



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

***ROLE OF MOSQUE'S DESIGN ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN
BANGLADESH***

NAYEEM ASIF

FRSB 2015 5



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BANGLADESH**

By

NAYEEM ASIF

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, in
Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Science**

October 2015

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*Dedicated to:
Those who have special place in my heart;
My beloved parents.
Apu and Dada*

Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfilment of the requirement for the Degree of Master of Science

**ROLE OF MOSQUE INSTITUTIONS IN MUSLIM COMMUNITIES
IN BANGLADESH**

By

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October 2015

Chairman : Nangkula Utaberta, PhD

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The institution of mosque acted as the center of activity of Muslim communities for centuries. During the early days of Islam, administrative, educational, social, financial, and judicial activities were conducted centering the mosque. Up until now, mosque is one of the major establishment within a Muslim community in countries with Muslim majority as well as countries where Muslims are minority. But mosques of today are not as active and involved with society as they were during early age of Islam. This study aims to identify the factors behind the inactiveness of mosque institutions within Muslim communities nowadays and proposes recommendations to improve the situation. It is almost inevitable that every Muslim community would have at least one mosque within the locality. For most of the cases in Muslim major countries, there are more than one mosque to be found in any locality. These institutions are mostly use for prayer, meditation and recitation purposes. But there are so many potentials to utilize these existing infrastructures as center for community development by extending the scope of activities with the participation of the community people. According to the teaching of Islam people in a community meets in these mosques five times a day and the interactions strengthen the social bond which is a precondition for creating a harmonious society. Extending the activities of mosque with the participation of these people would ensure a balanced development of the community.

This study compiled and analyzed the opinions of previous researches regarding this issue and formulated a template for evaluating the activeness of mosque institution. By virtue of the authors residing country and working experience, the study focuses specifically on mosques in Bangladesh. Qualitative interview of experts and professionals were conducted to evaluate the current scenario regarding this topic and compile recommendations proposed by them. Finally, three mosques in Bangladesh were chosen and evaluated according to the pre-defined template. Recommendations for improving the situation were presented consequently. By analyzing the results, this study concluded that several factors are responsible for the inactiveness of the mosques in Muslim communities. Inefficient management, absence of income generating schemes, exclusion of certain social groups and inadequate facilities are the major factors identified by this study. There are some minor factors which were also identified and recommendations were made based on all

these factors at the end of the research. Mosque is not a temporary institution of any Muslim settlement rather, it can be said that, as long as there will be Muslim communities the institution of mosque will be found functioning within it. So it is highly recommended that these institutions are utilized to the fullest extent for the development of their surrounding communities. This study identified the factors behind the inactiveness of contemporary mosques and proposed resolution to integrate the mosques with the lives of Muslims in every possible way.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia bagi memenuhi keperluan untuk Ijazah Master Sains

**PERANAN REKABENTUK MASJID TERHADAP PEMBANGUNAN
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Institusi masjid bertindak sebagai pusat aktiviti masyarakat Islam sejak berabad lamanya. Semasa zaman awal kedatangan Islam, pentadbiran, pendidikan, aktiviti sosial, kewangan, dan kehakiman telah dijalankan berpusat di masjid. Sehingga kini, masjid merupakan salah satu pusat utama dalam masyarakat Islam di negara-negara majoriti Islam dan juga di negara-negara minoriti Islam. Tetapi masjid-masjid hari ini tidak aktif dan terlibat dengan masyarakat sepertimana mereka lakukan pada zaman awal Islam dahulu. Kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengenal pasti faktor-faktor di sebalik ketidakaktifan institusi masjid dalam masyarakat Islam pada masa kini dan cadangan dibincangkan untuk memperbaiki keadaan. Ia adalah hampir tidak dapat dielakkan bahawa setiap masyarakat Islam mempunyai sekurang-kurangnya satu masjid dalam kawasan itu. Bagi kebanyakan kes di negara-negara utama Islam, terdapat lebih daripada satu masjid boleh didapati di mana-mana tempat. Institusi-institusi ini kebanyakannya digunakan untuk solat, meditasi dan mengaji. Tetapi banyak potensi untuk menggunakan semua infrastruktur yang sedia ada sebagai pusat pembangunan masyarakat dengan meluaskan skop aktiviti bersama penyertaan masyarakat. Menurut ajaran Islam dalam masyarakat, berkumpul di masjid adalah sebanyak lima kali sehari dan interaksi itu dapat menguatkan ikatan sosial yang merupakan pra-syarat untuk mewujudkan sebuah masyarakat yang harmoni. Aktiviti masjid secara berterusan dengan penyertaan ramai masyarakat dapat menghasilkan pembangunan yang seimbang di kalangan masyarakat.

