

THE PRACTICES AND APPROACHES OF INTERFAITH DIALOGUE AT LEICESTER, UK

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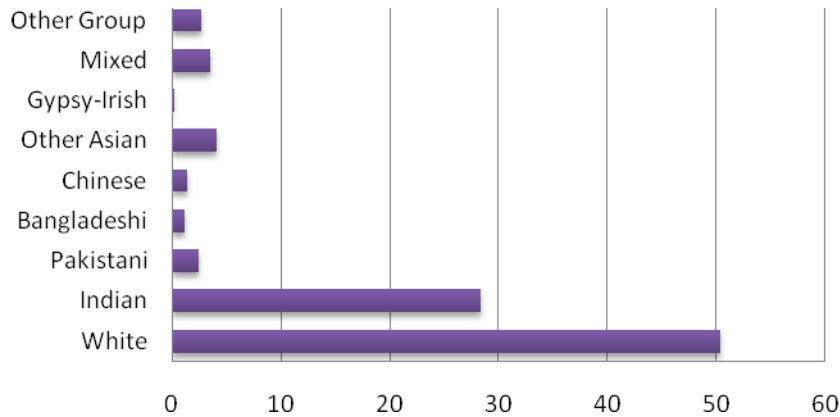
Abstract

The diversity of human is one of the God's. With the diversity, people from different religions, ethnics, and cultures can live together and sharing the good values. However, it can only be achieved with dialogue which is perceived as the best mechanism to build mutual understanding and respect with each other. In the context of Leicester, which located in the East Midlands of England, the practices of interfaith dialogue are implemented successfully till today. There are a lot of organizations and people who are involved and organizing interfaith dialogue activities with different approaches. This article will discuss about the practices and approaches of interfaith dialogue in Leicester. The method used in this research was qualitative, which included literature review, observation and participation, and particularly interviews with fifteen people who represented interfaith organization and religious community in Leicester. The findings show the practices of interfaith dialogue have been organized with different types of approaches. In addition, it can be deliberated as a good model of interfaith dialogue particularly for those who want to involve in these activities.

Key words: *Interfaith dialogue, interfaith relation, religious pluralism, dialogue in Leicester, religious tolerance.*

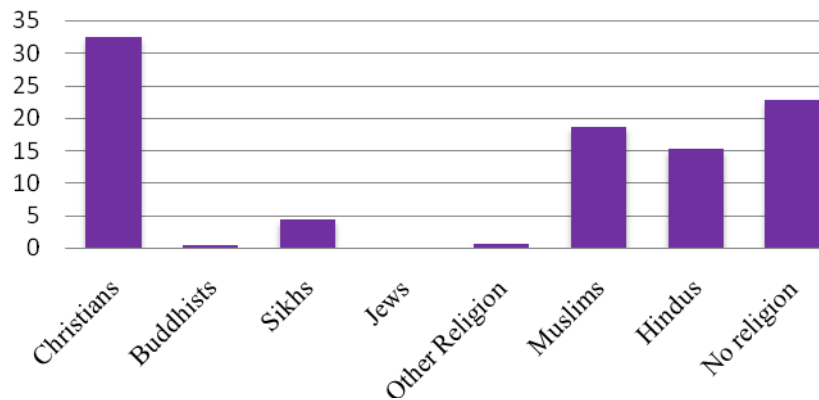
1. INTRODUCTION

The discussion about interfaith dialogue is practiced for over a decade with different ideas and approaches. Dialogue basically refers to a conversation between people of different background in certain aspects related to their life such as how to attain good life in multicultural society, or good value in religion that would be shared together. The dialogue on the other hand, aims to identify the differences and similarities among people so they can learn and understand people. Through dialogue, it helps to build good relation and mutual trust without sacrificing their life principles. In the context of multicultural society, dialogue is extremely essential to sustain the cohesion and harmony in the society. Leicester has a long story and experience in interfaith relation which has been generated through the dialogue. This city which is located at Midlands of England, hundred miles from London, contains numerous of ethnics, cultures and religions predominantly from Asia. These people in formerly known as migrants and refugees came to Leicester significantly after the Second World War. The population as according to Census 2011 by Office for National Statistics (ONS) was 329,839. Among the ethnicity, over 50.4 per cent are the White or local citizen, followed by Asian with 37.1 per cent which includes Indian (28.3 per cent), Pakistani (2.4 per cent), Bangladeshi (1.1 per cent), Chinese (1.3 per cent), and other Asian British (4 per cent), the Gypsy-Irish 0.1 per cent, mixed ethnics 3.5 per cent, and other ethnics group 2.6 per cent. It can be perceived based on the graph below:



