

DA'WAH AND CONVERSION AMONG INDIGENOUS PEOPLE IN THE STATE OF PERAK, MALAYSIA

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Abstract: *Islamic Da'wah in Perak is growing from time to time; involving all non-Muslim ethnic groups including the indigenous people. The percentage of indigenous people who has converted to Islam has also increased in the current year. The purpose of this study is to explain the history of the da'wah and conversion of the indigenous people to Islam in the state of Perak Malaysia. The methodologies used in this study are through questionnaires, structured and unstructured interviews. The first result of this study found that the da'wah on the indigenous people started in the Kuala Kangsar district by a preacher from Padang, Indonesia in the 1950s; followed by the missionaries appointed by the State Islamic Religious Department in the 1960s. The second result revealed that among the indigenous people, the first who converted to Islam was a woman in 1951 in Batang Padang district in Perak, after her marriage to a Muslim Malay man.*

Keywords: *Da'wah; Indigenous People; Conversion; Perak; Malaysia.*

INTRODUCTION

Malaysia is multi racial and multi ethnic where 5% of Malaysians are Orang Asli (Department of Statistics, Malaysia 2000). In Peninsular Malaysia, Perak is one of the states with the highest number of Orang Asli population. In the past, Orang Asli was animists but at present, a significant number of Orang Asli has converted to Islam. The population of Muslim indigenous peoples in the Perak State of Malaysia is 13,345 of 54,883 from the total population of indigenous peoples in Perak State (JAKOA Report, 2009). However, the number of indigenous peoples who converted to Islam is growing from time to time. The main objectives of this study are to investigate who are the first missionaries of Islamic da'wah to the indigenous peoples and who was the first Orang Asli to convert to Islam among them and from which areas or district in Perak State of Malaysia.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Indigenous peoples in Malaysia are called "Orang Asli". The term "Asli" is borrowed from Arabic, أصلي, which means "the first", "the original" native, indigenous due to the influence of the Arabs who brought Islam to the Malay Archipelago (Dr. Rohi Baalbaki, 1995). "Orang Asli" is the term used to refer to an ethnic group which is the first inhabitants of Malaysia. The term replaces the English word "Aborigines", which gives negative connotations such as backwardness, undeveloped, and primitive (Carey, I. 1976). The government of Malaysia therefore replaces 'aborigines' with "Orang Asli", especially after the establishment of the Department of Indigenous Affairs (Jabatan Hal Ehwal Orang Asli, with the acronym JHEOA) in 1954. During the British occupation, Orang Asli in the then Malaya was called "Sakai" which means "slave" in Malay (Kim K.K. 1984). "Sakai" also means a group of primitives living in jungles, very backward and dirty. The indigenous peoples do not at all like the term due to its derogatory meaning (Hunt, W. 1952). Other than "Sakai", several ethnographers called the indigenous peoples "The Pagan Races"; a group of people who do not worship any main religion of the world (Skeat, W.W. & Blagden, C.O. 1906). Carey however feels that this term is not accurate because quite a number of these peoples have worshipped two main religions of the world; Islam and Christian (Carey, I. 1976). There are several other terms used to call the indigenous peoples such as "Orang Darat", "Orang Dalam" and "Saudara Lama". Of all the terms, they prefer to be called "Orang Asli".

Orang Asli Ethnic Groups And Tribes In Malaysia

The Orang Asli in Malaysia is not homogenous. This is because every tribe has their own language, traditional values, world perspective and a history of their own. Anthropologists categorise them into three main groups: Negrito, Senoi and Proto-Malay (Hunt, W. 1952). The term Orang Asli refers to the descendants of the indigenous peoples of Peninsular Malaysia. The current population of the Orang Asli according to the three main ethnic groups (Negrito, Proto-Malay and Senoi) and from these three main groups, they are further sub-categorised into eighteen smaller ethnic groups (Department of Indigenous Affairs (JHEOA), Malaysia 2023) as in the figure 1 below:

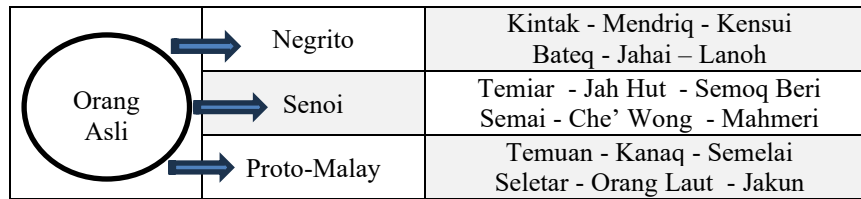


Figure 1: Main Tribes and Ethnic Groups of Orang Asli in Peninsular Malaysia

The categorisation is based on several factors: physical shape, language, culture, traditions, and in some cases economic functions. To ethnologists, categorisation is based on their traditional lifestyle. For the nomads and those who hunt for food, they are called Negrito, and those related to agriculture are called Senoi and Proto-Malay (Dentan, Robert Knox. 1968).

Population Distribution of Orang Asli in Malaysia

The Orang Asli's populations are randomly distributed throughout the country. Each tribe is not specific to one area. They are found in every part of the Peninsular except the states of Perlis and Pulau Pinang. The Senois are found in Perak, Kelantan and Pahang. The Negritos are found in Kedah, Perak, Pahang, Kelantan and Terengganu. The Proto-Malays population are concentrated in the southern part of the peninsula, especially in Pahang, Selangor, Negeri Sembilan, Johor and Melaka (Hudges, D.R. 1965).

Table 1: Tribes and Ethnic Distribution of Orang Asli Based on States in Malaysia

State	Senoi	Proto-Malay	Negrito	Total
Johor	44	10,893	1	10,938
Kedah	-	-	196	196
Kelantan	9,702	19	1,086	10,807
Melaka	27	1,208	-	1,235
N.Sembilan	74	8,380	-	8,454
Pahang	23,120	26,892	780	50,792
Perak	40,856	410	1,575	42,841
Selangor	4,651	10,556	3	15,210
Terengganu	682	45	30	757
Total	79,156	58,403	3,671	141,230

Source: Department of Indigenous Affairs (JHEOA), Malaysia 2008

The Negritos practise a nomadic lifestyle. They hunt, fish and gather natural forest produce from the jungles. The Senois practise nomadic agriculture where they plant paddy (*oryza sativa*), tapioca, sekoi and bananas besides hunting and fishing. The Senois from the Mahmeri ethnic group, who are found in Selangor, practise static agriculture by planting rubber and coffee. The Senois usually live in long houses; some of them are found to live in single families in their own houses. For the Proto-Malays, they focus on agriculture, fishing and hunting.

Table 2: Orang Asli in Malaysia

No	State	Total
1	Pahang	78,615
2	Perak	61,225
3	Selangor	20,961
4	Kelantan	17,487

5	Johor	15,825
6	Negeri Sembilan	12,221
7	Melaka	1,833
8	Terengganu	1,072
9	Kedah	336
Total		209,574

Source: Department of Indigenous Affairs (JHEOA), Malaysia 2023

Da'wah According to The Islamic Perspective

The meaning of Da'wah or *Da'wah ilallah* is a call to Islam, to obey Allah and His messengers and avoid what is forbidden by Allah and his messengers (Ali Abdul Halim Mahmud. 1993). The meaning of *Islam* is *الانقياد و الامتثال لأمر الأمر ونهيه بلا اعتراض* (obey Allah and his messengers and avoid what is forbidden by Allah and his messenger (Abu 'Ala al-Maududi t.t.). The ultimate success of *da'wah* is not only in succeeding to make people convert to Islam, but also to bring them to the practices of Islam in all aspects of life; and making them feel that they are also responsible to preach to others. A successful missionary is one who reaches this level. Every Muslim is a caliph (*khalifah*). The term *khalifah* refers to *Niyabatan 'Ani al-Nubuwwah* (a substitute to the prophet, after his demise). Every Muslim has to be aware that the duty of da'wah is compulsory, an obligation which must be carried out with great care to achieve the aims outlined above (Dr. Abdul Karim Zaidan. 1979). Prosperity and development will be achieved if the faith (*akidah*) of the "community is robust, whereby Islamic principles become the people's pillars in life (Muhammad Ibn Illan al-Makki, t.t).