Kajian ini disusun dan dianalisis dari pendapat kajian terdahulu mengenai isu ini dan dirumuskan template untuk menilai ketidakaktifan institusi masjid. Oleh kerana penulis menetap di negara asal dan pengalaman kerja di sana, kajian ini memberi tumpuan khusus kepada masjid di Bangladesh. Temubual kualitatif pakar dan profesional yang telah dijalankan untuk menilai senario semasa mengenai topik ini dan menyusun pendapat yang dicadangkan oleh mereka. Akhir sekali, tiga buah masjid di Bangladesh telah dipilih dan dinilai mengikut template yang telah ditetapkan. Cadangan untuk memperbaiki keadaan telah dibentangkan akibatnya. Dengan menganalisis keputusan, kajian dapat disimpulkan bahawa beberapa faktor dikenalpasti untuk ketidakaktifan satu masjid dalam masyarakat Islam. Pengurusan yang tidak cekap, tidak ada skim untuk menjana pendapatan, pengecualian terhadap kumpulan sosial dan kemudahan yang tidak mencukupi adalah faktor-faktor utama yang dikenal pasti dalam kajian ini. Terdapat beberapa faktor kecil

yang juga telah dikenalpasti dan cadangan telah dibuat berdasarkan semua faktor-faktor ini pada akhir kajian. Masjid bukan suatu institusi sementara untuk penyelesaian Islam, sebaliknya ia boleh dikatakan bahawa selagi akan ada masyarakat Islam selagi itu institusi masjid akan sentiasa berfungsi di dalamnya. Oleh itu, amat dicadangkannya bahawa institusi-institusi ini harus digunakan sepenuhnya untuk pembangunan masyarakat sekeliling. Kajian ini mengenal pasti faktor-faktor di sebalik ketidakaktifan masjid kontemporari dan cadangan resolusi untuk mengintegrasikan masjid dengan kehidupan umat Islam dalam pelbagai cara.

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I certify that a Thesis Examination Committee has met on 15 October 2015 to conduct the final examination of Nayeem Asif on his thesis entitled "Role of Mosque's Design on Community Development in Bangladesh" in accordance with the Universities and University Colleges Act 1971 and the Constitution of the Universiti Putra Malaysia [P.U.(A) 106] 15 March 1998. The Committee recommends that the student be awarded the Master of Science.

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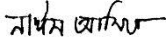
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background of the study

From the very beginning of Islam, the lives of the Muslims revolved around the LQVWLWXWLRQRIPRVTXH7KHQRWLRQEHJLQQJUHIIHUVWRWKHWLPHRIWKHILU Adam (peace be upon him) when he set up the house of Allah at Bakkah (Makkah) according to the commandment of Allah. Proceeding generations followed this footstep too and until the last prophet Muhammad (pbuh), evidences are found that the activities of Muslim community were strongly attached with the institution of mosque (Katheer, 2000). Arguments could be established regarding this statement while majority of the authentic references throughout the history supported this opinion. Scholars throughout the world in a wide range of time, unanimously agreed upon the significance of SURSKHWŴ SEXK PRVTXH LQ WKH OLYHV RI HDUO\0XVOLP FRPPXQLW\GXULQJ WFK establishment of Madinah as an Islamic state around 583 AD onward (Omer, 2013). For the contemporary studies, it could be derived from historical evidences that, the development of a Muslim community cannot be done in a holistic way (both spiritually and physically) without establishing the mosque institution as a focus for that community which must supports and serve the Muslims in their diversified issues evolved every day in contemporary modern society (Rasdi, 2010). When mosques are able to serve actively in a Muslim community, it reflects the ideal situation similar to the time of prophet (pbuh).

