Islam.

As a process, members of the group workshop should identify one of them as the group leader to facilitate the workshop. He then identifies the group secretary to take note of the contributions of each member. When the group is done with this process, one of them, or the group leader, presents the group's output before the participants. After the presentation, the presenter may entertain the queries and clarifications by opening the questions and answers session. The training facilitator let the presenter and his group answer any

query related to their presentation. If the questions are not satisfactorily answered, the training facilitator intervenes by supplementing the answers of the group.

When the group presentation is done, the training facilitator synthesizes the output of the group presentations. He appreciates the outputs that conform to the teachings of the Qur'an and the sunnah of the prophet, while he rectifies the ideas that contradict the sources of Islamic ideas and values. Through this way of teaching Islamic values, the students feel that they are empowered and may realize that they also know that they could contribute to this kind of activity and apply or practice it in real-life situations.

E.3. Reflection and Demonstration

Reflection is a method of teaching Islamic values that aims to self-realize and cultivate Islamic values through reflection. The trainer asks the individual participants to find a corner and sit alone there for 15 to 20 minutes to reflect, for instance, on the role of the articles of faith in cultivating and nurturing Islamic moral values. Others could reflect on the role of Islamic ibadaat in training individuals to live by the identified set of Islamic values above. Others may reflect on the guidelines in the application of Islamic values in the areas of peace-building and development works.

After this period, the training facilitator asks one from each group to share their reflections.

One's values cannot be known until it is put into practice. Thus, one of the methods of teaching Islamic values adopted by the BDA is demonstration. For instance, during the training session, the trainer requires some of the participants to demonstrate the performance of the five times daily salah. He instructed the participants to ponder upon the values that a Muslim should develop when he regularly performs salah, fast in the month of Ramadhan, gives zakat, and perform hajj.

E.4. Follow-Through

The Follow-through scheme is the last method of the BDA to teach Islamic values education. This scheme will enable the participants, after having completed the training, to practice and share to others (i.e. their community members) the knowledge, skills, and attitudes acquired from the training and implement their re-entry/action plans, which may contain, but not limited to the following: formation of core groups in their respective areas; conduct of regular Qur-aan and Hadith study circles (halakat); organize/manage echo-trainings for municipal and barangay levels Development Catalysts, community volunteers and other community development stakeholders;

conduct of Islamic symposia, fora, Islamic competitions, and the like; documentation of success stories, problems encountered, solutions attempted and recommendations in the operationalization of values transformation; conduct of regular assessment of the action plan implementation; conduct of planning and re-planning sessions; and submission of periodic reports to the Regional Project Management Office/Project Management Office (RPMO/PMO) for BDA documentation, monitoring and evaluation purposes.

Conclusion

BDA's BDA's initiative to teach Islamic values education was introduced by its mother organization, the MILF, as its means to continue Islamization program amid the group's conflict with the Philippine government. It was the MILF's dynamic approach to face challenges caused by the Government's all-out war policy in the year 2000, and the global war on terror of the United States of America and its allies. Like other concerned groups, the purpose of this activity was to arrest the steady decline of the moral values of Muslims caused by the dominance of Western values promoted by Filipino society. The methods of teaching Islamic values education used were adopted from the modern experiential or hands-on methods of teaching applied for adult

learners or participants. The BDA experience in Mindanao conflict-affected areas proves that these methods of teaching Islamic values education are not only in accord with Islamic traditional methods especially *ta'dib*, but also practical and effective. Thus, the present researcher suggests that government of the BARMM, which is also a product of the MILF armed jihad, should consider the possibility of integrating teaching Islamic values in the government controlled institutions of education to address the roots of the perceived moral crisis among the Bangsamoro youths.

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(Endnotes)

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