The Indigenous People (Orang Asli) in the State of Perak

Based on the Department of Indigenous Affairs (JHEOA), the state of Pahang contains the highest number of indigenous people, and the state of Perak comes second. JHEOA lists Senoi as the main tribe, followed by five others; namely Kintak, Jahai, Lanoh, Semai and Temiar (Suki Mee. 2009). The biggest ethnic group is Temiar followed by Semai. There are six major Orang Asli populations in Perak; in the districts of Upper Perak, Kuala Kangsar, Central Perak, Batang Padang, Kinta, and Lower Perak.

Table 3: The Distribution of Orang Asli Population Based on Religion in Perak, Malaysia

District	Religion					
	Islam	Christian	Bahai	Budhism	Animism	Total
Hulu Perak	3,761	651	122	248	5,216	10,207
Kuala Kangsar	5,859	77	255	228	2,900	9,319
Kinta	2,158	3,041	350	163	5,312	11,024
Perak Tengah	103	178	0	0	2,087	2,382
Hilir Perak	87	258	22	0	1,394	1,761
Batang Padang	1,371	6,095	3,251	201	9,407	20,325
Total	13,515	10,600	3997	840	25,955	55,018

Source: Orang Asli Biodata in The State of Perak & Kedah 2009

Based on religious beliefs in Perak, the number of followers of Islam is the highest as compared to other religions. The districts which contain the highest number of Muslim Orang Asli population are Kuala Kangsar, followed by Batang Padang. These Muslims converted before the independence of Malaya; the result of intermingling with Muslim communities and learned religious elders in the nearby Muslim villages. Batang Padang has been identified as the first district to have Muslim converts.

Da'wah Methods to The Orang Asli

Muslim missionaries, before getting to an indigenous village must observe these values (Paper Work "Metod Da'wah Kepada Orang Asli", t.t)

- i. To inform through a middleman of their visit.
- ii. To get permission before getting onto or entering houses.
- iii. To get the permission of the village head for any planned activities.
- iv. To accept and appreciate gifts and souvenirs, even if the value is small.
- v. Not to criticise or make fun of the beliefs and traditions of the indigenous people.
- vi. To show effort in learning their language.
- vii. To participate in all their activities.
- viii. To make effort in assisting the indigenous people.
- ix. To accept food and drinks offered. If they are non-halal, rejection must be very subtle and delicate.
- x. Not to talk or discuss matters that may be sensitive to their beliefs and traditions.
- xi. To be patient in any situation or observing strange behaviours and attitudes involving the Orang Asli.
- xii. To try to understand their conversations, especially with the village head (Tok Batin). As best as possible remain polite and courteous.
- xiii. To find the most suitable time to visit the Orang Asli. The researcher herself experienced this. The most suitable time is between 3.00 to 6.00 p.m. If a promise is made, fulfil it. Otherwise they will not believe us anymore.
- xiv. To be very careful so as not to turn them away.
- xv. To learn as much as possible their traditions, superstitions and the conduct of their lives.
- xvi. To show good examples.
- xvii. To start the conversation by asking about their well-being, cleanliness, education, safety, unity and prosperity. Discussions must relate to the notion that every matter; life's concerns, death, luck are Allah S.W.T.'s prerogatives. If they show interest, the discussion may be led towards religious inclinations:
 - To explain that religion should be the pillar of life, now and in the next world.
 - Religion is for all in the world.
 - Religion is easy to practise.
 - Religion protects its followers.
 - Religion leads people to prosperity, cleanliness, good health, unity and safety.