Source: 2011 Census by Office for National Statistics

On the prospect of religion populations, over 32.4 per cent were Christians, Muslims as the second largest religion group with 18.6 per cent, followed by the Hindus 15.2 per cent, Sikhs 4.4 per cent, Buddhists 0.4 per cent, Jews 0.1 per cent, and other religions 0.6 per cent, as shown in the graph below:



Source: 2011 Census by Office for National Statistics

In fact, the atmosphere of the multicultural society has changed the landscape of Leicester. In the diverse atmosphere, the community realizes how important it is to cooperate as one community to sustain their life in various aspects, such as social, economy, education, culture, religion and so on. Along with their cooperation, mutual understanding, tolerance, and respect, it has initiated a movement to establish specific organisation to strengthen their relations, using the element of religions as common terms. Thus, numerous bodies and groups engendered with different kind of approaches were established. These bodies represented their community to ensure their engagement work effectively. Through the cooperation and good relation among them, they succeed to face and solve problems together.

2. METHODOLOGY

The methodology of this research was based on a triangular approach of interviews, observation and participation. The interview provided a direct point and first hand information related to the research. Besides, observation was used to feel and learn different kind of dialogue activities directly. It provided the form of approaches in dialogue besides the topic that has been discussed. Furthermore, it proved how significant the dialogue activities such as report and publication. Meanwhile the participation provided an involvement directly into the interfaith activities which included responses and opinions on any issues.

3. THE DEVELOPMENT OF MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY

The development of Leicester society strongly related to the transformation of Britain landscape after the Second World War (1939-1945) which bore a mass migration into Britain. With the involvement of army from Pakistan and Bangladesh, then followed by people from Punjab and Mirpur, after the war and partition of India in 1947, they were provided to stay at the British Isle or stay in Britain as the citizen. However, the construction of Mangla Dam in Pakistan which displaced hundred thousands of people, forced them whether to strive to stay in Pakistan or look for their relative in Britain (Siddiqui 2000, pg. 185). Furthermore, some of their relatives have settled in Manchester and became the locals since 1927, while another Pakistanis arrived in 1937. They settled in terrace housing just south of the city centre, around Oxford Road, and some of whom came over in response to a report about Manchester that they heard back home. The partition of India and Pakistan in 1947 forced these migrant to move as refugees into their newly state while some had to move to the Canal Colonies state (Werbner 1990, pg. 17).

In 1950s, the migration from Pakistan was happening, even when there were a few of Pakistanis in Britain in 1950. Small number began to arrive in the 1950s, but the population was still around 20,000 in 1960s. However, the Commonwealth Immigrants Act (1962) was enforced on 1st July 1962, as there was increasing number; around 50,000 Pakistanis had entered Britain in the preceding eighteen month. It followed by the arrival of large number of women and children in the later phase until 1967, following to the Act which had frozen the men immigrant (Jeffery 1976, pg. 48). Consequently, the later legislation of Britain government had forced these migrant to bring all their family to Britain and thus resulted to increasing of Muslim community. Within this period, the Muslim community started to generate their own life in extreme discrimination they had regarding their 'black people' status (Siddiqui 2000, pg. 185).

Islam is not identified as most of the immigrants were from Muslim community while the local citizens were Christians. Once the migrants arrived there and were faced with problems the local community dominated by the Christians had evoked sympathy towards the migrants and tried to help them to fulfil the migrant's life necessities. The Christians community provided them some help and thus had embarked on the interfaith dialogue between Muslims and Christian indirectly. Obviously, at the time, the purpose of the dialogue was directed to learn more about the migrant community especially about their belief, to solve issues on social adjustment. Consequently, it had generated a good relationship between them and led into the first bilateral dialogue between the Christian and Muslims which has took place in May 1973.

