MANAGEMENT OF MULTI STOREY BUILDINGS: ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

In Malaysia, there are various issues relating to the management of multi storey development in the civil law perspective which fails to be resolved. The two-fold objectives of this paper is to highlight some of the management issues in the management of multi storey development in Malaysia and suggest how these issues could be solved by applying Islamic principles. The research method used in writing up this paper is the qualitative research in which it will be based on revealed sources of Al-Qur’an, Hadith and writings of the traditional jurists from Hanafi, Maliki, Hambali and Shafie schools of thoughts as well as contemporary writers in Islamic jurisprudence. The finding of this paper is that even with no direct principle that demonstrates management of multi storey buildings from the Islamic perspective, it is believed that if the Joint Management Body (“JMB”) and Management Corporation (“MC”) apply the qualities and practices of the Muslim scholars and Shariah teachings, it will assist the JMB and MC in discharging their responsibilities in the best interest of all the parties concerned.

Keywords: Multi Storey Buildings, Strata Management, Joint Management Body, Management Corporation.

INTRODUCTION

It is essential to note that there is no direct link between management in Islam to the stratified property management. The main reason is that most of the literatures¹ at hand, deal with the corporate management of an organisation from the Islamic perspective. Nevertheless, it is submitted that there are some management principles which will be discussed in order to improve the stratified property management in the multi storey

development. The Islamic approach to management emphasises that all humans depend upon the guidance of Allah (SWT) and following His Prophet (SAW) with an accountable mentality, integrity and skills in order to achieve a predetermined objective. All the messengers of Allah from Prophet Adam (AS) to Prophet Muhammad (SAW) led and taught people the Islamic approach and way of life on managing and conducting all their worldly activities in order to bring happiness to them in this world as well as life in the Hereafter. The most essential concept is the concept of al-Tawhid (the oneness of Allah). Tawhid is the most fundamental principle and basis for the Islamic faith. Tawhid concerns man’s particular relationship with the universe and binds everything to Allah (SWT). When a person looks upon everything in the world as belonging to Allah (SWT), he then cannot be biased in his thinking and his behavior as he knows he is just one of creation of Allah and living temporarily in this world. His vision is wider and his sense of service is not restricted to any specific spheres or groups. The belief in unity of Allah (SWT) requires a person not to discriminate among his peers as well as subordinates. The management of the stratified properties involves an organisational entity which shall manage the stratified properties. The form of the said organisational entity would be a resident property management team specifically set-up to manage that particular property. On that account, the stratified properties would be managed by the JMB or MC respectively. Hence, it will be good for the JMB or MC in managing the multi storey buildings to have the fear to Allah (SWT) and believe in the unity of Allah (SWT). This will ensure that they will perform their duty since they are not only responsible to the parcel owners but most importantly they are responsible to Allah (SWT).

HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT: PROBLEMS AND FINDINGS

The Strata Titles Act 1985 (“STA”) has been in existence for almost 31 years and since then, the development of residential multi storey buildings has increased tremendously. The STA has gone through various amendments. One of the factors that contribute to those amendments is with regards to the maintenance and management of the

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⁴ Maintenance is concerned with preservation. The basic objective of a maintenance organisation is to preserve the physical condition of a building and its services in order to retain its value and enable it to continue serving the purposes for which it was built. The aim of the maintenance process is to prolong the economic life of the building so that its value and usefulness can be sustained for as long as possible. Maintenance could either be planned or unplanned. When planning is involved before the execution of the work, it is termed ‘planned maintenance’. When work carried out as an emergency measure without any planning or forethought then it is called ‘unplanned maintenance’ for further reading Basar Juraimi, Building maintenance: a current outlook, *3rd Quarterly The Surveyor*, 1984, Vol. 19, No. 3, pg. 21; Hasnan Abdullah, Perlunya pendekatan yang bersepadu dalam penyelenggaraan bangunan, *4th Quarterly The Surveyor*, 1994, Vol. 29, No. 4, pg. 34
buildings and common property of multi storey development. Among the common problems encountered within multi storey buildings include physical defects of the properties; limited access or no direct control by the property managers over the management fund since the accounts are kept either by the developer or the MC; refusal by parcel owners to pay the maintenance fees as the developer did not rectify defects or did not provide facilities as promised; refusal by parcel owners to pay the maintenance fees because their units cannot be rented out; non-payment of the maintenance fees by some developers for the unsold units although they have to; poor quality of management and maintenance services; as well as other legal and social problems.\(^6\) These current issues have been going on for quite a while. Due to the above, the JMB or MC are faced with a lot of challenges in meeting with the needs and expectations of the parcel owners of the multi storey buildings.

