

Infinity Presents Paper on Islamic Microfinance at Harvard Forum on Islamic Finance

Cambridge, USA; April 26, 2014

Infinity Consultants was selected to deliver a paper on Cooperative Finance Models in Islamic Finance and its relevance to Financial Inclusion at the recently concluded Harvard University Forum on Islamic Finance, held at Harvard Law School, Cambridge, USA.

Representing Infinity, Saif Ahmed, Managing Partner presented the findings of the paper titled "Achieving Financial Inclusion of Muslim Minorities Through Alternative *Shari'a*-based Cooperative Finance Models" in a panel session of the Forum which was well received by the audience. The paper was co-authored with Abdul Qadir Buhari and Blake Goud with the objective of demonstrating how financial inclusion of lower income Muslim populations across the world is possible through Islamic finance using India as a case study. The paper developed three viable *Shari'a*-based alternative cooperative finance models that leverage enabling microfinance infrastructure and best practices to achieve broad based financial inclusion of all segments of the population with a focus on the Muslim minority community. The paper also discussed the structural and regulatory frameworks along with the associated challenges for each of these three models and further describe their common *Shari'a* compliant product structure that is based on a *Murabaha* and *Musharaka* financing model developed by Feroz, Goud and Rahman (2008), where further improvement is made by developing a detailed financial forecast model and relevant operating and profitability metrics of this two-stage model to demonstrate its feasibility for investment and operation in a real world environment.

"I was very happy to present at this year's Harvard Forum on Islamic Finance where the focus was on cooperative finance models as this is where the industry should be moving by involving all stakeholders and particularly the common man who has been basically neglected by Islamic financial institutions till now" commented Saif Ahmed. Infinity is working to develop innovative financial products and solutions that can be deployed in India and the submission of this paper will provide the requisite impetus to operationalize its plans to develop a viable Islamic microfinance model based on the equity finance concepts of Islamic finance that use profit and loss sharing (PLS) as their core principle and represent the purest form of Islamic Finance.



About Infinity Consultants

Infinity Consultants (www.infinity-consult.com) is an advisory firm based in Bangalore, India that focuses on developing Islamic finance products for the Indian market and in providing corporate finance, business and investment advisory solutions to clients in the Middle East, India & South East Asia. Infinity has pioneered the development of Zayd Chit Funds Pvt. Limited, India's first *Shari'a* compliant chit fund company and Zamzam Capital LLP, a leading investment management firm focused on *Shari'a* compliant funding & investments, while also being at the forefront of delivering a range of high quality Islamic banking & finance based training and certification programs worldwide.