This first formal dialogue with the theme 'Islam in the Parish' brought together the Muslims and Christians panellist. In the following year, another dialogue which themed 'The Family in Islam and Christianity' in May 1974, and 'Worship and Prayer in Islam and Christianity' in May 1975 were held (Siddiqui 2000, pg. 185-186). Each of the dialogue themes specifically aimed to understand more about Islam and Muslims. It includes religious discussion either in theologies or vice versa. The highlight of each discussion is on how the religion and religious community can work together to build tolerance within society. Besides, Christian as well as Islam has the same agenda about how to approach the secular British policies towards the religious community.

There are also certain dimensions that seem controversial to both Muslims and Christians, especially when some religious people disagreed to involve with the dialogue, especially when the dialogue is perceived as missionary agenda. Obviously, the missionary agenda is perceived by other religions as a threat and they are prepared to handle this situation. In Britain, circumstances are influenced by the changing of the political and religion landscape through numerous regions. The first interaction between certain Christians clergy with the immigrant and refugees motivated by the evangelism agenda where their right hand come to help while their left hand comes with the Bible¹. Moreover, it is usually regarded as the colonial activities for many centuries.

According to Lamb (2012, pg. 35), this missionary and conversion issue leads to a long debate in the 1970s and 1980s among the religious people even in their own denominations. This issue perhaps can be examined through the story of the Church, particularly to the Christian debates about the acceptance among them to have a pure dialogue with other religion without any hidden agenda as implemented for many years especially during colonization period. Here, Siddiqui (1996, pg. XIII) remarks, the serious debate that emerged within the Western Christianity immediately before and after the 1914-18 war was thus instrumental in forcing the Western Churches to shift from mission to dialogue. In different prospects, the mission connotation in Christianity contains several meaning and not limited to conversion activities². Probably, the Christians group that strongly focus on missionary activities in term to convert other people broadly refer to the Radical Evangelist groups (Muhammad Shafiq & Mohammed Abu-Nimer, 2011, pg. 17-18).

At Leicester, the early formation of the social landscape began with the arrival of New Commonwealth migrant process after the Second World War. Significantly, in the aftermath of the Second World War there was little indication that Leicester was on the threshold of major cultural change. In 1951, the Asian population was only 624. It seemed that most of these people settled in Leicester after 1945 because there is little recorded evidence of early presence. Moreover, before the war, Leicester and people from surrounding areas that subsequently became the New Commonwealth were limited to tours by the local regiments, visiting political leaders, students and the occasional early migrant. On the other hand, the early Asian population was contributed by the Former Soldier in Indian Army and itinerant visitors to made up the main bulk of Leicester's Asian population before 1945. The Indian Workers' Association (IWA) was founded by those from the Indian subcontinents that were keen to establish links and remain in touch with development in India. This process has involved decades of challenges and adaptation for the new culture, either the locals or the immigrants particularly among the Asian. The Asians in Leicester have their own contribution in developing Leicester since 1945 in term in term to fulfil their life necessity such as Asian settlement, work, education, religion, community institution, family, leisure, culture and public life (Martin & Singh, 2002, pg. 7-8).

Two key factors were identified which contributed to the migrant process after the Second World War. First, it was caused by the independence of India and followed by the partition of the province of Punjab between India and Pakistan. Over 10 million people were dislocated. Punjab at that time had a history of outward migration since the nineteenth century; given their central role in the Indian Army, while many former soldiers who had served overseas decided to start new life in foreign countries. Secondly, the right to settle in Britain as The Nationality Act (1948) has given every Commonwealth citizen their right to move to the 'mother country'. Given the post war demand for workers, changes in Commonwealth countries before migrants could arrive in work, immigration rules, and settlement difficulties (Martin & Singh 2002, pg. 8)

In 1961, the new Commonwealth population in the city had increased to 4,624 and most of the migrants settled in Highfields and the Belgrave area where rented accommodation was plentiful. The St. Peter's Estate in Highfields was favoured by Afro-Caribbean, while Indians and Pakistanis chose properties near the

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Spinney Hill Park and Belgrave Road where affordable private housing was available. Consequently, the migrant to the city was hastened by the Commonwealth and Immigration Act (1962), which restricted the right of Commonwealth citizen to settle in Britain. After 1962, migrants need a work voucher in order to ensure entry to the country. It is to avoid more restrictive immigration legislation led to pre-emptive migration and family unions (John Martin & Singh, 2002, pg. 8). By 1968 to 1978 the large number of Asian coming to Leicester significantly became the turning point (Open Society Institute, 2010, pg. 32).