Mosque is the institution which is established on a prior basis whenever a Muslim community is formed. Therefore, in contemporary Muslim settlements mosques are found everywhere. Members of the community meet in this institution on daily basis willingly for offering the obligatory prayers. This creates the opportunity for communal gatherings and social interaction which is form the basis of Muslim society. Social interaction is crucially significant to initiate developmental activities in any community (Adedokun & Adeyemo, 2010; Summers & Wilkinson, 1992). For Muslim communities, mosques have the most potential to act as the platform for social interaction. It is the inherent quality of this institution to accommodate communal gatherings as its primary function. This study will focus on the potential of mosque to be a center for community development for Muslim societies. Bangladesh, a south-east Asian country with Muslim majority is selected as the study area. So, the aim of this research is to evaluate the situation of contemporary mosques as potential community development center in Bangladesh.

1.1 Problem statement

The contemporary scenario is far from the ideal picture where mosques are recommended to serve as an active institution in the development of the community, in fact according to a number of recent scholars the situation is now completely opposite. 7RGDŴPRVTXHVORVWVKHLUVLJQLILFDQFHDVDIRFDO SRLQWIRU0XVOLPFRPPXQLW

remain merely as a place only to offer prayers and perform some religious rituals in a limited scope (EUNRoX %XGDFQULVKPDQ.KDQ -Asad, 2002; Mortada, 2003; Omer, 2013; Rasdi & Utaberta, 2010; Rasdi, 1998). The diversified ranges of activities that used to be conducted by the early generations of Muslims centering the mosque can no longer be observed in modern mosques. The mosque institution has been stripped off of all its significant functions and left only with the function of offering daily and occasional prayers, meditation or recitation (Hillenbrand, 2004). This research does not indicate that prayers, meditation and recitation are not important. It attempts to suggest that these functions become more meaningful and significant in the practical lives of Muslims, when mosque institutions simultaneously serve other related functions.

As stated earlier, mosques can be found in great numbers within Muslim communities. Being a public institution, it has close relationship with the lives of the community members. It can influence the life style of people, make positive impact by its activity and create harmonious society by strengthening the social bond among people. Nowadays, lots of other institutions are established to bring positive changes to mosques ready to serve this purpose. Proper utilization of these existing institutions might ensure the development of the community more effectively without even establishing mosques in Muslim communities are not being able to contribute in the developmental activities. This thesis aims to identify the key factors that are responsible for this situation.

There are several issues which should be taken into consideration while considering the institution of mosque. These issues are social, religious, economic and political. Without proper understanding of the current scenario of modern Muslim societies, it is not possible to identify why present day mosques are unable to make any significant impact on the Muslim communities.

Bangladesh is a country of approximately 160 million people where 86% are Muslim (Chowdhury, 2015). The country is divided into 7 divisions for administrative purposes and the largest one of these divisions is the capital Dhaka. Dhaka has been and continues to be a city of mosques. In 1985, there were 1650 well-known mosques in Dhaka city. However, the total number of mosques was around 4000. In 2005, the number of well-known mosques increased to 1800 while the total number in Dhaka city, including small and unimportant mosques was around 7000 (Hossain et al., 2012). As an expanding city, new mosques are being established so often in Dhaka. Unfortunately, majority of these mosques are only used for prayers and recitation. They have no role, no contribution in developing the society. If additional activities are incorporated to these existing institutions, they could bring significant positive changes to the communities they serve (Rahmani, 2012) research will focus on identifying potential activities to be incorporated with these institutions in order to revive the concept of mosque according to the practice of prophet (pbuh). Moreover, this research will attempt outline the necessary steps to be taken for making the mosques more active in developing the community.

1.2 Research question

This research will be structured based on the following questions or problems. These questions are formulated on the background of the above discussion. In brief the research problem is focused on the inactiveness of mosque institution and its inability to contribute in community development.

Main research question is formulated based on the research problem. The question is stated as follows, **DESCRIPTION of mosque to**

Sub research questions are:

1. What are the functional requirements of mosque institution that could be derived from historical precedence?
2. What are the necessities of the contemporary Muslim societies which could be served by the institution of mosque?
3. What are the key activities that would revitalize the institution of mosque in Bangladesh for connecting to the community and serve in a more integrated way?

The study attempts to identify the influencing factors which make the modern Muslims to get detached form the institution of mosque. The necessities of the contemporary Muslim societies will be identified then which could be served by the institution of mosque. Finally the key activities will be analyzed that would revitalize the institution of mosque to serve the community in a more integrated way.