In order to manage the multi storey buildings effectively, the most important element relates to human relation and managing people. Therefore, Human Resource Management is the most related among all branches of management since people or human resource is vital for the effective operation of any organisation. In Islam, human resource is recognised as the most valuable asset since it revolves about the greatest creature of Allah. Thus, the operational level, management behaviour from the Islamic perspective with the emphasis on human resource management may be expressed in the following principles:\(^7\)

1. The principle of Amanah

The position of the JMB or MC is a trust as the person is entrusted by the parcel owners to manage the multi storey buildings. According to Islamic principle, such trust is termed as an amanah. In other words, the JMB or MC is given the trust or amanah to run the management of the multi storey buildings smoothly for the benefit of the community of the multi storey buildings. Therefore, the JMB or MC being the trustee for the parcel owners should not abuse the knowledge or misuse the power, position and privileges. In order to overcome any issues on mismanagement or breach of trust and duties, true behaviour should be utterly fair in the execution of the management functions. And such fair execution could become a reality if all management staff upholds integrity and trustworthiness in all dealings. According to Islamic principle, power, wealth and knowledge are amanah entrusted to man by Allah (SWT). In al-Taubah, verse 11, Allah explains to the following effect:

\(^{5}\) Property management can be defined as an activity which seeks to control interests in property taking into consideration the short and long term objectives of the property owner and particularly the purpose for which the property is held. The tasks involved in managing property involve establishing policies and then implementing strategies to achieve those policies. Continuous monitoring and reviewing is also carried out. For further reading refer to Gurjit Singh, Condominium management: principles into practice, \textit{4th Quarterly The Surveyor}, 1992, Vol. 27, No. 4, pg. 13.

\(^{6}\) Tiun Ling Ta & Lim Yoke Mui, Factors contributed to problems in managing high-rise residential building in Malaysia, \textit{The Surveyor Journal}, 2007, 41.3, pg. 35.

But (even so), if they repent, establish regular prayers, and practise regular charity, they are your brethren in Faith: (thus) do We explain the Signs in detail, for those who understand.

This indicates that all believers are entrusted to use their soul and goods as *amanah*. Anas Ibn Malik (RA) reported: “Whenever the Prophet (SAW) preached his companions, he used to say: The person who does not keep trust has no faith and the person who does not respect his covenant (and promise) has no religion.”

2. The principle of dual responsibility

The JMB or MC should uphold responsibility and accountability in every management dealings and not otherwise. All management staff should have the awareness that they are accountable to the Almighty Allah as well as to the State Authority or Commissioner of Buildings any of their deeds and actions taken by them. With this conscience, the tendency to be astray is low and they will perform with honesty and integrity. Man is accountable for his actions to his superior not only during his lifetime but also to the Creator both in this world and Hereafter. In *al-An’am*, verse 32 Allah says to the following meaning:

> What is the life of this world but play and amusement? But best is the home in the hereafter, for those who are righteous. Will ye not then understand?

Abu ‘Abbas Sahl ibn Sa’d as-Sa’idi said, “A man came to the Prophet, (SAW), and said, ‘Messenger of Allah, show me an action for which Allah will love me and for which people will love me if I do it. He said, ‘Do with little of this world and Allah will love you, and do with little of what belongs to other people and people will love you’.”

3. The principle of institutional loyalty

The people involved in the management of an organisation are expected to do their job efficiently and honestly guided by the built system of reward and punishment. In this sense, this principle should be instilled in the members of the JMB or MC in order to ensure that they perform their duty full of loyalty and commitment for the betterment of the community of the multi storey buildings at large. Any form of disloyalty and dishonesty should not be tolerated in such management organisation. Once the members of the JMB or MC are loyal, they will then perform their duty with the utmost honesty and integrity and this will be beneficial to the community of the multi storey buildings. The management practice in Islam is based on the principle of institutional loyalty rather than personal loyalty *per se*. Allah says in *al-Mumtahinah*, verse 7 which means:

> It may be that Allah will grant love (and friendship) between you and those whom ye (now) hold as enemies. For Allah has power (over all things); And Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

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8 The above hadith which has been reported by Anas Ibn Malik (RA) has been narrated by Ibn Majah. *Sunan Ibn Majah* is a collection of hadith compiled by Imam Muhammad bin Yazid ibn Majah al-Qazvini (rahimahullah).