Therefore, in the conduct of da'wah to the Orang Asli, knowledge, experience and skills (e.g. interpersonal, communication skills) play very significant roles. Several strategies were planned in order to provide support to the Orang Asli communities. Among them are:

- i. *Bil-lisan da'wah* approach
- ii. *Bil-hal da'wah* approach

- iii. *Da'wah* through visual media
- iv. Enrichment programmes

The implementation of these da'wah approaches is divided into three methods: Individual Program (Fardu Ain studies and visits), zone level programs (implemented through small groups), and integrated programs (involving zones, government departments, public and private higher learning institutions and NGOs).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study was designed based on the research objectives of explaining the Conversion history of the Orang Asli in Perak State; identifying the initial stage of da'wah approach used and the propagation process up to 2010. The research design will discuss the research concept, data collection relating to the Orang Asli and their Conversion as well as the da'wah programs involving Orang Asli by referring to documents gleaned from the Department of Indigenous Affairs (JHEOA), Perak Islamic Affairs Department (JAIP), Department of Islamic Development (JAKIM); interviewing certain activists, JAIP staff, JAKIM staff who were directly involved in Orang Asli da'wah activities and their conversion. Case studies were also conducted on nine Orang Asli settlements from all districts in Perak State. These case studies serve to augment the facts that abound on da'wah and Conversion activities on Orang Asli in Perak State.

Sampling and Sample Selection

In the *Proportional-Ramdom Sampling* employed in this study, sample sizes were at ratios of 0.3 of the population for a study area. Even though sample sizes of 10% of the population would have sufficed, the researcher has increased the number to 30% or a ratio of 0.3 due to the low number of population in the study area. With a known population for the area (from JHEOA information), the samples from each area were determined as such:

$$SS = 0.3P$$

Where SS = Sample Size

P = Total Population for each study area

For example:

Total population sample for Kg. Lata Kinjang is 100 persons, therefore the sample size selected for this area is $0.3(100) = 30$ persons.

This method of sampling is used at the case studies in the nine Orang Asli settlements namely Kg. Redang Ponggor, Kg. Sg. Tonggang, Kg. Kenang, Kg. Kuala Chenein, Kg. Sg. Badok, Kg. Bkt. Asu, Kg. Lata Kinjang, Kg. Ulu Chenein, and Kg. Suak Padi.

Data Collection Techniques

The data in this study consists of secondary data and primary data. The sources of secondary data were obtained from department reports, bulletins, minutes of meetings, brochures and circulars issued by the Central JAKOA Publicity and Research Section, Perak State JAKOA, Perak State Orang Asli Foundation and JAKIM. From these secondary sources, basic information on the total number of residents of a particular Orang Asli settlement according to religious classification will be obtained. This includes the location of the study area, classification of the area, the ethnic makeup of the area, economic activities and the da'wah programs being implemented. In undertaking this research, the researcher and project members themselves interviewed the Tok Batin (Village/Community Head), da'wah activists and da'wah missionaries appointed by JAIP. The researcher also scrutinised all files on Orang Asli Islamic conversions from 1954 until 1998 at JAIP office. After securing data on Islamic conversions, the researcher then traced the family members of the first Orang Asli convert in Perak State and interviewed them to obtain the first Orang Asli convert's background and her reasons for converting.

Research Instrument

The study instrument for this study was the questionnaire form. The questions were structured and divided into 2 sections. Section A was on the respondent's information. The information required in this section was age, gender, educational status, and type of job. Meanwhile, Section B was on da'wah and conversion. The questions fielded were to obtain information on year of conversion, the approaching missionary and da'wah approach used as well as the respondent's opinion on Islam before converting to Islam. Thus the researcher will be able to identify the missionaries who have put in the most effort in propagating da'wah and the most effective approaches employed. Hence they can be used as effective mechanisms in da'wah activities among the Orang Asli communities. However, there was a peculiar constraint in completing this study whereby unofficial data on Orang Asli conversions obtained through Orang Asli sources was limited in terms of accuracy due to the lack of written history in the Orang Asli communities. Thus, this data could not be validated.

RESULT OF THE STUDY

The history of *da'wah* to the Orang Asli in the state of Perak refers to two levels of da'wah: *da'wah* at initial level and its development until 2010.

