

Spiritual and Traditional Rehabilitation Modality of Drug Addiction in Malaysia

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Abstract

The phenomenon of drug addiction is becoming increasingly serious in Malaysia due to the growth number of addicts among youth. The government and non-government agencies have taken intensifying efforts to combat the problem of drug abuse in this country. Despite various efforts being done by the government for the purpose of treatment or rehabilitation, most are less successful. The effectiveness of the establishment of rehabilitation centres for drug rehabilitation treatment is in reality not of something that we can be proud of. Malaysia is in needs for other modalities as an alternative to the conventional drug rehabilitation process performed by the government. This study therefore is conducted to explore some spiritual and traditional modalities for drug abuse rehabilitation process in Malaysia. Data is collected using content analysis approach. The finding of the study shows that there are eight spiritual and traditional modalities, which will be discussed at length in this article, to address the drug abuse rehabilitation process in Malaysia.

Keywords: Drug Addiction; Rehabilitation; Spiritual; Traditional

1. Introduction

Government and non-government organisations are taking more active roles to tackle the problem of drug abuse in the country. In line with that effort, many drug rehabilitation centres have been established. Although various attempts have been and are being executed by the authority, many of them are not that successful to solve the abuse of drug addiction. The establishment of rehabilitation centres as a way of drug treatment and rehabilitation is in reality not of something that we can be proud of. Relapsed drug addicts that are reported by AADK proves the fact that the ongoing rehabilitation process is far from satisfying. The number of healed drug addicts after participating in treatment and rehabilitation program, is so small compared to relapse. Wan Mahmood Pawanteh (1998) reported that 90% out of 100 drug addicts are relapsing within five years of drug rehabilitation and treatment program. The finding from the Ministry of Community Welfare (Chuah, 1990) reported that only 37% of the ex drug addicts are totally cured and be self-sufficient whereas the rest return to drug addiction. This phenomenon raises a question mark about the effectiveness of the available rehabilitation centres in dealing with this social problem (Jamaluddin, Mohd. Khairie, Zaheruddin & Subri, 2000). This scenario clearly illustrates the need for a more effective modality to treat and rehabilitate these drug addicts.

2. Drug Rehabilitation Scenario in Malaysia

According to national Anti-Drug Agency (AADK, 2004) Malaysia government has established 28 rehabilitation centres nationwide. In 2001, the number of drug addicts receiving treatment and rehabilitation are 13,339 and the number increases by 6.2% the following year to 14,163. While in April 2004 (April 4th, 2004) the number decreases to only 10,456. At the same time, there are 299 and 217 relapsed drug addicts under treatment and rehabilitation program in Kajang Prison reported respectively in 2002 and 2004.

Malaysia has started its institutionalised treatment and rehabilitation program since 1975 following the amendments made to the Dangerous Drug Ordinance 1952, under the A293 Amendment Act, 1975: A 389 and A413 year 1977 (Wan Asmi Ramli, 1986).

The program is placed under the responsibility of the Ministry of Public Welfare, as of the time, drug addiction is regarded as a social problem (National Drug Agency, 1997). When the government declares drug as a threat to national security in 1983, the organisation of anti-drug organisation is restructured. Based on the new structure, the field of drug treatment and rehabilitation is shifted to the responsibility of the Ministry of Home Affairs. A new act, Drug Addict Act (Treatment and Rehabilitation) 1983, is approved and come into force on April 15th, 1983. In May 1983, the Division of Drug Treatment and Rehabilitation is established under the same Ministry. This division is, then, combined with the Anti-Drug Task Force and later known as National Anti-Drug Agency (AADK, 1997).

The main goal of treatment and rehabilitation of drug addicts is to avoid physical and psychological dependency on drug. Towards that end, two approaches are implemented; firstly, termination of drug dependency through rehabilitation in the institution and supervision in the community and secondly, prevention of relapse (AADK, 1998). Rehabilitation in the institution is implemented in rehabilitation centre for two years. It is a newly introduced approach with the establishment of Tampin Rehabilitation Centre in 1983. Under this new concept, all rehabilitation input are provided by various agencies such as the Ministry of Social Welfare, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Youth and Sports, National Civics Bureau and Islamic Affairs Division (Prime Minister Office) and the Ministry of Agriculture (AADK, 1997).