9 The above hadith which has been reported by Abu ‘Abbas Sahl ibn Sa’d as-Sa’idi has been narrated by Ibn Majah. *Sunan Ibn Majah* is a collection of hadith compiled by Imam Muhammad bin Yazid ibn Majah al-Qazvini (rahimahullah).
4. The principle of public interest

There must always be a balance between the development of the JMB or MC and the individual. However, it is important for the JMB or MC to determine that any action or decision taken or made must not be in conflict with the collective purpose of the community of the multi storey buildings. Management in Islam also relates to the development of both the institution as well as the individual. However, the objective of the individual is permissible as long as it does not come in conflict with the collective objectives of the community as a whole. This is reflected from al-Anbiya’, verse 107 when Allah says to the effect:

We sent thee not, but as a Mercy for all creatures.

5. The principle of consultation (Shura)

The JMB and MC can adopt the concept of open and amicable consultation (or what is termed as Shura) in solving any issues and disputes with regards to the maintenance and management of the multi storey building. Should such consultation becomes the pillar of any dispute resolutions, the multi storey buildings management will be smooth and efficient. In this regard, the writers suggest that all the parcel owners or any parties related to multi storey buildings should bring forward the matters in dispute during the extraordinary general meeting or annual general meeting of the JMB or MC. This way the matter in dispute can be openly discussed and opinions of all the stakeholders can be collectively heard, in order that all parties to be able to reach a consensus decision.

The above method is actually in line with Shariah principles and teachings. Shariah encourages management to create a working environment which generates co-operative forces and encourages consultation in the decision-making process. The Qur’an has indeed encouraged people to think and consult in matters of mutual interest. In Al-Imran, verse 159 Allah reminds us to the following effect:

It is part of the Mercy of Allah that thou dost deal gently with them Wert thou severe or harsh-hearted, they would have broken away from about thee: so pass over (Their faults), and ask for ((Allah)'s) forgiveness for them; and consult them in affairs (of moment). Then, when thou hast taken a decision put thy trust in Allah. For Allah loves those who put their trust (in Him).

The consultation process is more prevalent and relevant especially when it affects the community at large. Leaders have been given clear instructions to consult subordinates in their affairs. This has been emphasized in al-Shura, verse 38 which means:

Those who hearken to their Lord, and establish regular Prayer; who (conduct) their affairs by mutual Consultation; who spend out of what We bestow on them for Sustenance.

Al-Qur’an has emphasised that managing affairs through “mutual consultation” or Shura10 is described as one of the important characteristics of righteous people. Shura is defined as a process of an open dialogue and throwing ideas and giving different opinions with regards to any dispute which may arise. The dispute will be discussed by

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a group of scholars until it reaches a consensus which is considered to be the best decision made and to be implemented; in the best interest of that organisation. The early Muslims had already practiced “participative management”. Narrated by Abu Hurayrah that the Prophet (S.A.W.) said: He who is consulted is trustworthy. The involvement from all parties and stakeholders is a necessary condition for the creation of a stable and strong organisation.

_Shura_ is a proactive and dynamic process which involves the mutual and reciprocal consultation between each party who has an interest in the subject matter in dispute. The mutual consultation process must be observed by all the interested parties; including those in positions of authority. The reason for this is to ensure the equal participation and fairness in _Shura_ process of problem-solving and decision-making. It is essential to note that mutual consultation is synonymous with seeking consensus. Therefore, the ultimate purpose of _Shura_ is to reach an amicable solution which is practical and acceptable to all the parties in dispute. This will ensure that any disgruntled party will not resort to backbiting or sabotage; once the consensus has been achieved.  

6. The principle of due benefit

It is the duty of the JMB or MC to ensure that anybody employed by them to manage and maintain the common property are not only paid in full but be paid in due time as discussed above. Amicable and non-exploitative working environment should be promoted. Management in Islam stresses on non-exploitative relationship between labour and capital representing employees and employers respectively. Islam imposes its followers to fulfill their duties and obligations. In the following first verse of _al-Mai’dah_, Allah reminds us which means:

> O ye who believe! fulfil (all) obligations. Lawful unto you (for food) are all four-footed animals, with the exceptions named: But animals of the chase are forbidden while ye are in the sacred precincts or in pilgrim garb: for Allah doth command according to His will and plan.