Initial Level Da'wah

The study shows that unofficial efforts have been made since the 1950s in the Kuala Kangsar district. It was made by immigrants from Kg. Lagan, Padang, Indonesia. Tuan Fakeh Adam bin Duaman with two of his friends came to Malaysia, heading north from Singapore to Negeri Sembilan, later on to a religious school in Kedah. They finally settled down in Kg. Lasah, Sg. Siput, Perak. Here Tuan Fakeh Adam started to spread Islamic teachings to the Orang Asli and he successfully converted hundreds of Orang Asli. He was the earliest settler and is highly

respected in the history of da'wah Islamiah to the Orang Asli in Perak. He started in 1956 until 20th July 1975 (based on the date of the official condolence letter by the Department of Islamic Religious Affairs to his son, Ahamad bin Fakeh Adam dated 31 July 1975. The Hon. Dato' Ahamad bin Fakeh Adam was a Member of the Perak State Legislative Council for Lintang (2008-2011).

The effort for da'wah to the Orang Asli was started officially by the Council of Islamic Affairs ever since 1965, pioneered by Ustaz Hj. Halimin bin Hj. Abdullah. He was an officer in the Da'wah Section of Perak Department of Islamic Religious Affairs. He was appointed in 1965 and had serviced the department until 4th December 1995. In 1994 he established Nurul Hidayah Religious School for the Orang Asli in Kg. Kenang, Sg. Siput, later on became the principal for the school in the same year. His wife was Zaharah binti Razali, an Orang Asli from the Semai tribe, also a teacher for fardu ain in the school. This is the first religious school in an Orang Asli settlement in Perak. The school greatly contributed to the emergence of many individuals who understood and preached Islamic teachings among the Orang Asli peoples. This was the result after 30 years of effort. Kg. Kuala Chenein, Lasah in the district of Kuala Kangsar was the first village where the da'wah operation started. This was followed by Kg. Bukit Tinggi (Kuala Kangsar), Kg. Sg. Cadak (Ulu Kinta), Kg. Ulu Grik (Grik), Kg. Bukit Sapi (Lenggong), Kg. Geruntung (Gopeng), Kg. Palawan (Teluk Intan), Kg. Air Denak (Bt. Gajah), Kg. Sg. Galah (Kg. Gajah), Kg. Ulu Bekor (Parit), Kg. Lata Kinjang (Tapah), Kg. Chang (Bidor), Kg. Kuala Slim (Slim River), Kg. Teras (Slim Village), Kg. Suak Padi (Bota Kanan), and finally Kg. Cinggung Bt. 8 (Tg. Malim).

From 1965 to 1975, Ustaz Hj. Halimin bin Abdullah was the only da'wah officer appointed to spread da'wah and plan religious activities in Orang Asli villages throughout the whole of the state of Perak. He appointed missionaries including Fakeh Adam (who was based in Lasah) and these missionaries were spread throughout the state. They had assistants, who were the Muslim converts. In 1975, JAIP appointed other religious officers like Ustaz Halimin. These officers grew ever since and they co-operated well in the continuing quest of da'wah in the state.

The Development of Da'wah until 2010

JAIP continued the da'wah in various forms and methods. However the methods which were effective then are not effective any more at present. In the past, the missionaries must live with the Orang Asli in their villages. At present the assistant missionaries, who are Orang Asli themselves, stay in the villages. The effect is profound. The methods implemented in the villages are well planned, based on schedules. Some programmes require the missionaries to stay for several days in the village. In 2009, the government of Perak, assisted by KADIR brought in missionaries from Indonesia's pasentren (religious school) to stay in the Orang Asli villages. This process has just been started and no studies have been conducted yet to check its effectiveness. This was the method used by Tuan Fakeh Adam who successfully converted hundreds of Orang Asli to convert to Islam. However, the researcher believes that there are still many Muslim Orang Asli who believe in worshipping the spirits upon the death of a person, without which will cause chaos to the souls of the dead. There is still a hut in Kg. Kuala Chenein, Lasah for the purpose.

The *da'wah* methods include weekly programs, special religious days, da'wah visits, Da'wah Bil Hal, Fardhu Ain Enrichment and other cordial ceremonies. Bil Hal Da'wah Program is the

synergized efforts between institutes of higher learning with JAIP and JAKIM. This is still in practice now.