Treatment and rehabilitation approach adopted by rehabilitation centres include two significant aspects which are psychosocial and, "tough and rugged". The former comprises two main parts, psychology and social. Psychological component focuses on internal rehabilitation in terms of attitude, personality, value, personal behaviour and methods of problem solving. On the other hand, sociological is focused on external factors such as the restoration of the relationship between personal, group relations, family relations, community and religious ties. While the former stresses on psychology and social, the latter is aimed at building physical endurance, self-discipline and mental. Rehabilitation activities using this approach include physical rehabilitation, psychological, vocational, self-discipline, religious, civic, family, community and recreation (AADK, 1991).

Rehabilitation centres in Malaysia have provided many facilities to support their rehabilitation program including drug detector, detoxification, provision of rehabilitation orders, military-style training, a variety of vocational skills training, counselling, religious classes, civic and polity, agriculture and livestock. Nowadays, there are 28 rehabilitation centres that are fully operational in the country. Drugs addicts who undergo rehabilitation process at one of these centres will have to go through four rehabilitation phases which are learning, implementation, self-awareness and integration processes (AADK, 1997; 2007)

3. Material and Method

This study aims to analyse a variety of alternative modalities for drug rehabilitation process in Malaysia. This writing is a part of research on drug rehabilitation process using alternative methods as applied at the Pondok Remaja Inabah (Inabah Rehabilitation Centre) in Malaysia. From this study, a lot of qualitative and quantitative data is collected relating to a variety of alternative modalities for drug rehabilitation process carried out by various agencies or individuals in Malaysia. Thus, it is highly necessary to put forward information related to this issue before pursuing discussion on the effectiveness of rehabilitation variables. While reviewing the literature for drug abuse and its contributing factors, many data on a variety of alternative modalities for drug rehabilitation process in Malaysia is found. Therefore this paper will use content analysis method, which is an approach that uses information extracted and collected from a variety of secondary materials.

4. Results and Discussions

A synergy effort has been taken by government and non-government agencies to enhance rehabilitation process in Malaysia. The government has established drug rehabilitation centres across the country, whereas non-government agencies have set up rehabilitation institutions with a variety of methods to combat the drug problem. Among the methods introduced are cold turkey, acupuncture, nutritional replacement and rationing, community, psychotherapy, oral naltrexone treatment, psychotherapy and religious approach. Moreover, many private drug rehabilitation centres, which are traditionally practised by the medicine men or shamans have been established since 1977 (Rohana, 1994). There are reported around 2,000 medicine men working on the fulltime basis and 20,000 more on a part-time basis (Spencers dan Navaratnam, 1981). In Malaysia, spiritual-based approach is regarded as a widely accepted method of treatment and commonly practised in Islam and Christianity to treat various diseases including drug addiction.

Among alternative drug treatment and rehabilitation modalities are Raden Suratman's Traditional and Spiritual Drug Addiction Rehabilitation, Darul Syifa's Spiritual Drug Addiction Rehabilitation, Hj. Salleh's Traditional and Spiritual Drug Addiction Rehabilitation, Jabat Sufi's Private Drug Treatment & Rehabilitation, Christianity Spiritual Drug Addiction Rehabilitation, and Malaysian Association for the Study of Traditional Asian Medicine (MASTAM).

4.1. Raden Suratman's Traditional and Spiritual Drug Addiction Rehabilitation Modality

Traditional and spiritual drug treatment by Raden Suratman has been introduced and practised since mid 1977 and is still performed up to now (Mahmood Nazar, 1999). It is a combined approach of traditional and spiritual. The former includes rubbing or drinking traditional ingredients made of tree leaves and roots (Rohana, 1994) whereas the latter uses spells from Qur'anic verses in the process of treating Muslim drug addicts. On the other hand, shading of the symbols in the Sanskrit language on a patient's body is used as a treatment to non-Muslim drug addicts (Mahmood Nazar, 1999). The process of treatment undertaken by Raden Suratman, which is held at Kampung Baru, takes 45 days and nights. Treatment begins with the examination of the chest, eyes and the patient's blood to determine how serious addiction and drug toxins in the body. Once these signs are identified treatment will be carried out.

During the first step of treatment, patients is washed with spelled water. Then, the back or front body of patients is written with either Qur'anic verses for Muslim patients or with sanskrit symbols for non-Muslim patients. Medicines (traditional ingredients) is given to them every 2 hours for the first three days and every three hours for the next four days. It is necessary for the patients to stay with him during this stage. The medication will show positive result when the patients experience vomiting and diarrhoea for 20 times. If these signs prolong, medication is discontinued and replaced with diarrhoea drug resistance. The whole process is repeated after seven days of treatment. Patients is prescribed with rubbing oil and spelled water (water that causes hatred to drug) for drinking and washing their face. A patient once every 15 days until 45 days of treatment is required to take medication. To ensure the successful treatment, patients are not allowed to eat durian and drink alcohol and, cannot leave the house within seven days of treatment. It is believed that night time, or after isya' prayer, is the most appropriate and efficacious time of treatment for its quietness and cool temperature.