The increasing number of Asian, who migrated to Leicester, later recognized as the citizen even when they were faced with discrimination. The community in the early 1960 started to generate their own community life especially to activate their religious practices towards their societies. According to Winstone (2006, pg. 8), between 1968 and 1975 where the ethnic minority community in Leicester grew from 5 to 25 percent, Leicester at that time has inherited a commercial class from East Africa that brought their strong Hindu, Sikh and Muslim beliefs with them. A massive demand for places of worship was created as well as curiosity about the beliefs and festivals of relatively unknown religions in Britain. This multicultural atmosphere resulted to the communities getting familiar with other cultures. Thus, Martin & Singh (2002, pg. 10-11), noticed that there were place of worship such as the Sikh Gudwara was founded on New Walk and later it become the centre of community life. Furthermore, The Indian Workers' Association (IWA) also contributed actively in organizing migrants to campaign on racism issues, besides culture and work.

In 1972, there was another arrival of Uganda's migrants to Leicester consequently after General Idi Amin was exiled to the Asian population. These people were told that they could not move to Leicester. However, this message was perceived differently, thus motivates them to move to Leicester in a large number. It also has been addressed by Open Society Institute (2010, pg.33) and Martin & Singh (2002, pg 11) where in 1972, the City Council worried that "the entire fabric of our city is at risk" from immigrant, inserted a tersely worded advertisement in Ugandan daily newspaper warning a potential immigrant which told: "...you should not come to Leicester" and indirectly it has promoted 'Leicester' to these people. Accurately, in 1981 the minority ethnic population of the city had increased to 59,709, and this rapid growth creates serious political, economic and administrative challenges that ultimately affected the nature of all civic institutions in the city. It had increased to 76,973 by 1991, and to 100,000 by 2001. This resulted to the fundamental change in the character of the city. In addition, during the 1990s, the war in Bosnia increased the number of refugees who arrived here until 2004.

The arrival of migrants from Uganda set off a wave of racism. Hostility to coloured immigrants had been a constant feature in Asia settlement but the early 1970s saw the local growth of the National Front which established a base among the white working class of the city. In February 1974, the general elections by National Front secured 7.4 percent of the vote in the constituency of Leicester East, 6.4 percent in Leicester West, and 3 percent in Leicester South. The Front did better in local elections. Two years later in 1976, it came within 61 votes of victory in the Abbey Ward and gained 18 percent of the total vote in the city. The Front's influence was at its peak in the mid-1970s but decline after the general election of 1979. The atmosphere of racial hostility created by the National Front's activities manifested itself in other ways. The Imperial Typewriters strike in 1974 became a symbol of the deeply entrenched racism within the city and its labour movement which seen as unresponsive to the needs of black workers. This bitter strike attracted national attention which was followed by the Mansfield Hosiery dispute. The activities of the National Front in the city were challenged by the local chapters of the IWA, the Anti-Nazi League and the Inter-Racial Solidarity Campaign (Martin & Singh, 2002, pg 11).

In the mid-1970s, the anti-racist mobilization had a strong influence on the local Labour Party. Young activist like Peter Soulsby recognize the importance of the issue which was reflected in major national developments, for example the Race Relation Act (1976). New law was placed on local authorities to improve race relation. It also created the Commission for Racial Equality to police the legislation. But the displacement of 'Old Labour' was gradual and took almost a decade. It was not until the early 1980s that the 'new left' with its commitment to a multiracial city was firmly in power. By 1983, there were 9 Labour Asian

councillors in the City Council representing inner-city wards in Highfields and Belgrave. After this political success, the Labour Party undertook an audit in Highfields and Belgrave (Martin & Singh 2002, pg 11-12).