1.3 Research objectives

Mosque as an institution lost its significance in Muslim communities gradually over a long period of time. It did not happened overnight. So the process to revive its role as a center for community development would also require certain periods of time and thus the proposed framework should consider the timeline of its application. This requires proper planning and strategy rather than just some set of rules or activities which can easily be proposed deriving from historical evidences. This thesis aims to generate or scenario and existing potentialities.

This research will be conducted in order to identify the reasons why contemporary mosques are unable to address the needs of modern Muslim societies. Adopting a qualitative strategy this research will attempt to recommend a framework for resolving the issue stated in research problem.

Research objectives are formulated to guide the study in search for the answers of research questions.

Research aim:

Identify and analyze the factors that enables the institution of mosque to contribute actively in the development of Muslim community.

Sub research objectives:

1. To determine the functional requirements of mosque institution from historical precedence.
2. To identify the necessities of the contemporary Muslim societies which could be served by the institution of mosque.
3. To identify the key activities that would revitalize the institution of mosque in Bangladesh for connecting to the community and serve in a more integrated way.

Therefore, the focus of this research will be analyzing the chronological history of the role of mosques in the development of Muslim communities which will lead to the identification of the issues regarding contemporary mosques i.e. the reasons of their inability to make significant impact on the development of modern Muslim communities. Furthermore, by following qualitative research methodology, this research intends to evaluate certain mosques as cases based on criteria formulated from literature review and also analyze the opinions of experts to draw up a template based for evaluating the selected cases. At the end of the research a brief outline will be presented on probable steps to be taken to resolve the issues of contemporary mosques in order to make them more actively integrated with the lives of modern Muslim communities.

1.4 Scope of research

This study will focus on the institution of mosque from a functional perspective. Thus the scope of this research will be confined within the boundary of analyzing the activity patterns and spatial provisions for those activities within the institution of mosque. It should also be kept in mind that activity pattern varies with the variation of location, scale and functional provision of mosque. Hence, the study will also attempt to formulate a conceptual framework based on the parameters derived from literature review so that the activity analysis can be done in an organized manner.

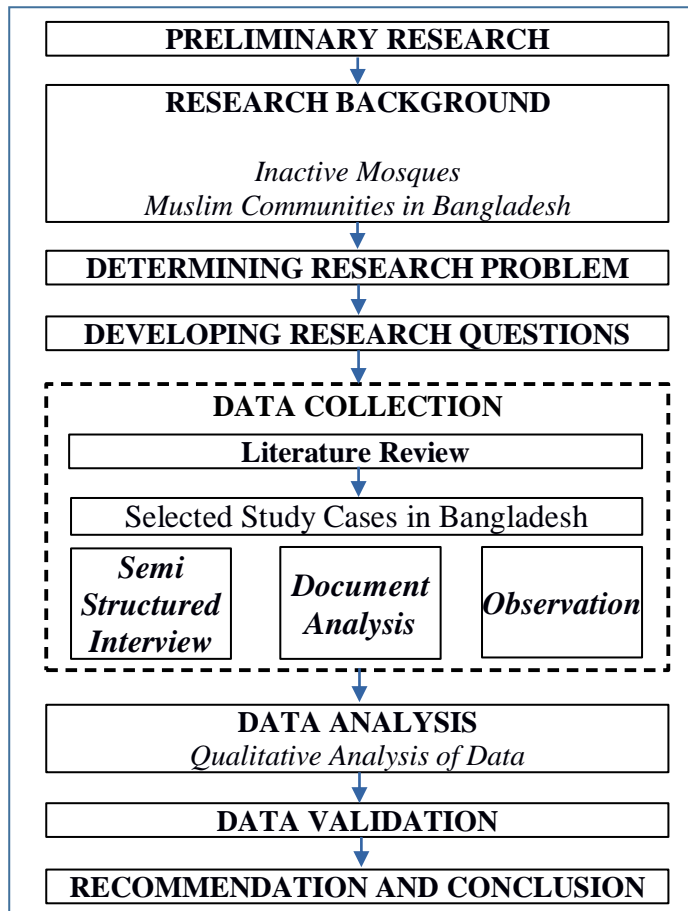
Following process will be adopted to conduct the research:

- a. Identifying reasons for which mosques are being unable to address the issues regarding contemporary phenomenon.
- b. Identifying activities which could be incorporated within the function of a mosque in relation to the needs of modern Muslim society i.e.-Social activities, Communal activities, Welfare, Entertainment etc. by reviewing literatures and physical surveys.
- c. Redefining the institution of mosque by proposing a framework in order to make it more adaptable towards the needs of modern Muslim communities.