4.2. Darul Syifa's Spiritual Drug Addiction Rehabilitation Modality

Darul Syifa, a spiritual treatment and rehabilitation centre founded by Harun Din, is located at Bandar Baru Bangi. It offers spiritual care treatment, by means of medication and prayer, to patients with disorders or diseases that have no physical or psychological elements (Mahmood Nazar, 1999). Drug treatment process starts with reciting surah al-Fatihah and a prayer on a small amount of water (the water of Zamzam, mineral, rain or boiled water). The prayer for this treatment reads:

"You have been extreme, you have been damaged, I cut from you (the drug) as it is forbidden pork for you."

The prayer is then blown into the water and patients' body. The process is repeated until the treatment succeeded but normally will show efficacious result with more than one treatment and the patients are required to perform regular prayer throughout the treatment process.

4.3. Hj. Salleh's Traditional and Spiritual Drug Addiction Rehabilitation Modality

Hj Salleh's treatment and rehabilitation approach stresses on two aspects, namely spiritual and physical. Spiritual treatment is conducted with spell from Qur'anic verses whereas coconut water and plain water is used for physical treatment. Patients do not need to adopt any additional practices unless required by religion (Mahmood Nazar, 1999). Hj Salleh's treatment process is illustrated as follows:

- i. Hj. Salleh write surah Ali Imran, verse no 111 on the skin of coconut skin using the back of blunt nutcracker. The verse states:
"They will do you no harm, barring a trifling annoyance; If they come out to fight you, They will show you their backs, And no help shall they get."
- ii. After the text is written, coconut fruit is cut in the back and the patients have to drink the water in one breath and later sit on the stairs for five minutes. After drinking young coconut water, patients will vomit and it is strongly believed that the vomit throws out all drugs in the patients' body.
- iii. Patients will be given regular drinking water, which is functioning as 'hatred water' to drugs, that is earlier spelled with Qur'anic verses (surah al-A'raaf: 43). The verse reads:

“And We shall remove from their hearts any lurking sense of injury. Beneath them will be rivers flowing, and they shall say: Praise be to Allah, who hath guided us to this (felicity): never could we have found guidance, had it not been for the guidance of Allah: indeed it was the truth that the Messengers of our Lord brought unto us,” and they shall hear the cry: “Behold! The garden before you! Ye have been made its inheritors, for your deeds (of righteousness).”

- iv. After completing the treatment, patients need to comply with certain conditions such as they cannot hang out with fellow drug addicts for at least one month and strongly encouraged to have a frequent visit to Hj Salleh to seek for further treatment.

4.4. Jabat Sufi’s Private Drug Treatment & Rehabilitation Modality

Jabat Sufi’s Drug Treatment and Rehabilitation Centre, founded by Mohamad Ismail bin Haji Saleh, is one of the drug rehabilitation centres located at Simpang Pulai, Ipoh, Perak. The center provides rehabilitation for drug addicts who are determined to change their way of life practiced before. Each addicts, who come for treatment, will be placed in hostels provided and follow the treatment process using a module that has been set for 21 days. The center is located at No. 766A, Taman Chandan Desa, Jalan Gopeng, 31300 Simpang Pulai, Perak. Treatment and rehabilitation are applied mostly in the form of group or individual lesson, such as religious lectures, talk, intellectual discourse in the form of motivation or counselling.

According to Mohammad Ismail bin Hj Salleh, a healer in his centre must be knowledgeable and equipped with a vast religious knowledge in all areas ranging from worship, faith, fiqh and moral as much as possible. It is almost impossible, according to this modality, to cure a drug addict without any of these knowledge and disability to master in the physical and spiritual treatment. In order to ensure the successfulness of the treatment, patients’ behaviour must be analysed and rectified. From there, the treatment approach is accordingly set for patient. Although one particular treatment method suites on a particular patient, other patients who are on different methods are not left behind. This is due to the fact that every patient is diagnosed differently and thus different approaches of treatment are to be applied. In some cases, a few healers in the centre often witness patients who act beyond their own ability during a group or individually lesson such as religious lectures, talk and intellectual discourse in the form of motivation or counseling. The method stresses more on the usage of proper and attractive words based on faith and piety towards Allah in the process of treatment and rehabilitation of drug addicts. If that approach is fully applied, the whole process of treatment and rehabilitation is not as difficult it may be expected, because the result depends on the commitment and determination of the healers themselves.