Conversions of the Orang Asli in Perak, Malaysia

i. Official Conversions

Conversion data from JAIP's Da'wah Section's Registry File in Perak from 1954 to 1998 showed that the first person to convert and register was Maah Binti Bah Sunye; her Muslim name then was Bedah Binti Bah Sunye. She converted to Islam in 1951 from the village in Bt 3, Jln Pahang, Batang Padang District. She registered as a Muslim at the age of 12 due to her marriage to a Muslim man, Dallah, from a Malay village. Bedah binti Bah Sunye passed away in 2008. According to her second daughter Shamsiah binti Dallah, in 2010 she would have been 71 years old. Her husband Dallah passed away on 22nd January 1967. Only after the death of Dallah did she register her conversion at JAIP which was on 29th May 1967. Her name Bedah binti Bah Sunye was changed again to Siti Mariam binti Abdullah.

The Temiar tribe became the most number who converted to Islam. This was due to the fact that the Temiar is the largest tribe in Perak.

The Batang Padang district was among the first districts to record conversions officially. This was due to Maah binti Bah Sunye's conversion in 1951.

Besides there was a letter dated 1st December 1960 which was found in the registry file in the Da'wah Section of JAIP written about the active efforts made by Christian missionaries in the district, a matter which worries JHEOA at the time. As a consequence, JHEOA requested JAIP to investigate and take actions.

ii. Unofficial Conversions

Based on the interviews with officers in the Da'wah Section of Perak Department of Islamic Religious Affairs and several important persons or the oldest orang Asli in the Batang Padang and Kuala Kangsar districts, the researcher found that unofficial Orang Asli conversions had occurred during British rule 1824-1957 (Department of Information, Malaysia).

iii. Da'wah Propagation up to 2010

Da'wah propagation was carried out by JAIP in various modes. However, approaches that were once effective could not be carried out as effectively at present. One of such methods was where the da'wah missionaries are required to live and assimilate with the Orang Asli in their villages. This method was replaced with appointing assistant missionaries from among the Orang Asli themselves which produced encouraging results. Other approaches carried out in the Orang Asli settlements were well scheduled, some of which requires extended stays with the Orang Asli in their villages. In 2009 the Perak State government in collaboration with Kumpulan Da'wah Islamiyah Darul Ridhuan (KADIR) have brought in da'wah missionaries from Indonesian *pesantrens* to stay with the Orang Asli in their villages. This is a relatively new process and no research has been carried out to study its effectiveness. This approach refers to the old approach whereby Tuan Fakeh Adam had successfully converted hundreds of Orang Asli to Islam. However, the researcher have found that a significant number of Muslim Orang Asli residents in this district who still adhered to the belief that there will be chaos created by spirits if they did not pray to the departed spirits upon any death in the village. This is apparent by the existence of a *sewang* ritual hut at Kg. Kuala Chenein, Lasah.

Other da'wah approaches implemented include weekly programs, programs on Islamic holy days, da'wah-themed visits, Da'wah Bil Hal, *Fardhu Ain* Enrichment and informal, cordial events. Da'wah Bil Hal Programs are collaborative programs between public or private institutions of higher learning and JAIP or JAKIM. These approaches are still being practiced at present.

iv. Case Studies at Nine Orang Asli Villages

i. Respondent's Background

These case studies were carried out at nine Orang Asli settlements in the State of Perak. Each village represents a district in the State of Perak. These villages are Kg. Redang Ponggor, Kg. Sg. Tonggang, Kg. Kenang, Kg. Kuala Chenein, Kg. Sg. Badok, Kg. Bukit Asu, Kg. Lata Kinjang, Kg. Ulu Chenein and Kg. Suak Padi. The total number of respondents is 281 persons. The highest number of respondents was from Kg. Sg. Tonggang at 122 persons followed by Kg. Sg. Badok at 30 persons and from other villages at less than 30 respondents. Respondents consist of 179 males and 102 females.

The highest number of respondents cooperating in this study came from the 20-29 years age group at 97 respondents followed by the 40-49 years age group at 73 respondents; whilst the lowest number of respondents come from the 16-19 years age group. In terms of ethnic groups, it was found that the Temiars formed the most number of respondents at 205 respondents while the lowest number of respondents in terms of ethnic groups were from ethnic groups other than Temiars and Semais. This may be due to the fact that the majority of Orang Asli in the State of Perak is the Temiars followed by the Semais.