Similarly, Winstone (2006, pg. 8) justified that the real change for policy makers began in the mid 1980s with the emerging view that faith communities could benefit regeneration in cities, as well as the growth of interest in Islam, clearly a religion and not an ethnic group. Issues such as the "greening" of places of worship, often unsuitable for Victorian schools and factories, beautiful on the inside but drab on the outside, were enthusiastically embraced. Peace vigils were jointly held for South Africa and the former Yugoslavia, with both Serbian and Bosnian supporters listening to Hindu music on Spinney Hill Park. In addition, all religious festivals were celebrated by the communities although they were from the different religions. The religious activities on the other hand was supported by the Local Authority to several interfaith bodies as well as Leicester Council of Faiths, working on a wide range of issues, including regeneration; with the Muslim Burial Council on funeral service delivery and with the Hindu community on a whole range of issues including cremation, water death rituals and park management. Over this period the general public has become increasingly curious about non-Christian faiths.

The findings were used to target services more effectively, to increase the number of non-whites in the City Council's workforce to reflect the proportion of non-whites in the population and to reformulate general policies in areas such as cultural policies. Against the backdrop of inner-city riots of 1981, evidence of high levels of unemployment among Asian and Afro-Caribbean youth was used to attract inner-city grants from central government. This funding, and the patronage associated with its distribution, became focus of the politics of the New Asian councillors. In the 1980s, with the support of the Asian community, Leicester became a Labour Party stronghold. In 1987, all three parliamentary seats were won by the Labour Party. Keith Vaz captured Leicester East to become the first Asian MP since 1923 (Martin & Singh, 2002, pg 12).

In sum, there are three phases that changed the landscape of Leicester. Firstly, earlier there were few people from Asia had come to have their own settlement in Leicester. However, it not significant because the number was too small compared to after the Second World War. Secondly, the Second World War had given impact on some territories; hence the immigrant process happened drastically with a large number of people coming to Leicester. By the first period, before 1970, most of them are from the East African Asian. Over a decade, these people became educated and had a good work including some who had reach the professional level. The third period after 1970, there were another migrants from South Asia who were dislocated from their country. These people unfortunately, come to Leicester for unskilled work and later build their own life here. In fact, the Asian were synonyms with the manufacturing industries. A year later, more migrants coming to Leicester from South Asia, East Africa and the newly settled Somalis who were impacted by war. These migrants gave a lot of contribution in developing the multiculturalism society in Leicester besides the economy and industry.

4. EARLY DIALOGUE

Since the society landscape of Leicester totally changed from different culture, ethnic and religion, slowly and gradually the diversity atmosphere helps them to understand each other with various kinds of interactions, as well in transaction activities, education, business, medical and hospitality, and so on. The communities, particularly among the religious ones realized how they could cooperate and work together to contribute to the society. Besides, interaction activities through dialogue and discussion among the communities, there were also involvements by several religious groups and individuals that concern in organizing dialogue activities in formal way. For instance, in 1985, the Christian-Muslim Dialogue Group was established under the Islamic Foundation. The dialogue group organised through academic way, debated on theology issue around Christianity and Islam (Sameja, 2012, pg. 91). Gordon and Siddiqui were some of those who were responsible in organizing it. Within seven years of organising the activities, it attracted 10-50 participants, particularly among the sixth formers and students.

Another dialogue activity was identified in 1986 through the opening of Leicester Overseas Centre in Blackfriars Hall in Wellington Street, Leicester. It came because the Sikh Community had brought the Holy Cross School buildings in New Walk for use as a Gurdwara. Hence, it seems sensible to offer the nearby Church Hall as a meeting place for all those communities that had no premise of their own. By opening on every Saturday, it provides a place for discussion on difficulties and problems either religious or secular (Bunen, 2006, pg. 11). The establishment of Leicester Council of Faith in the same year can also sought the interfaith dialogue as essential agenda in Leicester society. The council brought different people of faith in several meetings and dialogue in order to build a good relation and common understanding as they represented their community (Silk, 2006, pg.10). In 1984, the initiative from Brian Pearce in 1984 to gather a number of people in working of interfaith activities in wide level led to establishment of The Interfaith Network for UK and shadowing most of interfaith organization in the UK, including the Islamic Foundation, the Leicester Council of Faith and several dialogue groups as there were work in the local level (The Interfaith Network for UK, 2007).