As stated in previous section, this thesis will relate most specifically to Bangladesh. Cases will be drawn from this area and conclusion will relate primarily to this region.

1.5 Research strategy: Case study research

As the research will focus on the functional aspects of mosque by analyzing the historical precedence and contemporary practices, qualitative research method is chosen to conduct the process because it will give the opportunity to collect and compile necessary data and make a comparative study of selective cases in order to reach towards a conclusion (refer to the research design diagram).



Research Design Diagram (Source: Author)

Followed by literature survey, semi structured expert interview, observation and document analysis, these three approaches will be adapted for the qualitative strategy. Literature survey will cover a wide range of time period starting from the early texts of Islam until recent academic and professional works. This will ensure a holistic background for the next steps. For observation, criteria to select the appropriate cases

or samples will be established. A classification of mosque based on selected parameters will be done for setting up the criteria of choosing samples.

([SHUWV\QWHUYLHZV ZILG FRQW compilation of significant information for conducting the comparative analysis of selected examples and therefore, direct the study towards generating a framework as stated in the research scope.

Document analysis will involve a systematic approach of explanation of the proposals and design related documents of the selected cases which will give an insight of the original concept of the establishment and the spatial organization of particular cases.

1.6 Significance of the research

With the advancement of time, the life style has changed drastically which require the scholars and academicians to re-evaluate or re-define every aspect of life for resolving contemporary issues. This is also true for Islamic studies and it would insufficient to try to evaluate the needs of present Muslim societies in the light of early generations of Muslim. No doubt that, we have to draw lessons from the lives of early generations of Muslims but that does not necessarily implies that we follow blindly, rather it implies that we use our intellects to identify their philosophy and apply it in proper form to suit the needs of present time (EUNRoX %XGDFÖ . This approach will ensure the flexibility that Islam offers for its followers and as a result, contemporary Muslim communities will be able to resolve their issues within the boundary and teachings of Islam.

Current research has adopted this approach and attempted to evaluate the need of the modern Muslim societies in the light of contemporary time. Moreover today, the numerous mosques, established in everywhere of Muslim settlements are under-utilized. So the people are unable to gain proper benefits of having these institutions within their communities. This study simultaneously attempts to identify appropriate programs for reviving these mosque institutions. The findings of this study will serve several purposes. First, it will identify the reasons why people today are being detached from the institution of mosque. This would lead to the second stage where the study will discuss on probable recommendation that will relate the institution of mosque to the need of contemporary Muslim societies. Finally, an outline of appropriate programs and recommendations will be suggested that could revive the institution of mosque to contribute actively in the development of the community.

1.7 Outline of the thesis

This thesis will contain seven chapters. Following description is a brief outline of these chapters. Chapter one will give a summary of the overall research and also present the justification of this particular research work. It is comprised of research question, objectives, purpose of research, research scope and significant of the research. Chapter two consists of reviewing the literatures regarding the research topic starting from the HDUO\ VODPLF WH[VVLH4XU\QDQG DGLWK XQWLO WKHUHFHQWDFDGHPLFZRUNV C this sector. Chapter three aims to formulate a conceptual framework for conducting the research in an organized manner. As the objective is to explore certain issues, fields

and phenomena and provide first description and also discover new relation by collecting and analyzing data, this research predominantly belongs to the social research category. Chapter four describes the research methodology in detail and includes the research design, data collection methods, and the modes of data analysis. Based on the selected methodology, an elaborate description of the research findings will be presented in chapter five. The findings will be organized in a suitable manner in order to adopt an appropriate method of analyzing the data. Chapter six will analyze the collected information based on a predefined approach that was derived from the literature review. Following that, recommendation will be proposed to make an attempts of answering the research question previously stated. The final chapter will present a brief discussion of the possible studies that may compliment the present research and discuss its contribution for redefining the mosque as a center for development of contemporary Muslim communities and also fill in the gap of the literature in a large context of body of knowledge.

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