In a hadith narrated by Abu Hurayrah, the Prophet (S.A.W.) said, “Allah says, ‘I will be against three persons on the Day of Resurrection: 1. One who makes a covenant in My Name, but he proves treacherous. 2. One who sells a free person (as a slave) and eats the price, 3. And one who employs a laborer and gets the full work done by him but does not pay him his wages.”

7. The principle of efficient use of resources

The JMB or MC should always practice efficient use of resources, both human and non-human. They must always ensure that whatever action or decision they make is for the
betterment of the multi storey buildings and the community at large. Management in Islam is equally concerned as in the western capitalist practice with the efficient use of resources in order to increase productivity and better utilisation of both human and non-human resources. The Qur’an states that man can have nothing but what he strives for, as mentioned in al-Najm, verse 39, which means:

That man can have nothing but what he strives for.

8. The principle of justice and fairness (al-Adl)

The JMB or MC should practice justice and fairness in dealings with the management of the multi storey buildings as well as the enterprise in both interpersonal and inter-group interests. The JMB or MC must be transparent and not biased in making decision pertaining to any disputes arising between the JMB or MC members and the parcel owners. The decision made must be fair and just. To be just is commended in Islam. Surah al-Nahl, verse 90 bears a testament of this when Allah reminds us:

Allah commands justice, the doing of good, and liberality to kith and kin, and He forbids all shameful deeds, and injustice and rebellion: He instructs you, that ye may receive admonition.

This implies paying what is due to others and giving fair treatment with all parties concerned.

9. The principle of fulfilling the contract

The JMB or MC when entering into any contract for the upkeep of the common asset in the multi storey buildings should look after the interests and rights of the parcel owners. Islam orders its followers to fulfill their contracts. Allah emphasizes in al-Ma’idah, verse 1:

O ye who believe! fulfil (all) obligations. Lawful unto you (for food) are all four-footed animals, with the exceptions named: But animals of the chase are forbidden while ye are in the sacred precincts or in pilgrim garb: for Allah doth command according to His will and plan.

As stated by the writer, Abbasî13, Islam conceived a unique management perspective that nurtured civility, prosperity, diversity and happiness amongst people of different backgrounds and ethical origins around the world for more than 1000 years. Management and leadership are as old as the earliest human civilisation. The history of Islamic leadership and management began during the time of the holy Prophet Muhammad (SAW) after the historic migration to Medina and the subsequent formation of Islamic society.14 Muslims have to fully carry out in practice the instructions given by the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) as ordained by Allah. In the Islamic management model, leaders have to surrender their authority to the instructions consecrated in the al-Qur’an and Al-Hadith. In corporate management, leaders have to accomplish their

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objectives and the said leader must have the right qualities in order for him to be respected and followed. Therefore, in order to guide, direct or influence the actions of others, there are three (3) important elements in leadership; humility\textsuperscript{15}, responsibility\textsuperscript{16} and accountability.\textsuperscript{17} In summary, Islamic leadership possesses the elements of sincerity, proficiency, justice, truthfulness and patience. On this basis, we can administer the same elements to stimulate the inspiring management model in Islam in the multi storey buildings management of the multi storey buildings.

**SOME SUGGESTIONS IN A NUTSHELL**

From the above discussions, the writer submits that management by example was a clear way in which the earlier Islamic leaders paved the way for the Islamic generation to learn and ensure success through hard work and devotion. Over time, the teachings of Islam through the practices of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and the *Shariah* have shaped the Islamic values. Islamic values are indeed universal and hence applicable in all spheres of life.\textsuperscript{18} The Islamic values remain constant despite the evolution of time. In view of the above, the writers propose the following basic code of conduct and ethics for the committee members in the JMB or MC to abide by:

1. **Sincerity.** It is a quality that is endemic. Sincere efforts lead to efficiency; which in turn leads to the individual’s better performance (\textit{al- Zumar:} 14 Say: “It is Allah I serve, with my sincere (and exclusive) devotion.”) The members of JMB or MC must always be sincere in any works undertaken by them in serving the needs of the parcel owners of the multi storey buildings.