5. DIALOGUE IN TWENTIETH CENTURY

Since 9/11 and 7/7 events, there has been an upsurge in demand for interfaith dialogue activities and programmes. It leads into emergence of several interfaith organisations and groups with different kind of approach. These organisations work on promoting good relation between people of different faith and help to reduce tension in the society. Such as bilateral dialogue group and trilateral dialogue group came and attract people in gaining good relation and discussion on certain issues, theology or non theology. As addressed by Interfaith Organisation in the UK: A Directory (2006, pg. 64 - 67), five interfaith bodies have engendered with different approach and concerns on particular level of the society. For instance, the Leicester Faith Leader's Forum, established in 2001 aims to provide a forum for the Anglican Bishop of Leicester and other faith leader within this city. Participated by eight main religions in Leicester, it organizes a discussion on religious topic; social issues, local, national and international.

In 2002, a trilateral dialogue group entitle Family of Abraham Group was formed, concerning on promoting good relation between the Abrahamic Faith; Christians, Jews, and Muslim at Leicester. Furthermore, it aims to building up a growing understanding of the commonalities and differences between our faiths, in their theologies and practices (Wingate, 2012, pg. 16). In 2002, a bilateral dialogue group entitled Hindu-Christian Forum was established. Dialogue around serious topics took place, including theology or non-theology topics. It helps to strengthen the relation between both parties. Followed by another bilateral group in 2003, the Hindu-Muslim Dialogue was established to reflect the relation between both faiths. The group focuses on religious topics, social issues, and local issues related to both faiths in order to develop understanding between Hindus and Muslims in Leicester. Besides dialogue group based on faith discussion in general, there were also another group that specified on particular gender like Christian-Muslim Women Group. Established in 2002, the group seeks to explore aspect of each other's belief and practice in their perspective, besides works on women's agenda.

6. DISCUSSION AND SUMMARY

The practices of interfaith dialogue in Leicester can be classified into three phases. The first phase began after the formation of Leicester atmosphere into multicultural society, followed by World War II that has brought a huge number of Asian people to settle there. In fact, the World War II bares millions people who were dislocated from their origin country particularly with the partition of the province of Punjab between India and Pakistan. Furthermore, a huge number of Asian people served with the British Army in the War, thus they have special privilege to stay in the 'mother country'. For several years, the migrant activities were never resumed although in 1972, the government had announced that Leicester could not receive more

people. It then, totally changed the landscape of the society. Through the diverse society, they started to learn and know about each other in order to sustain the essence of cohesion and harmony in the society. On the other hand, the new atmosphere evoked new problem in the society especially the discrimination³ and racism⁴ against the minority. To face the issues, they were cooperation between the minorities and the locals to solve the problem. Thus, the interfaith relation through informal dialogue began as reflection to the circumstances in order to develop the society in better condition.

The second phase of interfaith dialogue as officially began in 1980s, through the establishment of Christian-Muslim Dialogue Group in 1986 by the Islamic Foundation. Briefly, the dialogue group was organized in academic way. It was in March 1978 that the board of Islamic Foundation trustees agreed to establish an "interfaith Unit" in the Foundation, which fully responsible to the interfaith dialogue activities that led to the Christian-Muslim Dialogue Group, and followed by the Leicester Council of Faith. However, the Christian-Muslim Dialogue Group was based on bilateral dialogue concerned with neither two faith communities, nor other religions which had existed by that time. During the same year, an informal interfaith activity was initiated by religious community in order to build good relation among the community. The interfaith activities included all faith communities in several activities related to them, and it's a challenge that they had to face in this period.

Another interfaith activity that combined between formal and informal dialogue took place through the establishment of the Leicester Council of Faith. The council which was established in 1986, represented by eight religions in Leicester included the Christians, Muslims, Jews, Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Baha'is, and Jains. It also included other religious, belief and also the non religious community to involve with several interfaith activities, although they were not included as part of the council's member. The Council aims to advance public knowledge and mutual understanding of the teaching, traditions, and practices of the different faith communities in Leicester and the surrounding district, including an awareness of their distinctive features and their common ground besides to promote relation between people of different faiths.

