Citizenship, Identity, and Education in Muslim Communities

*Essays on Attachment and Obligation*

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The Challenge of Identity, Education, and Citizenship for Muslims in a Pluralistic Society: A Case Study of Malaysia

Rosnani Hashim

This chapter examines the path the Malay-Muslims in Malaysia have travelled in establishing and maintaining their identity in the modern context. It examines the educational responses of Malaysia, with a predominantly Muslim population, in molding Muslim identity within the context and needs of a pluralistic society. The discussion proceeds within two contexts: the first is the most immediate context of colonization that bequeathed Malaysia an educational system that catered to the needs of a small elite group, and the second is the larger context of Muslim reform movements beginning in the nineteenth century that made education of Muslims an issue. Malaysia is one of the very few countries in the Muslim world and in Asia that has, since gaining independence, tried to overhaul its educational system to make it more responsive to the needs of all its members while maintaining its Muslim identity.

Historical Context

It is a tradition of Muslims to be able to read their holy book, the Qur'an. And wherever there are Muslims there is bound to be a mosque, which functions both as a place of congregational worship and