4.5. Christianity Spiritual Drug Addiction Rehabilitation Modality

Christian rehabilitation centres using spiritual treatment approaches have been established since the end of the 1970 such as the Turning Point and Alpha Ministry Centre in Kuala Lumpur, Christian Care Centre, Rumah Cahaya (Home Light), Joes's Corner, Rumah Kepercayaan (Home Trust), Disiple House and St. Barnabas Church in Petaling Jaya (Lee RLM, 1985). These centres emphasize more on spiritual development rather than on physical or psychological. To achieve that goal, Lee R.L.M. (1985) says that there are three phases of rehabilitation. Firstly, the induction phase (inducement or stimulus), which consists of confession or admission of "cold turkey" treatment method for drug addicts. During this period, they are isolated from the outside world and not given any medication. The purpose of this stage is to calm them down through prayer and worship, and special attention is done by a counselor and rehabilitation fellow. When recovering from drug symptoms, they will be introduced to the program and follow the norms at the centre.

Secondly, character formation phase requires drug addicts to give oral or written statement, to participate in Bible class and to attend chapel services. At this stage, the emphasis is on their career path and religion commitment rather than new lifestyles. While in the rehabilitation centre, the evaluation will be conducted by the counselors and friends. The evaluation of the treatment progress is based on various criteria such as adherence to the staffs, attitude towards future work, relationships with peers and more importantly their spiritual development.

Thirdly and the final phase of the treatment, drug addicts are freed to move and communicate with the outside world and encouraged to look for jobs that are appropriate for their future . They are also encouraged to start a new and fresh effort towards a better career through a proper counseling session.

4.6. Malaysian Association for the Study of Traditional Asian Medicine (MASTAM)

MASTAM is a voluntary agency involved in drug treatment and rehabilitation in Malaysia. It has doctors who specialize in homeopathy, medical ayurvedic or Siddha. Herbs, which need to be taken every day, are commonly used in the process of treating its patients. Moreover, they are asked to meet the appointed doctor every week within 60 days. During this period, the drug addicts are not allowed to take some foods such as foods that contain high cholesterol, alcohol and coffee.

4.7. Malaysia Association of Pengasih (Pengasih House Project)

Rumah Pengasih (Gracious House) is a private treatment and rehabilitation centre approved by the government. RP started operations in 1993 and its treatment stresses on "Peer Mentoring Rehabilitation" which emphasizes on the restructuring of thought, emotion management and stabilization, changes in behavior and spiritual development (Persatuan Pengasih Malaysia, t.th). Residents of this centre are admitted based on voluntarily basis. Duration of treatment is between 6 and 12 months. They are guided to address issues related to employment, family, intimate relationships, social support networks and life journey. The program also involves efforts to secure drug addicts with employment and opportunities for vocational and academic training (Persatuan Pengasih Malaysia, t.th). In an effort to expand its services, the centre provides a variety of projects, including Bakti Kasih, Lautan Kasih, Muara Kasih and Seruan Kasih (Persatuan Pengasih Malaysia, t.th).

4.8. Pondok Remaja Inabah Modality

Pondok Remaja Inabah is part of the Pondok Pesantren Suryalaya, an educational institutions established on Thursday, 07 Rajab 1323H corresponding to September 5th, 1905, by al-Marhum Mubarak Shaikh Abdullah bin Haji Nor Muhammad, who died in 1956 at the age of 120 years, famous for its 'old Abah' calls. He is famous as a teacher of Qadiriyyah Naqshabandiyah Sufism, in Godebaq village about 90 km from Bandung. Pondok Remaja Inabah is part of the Pondok Pesantren Suryalaya in carrying out its core functions and roles of implementing "amar ma'ruf nahi munkar". The centre is a rehabilitation center committed to Islamic approach through repentance and worship activities such as remembrance and prayer following Qadiriyyah Naqshabandiyah Sufism method.

Since 1905, the Pondok Pesantren Suryalaya has gained the trust of parents who want to educate their children with religious knowledge. At the same time, some of the youths sent to the centre are facing social problems like drug addiction. As this group is classified as youths suffering from mental disorders, they are separated from other normal students. They are placed in a special center for rehabilitation process before being allowed to follow the formal class at the institutions (Harun Nasution, 1990).