2. **Proficiency.** This is the value which ensures that organisational members demonstrate more than what is required of them. This means behaving with others in such a manner that makes them comfortable and happy. It further means doing a good job or doing some job in a very proficient manner (\textit{al-Qasas:} 77 But seek, with the (wealth) which Allah has bestowed on thee, the Home of the Hereafter, nor forget thy portion in this world: but do thou good, as Allah has been good to thee, and seek not (occasions for) mischief in the land: for Allah loves not those who do mischief). The members of the JMB or MC must always be competent and efficient in addressing any issues raised or challenges faced by the parcel owners in the multi storey buildings.

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\textsuperscript{15} As stated in Unus I, The Story of Musa and Harun: Lesson in Leadership, \textit{International Institute of Islamic Thoughts, Herndon} viewed from www.islamicist.org, Musa (AS), in respond to Allah’s command, first seek for Allah’s assistance in enhancing his capabilities and enabling him to succeed in completing the task assigned to him. Hence, his plea for help signifies the symbol of a Muslim leader who was full of humility and dependent on Allah for everything (\textit{Taha:} 25-26).

\textsuperscript{16} Prophet Muhammad (SAW) said, “Whenever Allah makes a man responsible for other people, whether in greater or lesser numbers, he will be questioned as to whether he ruled his charges in accordance with Allah’s decrees or not. And that will not be all. Allah will question him even about his family members.” Source from Ibn Hanbal on the authority of Abdullah ibn Umar in Abdus Sattar et al., Islamic management model, \textit{African Journal of Business Management}, 2010, Vol. 4(9): 1874.

\textsuperscript{17} The Qur’an states that everyone will be accountable for their deeds (\textit{al-Zalzalah:} 7-8).

\textsuperscript{18} Abdus Sattar Abbasi, Role of Islamic leadership value based corporate management, Ph.D Thesis, National University of Modern Languages, Islamabad, July 2008, pg. 33.
3. **Justice.** An important ingredient to keep individual and collective affairs straight is being just. Islam is absolutely unambiguous about eradicating all forms of injustices, inequity, exploitation, oppression and wrongdoings from the management process in particular and in society in general. Thus, a person cannot deprive others of their rights and fulfills his obligation towards them (*al-Nahl*: 90 Allah commands justice, the doing of good, and liberality to kith and kin, and He forbids all shameful deeds, and injustice and rebellion: He instructs you, that ye may receive admonition). The JMB or MC must always be just in deciding any matters with regards to the management of the multi storey buildings. Justice should always be the utmost important for the members of the JMB or MC to uphold in making any decision.

4. **Truthfulness.** This is the most cardinal principle in the Islamic value system. It means congruency between words and deeds. When Imam Bukhari (ra) visited a person to obtain a hadith, he noticed that the person was deceiving his animal by expanding his lap with grains. He refused to take hadith from him and said “If a person deceives an animal, he can tell a lie to anyone”. Al-Qur’an gives clear teachings regarding truthfulness (*al-Ahzab*: 24 That Allah may reward the men of Truth for their Truth, and punish the Hypocrites if that be His Will, or turn to them in Mercy: for Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful). Practicing truthfulness amongst the members of the JMB or MC is very crucial. The members of the JMB or MC must be truthful to each other and also to the parcel owners of the multi storey buildings in order to gain harmonious living.

5. **Patience.** One of the most fundamental pillars of Islamic teaching is to have patience. Practising patience and perseverance in daily management activities will have a magical effect, hence difficulties disappear and obstacles vanish.19 Islam appeals for patience in life (*al-Asr*: 3 Except such as have Faith, and do righteous deeds, and (join together) in the mutual teaching of Truth, and of Patience and Constancy). The members of the JMB or MC must always hold their anger and be patience when faced with varieties of human characters in managing the multi storey buildings.

In the event that the elected committee members of the JMB or MC diligently apply all the above basic conduct and ethics while providing their service, it is strongly believed that it will achieve an optimum performance and excellent results.

**CONCLUSION**

As mentioned above, there has been no direct principles that demonstrates management of multi storey buildings from the Islamic perspective. In this context, it is suggested that if members of the JMB and MC can emulate and apply the qualities and practices of the Muslim scholars and *Shariah* teachings, the writer is of the view that the management of the JMB and MC will become more effective and equitable. It is

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believed that by applying the Islamic principles as discussed above, the JMB and MC may be better equipped to overcome any challenges and complexities in managing any disputes brought before them. This is in line with the fact that Islam is a way of life and it promotes equality and peacefulness when dealing with people. It is believed that when the JMB and MC share the same Islamic values and qualities, it will help the JMB and MC in discharging their responsibilities in the best interest of all the parties concerned.

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