The majority of respondents did not attend school at 152 respondents but those who did attend school were only 29 respondents. In terms of educational background, the respondents may be divided thus: respondents educated up to UPSR level (83 respondents); PMR level (17 respondents); SPM level (28 respondents) and Diploma level (1 respondent). In terms of employment classification, the majority were self-employed (169 respondents), in agriculture (65 respondents), in construction (30 respondents), staff at the public sector (4 respondents) and pensioners (3 respondents). In terms of monthly income, 214 respondents earned an income of below RM500 and 54 respondents earned income brackets of RM500-RM1,000. There were however, those among the Orang Asli earning between RM1001 to RM2000 (10 respondents) and 3 respondents earned RM2001- RM3000.

ii. Da'wah Propagation Process

Questionnaires under this section will augment research findings obtained from this research project. Early da'wah activities occurred in the District of Kuala Kangsar and early Islamic conversions occurred in the District of Batang Padang. Questionnaires under this section will also explain da'wah and the da'wah propagation process.

Respondents who responded to the questionnaires were mostly from families who were not original Muslims numbering 194 respondents (69%) while those who came from originally Muslim families were only 87 respondents (31%). Among the factors motivating them to embrace Islam are as follows:

- a) Through "Coaxing" (132 respondents)
- b) Through Marriage (59 respondents)
- c) "Friendly Visits" Approach (20 respondents)
- d) Direct Publicity on Islam (14 respondents)
- e) Exemplary Missionaries' Conduct (16 respondents)

- f) Through Adoptive Families' Activities (5 respondents)
- g) Through "Helping" Approach (3 respondents)
- h) Other Approaches (32 respondents)

Based on their perceptions before converting to Islam, the study findings showed that 185 respondents said Islam is an interesting religion. Only 4 respondents felt that Islam is an intimidating religion. Other responses were: Islam is very burdensome (33 respondents), burdensome (11 respondents), not interesting (14 respondents), same as other religions (12 respondents) and others (22 respondents).

87 samples are Muslims for generations and 79 respondents converted to Islam between the years 1990-2010 and those whose year of conversion to Islam could not be ascertained were 115 respondents. In truth, the number of samples to identify the approach were only 79 respondents from 281. This is the total number of respondents who said that Islam is an interesting religion before they converted to Islam and study findings also indicated that the most effective approaches on them was the "Coaxing" and "Marriage". The time period they took to finally decide to convert to Islam was mostly between 2 – 3 years (67 respondents) and the shortest time period taken was a few days (7 respondents).

241 respondents indicated that the main sources by which they were introduced to and made them understand Islam were directly from the missionaries and only 15 respondents knew about and were exposed to Islam through their own parents. The missionaries who contributed the most to da'wah on non-Muslims were the da'wah missionaries appointed by JAIP.

CONCLUSION

As a conclusion, based on the study conducted, the process of *da'wah* to the Orang Asli started at the initial level in Kuala Kangsar district, brought about by a missionary from Padang, Indonesia in the 1950s; followed by missionaries appointed by the Perak Department of Islamic Affairs in the 1960s. However, the data acquired on Islamic conversions between the years 1954 to 2010 in the Da'wah Section of JAIP showed that the first person to convert to Islam was a woman from Batang Padang district in 1951 at the age of 12, to marry a Muslim man, but only registered as a Muslim in 1967. The process of *da'wah* developed from time to time and different methods have been applied to attract the Orang Asli to have an interest in Islam. The most effective method was by living with the Orang Asli, or by marrying them as happened in the 1950s. This method was reapplied in 2009 by bringing in scholars from Indonesia's religious schools to live with the Orang Asli. Missionaries from JAIP, JAKIM, JAKOA, NGOs and independent ones play significant roles in preaching Islam to the Orang Asli as compared to their Muslim parents, social circles, institutions of higher learning and the media. Coaxing and marriage are the most effective methods of conversion found by this study.

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