The council also demonstrates a lot of initiatives and approaches in interfaith work, particularly multi faith dialogue, discussion meetings on religious topic, discussion meetings on social issues, interfaith awareness raising, promoting good community relations, making statements on current issues, prayer/worship, social gathering, shared meals, diversity training, educational events/exhibitions, assisting on multi faith civic ceremonies, providing advice to public bodies, acting as a consultative forum on local issues for local government, sending representatives to serve on local strategic initiatives, and involvement in regeneration/neighbourhood renewal work, and regular newsletter.

A drastic increase of interfaith activities in twentieth century, after the 9/11 and 7/7 incident shows the emergence of the third phase. In this third phase, various dialogue groups and interfaith bodies emerged and separated among different levels of society in order to reduce tension which was evoked by internal and external religious conflict. Such bodies and group like the Faiths Regeneration Network, Christian-Muslim Women Group, Faith Leader's Forum, Family of Abraham Group, Hindu-Christian Forum, Hindu-Muslim Dialogue Group, and St. Philips Centre were established and taken place in promoting several interfaith activities in the society. The St. Philips Centre itself, linked with most of the dialogue group in organizing interfaith activities in Leicester⁵. Indeed, the dialogue not only used to reduce the tension, it helps to engage the community in mutual respect, tolerance, and understand about each other⁶. For instance⁷, when tension comes against other faith groups, people who were enlightened by their religious representative were able to

³ Sood, M.

⁴ <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/1357865.stm>. Accessed at 11 December 2013

⁵ Hall, J.

⁶ Nagdi, S.

⁷ Lally, J.

distinguish between the real teachings of the religion, comparing to judge them by the act of its followers. As remarks by the one of religious community leader⁸:

"... if people can start having conversation with the neighbour, it takes away a lot of fear of And it also help defuse the problem that arise by a lack of understanding of the other, because you can't understanding anybody for the other faith or you don't have opportunity to speak to and listen to them, the you can adopt a lot of rumours and false information going on, and that why you can end up with fear and anger developing."

Another case has been addressed⁹:

"... there are a lot of misinformation, out sort the Muslim community with the non Muslim, about, because Muslim get bad press, for al-Qaeda, for crime, especially in this country, as well, that is always on paper saying... the non Muslim you can attack them and ... them, and all these colour below, not evidence, nonsense but people do thing, ... and it very similar in some Muslim, and you know, there a Sikh, drinks a lot, and they mess around and stand ... and they certain, stereotypes that Muslim got of other religion."

The health dialogue and good relation avoids the religious community from blaming each other even when it was propagated by media negatively. In same volume, it was convinced by other faith leader¹⁰ that the dialogue works as main key to engage people of different faiths. Once they have good relation, any future tensions can be managed properly. For instance, the English Defence League, one of the extremist groups in Britain, intended to come to Leicester and attacked a mosque before marching into the Highfields area, which represented the highest resident population of the Muslim community. The religion community raise against this group present, and initially it followed by the MP's of Leicester to ban them from coming to the city.¹¹ Together the religious^{12,13} community showed solidarity based on formula, if any faiths were attacked, it means all faiths were attacked.

Based on the discussion, the implementation of interfaith dialogue at Leicester, through it practices and approaches are proven by numerous activities. Leicester as the most multicultural city in the UK has succeeded to maintain their harmony and peace after initiative has been done by particular people and group in Leicester. Using an interfaith dialogue as a main approach, they are able to link each level of community to discuss particular issue related to them. Obviously it can be evaluated through the existence of interfaith bodies and dialogue group that has been organized by several people who had a lot of experience in interfaith relation.

Furthermore, each group has their own agenda and any issues discussed are limited to what they want to achieve. They are involved in each level of the community from the lay people, youngsters, religious representative, academician, NGOs and so on. Here we can perceive that these elements are extremely essential to build good dialogue without creating any tensions or gap between faith groups. Briefly, it could not be done without a good relation in each level of the community for the sake of the humanity. Since this atmosphere has been actualized, whatever obstacle can be overcome and managed together to sustain the cohesion in the society. This perhaps could be a good model of the interfaith dialogue, especially in our country.

⁸ Potter, J.

⁹ Mann, R.

¹⁰ Nelson, T.

¹¹ <http://www.leicestermercury.co.uk/POLICE-FEAR-RACE-ATTACK-MOSQUE/story-12081298-detail/story.html>. Accessed at 11 December 2013.

¹² Ahmed, S.F

¹³ Ahsan, M.

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