Pondok Remaja Inabah is a rehabilitation center committed to Islamic approach through repentance and remembrance activities such as worship, prayer with Tarikat Qadiriyyah Naqshabandiyah method. The centre's main focus of treatment and rehabilitation is drug addicts' heart. It believes that a positive and guided attitude is resulted from a clean and pure heart. Therefore, Inabah's main objective is in accordance with the objective of Qadiriyyah Naqshabandiyah Sufism (PRI, 2004; Emo Kastama, 1990), which is:

- i. *Taqarrub* is closeness to Allah, for Allah is nearer to each individual. This is achieved through *ubudiah* (worship) directly to Allah so that there is no barrier between the Creator and the creature.
- ii. *Marḍātillah* is to achieve a lifestyle blessed by Allah. It is achieved by searching for Allah's blessing through obedience and conformity to His fate. Those who reach this level will show a quality and positive attitude such as asceticism, gentle, forgiving and love.
- iii. *Mahabbah* and *ma'rifah*. *Mahabbah* is a sense of love and obedience to Allah swt. A person who reached the stage of *Mahabbah* to Allah will be strong, honest and always tends to God more than anything else. The Prophet S.A.W. stated in his hadith which means:

"I have been given the love of God in three things that is sweet scent, women (wives) and Allah made my heart looked (firm) at Him in prayer."¹

On the other hand, *ma'rifah* means to know or recognize. It means that someone must know Allah through the sign of His Greatness (His verses) rather than knowing Him through His substance (*zat*). A person who has reached this stage experiences the existence of Allah in his heart.²

¹ Diambil dari kitab Siras Salikin halaman 121.

These three objectives are embedded in common prayer regularly cited by practitioners during *jahar* and *khafi* remembrance. The prayer reads:

“Lord, only Thou my destiny and the pleasure I sought thee. Give me the ability to love and to enlighten you.”

In order to achieve this objective, *taqarub* and *mahabbah* to Allah through a clear (*jahar*) and silent (*khafi*) remembrance is indeed important as a way to combat the passions and temptations of Satan who become the main enemy to human and brought them to physical and spiritual damage. Moreover, both are regarded as a tool to strengthen and enhance the qualities of faith. If the faith embedded in the heart, it will become the light in human soul. In addition, Allah will make those believers to hate disbelief, transgression and iniquity. Allah said in surah al-Hujuraat: 7:

”And knowing that you is Allah’s Messenger: were he, in many matters, to follow your (wishes), ye would certainly fall into misfortune: But Allah has endeared the faith to you, and has made it beautiful in your hearts, and he has made hateful to you unbelief, wickeness, and rebellion: such indeed are those who walk in righteousness.”

Hadith of the Prophet (S.A.W), as narrated by Thabrani from Abu Hurairah says:

"The remembrance of Allah is a strong feature of the faith, which can demolish hypocrisy and act as defense from the influence of Satan and the shield from the heat of hell fire."

These verses and hadith explain the advantages of remembrance and its importance in human life. It becomes a tool to strengthen the faith, control their desires, and demolish hypocrisy, the fortress of Satan and Hell. The healing rate of modalities performed in Pondok Remaja Inabah is significantly proven. Emo Kastama (1990), who studied Inabah Rehabilitation Centre in West Java Indonesia from July 1989 to February 1990, found that the effectiveness of treatment and rehabilitation in the PRI is convincingly high, showing the total of 93.1% recovery. While a study by Mahmood Nazar (1998) found that only 23% of drug addicts return to drug after 25 weeks of drug rehabilitation at the PRI. Therefore, Pondok Remaja Inabah’s rehabilitation method using an Islamic approach can be considered as an alternative modality besides other traditional treatment.

5. Conclusion

This paper seeks to explore the diversity of alternative modalities for rehabilitation process practiced in Malaysia. The finding shows that there are eight alternative rehabilitation modalities in regards to the abuse of drug use in Malaysia. The existence of these alternative modalities considered as a response to the ineffectiveness of existing rehabilitation centres implemented by the government in dealing with drug addiction problems. Most of these alternative modalities use Islamic approach, such as prayer, remembrance, repentance, fardhu ain and Qur'an classes, in treating drug addiction problem. The outcome of rehabilitation process in these centres is significantly encouraging, ranging from seventy to ninety percent successful rate of rehabilitation in the country.

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